

## PREFACE

This book has been prepared as a memorial to my maternal grandparents, John Raleigh PRYOR and Iva Beatrice BARNHART. Naturally, in the course of researching the lineage of my grandparents, many connecting family lines and much history was unfolded. The history of many of the families is rooted in a deep and abiding faith in God, and after they came to America, in a great love of country and strong patriotism. We should want to know our ancestors, because they can teach us much, as they have given us much. Whiting once wrote: "They who care nothing for their ancestors, are wanting in respect for themselves, and deserve to be treated with neglect by their posterity. Those who respect and venerate the memory of their forefathers, will be led, not by vanity, but by filial affection - by a pious reverence to treasure up their memories...Every virtuous ancestor puts us under bonds to our posterity, and he who is duly sensible of what he owes to the past and to the future, will rarely fail to perform his duties to the present."<sup>1</sup>

It is with such thoughts that this book is presented. I feel an obligation to my Mother Virginia Beatrice PRYOR CUNNINGHAM, the first-born of John and Iva, and to all of my ancestors who survived so much, suffered so much, labored so hard, and gave so much that I might have the heritage I now own. I hope the book will in part satisfy part of the obligation, and I hope it will stir some unknown or some unborn relative of our present or a future generation, to carry the work even further.

In the research leading to, and the preparation of this book, I am indebted to so many persons that an exhaustive list is probably beyond the scope of this work. There are so many authors, writers, and researchers both known and unknown responsible for bits and pieces of the genealogies detailed within these covers. This includes, of course, that vast army of government (local, state, and federal) researchers, compilers, documenters, clerks, and record keepers as well as those from organizations, such as the Sons of the American Revolution. It also includes all of those librarians in so many towns and cities who were so courteous, kind, and helpful. Finally it includes the long forgotten census takers of bygone years, many of whom are responsible for recording information not available anywhere else. Parenthetically, despite their proneness to misspellings, poor penmanship, and guess work, those census takers (oftimes barely literate themselves) had to deal with often illiterate and perhaps uncooperative citizens. These citizens moved about frequently and many times probably cared little if at all whether they were ever found or counted. Thus we owe a deep gratitude to the census takers in so many places, which can never be fully acknowledged.

In any work as comprehensive as I have tried to make this one, much correspondence is involved. I have lost track of the number of letters that have been written and received. My files contain several large loose leaf notebooks full of correspondence. And of course none of that includes the uncounted telephone calls placed and received. Much data has been received from some of the most unexpected places, and I have made contacts that have established life long friendships. It has been a pleasant though sometimes frustrating work, and it would be impossible to credit each and every person that helped make the genealogies

1 - Whiting, New Eng. Gen. Reg., Vol. VII, Reference 58, page 107.

contained herein possible.

Since, it is doubtful if any work on genealogy could stand alone without multitudes of credits, it is with fear and trepidation that I dare to delineate the names of those who have contributed to this work. The book itself is the culmination of research which can be dated to the mid 1940's when I was a teenager. My grandmother, Iva Beatrice BARNHART PRYOR was my first source of information, because it was from the notes that I made as she talked to me that I learned about some of the family connections. She first identified the BARNHARTs, STAATS, and ROUSHs and gave me some of the PRYOR genealogy. My regret is that I did not keep better and more notes, and that I did not have the foresight to spend more time in research with my loving grandmother, because she was a veritable fountain of information. Unfortunately, those early notes have been lost to the ravages of time, but they were the building blocks to Bible records and other family history now resident with some members of the family - in particular my uncle James Franklin PRYOR and my first cousin Judith Anne METZ BELL.

I must admit that my own abiding curiosity and my personal interest in the study of history was a great motivator for the derivation of the genealogies set forth herein. In particular, one of my original goals was to prove the American Indian ancestry of our PRYOR heritage. Although I am not fully satisfied with the result of that effort, the final product is well worth the effort. But I would be remiss if I did not mention the tid-bits of information and the photographs supplied by uncle Frank from time to time as sources of appetite whetting. It always seemed as if just as it appeared no more information was available Frank would come up with something new to send me off in yet another direction. Frank also must be given credit for many of the stories about Pop and Mom PRYOR, and particularly for many of the jokes attributed to Pop. My aunt Jeanette PRYOR HICKMAN provided me with much information, particularly on the BARNHARTs, STAATS and the SAFREEDS, and she was also a frequent correspondent and companion researcher. Aunt Jeanette was and is the collector of much of the family information and probably could write her own book if she so chose.

There are so many others - let me not forget my loving and doting Mother, Virginia Beatrice PRYOR CUNNINGHAM CLARK. She thinks I can do no wrong and that the book is a work of art and history, but then she is like any other mother. She was a source for much of the early life and history of Pop and Mom PRYOR, because she was the eldest child and always available as a source of information. My only regret is that I did not try to pick her brain more often and in an earlier time when the history was much fresher in her memory. She was also the source for some of the stories and anecdotes about Mom PRYOR.

