Winning the Battle
Landmarks connected to times of war

MAKING AN IMPACT
Investing in a Wabash neighborhood

PLACE, SPACE, & RACE
Preserving Indiana’s African American Heritage
Economy of Preservation

ON OCTOBER 7, INDIANA LANDMARKS, in partnership with the Indiana Farm Bureau, presented its 2020 John Arnold Award for Rural Preservation to Gerald and Betty Manning and family for their exemplary stewardship of the historic Stream Cliff Farm in Jennings County (featured in the September/October issue of Indiana Preservation). In a typical year we would give the award at the Indiana State Fair. But this year we presented it at the winning farm, thanks to the Mannings who hosted the program in Stream Cliff Farm’s repurposed historic barn that now serves as an events venue. Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch participated in the award presentation before a well-spaced and masked audience.

The Arnold Award honors farmers who couple modern agriculture with the preservation and continued use of historic farm buildings, a combination in full force at Stream Cliff Farm. Add to that a healthy agritourism operation, one can easily see why the Mannings took this year’s prize.

Stream Cliff Farm, as does the John Arnold Award, points to an aspect of our work that often gets overshadowed by our emphasis on heritage preservation. And that is, historic preservation is about commerce as much as culture.

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Why We Must Preserve our African American Heritage in Indiana

By Dr. Olon Dotson, associate professor of architecture in Ball State University’s College of Architecture and Planning, and chairman of Indiana Landmarks’ African American Landmarks Committee

THE NOVEMBER 1990 ISSUE OF EBONY MAGAZINE featured an article by a young Wynton Marsalis entitled, “Why We Must Preserve our Jazz Heritage.” Marsalis, who had, and continues to, devote his life and career to preservation through expression, discussed the critical importance of the conservation of the art form by exploring the devotion of jazz greats including Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington. He suggested that Ellington, through his compositions, clearly understood this heritage and demonstrated its legacy by taking the music to the highest level. Marsalis argued that in our constant war for basic dignity, “your ammunition is your imagination.” These artists were “defining the greatness available in human terms in this society, regardless of obstacles.” Marsalis found the art form of Jazz to be under threat and his approach through critical practice not only into my exploration of architecture, but in my understanding of society in general. I began to understand that the development of physical space, after all, is merely a manifestation of what is produced by our society. The organic patterns and configuration of cities and towns where we reside; the civic plazas, parks, and squares where we congregate and interact; and the buildings and homes that we occupy on a daily basis are all reflections of who and what we are.

In the early 1990s, Indianapolis native and internationally recognized artist and activist Claudia Polley approached Indiana Landmarks President Reid Williamson (1935-2017) to explore the urgent need of preserving Indiana’s African American heritage. Polley and Williamson joined forces, co-founding the African American Landmarks Committee in 1992. The mission of this entity was heritage conservation, with the understanding that physical evidence of many Black places and spaces in Indiana were under threat.

The establishment of this committee inspired other preservation organizations to consider heritage conservation as part of their mission. In 1994, The African American Heritage Preservation Foundation was established for the preservation, maintenance, and awareness of endangered or little-known African American historical sites primarily in the mid-Atlantic and southeastern United States. The National Trust for Historic Preservation subsequently established the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund to “support the preservation of sites and stories of Black history” at a national level.

By preserving historic sites that tell the story of African Americans in this country we draw attention to the contributions of both ordinary and extraordinary people. Such stories might otherwise be lost because urban renewal and the out-migration of blacks destroyed or led to the abandonment of many African American communities. By saving African American landmarks we can stimulate revitalization and foster interest in places that today seem to exist without history or meaning. Indeed, these places can serve as anchors reviving our sense of community.

Concerning historic preservation from an African American perspective, we must look beyond the elements featured in the Euro-centered revival, colonial, and hegemonic structures surrounding us. A rudimentary understanding of American history, and more specifically, Indiana history, informs us that many of these spaces and places facilitated systems of oppression, institutional segregation, and other structural barriers designed to impede our progress in society. As we witness the erasure of the remains of Black communities constructed under said systems, we must have the capacity to discover our creative and collective determination to preserve reflected in places and spaces throughout our state. We must embrace the notion of heritage conservation an approach to recognizing and celebrating Indiana’s African American landmarks.
Leading by Example

WHEN INDIANA LANDMARKS ACQUIRES historic properties, we often target places that are endangered, underused, or blighted—properties that need some improvement to show buyers their potential and whose revival we hope will inspire imitators and investors. So when a number of historic houses recently came up for auction in one Wabash neighborhood, we saw an opportunity to make a big impact.

