

Vernacular houses such as Perry and Julie Clifton's at 609 N. 14th are liberally sprinkled throughout Quincy's older neighborhoods.

Built by contractors without architectural plans, vernacular houses were constructed for people from all walks of life, but mostly for middle or working class families.

Like Quincy's more pedigreed houses, vernacular houses are important because they tell the story of past families of modest means. These homes range from extremely simple to very ornate, depending on the wealth and taste of the owner.

Johann and Johanna Ripper built their modestly embellished, brick, story and a half, T-Plan house for around \$1,200 in 1904. They had lived a few blocks up the street in a smaller T-Plan house. They might have built a second T-Plan house for the same reason that the Cliftons bought the Ripper house — it's a great family home.

When the Cliftons looked at the house, Julie said there were clothes on the line and sun-tea was brewing on the back porch which gave the house just the homey feeling she wanted.

"We looked at every house on the market. The new ones had rooms that were too small, they just lacked every-



Above: The Clifton family's kitchen has plenty of room for cooking, doing homework and other family projects. Lower left: The beautiful cypress raised-panel doors and cypress trim make the large room feel warm and inviting.

thing," Julie said. "Perry really didn't want an older house, but now he likes it; he just won't admit it."

T-Plan houses are known for their two front doors, one to the parlor and one to the dining room. They are also known for their large dining rooms, which were the "family room" of the time. Other rooms radiate from the dining room, which is why the T-Plan dining rooms are also "famous" for their multiple doorways which can become a decorating challenge.

The Clifton's dining room has seven doorways. Four of them are lined up on the west wall. Far from being a challenge in the Clifton house, the five-panel doors give the room a warm and homey character.

One doorway off the dining room is to the beadboard-walled boxed stairs that leads to the three ample bedrooms. One door leads to the basement, one to the side porch and one to the current powder room that was the Ripper's original kitchen which only held a

stove and a few hanging cabinets.

The Clifton family use the original parlor for their living room and the original bedroom is their family room. Their very large but friendly kitchen was added in the 1920s and Julie said it is perfectly located right off the family room.

The house has only had few owners, so the profiled, cypress trim throughout the house is in perfect condition. Julie keeps it in top shape with Murphy's Oil and Old English.

The Cliftons dove into a frenzy of home improvement projects when they moved in four years ago.

The Cliftons had the upstairs bathroom redone, a new furnace installed and the electrical wiring redone.

In all their work, the Cliftons insist on maintaining the integrity of the house.

"I like to ponder the past years and imagine what it would have looked like in the past," Julie said. "I always see it being filled with people."

AT A GLANCE

❑ **Original Owners:** Johann Leonhard and Johanna Ripper. Ripper immigrated to the United States from Germany in the 1850s. He was a successful farmer in Iowa before selling his land and moving to Quincy to marry. Ripper family members lived in the house until 1974.

❑ **Date of Construction:** Circa 1904

❑ **Architectural Features:** Re-entrant porch with turned posts and squared balusters, stained-glass transom above large single-pane front window, Greek Revival returns on all gables, paired windows, relieving arches above windows.