

'Doctors' Row' Disapp

The area around Park Avenue West and Mulberry St. was "doctors' row" less than 30 years ago with approximately a third of the city's physicians and optometrists located there.

In recent years virtually all of them have moved their offices out of the downtown area and, in most cases, closer to General Hospital.

In the early 1940s, when 20 physicians, dentists and optometrists had offices at or near Park Avenue and Mulberry hardly anybody thought of parking space. At that time there were few parking lots in that area.

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Patients parked on the street or rode buses downtown to see the doctor.

When Dr. P. O. Staker moved recently from the Dr. J. H. Nichols building at 58 Park Avenue West, it left that downtown landmark without a physician occupant for the first time in many years.

The structure with its columns on the Park Avenue side was built in 1905 by the late Dr. Nichols. For some years he used the ground

The Mansfield That Was

By VIRGIL A. STANFIELD

floor for his office and lived upstairs. Mrs. Nichols had a flower garden in the area at the rear between her home and the small structure which was occupied by the Leppo Shop.

Dr. Nichols had a small downtown clinic in mind when the structure was built, but it never materialized.

About five years after the building on the corner was erected Dr. Nichols added a structure to the rear to be used as apartments. Some years later a part of the addition was converted to physicians' offices. The same rooms now are occupied by Attys. Richard M. Christiansen and Harold McClellan.

The building is owned now by Mr. and Mrs. John R. Porter who live upstairs. Porter is a grandson of Dr. Nichols who died in 1941.

The Earick - Wolf Insurance agency occupies the older part of the Dr. Nichols building. Porter said he is

having the upper floors renovated and prepared for rental.

Across North Mulberry St., where the National Masonic Provident building stands, was a two-story home where Dr. Nichols lived before he erected the building which served as his headquarters for more than 35 years.

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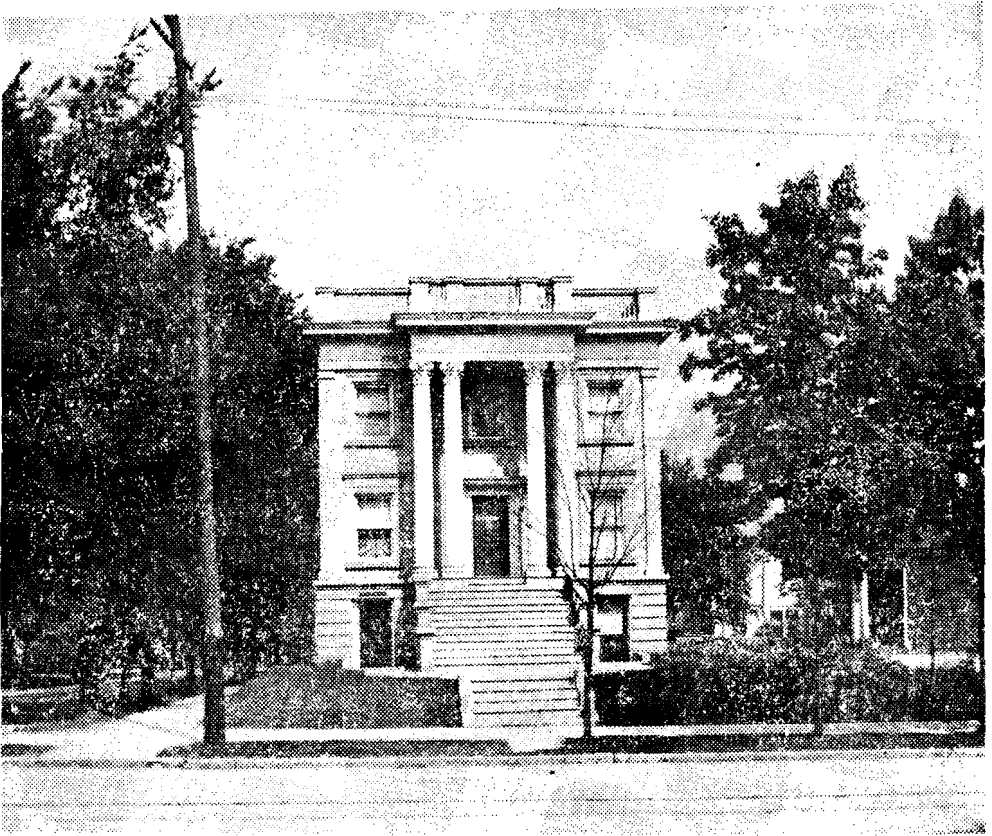
The house on the National Masonic Provident site was owned for a long time by the Vasbinder family which was prominent in Mansfield and had the fountain built in Central Park. When the park was cut in two by a street the fountain was moved to Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm. In the 1880s David B. and Jane E. Vasbinder lived in the house on the Masonic Provident corner.

Shortly after the Masonic building was erected in 1928 Halle Brothers opened a women's store on the first floor and in the basement. The store was closed during



The National Masonic Provident building at the northwest corner of Park Avenue West and Mulberry St. is on the site of the home of the Vasbinder family which was well known in Mansfield in the late 1800s. (Photo by Terry Wolf)

ears from Downtown



Recognize this downtown landmark? This is how the Dr. J. H. Nichols building at Park Avenue West and Mulberry St. looked in the early 1900s. It had trees around it then and a garden behind it. It was the center of a community of doctors and dentists about 30 years ago. (Photo by courtesy of John R. Porter)

he depression of the early 1930s.

In more recent years the first floor rooms were used as district headquarters by the Ohio Fuel Gas Co. A large addition to the building was opened in 1964. In the years before the building was enlarged the area behind it and south of the old Presbyterian church was occupied by large houses which were converted to doctors' and dentists' offices.

Now that all of the physicians have left the buildings at the intersection only Dr. C. M. Bradshaw, an optometrist, remains. He is in the Masonic building.

In the 1930s and 1940s the houses directly to the west of the Masonic building on Park Avenue were pretty much occupied by physicians and there were other doctors on the west side of South Mulberry St. between

Park Avenue West and West Second St.

The Blymyer Inn was a landmark at the southwest corner of Park Avenue and Mulberry St. for almost a century. The large and luxurious home was built in the 1840s by Z. S. Stocking who sold it to the Blymyer family about 20 years later.



George W. Blymyer, who lived in the house for some 40 years, operated a stove and tinner's shop on North Main St. In the early 1900s the Blymyer home became a boarding house for well-to-do retired people. It had a cafeteria in the basement. Then the structure became the Blymyer Inn, a home for elderly people. It was razed in 1946 and the corner is now occupied by a Sohio station.

Directly to the south of the Blymyer Inn were the Jones Memorial, a Fire-

stone store and the YWCA. At the southern edge of this area now stands the Professional Arts Building where Drs. M. M. Christian, a physician, and J. F. Gaskins, a dentist, have offices. They are the only doctor and dentist left in the immediate vicinity which less than 30 years ago was heavily populated with professional people.

The First Lutheran Church has been at the southeast corner of Park Avenue and Mulberry since 1894. Before that there were five homes in the block.

The building just east of the Dr. Nichols structure has housed cafes and restaurants for many years. The late Harold Bloodgood operated a cafe in the building for several years and then Ed McNew had a restaurant there. Now the MS restaurant is in the building.