Others who have contributed include my first cousins Sharon DAVIS FISHER, Sandy HICKMAN WILES PETTIT, Chris HICKMAN LOWE, and my distant cousins Glen LINCICOME, Howard PRYOR, and his wife Hazel, Elizabeth PRYOR CURRY, Thelma MASTERS, her son Bob MASTERS, Faye SPIES, Lewis PRYOR, Bud WEEKLEY, Carrie LANCASTER, Laurie SCOTT, and Connie KOCZKODAN. Paul STAATS (unrelated) who lives in Camarillo, California contributed much background information on the history of the STAATS family. So many have provided pieces of data or information. Aunt June PRYOR JONES and her husband Dave, aunt Anne PRYOR HENDRICKS, and aunt Nina PRYOR DAVIS. I have received many words of encouragement from so many,



including cousins Mary Sue DAVIS HELMICK, Iva Jane McCLURE BREEDLOVE, and Annette PRYOR GELBRICH. Annette and her husband Frank also gave me guidance and help with German translations and the meaning of German words. But Annette must be given special credit for her work in the final printing and preparation of the book for publication. She labored hour upon hour to put the text in final form, and to establish the large index, which puts it all together. My heart-felt and loving gratitude is expressed to her. My brother, Robert Thomas CUNNINGHAM, and his wife Norma provided a place of refuge and sustenance and a base of operation for research in West Virginia and Ohio.

Finally, I cannot forget my immediate family for their encouragement and help, particularly daughter Evelyn Jane CUNNINGHAM HIGGINS, who has been a helpful researcher in Manassas, Virginia and Washington, D. C., and typist of some first drafts. Daughter-in-law Lynn LANGLEY CUNNINGHAM also typed some first drafts as did daughter-in-law Michelle BROCK CUNNINGHAM. But I must give extra special credit to my loving wife, Helen Larayne STINSON CUNNINGHAM. She, who has endured countless hours in libraries, and trips to multitudes of cities and towns. She who has tramped through woods and weeds to visit almost inaccessible cemeteries. She who has strained her eyes to read illegible grave stones and been a constant companion during thousands and thousands of miles of auto travel. Finally, she who labored hour upon hour to type the manuscript. Without her there would have been no book.

If I have forgotten anyone, please forgive me and chalk it up to early senility in one who has at last reached a long-sought goal. Please add your name to those unnamed unknowns who provided so much. The human mind is a marvelous gift of GOD. The mind is endowed with the faculty of memory, and it is quite delightful to pluck from this storehouse each morsel of happy remembrance. Sometimes the memory plays tricks on a person, however, and only portions of an incident or happening are clear while other portions are faded or forgotten. Much of the information detailed in this book about my grandparents is a result of things recalled from my memory. Therefore, if some things are remembered differently by one of you readers, or if details are not completely accurate, I beg you the reader to relive the incident according to your memory recall. Mentally adjust the historical image such that the good is beheld and the positive is accentuated. Finally, as one who has been subjected to many writing courses and interminable hours of instruction related to proper grammar and sentence structure, I beg the indulgence of the reader. This book is not intended to be a work of literary art. I have taken some license with grammatical structure, because of the intimacy I have known, and the history I have experienced with many members of the PRYOR family. Much of the material presented about Mom and Pop PRYOR and their descendants is written from my perspective and in the first person. This is particularly true for Chapters II and III. I hope this does not detract from the history presented or prove too stilted for the reader. Probably in every genealogy that has been written there are errors, and this one will be no exception. The work is intended to present the history of the PRYOR family as best I have been able to determine it. I hope that it is substantially correct. If any errors are found I would appreciate it if they are called to my attention, and I will try to correct them, if possible.

Some may ask the reason for recording family genealogies. The United

States of America is a fairly young nation from the standpoint of the time frame of recorded history. It sometimes seems as if for many years our nation was ashamed of it's ancestors. Outside of New England and some religious groups, few public records were kept in the very early days of colonization. In many of the old countries of Europe authentic data can be obtained from church books and/or city registers. The reader will note that in the history of the ROUSH family (see Chapter X, Part 3) some records were kept as far back as the sixteenth century. Indeed there probably are some such records back to the fourteenth century. Genealogy is the history of people, and people make history. We can learn lessons of inheritance, environment, psychology, and other facets of life from a study of family genealogy. Certainly anything that teaches us something must be worth while. It should be even more so if it is fascinating to the one doing the learning. Most people find the study of family history to be fascinating.

Finally, a word about the numbering system in Chapter XV for the genealogy of the generations of John PRIOR, Sr., who started it all. The system is described in Chapter XV, but basically it was derived to maintain a running total of the number of descendants listed. Each person in the line of each of the children of John is numbered; followed by a dash and a number representing the generation from John. For instance, John is numbered 101-1 as the first person and the first generation. His eldest child is numbered 101-2; the first person in the second generation. In the third and succeeding generations the numbers continue to grow. They follow a pattern of maintaining a sequence within the families of the 12 children of John and Margaret CARVIN PRIOR from generation to generation until no more descendants of that child were found in the generation being numbered (the reader is referred to the Index of descendants in Chapter XV). At first, this numbering system may seem burdensome to you the reader, but I assure you, I have spent considerable time researching many genealogies and reviewing many generation accounting schemes. Each of them has its shortcomings, as does the one used herein. All become quite tedious. The advantage of the one used is that it is possible to tell rather rapidly how many descendants of John PRIOR, Sr. have been identified. I have not attempted to number the generations of the allied family genealogies documented in the book.

This book has been a labor of love. Perhaps one of you will be motivated to carry the work further.

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September, 1989