

## House History

173 Woodstock Street North, Tavistock

Plan 307 - Lot 53 ... West of Woodstock Street, North of Hope Street  
continued from South Easthope Township Concession 5, Lot 21



*“My grandfather, Adam Schaefer, built this house before his death in 1899. The whole house was constructed of pine and birch from the Schaefer mill in Callander. My uncle said he could show me the stump of the tree that became the stairway stringer.”*

*... excerpt from an unpublished interview with Erma Loth by the Tavistock Gazette in 1984*

### **Adam Schaefer (1845 - 1899)**

Our interest in Adam Schaefer begins in 1869 when he formed a business partnership with his brother-in-law, John Kalbfleisch. Known as Kalbfleisch & Schaefer, the pair started as cabinet-makers. Their company quickly expanded to include a saw mill, a planing mill and a furniture factory with a large showroom then located at what is now 65 Woodstock Street North. In time they took on contracting jobs and built homes. Perhaps their best-known contract was signed in 1882 with Trinity Lutheran Church in Sebastopol to complete all the carpentry work for the new church.

All things come to an end and the business partnership was dissolved in 1892. Adam set his sights to the north and purchased a milling business at Callander, near North Bay. He returned to Tavistock in 1899 and purchased the H.B. Wilker planing mill and furniture factory then located at what is now 82 Hope Street West.

Adam met a tragic end that same year. He was at work when a portion of the plank he was sawing was thrown back with great force, striking him in the abdomen. Despite the best efforts of two doctors, he died the following morning.

Adam Schaefer left behind a large family of 6 sons and 6 daughters seen in happier times in this photo taken about 1892.



*The Adam Schaefer Family  
left to right  
back row - Bill, Jacob, Fred, Ezra and George  
middle row - Lydia, Adam Schaefer with granddaughter Eva on his knee,  
Mary (Kalbfleisch) Schaefer with Ada on her knee and Louisa  
front row - Amanda, Minnie and Charlie  
missing - Edith*

The Adam Schaefer family, with two exceptions, all moved to Spokane, Washington USA in the years following Adam's death. One of the exceptions was daughter Lydia who married Louis Loth. Two generations of the Loth family lived at 173 Woodstock Street North for 90 plus years. We'll be reading about the Loths later in this document.

### **The Early Days Of The House At 173 Woodstock Street North**

A house history draws on many sources of information.

Using Erma Loth's interview and Tavistock Gazette reports we know that the house was built in 1899.

From Registry Office records we know that the plot of land where the house sits was part of Concession 5, Lot 21, South Easthope Township in Perth County. In 1899 that plot was owned by Andrew W. Kaufmann, a successful farmer and landowner who lived in Sebastopol. This house would have been an investment and rental property along with other properties that Andrew owned in Tavistock.

In 1902 the property (one acre of land plus house) was purchased by John and August Schaefer, Executors for Adam Schaefer. The purchase price was \$300. It remained a rental property.

Those same Executors sold the north half of the property in 1912. The north half (one-half acre with no buildings) sold for \$200. The house that is now #173 stands on the south half of what is now Lot 53.



*Woodstock Street North circa early 1900s  
The house at 173 is the second house from the right in the photo above  
and stands alone in the photo below.  
Note the fences running along the fronts of all the properties on the street.*

A search through Assessment Records turned up a surprising fact. In 1905 the assessed value of the property doubled from \$1200 to \$2400. Neighbours did not see the same somewhat astronomical increase. The logical conclusion is that an addition was made to the house, perhaps one or both of the “extensions” shown on the left of the photo below circa early 1900s.



Logical, yes, but almost impossible to prove. While the house unquestionably has a unique footprint that certainly suggests additions were made, there is no discernible difference, either inside or outside the house, to differentiate an original section from a newer one. As this may have happened within 6 years of the house being built there is every possibility the same builders and masons were used and the same building material was still available.



A closer look at the house in the early 1900s showcases:

- detailed cornice moulding and elaborate brackets at the roofline
- what appears to be painted ironwork above the front porch
- decorative fretwork at the tops of the porch posts
- an exquisite stained glass insert in the round-arched window in what was the double parlour.

Three courses of brick (triple bricking) was uncovered during renovations done in the early 2000s.

This was most definitely a home where attention to detail was paramount.

### **Who Lived In This Grand Stately House?**

While Registry Office records tell us who owned the property, Assessment Records tell us who lived at the property. Sadly, some of the Assessment Records from the early 1900s are missing: some are too general to place people in specific houses: some are incomplete: and some have errors. What's not to like about old records? Census data often helps to fill in the blanks.

