

## **OLD SETTLERS DAY PAST JULY 31, 1963**

Old Settlers Days Past and the “Shotgun Wedding” of Old Settlers’ Day with American Legion to make it a week – long carnival and entertainment event , were reviewed by former OSD officers and directors at the Wednesday evening meeting of the Columbia City Rotary Club.

It was Walter Firestone, Larwill, who wrapped up the OSD summary and termed the Legion Festival’s “Shotgun Wedding”.

He said “Each had to have the other.” The OSD officers found the late 1940’s that they couldn’t get anyone to come and operate rides for a one – day celebration anymore and it was a “ pleasure for the American Legion to pick up the slack for ODS, because of the financing it gave them.”

Firestone told how in 1948 the American Legion was in debt \$125,000.00 on its \$150,000.00 home. In conjunction with OSD and its own efforts, this debt has now been reduced to \$8,500.00. Before the marriage of OSD and the American Legion, the Legion Post found OSD profitable for it cleared at the one day celebration considerable amounts from its stands and a car raffle.

Answering criticism from business people who have objected to continuation in downtown Columbia City, Robert Gates reminded the community that such shopping centers as Northcrest in Fort Wayne pay for staging carnival rides to lure patrons to their stores. Old Settlers Day and the Legion Festival are expected to bring 10,000 visitors here before the close of the week and this includes many who might never have heard of Columbia City.

The nostalgic side of OSD was brought out by several speakers. First was James D. Adams, who reviewed the earliest Old Settlers reunions.

One in September 1904 was the first. Another in the fall of 1877 was held in Columbia City, another in September, 1881 at Troy Cedar Lake and one in 1896 at Blue Lake. Then on September 21, 1888 at the Courthouse cornerstone laying. The ceremonies were then given over to the old settlers.

Taken from the Historical Society Bulletin 1998 from an article written by the Post and Mail July 31, 1963