Destination Lodi

V.A Homan Building

On May 7th the Lodi Harrisville Historical Society has partnered with Lodi Library a Lodi Square walking tour. The tour will start at the Waite-Harris house at 2pm and last approximately one hour. It is free and is limited to 20 people. You need to sign up at the Lodi Library.

Victor Amos Homan was one of Lodi’s prominent citizens in the days when Lodi truly was a thriving village full of opportunity. He was known for his philanthropy and commitment to the community. Victor was born in Mansfield on March 5, 1868 to Henry Homan (1838-1906) and Susan Markley (1846-1927) who were married in Ashland County in 1867. He had one brother, Preston who was born in Chatham on March 17, 1872. Victor and Preston completed their education in the local schools at the 8th grade level as was common for most children at the time. Preston eventually married Tressa Shank and had two sons, Homer and Robert. Preston died July 25, 1922 spending his entire life farming in Chatham township. In the 1870 census, the Henry Homan family is living on their farm in Chatham Township along with an eleven-year-old boy by the name of John Rowan. The closest post office at that time was in Lodi. By the 1880 census, Preston had joined the family along with 4-year-old Westa Markley from California, and a 38-year-old farm hand from Switzerland, John Fotsch. John Rowan, now 21, was living down the road with the Brinker family as a farm laborer and went on to become a carpenter in Lodi as well as working on local railroad bridges. Westa later married Charles Allis, the grandfather of Mel Allis. Victor married Almerta (Myrta) Young (born Sep 2, 1869), daughter of George and Almeda Lance Young of Chatham on October 20th, 1888. A daughter Hazel was welcomed to the family on August 6, 1891. By 1900, Victor, Myrta and Hazel were continuing to work the farm, but were listed as living within the Village of Chatham.

The 1910 census shows 42-year-old Victor and his family living in Lodi on Elyria Street, and Victor was employed as the owner of a hay business. His mother Susan was also living with the family along with a servant, Bell DeWitt. Around 1911, Victor became a partner with long time businessman Henry Bennader, but it is unclear how long the partnership lasted. On December 23rd, 1911, 19-year-old Hazel married Waldo E. Starr from Penfield, Lorain County, Ohio. Waldo had been employed as an assistant manager of the Horr-Warner farm on the edge of town. The Starr family soon welcomed sons Victor Homan Starr in 1912, and Jack Starr in 1914.

In the 1916 Farmer’s Directory, Victor and Myrta had moved to Medina Street, and he was still in the equity business. In August of 1918 he bought the Taylor Inn from Oberlin College and owned it for 2-3 years. The Homans also had a house and farm on Lodi road where he was known for his dairy herd.

In 1920, Myrta and Victor lived on the lower end of Church Street along with his book keeper Ina Sims, aged 30. Son-in-law Waldo Starr and family were living next door, and both men were working together in the hay/equity business. The addition behind the opera house bearing the name Homan-Starr was built in 1923, likely for use as an office. Waldo and Hazel moved their family to Pasadena, California around 1925 where their son Wally was born later that year. Waldo was carrying on the family trade in his new locale with his own wholesale hay business. They moved on to the Los Angeles area in 1931. In 1930 Victor and Myrta were still living on Church street, but his occupation then was listed as general farming. Victor built the one-story brick building on the square that eventually housed Hall’s Barber Shop, Fetzer’s Variety and the Western Auto store in 1932.

In 1938, the Homan couple moved to the top Church Street when they bought the former Hower home on the corner of Church and High Streets. Victor died at home on October 16, 1941 of pneumonia. He had been ill for 5 years with cerebral atherosclerosis that gradually claimed his overall health. He had written his will in 1935, leaving $5,000 to his secretary Ina, and designating his wife as executrix of his estate. He was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery prominently on the corner of section five. His son-inlaw Waldo died in Los Angeles in 1933, grandsons Jack and Vic in 1938 and 1968 respectively. Myrta Homan passed away in 1963 in Lodi at the age of 94, while Hazel passed away in 1978 and Wally in 1982, both in Los Angeles.

Thank you Wendy Warner for your research.