What do we know for sure?

We know there was a Schaefer or two renting the house starting in 1899.

We know from the 1901 census that Mary Schaefer (Adam's widow) and several of her children, including Louis and Lydia Loth and their children, were living at #173 at the time of that census.

We know that the Louis Loth family moved out for a few years in 1904 to live in a house across the street.

We know that the Schaefer family moved, almost one by one, to Spokane, Washington USA. The last to leave was Mary Schaefer in 1907.

Last and most importantly, we know that Louis and Lydia Loth and their children were back in the house in 1907 and stayed there "forever".

Louis Loth purchased the property in 1920 for \$400. His daughter, Erma Loth, became the owner in 1967. For people in Tavistock of a certain vintage 173 Woodstock Street North will always be known as "The Loth House".

**Louis Loth (1868 - 1967) and Lydia Schaefer Loth (1870 - 1957)**

Renter, owner and long-time resident at #173, Louis Loth hailed from an interesting family.

Father John Loth was the owner and operator of the Commercial Hotel in Cassel and was subsequently the owner and operator of the much larger Commercial Hotel in Tavistock.

Mother Annagela was the daughter of Nichlous Kaufmann, the recognized founder of the village of Cassel.

Together John and Annagela raised 8 children ... all boys. The boys were talented musicians, accomplished sportsmen, personable individuals who worked hard and were respected in their chosen fields.



*The John Loth Family ... circa 1885*

*left to right  
back row - Fred, Louis, William  
middle row - John Loth, Edwin, Robert, Annagela (Kaufmann) Loth  
front row - Charles, Henry, Milton*

Louis Loth was born in Cassel in 1868. For several years he followed in the footsteps of his father and managed the hotel located on the northeast corner in the small hamlet. The telegraph office at the train station was always his calling. Louis was a telegraph agent for 44 years.

On a lovely spring day in April of 1896 Louis married Lydia Schaefer, the daughter of Adam and Mary Schaefer. Louis was 28 at the time and Lydia was 26. Son Carleton was born in 1896: daughter Erma in 1899: son Frederick in 1901: and son Lewis in 1905.

Lydia loved to entertain with frequent mentions in the newspaper of friends and relatives staying overnight or for much longer periods at the Loth home. When Louis could get away they hopped on the train and travelled, often out west to visit family. In his spare time at home Louis enjoyed lawn bowling and playing the cornet in the Tavistock Band. He was an active member of the Tavistock Horticultural Society and served a term as President of the Literary Society.

Carleton (Carl) moved to the US when he was 19 and then to Vancouver where he worked for the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Carl married Ada Annand in 1927 in Vancouver and died there in 1967.

Erma remained at home - literally. We'll read more about Erma later.

Frederick worked at the train station in Tavistock before moving to Kitchener where he was employed at the Sunshine Office Equipment Company. Fred married Anna Catherine Youngblut in 1931. He died in 1966.

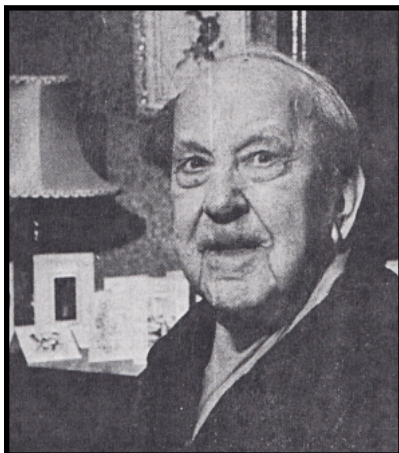
Lewis was also USA bound. He moved to Worcester Massachusetts in 1928: married Jessie Lamberton in 1936: and died in 2000.

The Loth sons kept strong ties to Tavistock, visiting often over the years. The family still spoke German at home in the 1930s.

Louis retired in 1933 after 44 years as a telegraph agent at the Tavistock train station. The businessmen of Tavistock presented him with a gift as a token of their high regard.

For the last years of her life Louis's mother, Annagela Loth, lived with the family.

Lydia died in 1957. Louis marshalled on, living with daughter Erma until his death at age 98 in 1967. At that time he was Tavistock's oldest resident. Lydia and Louis are buried at the Trinity Lutheran Church cemetery in Sebastopol.



