Tower – legend of the “Ladies”:

The aga Senković tower is the name of the site of the oldest building in Gospić. Situated on a small cliff above an ancient river crossing that connected the north of Croatia to the dalmatian south. A small stream flows within the bedrock beneath the tower and into the river below.

The tower gets its name from a Muslim noble family that probably built the defensive structure somewhere near the end of the 16th or early 17th century during the ottoman control of the Lika region. It later served as a military magazine for the Habsburg army during the Military Frontier era, and finally as a luxurious mansion for a wealthy Gospić family at the turn of the 20th century.

A legend connected to the tower and nearby river has remained in the local folklore. It tells how two ladies (cro. “gospe”) of noble birth were traveling through Lika. One of them was sick, so they were in need of a cure. They stopped at a river crossing and drank water from a stream. Miraculously, the water healed the lady. Thereafter, they built a tower to live on that site, and a city grew from the tower. The city was named after them Gospić, and the river was named Lika (cro. lik = lijek = medicine). The whole region of Lika was later named after the river.

Tower – hidden ottoman history of Gospić:

The first and oldest building with archeological continuity built in the Gospić area is the Aga – Senković tower. It is a fortified building, built sometime after 1527, after the Battle of Mohács that the Hungarian kingdom lost against the Ottoman Empire, allowing the Turks to penetrate and fortify the area of the Lika field.

As the modern name of the tower may suggest, the structure was originally built by an Ottoman frontier noble family (*aga*), the Senković family. The members of this family served as commanders of forts (*dizdars*) and larger military units (*agaluks*), and their fortresses served as military defense points and as residential buildings for these families; as their noble estates. The Senković family was one of the most prominent frontier families in western Lika. Aga – Senković tower formed part of a line defense system of towers in the Lika highlands. The Senković family left Lika after the collapse of Ottoman rule at the end of the 17th century.

One of the heirs of the new merchant Pavelić family living in the building during the 20. century described the ancient parts of the house:

*It was obvious by everything that the building is older than the others in the city! For example, at the entrance downstairs you had slanted steps. They went obliquely, and then on the sides there were handles and a thick rope that you clung to, like a handrail. It was a red rope made of something nicely rolled so thick and you went up with it. It was like something in nature, like a fairy, a fort! And up in the attic there was, dear God, everything… I even once found an old mace from the Turks, with those spikes!* (I. M.)

Mill – The dam of Gospić:

Near the old Murković mill, there is a small dam on the Novčica river. The locals call it “bent” which comes from a Turkish word, meaning dam or embankment, or more commonly “Murković’s bent” because it served the nearby mill, partly directing a stronger flow of water towards the watermill.

Besides being a structural part of the mill, the dam served as a backbone of many social activities that took place around the mill and along the river Novčica. The dam kept a stable level of water on either side, making it a desirable spot for swimming and summer activities. It also slowed the flow of water, making it easier to freeze during winter. This made the upper side of the dam an ideal place for skating, either for entertainment or for work, as a starting point for easier travel along the river.

Finally, the dam served as a bridge connecting the center of Gospić with nearby settlements across the river, used by the poorer classes of Gospić, as opposed to the old stone bridge by the Senković tower, used by the more elite citizens. During World war II, it was used by local partisan curriers to quickly carry messages in and out of the city.

Murković Mill – A place of commerce and political intrigue:

The Murković mill was a place of commerce. Large numbers of citizens of Gospić and its surroundings circulated through it for decades. It was the largest mill in Gospić and the Lika field and attracted customers from the farthest reaches. Narrators claimed that the mill would work all day and all night. The patrons would sometimes sleep by the side of the building in their horse drawn carts, while waiting their turn to use the mill.

The owner of mill, Ivan Murković, was an Austro-Hungarian army officer and a representative for the Croatian Peasant in the Croatian Parliament. The mill itself became a center of political events in the turbulent times of conflict in interwar Yugoslavia. According to testimonies, Ivan Murković held political meetings with other prominent figures from the political and social life of then Gospić in a special room on the ground floor of the mill.