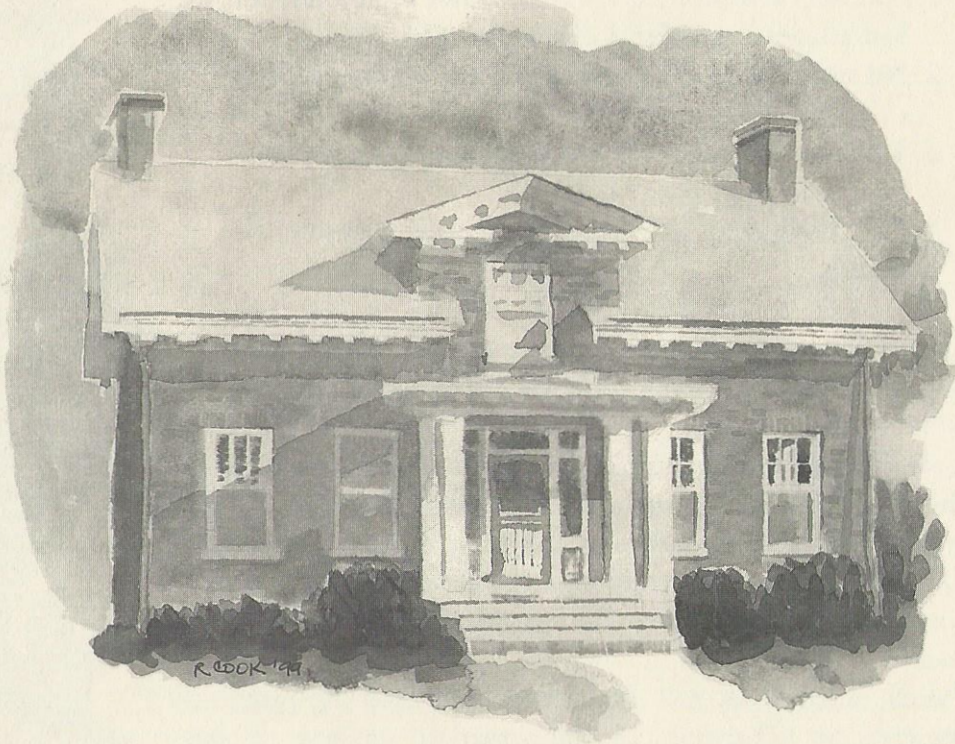


2137 Jersey



Year Built: 1909
Name of House: Frederick and Anna Wilms
Caretaker's House
Style: Georgian Revival
Architect: unknown
Current Owners: Steve & Lynn Gustison

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
OCTOBER 16, 1999

The home was built in 1909 as the coachman/caretaker home for the Frederick and Anna Wilms Estate at 2074 Maine. Wilms was the general manager of Western Coal and Mining Company. The home's first residents were coachman/caretaker Henry and Katherine Meise. When lots were subdivided the carriage house became part of the 2137 Jersey property. It is reported that Meise was a volunteer firefighter and had been called upon to help with the great Chicago fire in 1871.

The exterior of the home is brick with a stone foundation. The double-hung six over one windows are placed singly and in symmetrical rows. There is a side gabled roof with centered gabled dormer on the south side, and the windows have stone sills. The overhanging eaves have simple wood-bracketed cornices and the front porch has classical supports.

The cypress entry door is an unusual 42 inches wide with sidelights and transom. Entering the Gustison's foyer, you see the dining room on the right, the living room on the left, and the washroom tucked under the stairway. The dining room's floor is the original yellow heart pine floor. The wainscoting and crown molding in both rooms was added during the remodeling in the 60's. At that time the rear wing was added. The present owners use it as the master bedroom. The tub and sink in the master bath are from the Lincoln-Douglas Hotel. The area between the living room and kitchen was originally the butler's pantry.

Light fixtures in the upstairs and downstairs are identical and are original to the home. The bath at the top of the stairs was used as a sewing room until it was converted to a bath in the 60's. Both bedrooms were identical with large closets in the dormers. The bedroom on the east was divided to make two bedrooms which was a more functional arrangement for the present owners.

The present owners opened up an enclosed back porch and found the original rail and spindles and returned it to its original design. Also they created an enjoyable garden area reminiscent of Wilms large gardens.

The massive carriage house at the rear of the property has its original sliding door and the staircase (c. 1860) was salvaged from a home demolished to make way for the Civic Center. The starting newel is carved with presidential faces of that period. One can envision the grand carriages that traveled in and out of the carriage house.

