

## Indiana Historical Society

CHRISTOPHER B. COLEMAN

The preservation of historic structures and the erection of historical markers in Indiana demand more systematic consideration than has been given. From time to time persons interested in some particular place approach the Historical Society with the expectation that the Society will acquire and develop it. The Society, however, has no funds for this purpose and no staff for doing the work which would be involved. In the eastern states, historical and antiquarian societies, hereditary patriotic organizations, or groups organized for the special purpose, are the agencies which usually undertake this responsibility.

Occasionally in this state, various historical societies and clubs have served the useful function of holding historic houses until they could be taken over by some governmental office. Thus the Lanier House was very appropriately given by the late Charles D. Lanier to the Jefferson County Historical Society which kept it until the state consented to accept and restore it. The Henry Lane home in Crawfordsville was bought by the Montgomery County Historical Society, or perhaps better, was presented to it, but the Society finding itself unable to carry and maintain Lane Place, it was finally acquired by the city of Crawfordsville and, I understand, is leased to the Society for maintenance. The Fauntleroy home in New Harmony was deeded to the Indiana Federation of Clubs and has been maintained by it up to the present time, with the prospect, at least, of being merged with the state New Harmony Memorial.

In Indiana the state and local governments usually have to be appealed to for permanent care of memorials. Since the creation in 1919 of the State Department of Conservation, it has gradually become the accepted agency for the permanent preservation and maintenance of historic sites and buildings which are of state-wide or national significance. Sites and buildings which, prior to that time, belonged to the state and had been controlled by a special commission or other officers, have been transferred to that department. The Tippecanoe Battleground, the old State House at Corydon (which had been for many years the Harrison County Court-house), and the Nancy Hanks Lincoln burial ground, are

illustrations. The Lanier Home, when it was accepted by the state in 1925, was at once put in charge of the Department of Conservation. The General Assembly of Indiana and the national Congress, in creating the George Rogers Clark memorial commissions, provided that when completed the memorial should be maintained by the state of Indiana, and the former body specifically allotted it to the Department of Conservation. The same provision is contained in the Act of the present General Assembly providing for the New Harmony memorial.

Thus far, however, the Department of Conservation has not taken the initiative in selecting the sites and buildings to be developed as historical memorials, nor has it brought about their acquisition by the state. This, so far as the state is concerned, has been left to chance; that is to say, it depends on some person or organization to develop enough enthusiasm, interest and resources to induce the General Assembly to provide for the creation of a memorial for some individual or some movement. When such is forthcoming, a memorial is created. Otherwise, the great man or the movement concerned remains without material memorial and the historic building goes to pieces or passes into private use. Needless to say, the success of memorial movements is not in proportion to their merits, but in proportion to the pressure developed by their proponents. It would be ungracious to specify memorials of lesser importance which have been exploited, but certainly it must be admitted that some historical memorials in Indiana are not of as great significance as the site of Anthony Wayne's fort in the city which bears his name, or the La Salle portage in South Bend. Even in regard to markers requested by the various counties from the Historical Markers Project of the Works Progress Administration, all too often the most significant locations in the several counties are neglected in favor of less important points which are of especial interest to some one or two individuals.

In addition to the site of Anthony Wayne's fort at the head of the Maumee River (the erection of which signalized the "pacification" of the Indians of the Old Northwest) and the La Salle Portage in South Bend, anyone familiar with the state could probably suggest a dozen or more places which might well be made state memorials

and which are now falling into decay, or in some other way suffering serious damage to their historical value. To start the reader on such a list, one might mention the dam and aqueduct of the old Whitewater Canal at Metamora, the old Bailly trading post and residence in Porter County, pioneer mills, such as Beck's in Washington County, Killbuck Mill on Killbuck Creek, in Madison County, and the site of Fort Harrison (War of 1812) in Vigo County. At least two of the structures mentioned are likely to collapse, or to be otherwise ruined for historical and educational purposes unless something is done within the present year.

Already destroyed beyond repair or restoration are many of the earthworks left by the mound builders—the oldest human records in Indiana—such as those at Winchester in Randolph County. The most imposing pre-historic earthworks in the state (among them the largest single mound in Indiana), the Angel Mounds, near Evansville, have been saved only by the generosity of a few individuals and the exertions of the Indiana Historical Society.

It would therefore seem timely for the Indiana Historical Society, the county historical societies, the Historical Bureau, and the Department of Conservation, to work together for the formulation of some system by which the proper authorities, state, county, or city, could reasonably be expected to take over and properly develop historic sites and structures, in succession, as demanded by their importance and the urgency for action. Perhaps the committee of the Historical Society on historic markers and memorials might take the lead. That committee for 1939 consists of Herbert W. Foltz, Indianapolis, chairman; Louis A. Warren, Charles M. Niezer, Fort Wayne; Abram Simmons, Bluffton; Lorenz G. Schumm, Ray R. Addington, La Porte; Harry Johnson, Valparaiso; Paul H. Schmidt, Evansville; Francis Van Natter, Mrs. Harry T. Watts, Vincennes; Julie Le Clerc Knox, Vevay.

It is not out of place here to pay tribute to those individuals who recently, by their own efforts, have done great public service in preserving and restoring historic buildings. The work of Bernard Batty and the Arthur Jordan Foundation in obtaining the Benjamin Harrison home in Indianapolis and making it a semi-public historic memorial,

and the work of Mr. and Mrs. Eli Lilly, of Indianapolis, in the development along historical lines of the William Conner home in Hamilton County, are notable examples.

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#### A JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Indiana Historical Society has entered the field of bibliography, and work has commenced on its first task: a bibliography study of James Whitcomb Riley. Much source material may be found in Indianapolis, but it is hoped that librarians elsewhere, as well as collectors and other interested persons, may be able to add information regarding the ephemeral bits of Rileyana. If you have pamphlets or broadsides by or about Riley and will send a description of them, such helpful interest will be greatly appreciated.

A bibliographical check-list of the writings of all Indiana authors, in all fields, is also under way. By "Indiana author" is meant any writer born in Indiana, or definitely identified with the state. Aimed at accuracy and completeness, it will be a useful historical as well as bibliographical contribution. It is appropriate that the state's historical society should serve as a final clearing-house for information regarding the state's authors.

The task of compilation is under the direction of Mr. Anthony J. Russo, with Mrs. Russo collaborating. The work is directed by a special committee consisting of Mr. J. K. Lilly, Jr., chairman, Mr. Christopher B. Coleman, Mr. Benjamin D. Hitz and Mr. Albert L. Rabb. Communications should be addressed to Mr. Russo, in care The Indiana Historical Society, Indiana State Library Building, Indianapolis, Indiana.