

The Howell-Knapp Home

62 North Main Street

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The Howell-Knapp home is rich in history, from its original wood floorings to the historical relics passed from owner to owner. The house was originally built in 1855 for Milton H. Clark, son of Clarkston founder Jeremiah Clark III, and his wife, Hannah. The home was fashioned in Greek Revival style which was popular at the time, with its front pillars, low-pitched roof, and covered front porch. At some point in its history, the home was converted into a two-family house.

The Clark family enjoyed their time at 62 North Main Street while Milton Clark founded and worked in one of the first businesses in Clarkston, a merchandise and hardware store titled Clark and Stearns. "It's a part of the fabric of Clarkston," Melissa Howell explains. The home has been passed through five "caretakers," as Howell puts it - each adding a unique twist on the home while preserving its historical integrity. After the home was inherited by Josephine Clark following the death of her father, Milton, it then passed to the Squier family in the late 1930s. "You see the 1930s coming through in the beautiful mouldings," says Howell-Knapp. Along with a large addition, which created a big living room, kitchen, dining room, and enlarged the master bedroom, the Squiers added ornate crown mouldings to many rooms in the home, surrounding the tops of the walls and outlining the fireplace. These additons turned

the quaint home into a grand townhouse - the perfect place for entertaining others. The townhouse was then bought by Howell's grandparents, Helen and Richard Spohn, in 1945. It was at 62 North Main Street where Howell's mother and uncle grew up and where Howell herself spent many weekends visiting her grandparents with her family. It was then purchased by the Spohns' close friends, Jeanette and Jim Hitchcock, in 1970. The Hitchcocks made necessary updates to the home while preserving its integrity. "Really, I've been in this house since I was a baby," reflects Howell on her time spent there with her grandparents and then close friends. When the Hitchcocks prepared to sell their home, Howell knew that it was time for 62 North Main Street to return to her family. This was a home she had spent large portions of her childhood in, with special memories found in each room. "It's been in my life forever," she explains.

"We're passing through" is the sentiment that Howell shared as she described her experience with her home. Howell and her husband, Kevin Knapp, have a strong belief in preserving as much history in their home as they can, saying, "We wanted to be very careful with any updates that we did, making sure that they were fitting for a home of this historical significance." Since moving into their home in 2017, Howell and Knapp have added a patio, master bathroom and more space to the master suite, as well as created a wall of windows where a sun-porch formerly stood, adding beautiful natural light into the downstairs of the home, as well as an excellent view of Parke Lake. They are proud of the history of their home, and display artifacts that have been passed down through each caretaker. Melissa Howell expresses "We've preserved as much as we can to tell the story of the house." These artifacts include the gold-framed original blueprints of the renovations done in the 1930s, which hang around their home. Additionally, a photo collage wall in the breakfast nook contains an original photograph of the Clark family outside of 62 North Main Street. This photograph hangs among pictures of Howell's family, connecting the rich history of the home with personal family history. Another artifact displayed is an early 1800's shoe, found in the wall by the Squier family during their renovations to the home. This shoe - among many artifacts left by previous homeowners - exemplifies the history of the home, connecting the generations of caretakers who have passed through. When asked what her favorite room in her home is, Howell answered with "I would pick the butler's pantry." This room of the home contains large, glass-paned cabinets, showing off an impressive display of her grandmothers' china, gifts from family, and items collected from her and her husband's time living in Switzerland and Singapore. "It's a really pretty and light space to show off family heirlooms," expresses Howell-Knapp. The Howell-Knapps enjoy hosting family and friends to barbecue and swimming in Parke Lake in the summer, as well as watching the annual 4th-of-July Parade. Howell proudly expressed that she had been to almost every Clarkston 4th-of-July Parade since she was a small child.

The Howell-Knapp home is not only rich in history, but rich in culture as well. Howell and her husband lived both in Switzerland and Singapore, and have traveled to numerous countries around the world, including China, India, Indonesia, and Prague, to name a few. Each room in their home contains many pieces picked up from their travels, including two ornately-painted, handcrafted antique wardrobes from France, as well as an authentic ancestry portrait that Howell found in Shanghai, China. Additionally, the home showcases many other antiques, including vintage light fixtures from the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. These items give the home a warm, eclectic feel, and leave hundreds of stories to tell in each room. The depth of the history and culture displayed in the home leaves visitors with a feeling of connectedness across generations and continents.

This is the Howell-Knapp family's third time participating in the SCAMP home tour, but their first with this home. SCAMP holds a special place in the hearts of the Howell-Knapps, as their son Corbin attended the camp from elementary school through his first year of high school. "This was a no-brainer," says Howell when asked about why their family chose to participate in the tour. "I've always wanted to share this house," she expresses. Howell hopes that visitors will take with them an appreciation for the rich stories embedded throughout our community and world after touring her home. She sums up her feelings about her home with a simple yet powerful sentence: "It's a house where memories are created."

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