Western Kentucky University

From the SelectedWorks of Sue Lynn McDaniel

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We Shared In Its History: 1123 State Street

Sue Lynn McDaniel

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/sue_lynn_mcdaniel/9/
We Shared In Its History: 1123 State Street

(Editor’s Note: The State Street Methodist Church has recently purchased the home at 1123 State Street for educational space. I asked Sue Lynn Stone, who grew up in the house to reflect on her years there and share with us things about the house and its occupants)

I was reared on stories of our house, then educated by the University to look at it with a historian’s eye, and now try to recount a blended story of fact and tradition. During my college years, Irene Moss Sumpter included the Adams-Goodrum residence in her Bowling Green landmarks book. Its publication probably was the catalyst for my interview with my grandmother, Nelle Jane Shanks Stone, concerning her earliest memories of being in the house (notes of which I found years later when I had completely forgotten the conversation, but not its contents). As a young graduate with a bachelor’s degree in history, I met with Dick Pfefkerkorn to discuss career opportunities and, to my surprise, found a photograph of my front door adorned his office wall. Much of who I am comes from the 20+ years I spent at 1123 State Street; even my name “Sue Lynn” first belonged to an earlier resident of apartment 2.

The year 1844 is always told as its building date. In walking its interior and exterior with an eye for renovations, I have come to appreciate through the years the house as physical evidence of how a downtown residence survived and was renovated to meet the changing needs of its residents. It was originally built as a Greek Revival townhouse constructed using a Flemish-bond brick pattern. As several interior walls are three-brick thick, I suspect the original house consisted of two rooms over two rooms and later was expanded to four rooms over four. When the three southern rooms separated by a concrete goldfish pond were added, a former exterior window became a mirrored shelf in the front parlor. Grandmother remembers visiting Aunt Alice before the exterior door facing the south was modified into a window in the Sun Room. She also recalled a servant’s staircase behind the second room (which would become the elevated toilet which graced the rock hewn basement). The framed enclosed back porches, both upstairs and downstairs, appear to be later modifications. Its last addition, probably in the late 1930s was a kitchen for apartment 2 on the northwest corner of the house.

My father, Dan Ray Stone, recounts that it was his great grandmother’s sister Alice Goodrum’s independence which first brought the house into our family. As a spinster with failing eyesight, Alice overheard her brothers planning to share their homes with her in sequential two year periods. Unwilling to be a permanently revolving guest, she acquired a bank loan to purchase 1123 State Street as a “overnight guest house.” When downtown hotels would fill, hotel clerks would refer travelers to her home. Dying of typhoid fever at her residence in 1924, The Park City Daily News described Alice Goodrum as “one of the best beloved women in Bowling Green.”

Alice’s brother J. Willis Goodrum, his wife, Hattie Massey Goodrum, and her sister Johnnie Massey Clay next occupied the house. Mrs. Clay and Mrs. Goodrum later remodeled the private residence into apartments. Frugal women, they closed the former doorway into apartment 2 by using a gilded

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Architectural Details

- New members of the Landmark Association since December 1, 2003 include: Sandy Staebell, Chad Reagan, Charles & Pat Reid, Ed Swoin, and Donna Sue Weber.

- Judge-Executive Mike Buchanon has appointed a five-member Cemetery Board for Warren County. The board will be eligible for competitive grants through the Department for Local Government. These funds can be used to restore or maintain any non-profit cemetery that does not receive perpetual care funds. Grants may range from $1,000 to $25,000, and a one-to-one local cash match is required. Applications from county boards will receive funding priority. The members of the Warren County board are: Lindo Dickerson (2 yrs.), Robin Zeigler (3 yrs.), Sherrill Poe (2 yrs.), Dave Young (1 yr.), Jesse Vorner (1 yr.).

- The HPB is undertaking a county-wide cemetery survey. Currently, the Board is in the research phase and waiting to find out if they will receive a grant that will pay for subsequent phases. You can be a part of this exciting and extensive project that will be of use to genealogists, historians and planners. Here are ways you can help: 1) provide location information about small or unmarked cemeteries that may not have been identified; 2) your organization or church can volunteer to survey a cemetery and cover associated costs, which includes photography and a few inexpensive supplies; or, 3) you can have your name listed as a potential survey volunteer and will be called upon once funding is secured. For more information contact Robin Zeigler at 270-842-1953 or seeg1912@bgky.org.

- PBS's "History Detectives" is back for a second season of investigating history's mysteries and are looking for stories all over the USA. Their team of experts will set out to answer questions about artifacts discovered recently whose history is unclear; historic buildings whose rich past may not be fully known; and family heirlooms with a mystery past. Visit http://pbs.org/historydetectives/submit/index.html or contact Fred Grinstein at Lion Television: fred@lione.org or call 1-212-206-8633 ext. 29 for story submissions.

- Historic Preservation Week takes place May 3-9, 2004. The National Trust created Preservation Week in 1971 to spotlight grassroots preservation efforts around the country. Each Preservation Week highlights a different aspect of historic preservation. This year's theme is "New Frontiers in Preservation."

