DESTINATION LODI

A HISTORICAL JOURNEY

THE COL. DEWITT HOUSE

CIRCA 1886

I was going through old “The Way We Were” by our historical founder Joe Warner. It featured pictures and a small article about Col. Sewall DeWitt Jr. The article stated this Lodi hero’s last known address was 304 Mill Street; therefore, owner Terry Tomes will receive the last house plaque. Alloy has supplied 36 historical house/building plaques. Thank you Alloy for your support and donation to the Lodi-Harrisville Historical Society to enhance the history of Lodi. Alloy Fabricators are also making a cemetery sign for the Old Lodi Cemetery.

Sewall Wainwright “Witt” DeWitt Sr. was born on June 21, 1807 in Westminster, Windham County, Vermont. His parents were Wainwright Witt DeWitt (1777-1840) and Silence Ranney (1777-1858). His family changed the family’s last name to DeWitt after Sewall was born so he was originally a Witt.

The Wainwright name was from the father Wainwright’s maternal line, as did the name Sewall.

Sewall Sr. married Clarissa Burr, daughter of Russell and Elizabeth Birge Burr on May 24, 1832 in Lodi, Ohio. They had two children Elizabeth Greville DeWitt (1837-1931) and Sewall Jr. (1840-1926). Clarissa would marry again after the death of Sewall Sr. She would have three more children with William Moore.

Sewall Dewitt Jr. (1840-1926) was born after the death of his father in 1840. Joseph Harris raised him and like many young boys were farmed out as an apprentice to an area businessmen.

Col. Sewall DeWitt Jr. was a Union officer. S.W DeWitt enlisted in August 1861 and became a mayor in Company K, 8th O.V.I., later becoming a Lieutenant Colonel and commanding a Negro battalion in the battles of Shilo, Gettysburg, and Appomattox.

S.W. was discharged on December 1865, the highest-ranking officer from Harrisville Twp. during the Civil War.

He married Flora Richey on January 10, 1866 in Meadville, PA., returned to farming north of Lodi. On retirement, he lived on Rt. 83 on five acres and later 304 Mill Street. The couple had six children Howard, Harris, Lewis, Jesse, Belle, and Zada.

We are lucky to have the Civil War uniform of Col. Sewall DeWitt Jr. According to Terry, he found the uniform in the attic. The Lodi Log Cabin have been gracious enough to supply a case and keep this precious item until the Lodi-Harrisville Historical Society found a home. We found a home and it will have a place of honor in our museum.

I had a chat with Terry about his house. When he bought the house, it was a duplex. He shared the duplex with Jen Myers a relative to Col. Dewitt. Ms. Myers lived in the house all her life. The home once housed the village library and a funeral pallor. The tax map stated 1900, but mwe are sure it was much earlier. During remodeling, Terry found papers in the walls dating 1886. Terry said by the different foundations of various stone and block you could tell the time line.

In addition, the First Congregational Church of Lodi are celebrating 200 years and have many events planned. They have set up a wonderful display in the Hower windows. The church organizers have placed a schedule of events the Hower door.

The Lodi-Harrisville Historical Society will be taking ownership of our new home on August 1st. We are proud owners of the Waite-Harris House at Harris Street. We need volunteers and committee members for cataloging items, display organizations and event planning. Call me 330-635-7294. We have launched a fundraising campaign, donations to LHHS Box Lodi, Ohio 44254.