

A Quaint, Little, Old Indiana City

By JULIA LE CLERC KNOX

The old river town of Madison stretches along in some half dozen streets between the Ohio River and the hills and nods and dreams and dozes, resting calmly on its past laurels. A casual visitor would not realize that it was once the foremost city of the state, and in the "splendid idle forties" it was not *idle* though somewhat splendid, thanks to the humble *pig*. For Madison owed much of its commercial importance to this lowly animal, and was, at one time, the third pork packing point in the west.

One of these old slaughter-houses was destined after it no longer housed porcine choruses, to re-echo to the marvelous tones of Jenny Lind, which must have much surprised its walls, if indeed walls have ears, as the old adage says. I remember hearing my father tell of being present, in his boyhood, at the concert of the Swedish Nightingale. It seems there was no other building in the town, at that time, large enough to house the immense crowd, so, after much cleaning and scouring, the old packing plant was elevated to this great honor.

Madison was founded in 1808 by John Paul, for whom the D.A.R. have named the little ravine park at the back of the town. The location was then, commercially speaking, considered good. It was on the river between Cincinnati and Louisville which made shipping an easy matter. The site drew thither men of energy and vision, from all directions and for some years preceding the Civil War, the citizenry of the town was superior to any other in the state of Indiana.

So, the place has a great heritage which gives it a grave and dignified charm not easily matched. It unhurriedly sits apart from the pace that kills, in independent ease and seems to look askance upon those who do not share its composure.

Madison may well be called the city of interesting old homes. It would be hard to find a place of the same size that has so many mansion-like houses that seem so "to the manner born", with salon-like rooms of palatial dimensions. The Lanier Home, of course, strikes the highest note along this line, though there are many not far behind. A northern Indiana visitor to the place recently, expressed astonishment that

people anywhere in the middle west lived in the lap of luxury a hundred years ago, as that stately mansion signifies.

Every interesting historic landmark has back of it some great pioneer character whose memorial it is. So it is with the Lanier Home whose original owner, James Franklin Doughty Lanier, represented that best pioneer type "that brought to the making of a new state the finest capital". By his integrity and industry he rose from humble financial circumstances to a position where he helped very substantially to make our great state what it is today. By a loan of \$420,000, he enabled Governor Morton to equip the necessary state troops during a part of the Civil War. Again, his bank let Morton have \$640,000 to pay off state debts, a total of \$1,040,000 in the face of imminent risk, at the darkest hour of the conflict. So, the nation, as well as Indiana, owes Lanier a debt of gratitude for unselfish patriotism.

The proud old mansion stands, a mute monument to the grand old patriot, its builder. It represents the best taste in architecture of the pre-War period savoring, in its dignified simplicity, of the Classic revival. At the time it was completed, in 1844, it was said to surpass any building of like nature in either Cincinnati or Louisville. Even yet it seems to have no rival of the kind in Indiana, at least. The Harrison Home, at Vincennes, still not completely furnished, but interesting and dignified in its barrenness, can not compare with the Lanier Home as to grandeur and setting. The nearest peer it has in the state is Lane Place in Crawfordsville, which though neither so large nor so imposing, still preserves the intimacy of occupancy and whose setting, in all but the river view, is more beautiful. The Old Kentucky Home at Federal Hill, Bardstown, is built more nearly on the same lines, though not so large nor so handsome. Yet the furnishings seem more comparable.

The finest mansion in the west, we may well imagine the Lanier Mansion the scene of many notable affairs in our early history, a hospitable place where famous men and women foregathered. Thomas Buchanan Read, the author of "Sheridan's Ride" and "The Rising", spent some time there, painting the portraits of the family, one of which is that of Mrs. Lanier, now hanging in the home.

As you enter the broad hall you see, as a picture in a frame,

the lovely Ohio and the background of Kentucky hills, through the open door (if it be summer) at the end. This may tempt you to make your way at once to the back veranda, with its massive pillars, which leads down into a wide expanse of lawn on the river front, an ideal setting for a performance of *As You Like It* or other woodland drama or pageant. It is said that it has actually been put to some such uses.

If this view does not draw you too soon, you will note the circular stair case at your left, winding up to the glassed lantern of the third floor which lets in the light. Many noble old pieces of furniture lend grace and beauty to the great hall and still leave the impression of spaciousness. Two great horsehair sofas, a grandfather's clock, a hatrack, some Windsor chairs and an immense Japanese floor-vase intrigue the eye. A large oil portrait of Mr. Lanier occupies a shrine-like place over a pier-table of mahogany graced by two brass sperm or lard lamps of the kind that antedated the use of kerosene.