*left - Louis Loth on his 98th birthday*

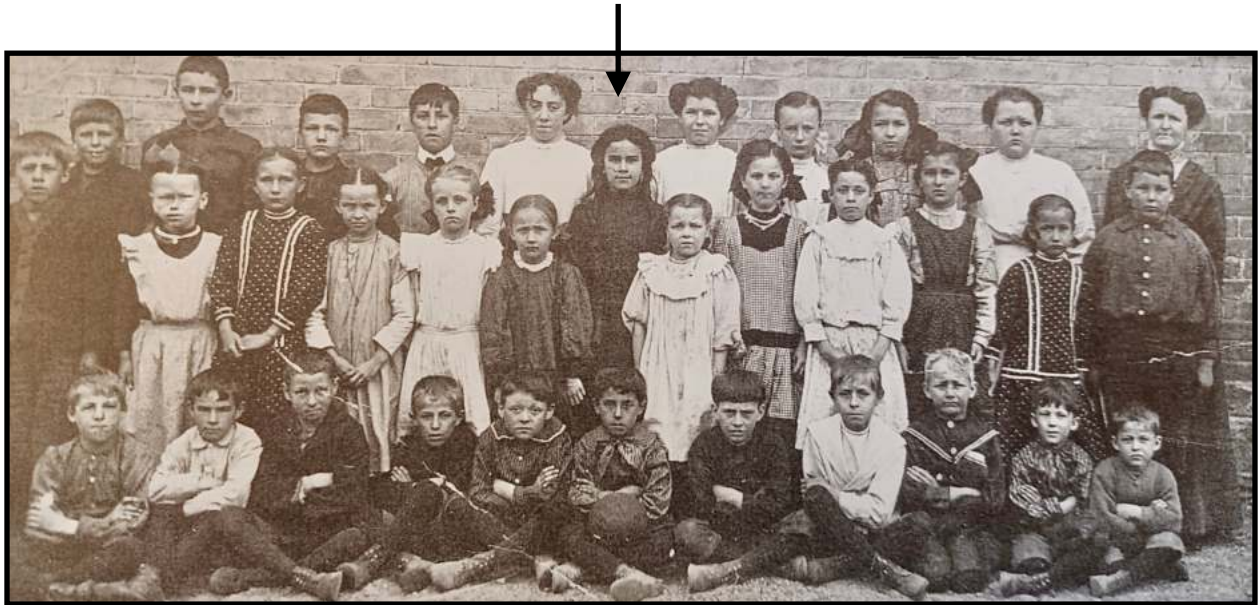
*right - This colourful quilt top, pieced by Lydia Loth, was donated to the Tavistock Historical Society.*



**Erma Loth (1899 - 1999)**

“Miss Loth was my first teacher.” That statement applies to hundreds upon hundreds of people. For 44 years, from 1919 to 1963, Erma Loth shaped the minds and hearts and futures of two and, in some cases, three generations of children. Those were the days before daycare and nursery school and pre school and kindergarten. Starting school at age 6 and meeting the teacher, Miss Loth, was a very big day ... a day that many of us still clearly remember decades later.

Perhaps ironically the first photo we have of Erma Loth is a school picture from 1910 where she is shown with her classmates ... all 8 grades of classmates ... at SS # 8, Sebastopol School.



*SS # 8 - Sebastopol School - 1910  
The pointer denotes Erma Loth. Brother Fred is in the front row second from the left.*

Erma, born on the 22nd of February in 1899 in Tavistock, was the second child and only daughter of Louis and Lydia (Schaefer) Loth. By all accounts she was a gifted student, both academically and musically at the piano.

She was a busy girl. As a very small child she travelled with her mother to visit her uncles in Northern Ontario. At age 15 she was on the Tavistock Girl's Basketball Team. When she was 16 she travelled by train to visit her relatives in Spokane, Washington USA.

*right - The Tavistock Girl's Basketball Team in 1914. They placed quite high in the standings. Erma is fourth from the right.*





Erma graduated from Normal School (Teacher's College) in Stratford in 1919. She taught at Gadshill, Blum's School (South Easthope Township) and Point Edward (near Sarnia) before returning to Tavistock in 1923 to begin a 40-year career at the Tavistock Public School ... always as the primary grade teacher.

*left - graduation photo from Stratford Normal School in 1919*

Erma moved back into the family home in 1923 and back into community life in the village. Over the years Erma was a member of the Monday Reading Club (often meeting at the Loth house), the Westminster Guild of Knox United Church, the Bridge Club, Trinity Lutheran Church Women and was a long-term very active member of the Tavistock Women's Institute. She served at local teas, sang at local events, won prizes for best costume at local carnivals and organized local school concerts.

