

## Ripley House

8543 OLD CHANNEL TRAIL

In April of 1881, Lafayette G Ripley purchased Lots 4,5,6 and 7 of Block 34 in the village of Montague. Construction of the house started in 1883. News of the house's construction progress was followed closely in the Whithall Forum Newspaper. E.M. Ruggles and Co of Whitehall supplied the bricks. J.S. McCoughey was the contractor. In 1883, Montague was building a new City Hall for \$5,000 and the Ripley House was to cost \$6,000. The Muskegon Daily Chronicle on November 24, 1883 states "L G Ripley's fine new residence is being finished up! It will be the finest house on White Lake. It is of white brick, trimmed with red brick." Thw Whitehall Forum reports on April 17, 1884 "L G Ripley has moved into his new residence." This begins the list of people who called the Ripley House home.

In 1941, the house became the Spliedt Funeral home. In August 1946 Robinwood Sculpture Studios owned by W E Atchinson occupied the property. About this time the Walter Snyder family also moves into the house. Lynne Adams Snyder starts the Lynne Snyder Dance Studio. The major main floor rooms became the dance studios with ballet bars, mirror walls, an Evertt Gee wall mural and the place everyone took ballet and ballroom dance classes. During the mid 1960s Lynne's brother Robert Adams, a NY producer used space in the house while he produced Summer Stock shows at Whitehall's Playhouse. During the Snyder ownership (mid 1940s-mid 1970s), a large old neglected 2 story barn located at the rear of the property along Meade Street was torn down and the wood recycled to make a new garage closer to the house. Walter with his trained eye had gathered some interesting architectural artifacts from the Linderman Gothic Revival house located on Whitehall's Mears Ave where the PNC Bank and parking lot are now located. These architectural fragments were placed on the back of the new garage facade. Walter Snyder dies in 1970 and Lynne in 1973, thus ending a very colorful and creative period for the house.

The Ripley House story continues in the news with the White Laker Observer article in 1983 telling of the property being sold to Bill and Debra Hams. The new use of the house was for a foster care home for 12 residences. The Ham's also had the house listed as a Michigan Historic Site. Later the Hams and their son used the house as a child day care center. Offered for sale in 2013, the property was purchased by Annie Rupert and her mother Cheryl Smith in 2017. They with the help of many others have upgraded the house and property. We'll hear from them at our July 19th meeting.

The LAFAYETTE G RIPLEYS-

Lafayette G Ripley (1844-1919) was born in Barre, Vermont on Jan 16.1844.

### Ripley House

His parents moved to Vassar, Mi. After his parents both died he lived in Barre with an Uncle Ephriam French. He was in the Civil War, wounded and moved to Saginaw where he worked in a drug store. He entered the University of Michigan where he graduated from the Pharmacy Dept. He then enlisted in the Regular Army and was assigned to duty in Cheyene and Fort Bridger, Wyoming. It was here he met Mary E Brackney (1844-1915) and they were married in Towanda, Kansas. The Ripleys came to Montague in 1874. He built the Ripley Block (now Lipka's) in 1878. The Ripleys had 8 children and moved into their Big Brick house in 1884. Mr Ripley's store was a great success and the Ripleys were leaders in the Montague Community. Of the Ripley's 8 children, 3 left their influences on the local White Lake Community.

### MONTAGUE W RIPLEY (1878-1943)

Graduated from Albion College in 1899. He served as Montague's Postmaster from 1904-1916. He wrote many historical articles on the White Lake area. He served 2 yrs as a State Representative, was in the Drug Store business in Montague and Whitehall, (he sold his Whitehall store to Robert Dowker in 1936), married Katherine Webster, had 5 children and lived his later yrs in Lansing.

### HOWARD B RIPLEY( (1885-1955)

Pharmacy at University of Michigan. Married Dorothy Welling in Auburn, NY, worked at the family drug store from 1907-1952. He sold the drug store to Glen Lipka in 1952. Howard was very involved in the Masonic Lodge, Chamber of Commerce. The Ripleys lived in the Ripley block on Dowling Street. They built their retirement house up on the hill at 8612 Old Channel Trail.

### HELEN RIPLEY ANDERSON (1887-1971)

Graduated from Michigan State Normal College in Ypsilanti "school of music" in 1910. She taught music in the Montague School from 1910-1915. She married banker Adolph Anderson in 1914. They had 3 children. Besides her many community organizations she was a choir member at the Montague Methodist Church. The Andersons lived at 8636 Old Channel Trail (the old Roesler home).

Roger Scharmer  
Historian  
White Lake Area Historical Society

Historical Researcher  
Kurt Weber

July 2018