The Burr House

The brick house of the Federal Period was built by George Burr Sr. the second settler in Harrisville Twp. The date the Burr house was built was undocumented. The brick home is noted for its unusual window arcades which feature blind arches. Brick houses of that architecture are rare for northern Ohio and suggests a date in the early 1830’s. There are 8 rooms in the brick portion, a small wood 4-room addition was added much later, probably around 1874. The house had a shallow roof but it was removed in the 1880’s when the present tall attic roof was added.

The bricks used in building the house were fired on the farm just a short distance from the building site. All the brick walls are 14 inches thick being made by putting two bricks side by side.

The house only contains one fireplace but each of the other rooms in the brick portion of the house has its own chimney flange. There rooms were probably heated years ago by means of potbellied stoves.

One of the really nice features of the house is a black walnut staircase in the living room. It adds a lot of charm and beauty to the house.

Two generations of Burr’s lived in the house. The Burrs were active in the anti-slavery movement and their home became a famous station on the Underground Railroad. As many as 10-15 fugitive slaves at a time, escaping from bondage in the south, were offered food and shelter before being transported to places of safety farther North.

George Burr and both of his wives are buried in the cemetery on Wooster Street here in Lodi. The Burrs sold their house to a railroad man.

Tom’s father Lester Packard bought the farm from Sam Vanasdale in 1946. Sam farmed the land and used the front two rooms of the house as a harness shop. It required a lot of work to get the grease and oil off the floors in those rooms.

Tom and Lenore Packard bought the farm from Tom’s father Lester in 1975. They raised four children on the farm and their oldest son Chris farmed with them until his sudden death in 2014. Now Jase, one of the grandchildren is working on the farm with Tom.

In May 1976 the George Burr House was entered in the National Register of Historical Places by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior.

In March 2001 the George Burr House was designated as an official Ohio Underground Railroad Historic Site by the Friends of Freedom Society.

I want to thank the Packard Family for sharing the extraordinary history of their home. The Lodi-Harrisville Historical Society has chosen their home to place a plaque of distinction. We will be celebrating 20 historical sites for this honor.

The Lodi-Harrisville Historical Society received a call from a Burr Family member. Mr. and Mrs. Jim Nettleton of Smithville would like to donate a davenport that once belonged to the Wooster Street house. They also donated a book signed by George Burr and a plate that feature the Tim Burr home on Bank Street. Now we have to find a home to showcase such a find.

Remember the historical museum is opened the 4th Sunday of each month up to October from 2-4 except in August. Due to the Annual Antique Fest the 4th Saturday in August, the museum will be opened at the same time to celebrate our history.