DESTINATION LODI

A HISTORICAL JOURNEY

RETURNING TO THE WAITE-HARRIS HOUSE

As most know, the Lodi-Harrisville Historical Society had purchased the Waite-Harris House. It has been quite a journey. I want to stress how important this house and the Waite-Harris families were to Lodi. After much family research, I thought I would share some of the information and correct my last article in the Waite-Harris house.

Dr. James E. Waite came to Lodi in 1881 from the Summit Co. area. His grandfather, Walter Waite was one of the early settlers of the Western Reserve from Massachusetts. Dr. Waite worked on this father’s farm, taught school for many years to raise money for further education. Immediately upon graduation from Medical School in Cleveland, he came to Lodi succeeding Dr. J. W. Cowan.

During his life in Lodi, Dr. “Doc” Waite was Director and President of the Lodi State Bank, director of the Farmers Insurance Company, President of the board of directors of the Lodi Hospital and it has stated he was instrumental in building up this institution. Dr. Waite was a member of the First Congregational Church, active in the Y.M.C.A., a Mason where he served as Master and Lodi Rotary. There is also a long list of medical associations.

On October 25, 1883, Dr.Waite marries Rachel Harris daughter of Nelson Harris and great granddaughter of our founding father Judge Joseph Harris. They had two children, Mary who married G. Thompson and passed away in 1918: and a son Harris who married Katherine Fogg. Dr. and Mrs. Waite had only two grandchildren, Mary Faye and Paul Thompson. All buried at Woodlawn in Lodi.

Dr. Waite passed away at home after a surgery in 1928. Rachel remained in the home until her death in 1940. It was at that time son Harris moved from Akron, living in the home until his death.

During my research, I found many passport documents of the destinations Harris and his wife traveled for his job with Seiberling Goodyear Rubber. They were obvious good friends with the Seiberling family. I found the Akron residence of Harris Waite on North Portage Path near Stan Hywet. It was once a lovely 4000 square foot brick home, now a duplex. I heard many stories of the lovely items, collected during his travels decorated their Lodi home. I have some Italian porcelain pieces my dad bought at their auction in the 1970s. These items will one day be returned to their home. I am hoping Waite-Harris items sold at this auction will return home.

Not surprising, I found majority of Lodi citizens related in the late 1800s. . . I was delighted to find Lt. Col Dewitt whose uniform we have on display, was the Great-uncle of Rachel Harris Waite. I also found connections between the Loomis and Ritchie families.

The Waite-Harris house built in 1890 did not have a front or back porch. It is my understanding you entered the house from the side porch into the pantry/kitchen. It was not until 1920 they added to the back of the house that included a new kitchen, Maid’s quarters and front porch. The built- in cabinet in the dining room covers where the back door once stood. In my previous article, I had these facts turned around. The original secondary front door had stain glass from the First Congregational church inserted by a previous family who did most of the restoration to the house.

Please come and visit Lodi’s home. We will have set hours in the near future. I will show the house if available. Call me at 330-635-7294.