DESTINATION LODI

A HISTORICAL JOURNEY

Lodi, the oldest settlement is full of historical homes and sites. I have chosen one home with significant history and it’s mine. I will continue to choose homes for a series of articles.

I researched my home and found Joseph and Laura Brown owned the land in 1874. It was transferred to two Burr family members, three other families until purchased by E.H Plank.

Our home was built in 1914 by Wooster born E.H. Plank and his wife Helen Glass Plank, a native Lodian. E.H. Plank was a promenade business man that owned and operated Lodi Mill. It’s stated in the History of the Western Reserve “To no single family are the infant flouring industries of northern Ohio more indebted then that represented by E.H Plank, proprietor of the Lodi Mills one of the best conducted plants in Medina County. “ The cost to build our home was $2000.00. The Planks had a maid that lived on the third floor. There is still a hole under the dining room table where the bell was to ring the servant. Our home still has all the original wood work and wood floors. The woodwork was always painted white on the second floor, we found after stripping the woodwork, they were all different kinds of woods, so we repainted. We were told during WW 1, materials were scarce. You used the “best” wood on the first floors for show, the maids quarters ended up with pine. They had both gas and electric. There was a tennis court in the back yard. A small decorative pool surrounded by stone steps with extensive gardens.

Burton and Leah Starbird were the second owners. Mr. Starbird was the Vice President of Peoples National Bank in Lodi. The Starbirds were known for their garden parties with Chinese lanterns lining the lawn. My mom said Mrs. Starbird would admit herself to Lodi Hospital each year for a week or so just to rest. Sounds good to me. It’s my understanding that once Mr. Starbird passed away, his wife fell on hard times. She would rent out rooms for extra income. When my parents came to look at the house to buy, mom said she remembers a lovely black grand piano in the corner. I have one originally chair that belonged to this family and a painting found in the attic by Mrs. Starbird.

The Heffelfinger family have lived in this house since 1944. My dad bought the house for $8000.00. When my parents first moved to Lodi, they rented an apartment above one of the stores down town. When mom moved in she wanted a modern house so wall paper was changed, upstairs crown molding removed, and the kitchen remodel. My parents also updated the heating system by removing registers on the first floor, we still have them on the second. I think they are pretty. Dad purchased the large old register in our basement from Lodi Hospital Maternity Ward during their remodeling. Yes, it was in the nursery. Works great! My father ran his insurance business out of the house for over 30 years.

Our home was like Grand Central with 5 children, finally 10 grandchildren and a business. But my parents also welcomed all who dared enter our home.

The house has gone backwards…..Larry and I have replaced the crown molding upstairs, we brought back the pedestal sinks. We ripped up the carpet my parents loved (mom always picked carpet the color of dirt) for the hard work floors. The floors show all the scratches and nicks from the families that lived in this home. We rehung the swinging door from the kitchen that a servant once pushed to serve in the formal dining room. I was always surprised the French doors survived without one broken glass through 100 years of children. I do know with four brother and a clothes chute big enough to fit a child in, I’m surprised I survived.

The third floor is now by office/toy museum, the maid now lives down stairs. We decorate with the antiques my mom hated, she liked oriental. We still have the cement pool with stone steps. Larry has enhanced the grounds, E.H. would be proud. Like my parents, we welcome all to our home.

The Lodi-Harrisville Historical is starting a program to place plagues at selected historical homes and sites. We thank Alloy Fabricators for making and donating the plagues as we need them.

The Annual Rhododendron Concert will be held on May 29th at 3pm, First Congregation Church of Lodi. Our program is a FRANK SINATRA TRIBUTE. The ladies of the church will offer a dinner with an appreciated donation after the concert. Please come and join our gift to the historical community of Lodi.

Museum opens every 4th Sunday, 2-4pm. Check out our new website lodiharrisvillehistory.org. Thanks to Brad Rice. Take a look at the Memorial Display at the Hower Building. We have a wonderful display of Civil War items thanks to Bill Kohl and Mark Grimm.