



Another



David Baker's House

This solid, old house has associations—historical, mortuary (so to speak) and political. It is one of the first houses in this region that was built during the Revolutionary War. Nathaniel Baker built it and gave it to his son, David, with five acres of land, in 1780.

Eli Marsh, son of Charles Marsh, bought the property from the Baker estate and established the only undertaking establishment in the township in 1835. When he died in 1861, Joseph R. Connolly ("Uncle Joe") took over the business. He lived for many years on Elmer St., directly back of the (present) public library. After Marsh, came John Leveridge, a prosperous land owner and business man, whose brother, Charles A., then owned and lived in the Henry Baker homestead, at Broad and Chestnut Sts., where the Methodists worshipped on clear summer Sunday mornings.

The ubiquitous Amos Clark Jr. was the next owner. He never lived in Westfield, but he made things lively hereabouts for many years. His home was in Elizabeth. He was a wealthy real estate man and a hustler. After serving on the City Council and the State Senate, he aspired to a seat in the Congress. To be elected, he had to have the farmer vote, so he bought land in this farming community and soon there was mud on his boots and eloquence in his soul.

Eloquence, however, was not his only means of vote-getting. It is said that he

traveled around in a buckboard drawn by a pair of high-stepping white horses, visiting farms and discussing the problem of government in such clear and agreeable language that his constituents were glad to vote for him. He was elected.

Congressman Clark had purchased the Baker house figuring on a quick turn-over, but lent an attentive ear to the wifely suggestion that it would be a good place for their son, Samuel Arthur, "to settle down and get married in". The young man promptly obliged by taking over and falling in love with the winsome Emily, daughter of neighbor Silas Pierson and they were married (in 1875). Samuel Arthur's idea of settling down, however, did not conform to the parental pattern, so his father determined to make a real farmer of him. He bought and gave to him the farmstead at Mountain Ave. and Bucks Lane in which the Rev. James Ladd, a retired Baptist minister, had lived. "Now, Arthur," said he, "don't forget to rotate your crops!" And Arthur did for many years.

Failing of reelection, ex-Congressman Clark spruced the Baker house up a bit and sold it. The Charles Fredericks and Rev. O. O. Jarvis, Episcopal rector, lived here at different times, and it was the home of Architect Charles Darsh for a generation. The present owners are Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Bubb, who moved here from Washington, D. C., in 1935.