More than 170 years is a long time for a structure to survive on West Ridge Road. Directly across from the south end of North Avenue at 3349 West Ridge is one of those survivors, a house built of brick in the Victorian-Italianate style, a very popular style of that period, especially for upscale homes.

Built by David Todd, it once was part of a substantial farm. The Todd name disappeared long ago in town history. No street carries the name, let alone a public building. In the late 19th century a large volume titled “The History of Monroe County, N.Y. Illustrated” was published. Within its pages are several paragraphs on the Todd family and specifically David Todd, plus a double page lithograph of the vast acreage, the farmstead, and out-buildings as they appeared in an 1877 artist’s rendering.

David Todd was born in Peekskill, Westchester County in April 1820. With his Scotland-born parents he moved west with them six years later to Genesee County. He married Elisa Speer in 1843, daughter of Abram Speer, an early settler in Greece, and engaged in farming for himself on a seventy-acre tract, not far from the family homestead. By the 1850s the elegant brick house was the home of David and Elisa, plus two daughters, Mary Frances, who never married and Sarah Elizabeth, who married Thomas Poryr of Greece. He kept buying and selling adjacent real estate until he finally owned 340 acres of fine farmland. Mr. Todd became interested in town government. He was town supervisor of Greece in 1874 and 1875.

Eliza Todd died in 1884, leaving David a wealthy widower living with his unmarried daughter. At the age of 60, he decided to leave farming and sold the house and extensive property for $40,000 (over $1,000,000 in today’s money). He and his daughter, Mary, moved to Rochester. He spent the rest of his retirement at his Fulton Avenue home, dying at age 79, on March 21, 1899. Little is known of the Ridge Road property until a Mr. James D. Casey is shown owning 206 acres in the very early 1900s.

William H. Craig enters the picture as the last of the owners of 3349 Ridge Road West to operate the farmland. William H. Craig was the son of Charles and Mary Craig, born in Cobourg, Ontario, Canada. Craig and Mary hailed from Ireland. William was an entrepreneur like his father. He ran a livery stable and managed his father’s hotels in Charlotte. He helped to develop Ontario Beach Park into an amusement park. Loving horses, he had many winning racehorses. While running a successful livery business for 16 years, he was elected an alderman for the Fourth Ward for four years. Albany called and he was assistant sergeant-at-arms of the New York State Capitol from 1897 to 1900. Sheriff of Monroe County (1906-1908) was his next job. Then in 1908 he became the superintendent of the Monroe County Penitentiary on South Avenue, Rochester. He purchased the Ridge Road farm about 1912 and sent his only son, Charles E. Craig, to Cornell Agricultural School to learn about farming. Now in charge of the farm, Charles made many improvements. There were a variety of crops, including fruit-bearing trees. He also had a herd of high-grade milk cows.

Modern farm implements and crop techniques were put in practice by William’s son. William died about 1928 and by the 1930 census the property no longer belonged to the Craig family.

Times were changing by the early 1930s. Greece’s population had expanded in the 1920s and many farmers were discovering it was no longer profitable to farm a small acreage, but selling land to a developer had its advantages, putting some money away, they sought factory jobs. The depression halted much of that. The Todd-Casey-Craig property of 206 acres began to shrink in size, until in 1959 it was only about 144.23 feet wide by 170.73 feet deep.

The 1940 suburban directory lists a Herbert and Bess Manly running “Ye Olde Farme” tearoom with tourist over-night accommodations available. Remembered by several local folk, the restaurant lasted until the early 1950s.

Greece Press ad - June 21, 1935

In the last almost seventy years it has been “remuddled” into a number of apartments by several different owners. Ridge Road went from barely a two lane, dirt wagon trail to four wide lanes. The house that David built over looks The Ridge, and weathers storms, pollutions, and humans!