

grounded in Quincy history

By Barb Schleppenbach

Special to The Herald-Whig

It was the early 1890s, and in the shadow of St. Francis Solanus Church new homes were appearing on the prairie like wildflowers after rain.

At least that is what the Rev. Lewis and Margaret Payne surmise from their investigation of the history of their home at 1425 College.

"With the help of the Gardner Museum and the Quincy Public Library, I found that the Sanborn maps show no house on this block in 1888," Lewis Payne says. "This house first appears in the 1893 edition, which was compiled in 1892."

Further detective work in the City Directory indicated ownership by George and Sophie Frerick.

"George was listed as a contractor in 1885," Lewis Payne says. "We suspect that he built a lot of the houses around the neighborhood, especially the brick ones."

The Paynes' home features molded brick and a side hall plan with a rear wing and side porch — a variation on a favorite style from that period. The porch leads to two doors — one opening into the dining room and the other to the front parlor.

"I said I'd never buy another house with a door right into the dining room," Margaret Payne says. "But here we are."

She admits that she was attracted to the house at first sight when the couple



H-W Photos/Justin Sagarsee

Margaret and Lewis Payne in the photo above relax with their dog, Duke, in their home at 1425 College, pictured at top. The dining room, right, contains many of the couple's favorite plants. The home was likely built around 1893 and first owned by George and Sophie Frerick.

decided to retire to Quincy in 1996. The sellers had restored it as a family home following a number of years of use as a two-unit dwelling, and "they had done some nice redecorating," Margaret Payne says. "I just liked it. I always wanted a big old house."

The pair agreed that the exterior — which Margaret termed "stark" — would go to the top of their project list. Their first year found her "digging in the ground the whole summer," and replacement storm windows and a new door also contributed to a fresh look.

Before this renovation, the full-length windows in the parlor and the big bays in the dining room could not be opened; many in the home had, in fact, been painted shut.

Now the bay windows bring cooling breezes inside during the summer and the bay alcove provides a winter home for many of the Paynes favorite plants.

Airplane plants, African violets, begonias, Christmas cactus and ferns lend a soothing touch of nature, and

the Paynes have gladly dispensed with the vivid floral wallpaper that formerly covered the parlor walls.

In the late 1990s, an honorable mention in the annual Dogwood Contest reflected Margaret's success in revitalizing the home's landscaping.

Rich oak woodwork demonstrates the care taken by previous owners.

"It has never been painted," Lewis says. "We have sanded the windowsills and have found no trace of paint residue."

Elegant oak pocket doors remain fully operational between the parlor and the dining room.

"The walls are plaster on brick," Lewis Payne observes. "Nailing into that can certainly be exciting."

That obstacle has slowed progress on the installation of floor-to-ceiling bookcases to hold the couple's hundreds of books and vintage vinyl recordings that remain in storage.



Another project still on the list is remodeling the large kitchen, which might involve removing an island sink and countertop and making better use of the kitchen porch.

The cheery room is decorated with antique kitchen and farm utensils. The entire home showcases furniture from departed friends and family, including a 100-year-old game table made by Lewis' great-uncle and a child-sized therapy chair used by his mother to strengthen her leg after surviving polio.

The Paynes enjoy owning a home with such deep roots in Quincy's history, and their efforts have given it a thriving outlook for the future.