

Harding Museum

The Harding Museum is located on the corner of Park Avenue and Elm Street in the Mackinaw Historical District, west of the Great Miami River in Franklin, Ohio. The house was built by Clarence Harding, Vice-President of the Harding Paper Mills, in 1901 for a cost of \$9,000. FAHS has a letter in its files concerning the decision to build, the naming of the contractor, etc.

Clarence Harding died in 1904, and his widow Lilly Woodward Harding continued to live here until her death in 1948. Clarence and Lilly had two sons, Justin and Edwin Forrest. Justin W. Harding, who married Mae Gaynor and made their home at 312 S. River Street, was one of the jurists at the War Crimes Trials at Nuremberg, Germany following World War II. After graduating from West Point in 1909, Edwin Forrest Harding married Eleanor Hood of Exello in 1914. They had four children: Davis, Edwin F. Jr., Eleanor H. O'Hara, and Anne. The General and Mrs. Harding considered 302 Park Avenue their home during his years of service and returned to it upon his retirement in 1946.

The frame house now located at 321 Park Avenue was originally at 302 Park. It was moved by 1900. General Harding and Mrs. Harding willed their house to FAHS for use as a local history museum. It opened to the public as the Harding Museum on Sunday, April 30, 1972.

Each room downstairs is of a different wood: Center Room – **quarter sawn oak**; Northeast Parlor – **cherry**; Library – **mahogany**; Dining Room – **curly birch**. Note the oriental rugs, the sliding pocket doors, and the stained-glass windows.