“By improving a cluster of homes in a two- to three-block area, there’s really an opportunity to transform the neighborhood,” says Dave Haist, an Indiana Landmarks board member who lives in the neighborhood.

The six houses Indiana Landmarks acquired are all located in the East Wabash Historic District, a National Register-listed neighborhood roughly bounded by Walnut, East Market, North Wabash and South East streets. The properties recently served as rental housing, most divided into apartments.

“These homes today are detractors for that neighborhood,” says Parker Beauchamp, Wabash native, business owner, and past chairman of Indiana Landmarks’ board of directors. “Once Indiana Landmarks has fixed them up, I hope the biggest detractors will become the biggest attractors, the reason why people would move to that neighborhood.”

Built from the 1870s to the 1910s, the houses illustrate the range of architectural styles in the historic district. “There truly is something for everybody, from a modest, wood frame house to larger Victorians,” says Paul Hayden, director of our northfield office in Wabash, who will head the project. “It’s a mad mix of styles and sizes.”

We expect the project—acquiring the six Wabash houses and rehabilitating the exteriors—to cost approximately $770,000, funded by Indiana Landmarks, the City of Wabash, and donations from private individuals and organizations. Local government leaders have supported our past preservation efforts. We previously partnered with the City to acquire and repair the 1848 Alber House, Wabash’s oldest extant house, and with the Wabash County Commission and Jail, a former entry on our 10 Most Endangered list now on the market for $79,000.

“From our past experience with Indiana Landmarks, we know that these houses are going to be returned to a much better condition and standard once they are done with them,” says Wabash Mayor Scott Long. “Wabash is seeing a resurgence of people who want to take on historic homes and repair them to their former grandeur, but it’s been tough to buy in certain categories. We hope this fills a need.”

Wabash’s vibrant downtown includes a variety of shops and restaurants, as well as the Charley Creek Inn, and historic entertainment venues including the Honeywell Center and recently restored Eagles’ Theatre. But options for homebuyers have been limited, particularly for those seeking historic houses.

“As leaders of Wabash look for what is needed to attract people to live and work here, the number one issue is having housing that is affordable and livable. Our amenities are fantastic, but people can’t find a home,” notes Haist. “When restored, these houses will fit that right price point and be in high demand.”

We expect to list the properties for sale in early 2021, once exterior improvements are complete. Watch our website, indianalandmarks.org, for updates.

When 23 historic houses came up for auction in Wabash, Indiana Landmarks seized an opportunity to make a big impact, buying six of the most architecturally significant in the East Wabash Historic District. We plan to rehabilitate the exteriors before putting them back on the market this spring.

PHOTOS BY EVAN HALE

A c.1900 brick and stone Queen Anne-style duplex at 106-108 East Hill Street retains original fireplaces, woodwork, staircases, and built-ins, as well as fine masonry work and a wide front porch outside. Its design offers an opportunity for an owner to live on one side and rent the other.

In addition to its striking exterior, the c.1870 Second Empire-style house at 189 North Wabash Street includes unusual interior details added during a 1920s remodel, including a sculpted iron staircase, Art Deco light fixtures, and seven elaborately tiled bathrooms with period fixtures. “You expect Joan Crawford to come down the front staircase,” says Hayden.

We will make exterior improvements to all of the properties to address deterioration and add curb appeal before offering them for sale with exterior covenants to safeguard their historic appearance.

The houses acquired by Indiana Landmarks most recently served as rental housing, many of them divided into apartments. The architecturally diverse selection includes a c.1890 Queen Anne duplex (above) on Hill Street with original built-ins and c.1890 Classical Revival (below) on Main Street overlooking downtown. Many of the houses retain fine features, including seven elaborately tiled bathrooms from a 1920s remodel in a c.1870 Second Empire-style house on Wabash Street (facing page).
All around Indiana, you can find landmarks connected to times of war. Some directly supported military operations, including factories that manufactured parts for planes, ships, and tanks, plants that produced ammunition, and transportation complexes that stored and shipped munitions. There are entire neighborhoods built for workers of wartime industries, or that provided returning veterans with affordable options to pursue the American dream of homeownership. In downtown squares and in cemeteries, monuments and statues commemorate the fallen. Indiana even counts a plane and a landing ship tank used in the war effort among a rare group of non-building landmarks.