- The Italianate house at 1252 State Street is currently for sale. The house was probably built in the late-1870s or early 1880s. Owner Walter York is willing to sell the house for $150,000. The house most recently has been used as student housing and has been split into nine apartments. Dorian Walker is looking for a group of investors to purchase and bring the house back into single-family housing. Would you be willing to invest $10,000, or do you know someone who would be interested in investing $10,000? Or, do you know someone who would be interested in purchasing the house themselves and restoring it? For more information about Dorian's plan, please contact him at 793-9055.

We Shared In Its History: 1123 State Street (cont'd)

- The front entrance decorated for Christmas in the late-1960s.

- Interior photo at 1123 State Street featuring Dan Stone.

- The Liberty Group, Inc. 
  212-206-8633 ext. 1123

The front entrance decorated for Christmas in the late-1960s.
We Shared In Its History: 1123 State Street (cont’d)

Nellie Elliott in #3, and Gus Burks in #4. Being a proper Southern child, I learned to refer to the two former as "Aunt" and the latter as "Uncle." As the only child on the block, the Chestnut of my childhood, I impressed Aunt Hettie into attendance of a tea party to celebrate my deaf cat Powder Puff’s birthday and probably convinced Aunt Nellie out of a pair of high heels and a dress in order to play dress-up.

Once I was old enough for adventure, Dad let me walk with him to town or to the post office. The Bowling Green Business University building on College Street burned in June 1963. One evening we walked home past the ruins. Its tower, the night watchman and the barricade made a lasting impression on a very young child. I also remember the day the Mansard Hotel Burned as Grandma and I were downtown shopping at the time.

Having Graves-Gilbert Clinic for a neighbor had its pros and cons. My mother probably took great comfort in being able to run literally with her accident-prone preschooler for stitches when needed. Yet, as a typical child, I did not want to walk down their side of the street after one bout with stitches.

As I aged, the city block was my territory. While I was in elementary school, the old alleyway was lined with rock fences concealing deep backyards and driveways to wooden garages. By age 7, I began piano lessons with my backdoor neighbor, Nellie Dickey Bowen. Miss Nelle fascinated me too. In her 1950s vintage car horn and then quickly backing blindly from her wooden garage into the alley. If I headed across the alley in the direction, I could visit with Mrs. Russell, who lived in a fascinating house that had her husband’s watch repair shop in its front rooms. It was Mrs. Russell’s white French poodle, Pierre, which will always be my hero for having found Powder Puff when she was trapped in the neighbor’s basement. I look back on that day and realize what a wonderful sense of community we had.

The houses included the longtime residents upstairs, Hettie Fowler in #5, and short drives to wooden garages. By the time I had her husband’s watch repair shop in its front rooms. It was Mrs. Russell’s white French poodle, Pierre, which will always be my hero for having found Powder Puff when she was trapped in the neighbor’s basement. I look back on that day and realize what a wonderful sense of community we had.

Carved limestone detail on the front porch.

As a college student, I lived upstairs in Apartment 4 (the efficiency), later Apartment 5 (the back Northwest corner of the house), and finally Apartment 3 (the Southern half of the upstairs). Returning to Bowling Green after completing graduate work at the University of Kentucky, I lived in Apartment 1 for a year. 1123 State Street will always be a part of me. As a teenager, I dreamed of restoring the house to a single family dwelling. I equate the decision to sell 1123 State with First Baptist Church’s decision to tear down the Chestnut Street facade. It was quite difficult for me to agree, yet I knew it was the best decision for my parents who had loved and cared for the house for more than 50 years. I am thankful that State Methodist Church will find use for it in their ministry.

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The President Speaks

by Eileen Starr

Square that day and more details will be forthcoming. Walking maps will be distributed at the event to indicate where the artwork is located in the downtown area.

Andee Rudloff is Chair of the event. Robin Zeigler as the Preservation Planner for the Historic Preservation Board is one of the main organizers. Kari McCloud, the Landmark Association and the Bellwood Presbyterian Home for Children are also assisting the effort. Tickets will be available for sale before the event and additional publicity will be distributed to Landmark members concerning the time and cost.

The auction should be fun. We will recognize Landmark Association award winners at the auction and elect new officers as well. Remember to bring your checkbook!

There is additional good news on a different topic. Bowling Green Municipal Utilities is giving the Landmark Association $500 for the production of a book on the history of the Quonset Hut Auditorium. The author is Amber Ridington and the book is based on her Folks Studies thesis written as part of her Master’s degree program at Western. Jonathan Jeffrey will edit the book which will hopefully be available within the next year. The Landmark Association is grateful for the funds from BGMU.

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Detail of wrought iron work found on the house’s back porch.

The event has generated excitement in both the preservation and art communities. Professional artists, students and amateurs representing various populations within the community submitted proposals. Robin Zeigler, Historic Preservation Planner for the Bowling Green-Warren County Historic Preservation Board, was quite impressed with the number of submissions and their originality. She said, "Artists developed really innovative and sometimes unique interpretations of a very broad theme." The different backgrounds of the artists will, no doubt, be evident in their work, which will be displayed outside for one month. The artwork will then be auctioned off at the Landmark’s Annual Meeting on June 4th. The kick off date for Windows of Preservation is May 5th in Fountain Square at noon and is being held in conjunction with the national celebration of Historic Preservation Week. Lunch will be available on the square that day and more details will be forthcoming. Walking maps will be distributed at the event to indicate where the artwork is located in the downtown area.

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