*left to right - Beryl Dyck, Pauline Schaefer, Erma Loth and Beverly Neeb .... Woodstock Street South. Circa 1961.*



In 1963 it was time to retire. Over 400 former pupils were part of a very large gathering to honour Erma Loth, a beloved teacher, colleague, neighbour and friend. There were speeches and presents and stories galore. Miss Loth noted that her pupils "are now scattered across Canada and among them are doctors, nurses, teachers, ministers, dentists, newspapermen, businessmen and farmers. Some are in hallowed graves in Europe and one or two have no known grave".

During her retirement years Erma devoted a significant amount of time and talent to the Tavistock Women's Institute ... organizing meetings, canvassing for charities and working for causes that would benefit people locally and more widespread.

While others may have taken the opportunity to do upgrades and renovations at the big old house Erma was quite happy to leave things be. With the exception of some wallpapering ... up the 10 foot walls, across the ceiling and down again ... and exterior painting when needed, the house remained much as it had been her entire life.





*above - inside the front door*



*above - looking into the front part of the double parlour*

*below - an upstairs bedroom complete with a long narrow closet*



*below - the upstairs hallway*



In 1997, when she was 98 years old, Erma determined that she could no longer manage the big house that she had lived in all by herself following the death of her father in 1967 and went to live out her days at the Bonnie Brae Nursing Home.

The house at 173 Woodstock Street North was put up for sale ... the first time a change of ownership had gone through real estate.

Arrangements were made for a public auction of the contents.



Above, Joe Zehr takes bids on an antique at the Loth sale that brought \$7250.

## ANTIQUA AUCTION

Auction Sale of antique furniture, antique dishes & misc. collectibles  
to be held at the Tavistock Memorial Hall in Tavistock

**Wednesday, March 31 at 4:00 p.m.**

Antiques – West. refrigerator, wringer washer, 12 pane pine flat-to-wall cupboard, 2 harvest tables, pine dry sink, diningroom table & 6 chairs, Knechtel hosiery cupboard, washstand, oak diningroom table, 6 chairs & buffet, sideboard, drop front secretary w/large bookcase above, bureau sideboard, Eastlake parlour table, 2 parlour tables, clover leaf table, library desk, love seat, Heintzman piano & stool, Weber upright piano, excellent condition, made by Heintzman; New Columbia gramophone & 45 records, Marconi table radio, Singer treadle sewing machine, cane bottom chairs, small pine cupboard, chest of drawers, 3/4 oak bed, fern stand, spool bed, oak table, washstand harps, 2 pressback rockers, 2 oak rockers, bustle chair, 3 - 3 pc. bedroom suites (oak), 2 bonnet chests, bottom of wardrobe, dressers, bridge lamps, lamps, trunks, stools, old boxes, mirrors, dresser sets, brass jardiniere, 2 mantle clocks, crocks, bells, Parkview cream can, milk bottles (Hoopers, Finnigans, etc.), oil lamps, 1 pt. granite jug, shaving mugs, Toledo hardware scale, flat irons, cast iron fry pans, chamber pots, Baby Ben alarm clocks, child's sleigh, pictures, wash boards, cheese box, approx. 20 quilts (butterfly, log cabin, sno ball, etc.), hooked rugs, rag mats, quilt frames, school bell, school books, newspapers, Beatty wash tub, hand knitted bedspread, linens, dishes - Depression, Royal Albert, Cornflower, Crystal, etc., sterling silverware & many more collectible items.

**Terms** – Cash or cheque day of sale. No buyers premium.  
Auctioneers & proprietors not responsible for any accidents or deletions day of sale.

**Proprietor** – Erma Loth of Tavistock

**Auctioneers** Joseph Zehr & Doug Jacob  
519-887-9599 519-271-7894

Erma Loth died on April 2, 1999 at age 100. She is buried with her parents at Trinity Lutheran Cemetery in Sebastopol.

## Ken and Terry-Lee Horst

New owners of old houses often dream of finding a treasure hidden tightly away and long since forgotten. Terry-Lee Horst did just that. Shortly after moving into #173 she found a tiny purse filled with money tucked between the baseboards in an upstairs bedroom. The find was great fun. The money was even better ... US and Canadian coins and best of all, Canadian shinplasters (paper money valued at less than a dollar). For those who may wonder, it's not tucked in the baseboards anymore.

