

373 PARK

Gothic Revival
Built 1854



Love of art and design has run through the veins of many 373 Park Street residents: from the first family to live in it to current owners John and Trish LaFleur. Henry Yarwood, the first owner, launched its connection to art through his son Louis. Former *New Yorker* Henry moved here in 1853 upon urging from his brother Reuben. Widower Henry's four children moved with him. He bought the land and built the house in 1854. Henry died in 1860, though Louis was listed as owner by 1859.

Louis, born in 1827, took art lessons while in school. He supported himself, wife Caroline and their family first as a clerk at Dexter Woolen Mills, then by opening a drugstore. He then founded an art studio where he sold his work. The June 23, 1879, *Elgin Daily Leader* mentioned his paintings and sketches were popular among Elginites, and that "an increasing appreciation of his artistic power is to be seen in the increasing demand for his later and more elaborate works."

While making a living as a painter, Louis became Elgin's first librarian by lending books he kept in his studio. In 1873, a city library opened in a defunct YMCA reading room. By 1874, the library opened in the former woolen mill with about 2,000 volumes and Louis as its librarian. He served as city treasurer, an alderman and Elgin Academy trustee, and died in 1907. The couple's children Marcus and Kate were music teachers: he of piano, she of voice.

The house became connected to the Elgin watch industry when the Trudes bought it in 1920. Ernest Trude worked at the Illinois Watch Case Co., and E. DeVene, Esther and Rose at the Elgin National Watch Co.

This connection continued with the Sanderses, who owned 373 Park from 1925 to 1954. Evelyn Sanders worked at the watch company, and Everett at the watch case company.

The LaFleurs have adapted the home to modern living in their own way. The house was in