On your right as you enter, are the magnificent double parlors with graceful columns. They are furnished in the prevailing parlor style of the time, mantel mirrors, crystal chandeliers, mahogany center tables, a quaint old piano, handsome bookcases, Dresden china vases and other pieces in keeping. Two sofas and eight chairs of the French Empire period were imported from France by Mr. Lanier. These are upholstered in purple and grey to match the heavy window draperies and give the color scheme to the rooms. Two pieces of sculpture, Mary Lanier, in the charm of first youth and George Grey Barnard's "Crouching Venus" adorn these lovely twin apartments.

The dining room, which is on your left as you enter, is rich in old mahoganies, silver and china. The Sheraton chairs were imported from England. The chandelier is magnificent as are also the candelabra and the walls are decorated with Audubons. Here again is the mantel mirror. The great fly brush of peacock feathers, without which no pioneer dining room considered itself respectable, occupies a conspicuous place. The kitchen must have been at some distance, but with plenty of servants that was not important.

A small passage way separates the dining room from the sitting room, the color scheme of which is a warm crimson,

reflected in window draperies, upholstery and carpet. A great rosewood bookcase gives another interesting touch. There is an ormolu mantel clock and a chandelier to match. But the crowning piece of furniture is a wonderful old fire screen that tips at different angles and which so obviously belongs to another day that it at once becomes the center of attention because its like is so seldom seen.

By the wonderful spiral staircase you ascend to the wide upper hall of the second floor. Here is an old New Orleans triple wardrobe of mahogany, a grandfather's clock and some Windsor chairs. At each end of the hall is a small apartment, quaintly and attractively furnished. There are two large bedrooms on both sides of the hall, each furnished in a distinctive style, with color schemes carefully carried out in the minutest particulars, with canopied four posters, braided rugs, brass candle sticks, bureaus and the invariable wash stand with bowl and pitcher, great-grandparents of the modern bath room. There are hand-woven counterpanes, some being heavily embossed with candle-wick embroidery, fiddle-back chairs and old engravings galore. A trundle bed is a center of interest.

The nursery on the third floor is especially intriguing. No part of this lovely old mansion is more charming. Here are queer old dolls, and their furniture—beds, cradles, dressers, chairs, tables, cupboards, dishes, tubs and trunks and doll clothes stretched out on a line. Even the "grown up" and the "grown old" little girls are spellbound with the lure of it all. The servants quarters and the children's bedrooms adjoining, are not without their interest.

In refurnishing this old home it was impossible to restore all of the original articles but the style and atmosphere of a typical pre-War mansion have been successfully aimed at, and it is worth travelling many miles to see.

The first recollections of this delightfully old place were, when as a child, the writer heard of it at the home of Mr. Alex, the son of the original Lanier. He was spoken of as a mysterious recluse who, on account of an unlucky love affair, had shut himself off from the world. And so, the old home was given a halo by romantic sentiment. Later it was learned that this hero of romance had been rewarded by finally win-

ning the hand of his first and only love, who had become widowed by the death of his friend whom she had married.

Francis Costigan, architect and builder of the Lanier Home, was an eastern man who lived during the last twenty years of his life in Madison. He left quite a number of other notable buildings as monuments to his skill and taste, not only in Madison but in Indianapolis as well. The old Institute for the Blind, recently razed, is an example. His influence was great on other architects in near by towns, for instance George Kyle of Vevay used much the same plan when building the old U. P. Schenck mansion in that place. He even improved on the veranda, facing the river at the back of the house, by making it three storied. Its classic lines are a well known land-mark up and down the Ohio. Kyle also built the Schenck staircase circular, supporting itself, rising from the center of the hall and winding its way to the third story. The Vevay architect may, however, have copied the stair in the old Shrewsbury Mansion of Madison, also the work of Costigan. This too is a noteworthy building. The hall is wide but rather shorter than that of the Schenck Home and the circular stair seems to crowd it more. On the left are stately double parlors, separated by graceful columns that give an air of grandeur. On the right, again are double parlors, and beyond the front parlor is a spacious dining room which leads off into an entry and yet another apartment, making this old house four rooms wide at the front. The Jefferson Hotel, another of Costigan's designs, is built on the same grand lines. It used to sport colored waiters in dress suits, silver dishes and every thing that went to make up the ideal southern hostelry.

