

The Table

by Lynne Belluscio

The Seyferts stopped by several years ago and mentioned that they had the kitchen table on which Pearle Wait invented Jell-O. They said that someday they would donate it to the museum. I remember writing down their address and putting it on my rolodex.

Well a couple of weeks ago I received a phone call saying that they were downsizing and that they had decided to bring the table to LeRoy. It was an awkward conversation because as I explained to them, there is no way to prove that their table is the one that Jell-O was invented on unless there is a written note by Pearle or his wife to that effect, or if Pearle posed with the table and boxes of his Jell-O.

Of course the Seyferts took exception with that. What I do know is that the small drop leaf table supposedly came out of the house on West Main Street where Pearle Wait lived when he introduced Jell-O in 1897. After he died on July 23, 1915, his wife May continued to live in the house, although she had no means of support and had to raise her two-year old daughter, Dolly by herself. Her family was able to gather enough money to pay off the mortgage. She took in sewing and put up a tourist sign and took in boarders.

May's daughter married and



she and her husband moved in with May for a couple of years. Their daughter, Martha (Tabone) remembers her grandmother and when they moved to East Main Street, Grandma moved with them. May died in 1956. I asked Martha about the table and she doesn't remember anything about it. The reason why the Seyferts have the alleged table is because Pearle Wait's older sister, Josephine (Posie) and her husband Abraham Lincoln Holdridge lived kitty-corner across the street from Pearle. Posie's daughter Marion was Mrs. Seyferts mother.

Apparently at some point - and that's not really clear to

me - - the Holdridges took the table which was "the kitchen table." The little table isn't quite a kitchen table, although it could have been in the kitchen. It certainly isn't a work table. I think it was made in the 1800s and could be as early as 1850 or so. It has been refinished. Of course it is possible that it could have been the table on which Pearle "invented" Jell-O.

Maybe sometime in the future it could be tested for DNA to see if Pearle left sweat or tears on the table and of course there

it's worth the Historical Society also has a model log cabin that was built by Pearle Wait. I have no idea why he built it or why it was donated to the Historical Society, but alas, those are some of the mysteries.

An additional note: We have several copies of the DVD that was prepared by the United States Conservator's Office for the unveiling of the Henry Clay painting. If anyone wants to borrow a DVD, stop by the office and sign one out. I think you will find it very interesting.

would have to be a residue of Jell-O. There is no question that Mrs. Seyfert sincerely believes that it is the table on which Jell-O was invented. And wouldn't it be something wonderful if we could prove that it was the Jell-O table.

We're very glad to have it, but if we exhibit it, we'll have to put a disclaimer on it. For what







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