DESTINATION LODI

A HISTORICAL JOURNEY

THE MUSSER HOUSE

CIRCA 1825

While we were at church, a lovely woman named Betsy Anderson greeted us. I did not remember her but Larry did, she was in his kindergarten class. During our conversation, she spoke of her Grandpa and Grandma Musser that lived on Church Street. It happened that this home was on my list of historical homes. Betsy helped me with some history of this house and her perception of Lodi.

If you lived in Lodi during the 50s and 60s, you knew Mrs. Musser and her newsstand at the corner of Church and Wooster Street. I remember many a day stopping to buy candy and comic books, my favorite were vanilla taffy and Archie, sometimes Richey Rich. (Wish I had them now). She sold the newsstand in the late 1960’s.

In 1919, the Musser family bought the home at 115 Church Street. The actual date of the house was built is not exact, the Medina Co Auditor states 1825, but the deed says the lot was platted in 1868 and Leland Musser said it was built in the mid-1800s. If 1825 is correct, this house is one of our oldest. According to my research I could only go back to 1869, the deed was under the under the Marsh family.

Betsy’s Uncle Leland was born in 1917, so he was two when they moved into his house. He only moves out about a year before he died in 1995. Betsy’s mother, Mary was born in 1926 and her Uncle Gordon was born in 1936.

Leland and his father were in a painting business together, ruining the business out of the house. Prior to this business, Grandpa Musser owned a grocery store where the hardware store is now. Betsy said her mom grew many vegetables in the back yard during the war. She hated turnips all her life because of too many during war times.

Betsy and her mom lived with her Grandma and Uncle Leland during the 1950s when her dad Donald (known as Sandy) Anderson, was in Alaska in the Army. (Before Alaska was a state). There was an upright piano in the living room and a heat register about a yard square in the middle of the house between the living and dining room. Everybody stood there to get warm when they came in from outside. Betsy said she could hear the sizzle when drops of rain or snow from their clothing went into the coal fire. The coal cellar was a favorite place to playing with cousins, coming out a dusty black. The furnace was converted in the 1970s.

Since the house is quite old, the floors are uneven and the house is rather angled. It is my understanding that it may be the second oldest in Lodi.

There were two cedar chests in the house that had “fallen off a train” in a train wreck in Lodi during the 1930’s. Betsy still has one chest and her Uncle Gordon has the other in Indiana. She has other items such as a doorstop of a frog.

The summer after Betsy’ family move away, her mom put her on a bus to Lodi for a visit. Uncle Leland met her at the bus station where the Thrift Store in now located.

The house now belongs to Don and Tracy Kelling for approxamently 24 years. Don remembers the basement full of wallpaper. The Musser business must have been paint and wallpaper. According to Tracy, we have another haunted house in Lodi.

Mark your calendar! Memorial weekend we have two concerts. On Saturday, May 27 at 2pm, our Annual Rhododendron Concert sponsored by the Lodi-Harrisville Historical Society at the First Congregation Church of Lodi. The Cloverleaf Community Choir will be the entertainment. The Lodi Methodist Church will have their Annual Memorial Concert on Sunday, May 28 at 7pm.

The Rail Road Museum is in need of roofers.