It was April of 1999 when the Horst family ... Ken, Terry-Lee and their 3 young children - Kyle, Shauna and Nichelle ... moved into #173. The house had been vacant for a few years. When it went up for sale there was great interest and a bidding war.

With the bidding war won, another battle was shaping up. The house needed work, lots of work, some before the family could move in and a long list of to-do's after. It quickly became a community project:

- Pletsch Electric upgraded the 60-watt service; added needed outlets, lights and switches; and removed old knob and tube wiring.
- Doering Construction (owned by Lyle Doering) did extensive work at the back of the house creating a new kitchen and laundry room and outside, a deck and storage shed.
- Morris Plumbing had a big undertaking. There was one pipe only coming from the big old cistern in the basement to a dry sink with spigot in the kitchen area and then up the wall to the bathroom upstairs. In addition, the family needed a second washroom and one was created in the former cold storage area off the kitchen.
- Shawn Bender was called upon to design and install cabinets and an island in the kitchen and cabinets in the upstairs bathroom.
- Bickle Flooring did what they do best - flooring. The original plank floors were left untouched but the old linoleum had seen better days.



*The old kitchen (above left) underwent a big transformation and a new laundry room (above right) was created.*

There are always unexpected “joys” in an old house. The family quickly discovered that the double front doors would not stay closed and so, for the first few years, they were boarded shut during the winter. Winter also meant putting up storm windows but even that didn't stop snow from blowing in. Very quickly new windows and doors were added to the “must have” list. One can only seal windows with plastic for so many winters!

Replacement seemed to be the operative word. Out with the smelly old oil furnace and oil drums in the basement and in with a new gas furnace. Over time the old chimneys were removed and a new metal roof installed. Original exits that had been long closed were opened again and the house took on a whole new look with upgraded modern porches and a “dining deck” leading out from the dining room.



*The trellis that hid an old boarded-up door was removed and a new white door now provides an easy access to the dining deck on the south side of the house.*



Add in Terry-Lee’s green thumb and flair with gardening and it’s a whole new look that complements the original look and charm of the big red-brick home.

As with the exterior, the interior is a blend of homage to the past with a functional design and more modern look. Yes, there’s still more to do.



*far left - The front staircase has been lightened up to better showcase and appreciate its many intricate details.*

*left - The transom window that was once above the front door is now a feature piece leading from the front hall to the dining room.*

*right - A light fixture from “Erma’s days” graces a table in Terry-Lee’s colourful dining room.*

*Note the original plank floors, the tall baseboards and the window sills perfect for a flower pot.*



In the midst of all of these many changes there was one more very significant event. Another baby arrived. A boy named Tanner.

*right - The Horst Family In 2002*

*back row - Kyle, Kenneth holding  
Tanner and Terry-Lee*

*front row - Shauna and Nichelle*



The children are now, one by one, starting to leave the family home and makes lives of their own. The red brick house at 173 Woodstock Street North will always be the gathering place. Old houses full of many good memories keep calling you back.

Registry Office records are found on the next page.

**Registry Office Transactions For 173 Woodstock Street North**

**South Easthope Township, Concession 5, Lot 21  
and continuing on**

**Village of Tavistock Plan 307 - Lot 53 ... West of Woodstock Street, North of Hope Street**

Trans- action	Date	Registry Date	Grantor (seller)	Grantee (buyer)	Quantity	Price
Patent	May 5 1836		The Crown	Canada Company	100 acres	
Grant	Feb 26 1855	June 18 1855	Canada Company	Adam Weitzel	100 acres	
Bill of Sale	Apr 2 1884	Apr 4 1884	Adam Weitzel	Andrew W. Kaufmann	part 100 acres	\$141
Bill of Sale	Mar 20 1902	Aug 7 1903	Andrew W. Kaufmann	John Schaefer and August Schaefer, Executors for Adam Schaefer	1 acre	\$300
Deed	May 10 1903	June 1903	Executors for Adam Schaefer	Henry Rausch	1/2 acre North	\$200
Grant	Sept 1 1920	Sept 4 1920	Executors for Adam Schaefer	Louis Loth	1/2 acre South	\$400
Grant	Apr 4 1967	Apr 5 1967	Executors for Louis Loth	Erma Loth	1/2 acre South	\$1
	1999	1999	Executors for Erma Loth	Ken and Terry-Lee Horst	1/2 acre South	
	2013	2013	Ken and Terry-Lee Horst	Terry-Lee Horst	1/2 acre South	

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House History prepared 2024