*DESTINATION LODI*

*A HISTORICAL JOURNEY/THE BILLMAN HOUSE*

*I just love doing these articles because I get to tour most of the houses I write about. Current owner Dave Bohner was gracious enough to show me around and provide some history. Dave and his late wife Georgia moved to 730 Bank Street 20 years ago. Much of the beautiful wood work and wood flooring remains. Pockets doors are intact, built in cupboard with leaded glass and window seat remain in the dining room. Dave said there was once a dumb- waiter in the kitchen. The house was built by Arthur and wife Lepha Betz and were married in the house before it was completed. It’s told the house was just “a deck” for the wedding ceremony. Mr. Betz was a successful farmer and became a mail carrier for the Lodi Post Office. They had two children and lived in the house for 29 years. Their daughter Kathleen married Dean Hartzel who once owned the Texaco service station in Lodi.*

*The house at 730 Bank Street has always been known as the Charlie Billman house. The house was built and completed in 1916 but Charlie and wife Hattie Bennader Billman did not move in until October 26, 1945. Charlie and Hattie had lived on and moved from a farm on Pawnee Road/Rd 28. They had one daughter Wilma Billman Croskey and two grand-daughters, Eloise Rice and Carolyn Waite. The Billman house was featured in a Joe Warner’s newsletter stating when built, it had the latest gas lights, phone, electric as well, front and rear stairways and a full concrete basement. It’s noted he kept his wool and pelts in bins located in the basement. He had one barn lined in metal to store the furs. They lived in the house for 22 years.*

*Charlie Billman started in the wool and fur business at age 10 in Homer Township. In an article about Charlie, 1961, he traveled by horse and buggy. Later, he moved to Lodi and operated from the Timothy Burr/Mong property before moving to his in-laws property on County road 28.*

*Charlie filed cross cut saws, farmed and was a fur dealer. He bought beef hides, skinned the animals he purchased from hunters and sold the hides to the New York Fur Exchange. Charlie continued to buy fur, was a beekeeper, director of the Lodi Equity Company from 1920-1950. He worked at the Untied Dairy in Lodi for 12 years. He was a dealer in wool and fur for 60 years.*

*My husband said he remembers Charlie Billman always wearing jean bib overalls and a straw hat.*

*I was a little confused between Milo Billman and Charlie Billman…..Milo had a brother named Charles. It’s a coincidence they both owned property in the same area. I am still researching. Thanks Eloise for your help!*

*The Billman House will receive a plaque.*

*The Lodi-Harrisville Historical Society is trying to put together a Bridal Show/Tea fund raiser in June. We are need of wedding dresses and young models. We are looking for something from the 20’s, 30’s and 40’s. Dress donations already received are from Elva Dunham and Aggie Rice. Tonya Voorhees donated her hand-made dress of her grandmother Derhammer. We have a Civil War wedding dress. Donations not necessary, we can just borrow. Please call me.*