The home that Costigan built for himself on Third Street is by no means the least interesting of the grand old mansions that he erected in Madison. The doorway is especially noteworthy. A step or two ascends to a small square platform, supported by graceful, fluted columns. From the dome of this stoop or entry is suspended a chandelier. The hall is too tiny for a door to swing back into it, so the architect solved this problem by making a sliding door. From this diminutive reception hall, you walk through a tall, fourteen feet portal whose door curves with the curve of the front wall in the most unique way imaginable, the front window ledge being uneven with this odd curve. You enter a great salon-like apartment of some forty feet in length, with ceiling so high it resembles

the palaces and castles of the old world. There is a second high door on the right side of the room, about half way down the length. From this magnificent drawing room the house seems to reach a sort of anti-climax in two tiny rooms at the rear, significant of a later annex, a sort of after thought, as it were.

From the front entrance a steep flight of steps at the right of the magnificently large parlor, leads to the second floor where it ends for a minute, as it were, in a very narrow landing and then takes a stiff plunge to the ground floor again. To prevent the unwary from doing the same thing, a gate has been placed as a safeguard for the uninitiated. There are several bedrooms on the second with ceilings as high as those of the ground floor, but somehow they do not look it. One wonders how that immense drawing room could be heated in zero weather but the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Hinton, solve the problem by wintering in Florida.

Hon. Marcus R. Sulzer and family occupy the house next door and the narrow area between the two buildings is closed by a quaint old door, thought by some to bear the ear marks of Costigan. The Sulzer home is flush with the street as are so many of these houses of that architectural era. Large double parlors, separated by fluted columns, terminate in a narrow entry that leads to the square dining room while on the left the entry opens on a side porch. From the dining room you pass through the kitchen to a flower garden, resplendent with Japanese morning glories and scarlet sage. A path extending to the next street, has its edges abloom with a bright riot of petunias and other gay flowers. Stairs in the back parlor lead to a succession of bedrooms and bath.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Inglis have a very palatial residence on Main Street with a quaint, charming doorway, opening on a wide hall that leads through a narrow entry into a succession of rooms. The hall at the right opens on large double parlors, characteristic of all these old mansions. The upper floor duplicates the great hall, with a long string of rooms on one side, only. Here are many priceless antiques and art treasures picked up by Mrs. Inglis, on her travels abroad.

The old William Stapp home on lower Main Street is another notable, old mansion. It is situated on a rising knoll, back quite a bit from the street. The tree on the lawn, under which

Henry Clay once spoke, has long since gone the way of all trees. Also a wing at the left of the house has been torn away. The conventional broad hall has double rooms on both sides while a dining room branches off at one side and the kitchen occupies an ell. A broad stairway leads to an upper floor, with some twenty rooms in all. In the time of the Stapp occupancy the back yard reached to Third Street with croquet grounds, rockeries and pansy beds.

Besides the old family dwellings of which there are too many to enumerate, there are many other interesting places about Madison. The fountain which graces Broadway, is a duplicate of the one that took a prize at the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876. There is a George Grey Barnard Museum in an old church donated by Miss Drusilla Cravens, the fairy god-mother of Madison, who has done so much in restoring the Lanier Home, which was built by her grandfather.

George Grey Barnard is a Madison product. His father, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, looked like a twin brother of the poet, Longfellow. His mother had a face as delicate as an old cameo and a charming grace. At the time the writer was fortunate enough to see them in their own home, they occupied a stately old house on Second Street, of much the same architectural plan as most of the houses already described. Mrs. Barnard, with pardonable pride, exhibited a scrap book, containing the newspaper comments on her son's work. About the house were models and replicas of his well known sculpture. The Joan of Arc and Lincoln stand out most strongly in memory. Mingled strangely with these were the trophies and souvenirs sent home by the son on the western plains. As a climax, the gentle hostess seated herself at the old time spinet, a family heirloom, and from the yellowed ivory keys drew forth an air that attuned with the old time atmosphere of the place. Mrs. Barnard passed away shortly after that and the good Doctor followed not far behind.

Madison has sent forth many sons and daughters, who, in widely different walks of life, have brought her renown. Besides George Grey Barnard, whose fame as a sculptor is more than national, a few others are: Jesse D. Bright, United States Senator; David Graham Phillips, novelist; Irene Dunn, movie star. *Susan Lennox*, by Phillips, has recently been seen in the movies with Greta Garbo in the title rôle. This story is said to be based on actual facts and the scenes depicted are

pointed out near Madison. Miss Dunn starred in "Cimarron," in which her work as the heroine has been commented on very favorably by critics.

The oldest railroad in the state, the J. M. & I., was constructed between Indianapolis and Madison, down through that cut in the hills which is a wonderful feat of engineering. Buses and autos have driven the railroad from Columbus to North Madison out of business, and its place is now taken by an electric tram.