

Tea Talk

by Joyce A. Whitaker, owner of the Painted Lady Tea Room

Since we opened the Painted Lady several years ago many have asked, “What is the Painted Lady?” We have answered some very unique questions and many of them are quite humorous. Gentlemen have called curious about what kind of ladies we have, or are we a bar. Some asked if we do nails. Others think we sell paint or do faux painting. Most common is “Who is the Painted Lady?”

Many don't know that a “painted lady” is simply a Victorian house that has been painted out, a term used during the Victorian era at the turn of the century. Because of the uniqueness of the volutes and bargeboards that decorate the top of this lovely home, we felt the name “The Painted Lady” was perfect for the business. In the past it was known as the house with the roosters (medal work seen at the very top of the roof). Somehow, this wasn't as glamorous as the Painted Lady that we settled on.

We purchased this wonderful Victorian farmhouse six years ago just as it was celebrating its 100th birthday. It took us nearly a year to renovate and over time we became endeared to the property. It has had a place of honor in the community and has been on the Ohio Registry of Historic Places since 1961. This tall, three-story house is one of only three homes in Marysville that is built of ceramic block that was manufactured locally.

The original owner was Walter M. Beecher, a professional sheep farmer who was quite well known for buying and selling wool. He built this house in 1899 and it was part of a large farm that had some of the richest farmland in the county. This grand old lady has been a family home, a duplex rental, a floral shop, a dentist office and now a tea room and gift shop. She has never been quite as well dressed as she is today and she is open for thousands a year to enjoy. Her service to her owners has been varied and she has been neglected at times throughout her duration, but now she is gifted with something new to enhance her looks every year. In 2004 she received a new roof and fresh paint on the trim and deck.

As you pass by The Painted Lady take notice of one of the areas oldest landmarks that is still as grand today as it was when it was built 106 years ago.

Joyce will answer your questions through this column. Email: jwhitaker@A-TEA-ROOM.com or stop by The Painted Lady at 327 E. Fifth Street in Marysville.