

The Prasil Home

15 E Church Street

Article written by Ryan Barnes, CHS Junior
Artwork by Ameraeh Barbee, Waterford Mott Junior

Home Sponsor: Amanda's Wallpaper Installation

Located in the heart of downtown Clarkston, 15 East Church St embodies the heart and soul of the community. Clarkston has evolved over the past 200 years, and 15 East Church Street has evolved along with it. Local tailor John Herwig built this house around 1850, along with the house next door. After Herwig died in 1860, his wife Margaret kept the house until after the turn of the century.

The parents of the current homeowner, Drew Prasil, bought the house in December 2021. With its bright blue face and windows outlined in white paint resembling the sky on a bright, cloudless day, the house draws the attention of passersby in downtown Clarkston. In 1910, former owners added the stone porch, which others enclosed a century later.

Before the Prasils bought the house, previous owners remodeled a large portion of the interior, including redoing both bathrooms and remodeling the downstairs kitchen. Despite all the renovations, Drew says many of the home's original elements are still visible, including the wooden beams on the basement ceiling. He explains how some of the wood floors are still the same as they were 150 years ago and that the "walls of the basement are all original stone." When asked if the house had any unique architectural features, Drew highlights the oddly steep staircase and the nourishing creaking sound made when walking over the wooden beams in the basement. Also, when asked how the home reflects the surrounding community, Drew explains how the exterior embodies Clarkston's history. He says that window repairs are done carefully to retain the historical appearance of the house. This illustrates how the house is a mirror image and symbol of the historic village of Clarkston. Like Clarkston, the house has many unique historical elements that have stood the test of time.

The location was one of the Prasils' primary motivators for buying the home. Drew points out that the two-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bathroom house is just "45 steps" from Honcho. When asked about his favorite memory of living in the house, he cites gathering with friends and family just outside his home to watch the annual 4th of July parade. This speaks to the unique nature of the home's location and place among a beautiful downtown.

One of the most captivating stories of the home is the notion that it may be haunted. The story goes that Herwig's young son Willie died tragically on February 12, 1859, and the grief from this tragedy may be why John took his own life in June the following year. Drew recounts that the grandchildren of previous homeowners allegedly saw a ghost named Willy with bandages wrapped around his head. This eerie story contrasts with the otherwise lighthearted feel the home provides. Drew says he hasn't had any ghost sightings in the house, but footprints he believes to be Willy's remain in the concrete on the front porch.

For Drew, being on the home tour is personally meaningful. He worked at SCAMP every summer through high school, starting in 8th grade. "It is an awesome program," he says, and it's "great what they do for all the kids." He hopes tour guests admire "the historical aspect of the home" plus "a touch of my style." While many things have changed in the home, the original wood floors and stonework highlight the home's continuity of history, he says, making 15 East Church Street a unique home, and its history and beauty should be remembered for decades to come.