As 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, we examine the history and fate of landmarks connected to it and other wars, looking at structures preserved and endangered, and how an industrious home front fueled the creation of so many places still telling the story of a nation’s bravery and sacrifice.

WARTIME BOOMTOWN

At the outset of World War II, Evansville was at a tipping point. As the country’s manufacturers transitioned to supporting the war effort, the city mobilized industry in an unprecedented way, becoming a nationwide leader in the production of landing ship tanks (LSTs), P-47 aircraft, and ammunition.

There was a very deliberate and targeted campaign by city, business, political, and union leaders to...
make sure the city of Evansville didn’t get left behind when the war orders started rolling in,” says Dr. James MacLeod, University of Evansville history department chair and author of *Evansville in World War II*.

The city’s inland location and easy access to rail and river transportation routes made it an ideal hub for manufacturing. Thousands moved to the city, swelling the industrial pre-war workforce from 18,000 to over 80,000 by 1944. While multiple Evansville factories did their part, the city’s 45-acre shipyard was its biggest employer, primarily building LSTs, amphibious vessels that transported troops and equipment to beaches for invasion. At its peak in 1944, the shipyard produced roughly one ship every four days, completing 107 LSTs by the war’s end. Today, only a crane and a marker remain to note the shipyard’s location. However, the restored LST 325, used in the D-Day invasion, is moored on the nearby Ohio River as a floating museum.

During World War II, Evansville’s Chrysler plant (above left) became the Evansville Ordnance plant, producing roughly 96 percent of the United States’ .45-caliber ammunition made in the U.S. Portions of the building with its sawtooth roofline remain today, now housing a sporting goods manufacturer and distributor.

Ammunition produced at the ordnance plant was transported to a 30-acre site near the Chicago & Eastern Illinois railroad line in northern Vanderburgh County, complete with warehouses, administration buildings, watch towers, and bunkers for the explosives. Today, a collection of concrete structures on the site of the present-day Vanderburgh County Fairgrounds are all that remain of the munitions depot. The military constructed three such facilities during WWII; the remnants of Evansville’s complex are believed to be the only ones still standing.

The exact combination of factors that happened in Evansville was certainly unique, leading to the rapid transition from civilian to military manufacturing. Nowhere else in the world was building both P-47s and LSTs, notes MacLeod. “What could have been a ghost town became a boom town.”

**MONUMENTAL EFFORT**

On the southeast corner of the Monroe County Courthouse square in Bloomington, the Alexander Memorial comprises a 35-foot-tall limestone monument topped by a carved Civil War soldier. Created at the bequest of Civil War veteran W.M. Alexander, the monument was dedicated in 1928 to commemorate Monroe County veterans of all wars. Today, its eroded surface is a tribute in disrepair. Happily, restoration is on the horizon.

“This means a great deal to Monroe County’s veterans, who have fought in every way in every war the United States has been involved in,” says Mary Eitman, Monroe County Veterans Affairs director, who helped launch the restoration initiative.

Next spring, workers will remove stains from the limestone and repoint mortar joints, and volunteer stonecarvers will re-create carved limestone panels depicting military scenes on monument base, where erosion has blurred fine details on the once-crisp scenes. Unable to locate design drawings, the restoration committee made a public appeal for photos, scouring newspaper, museum, and historical archives. The search produced images of three of the corners, but no clear photos of the northeast corner, which depicts a cavalry charge. “We’re still holding out hope that someone will find a photo in their basement or attic to offer a clue,” says Danielle Bachant-Bell, a preservation consultant and restoration committee member.

The project is supported by $73,450 from the county government, $100,000 worth of stone and labor donated from area limestone companies, a $49,850 state Historic Preservation Fund grant, and individual donations. The Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County is still accepting donations.
The federal government built Charlestown’s Pleasant Ridge (above) to address a housing shortage for ammunition plant workers in 1942. One of the country’s largest collections of prefabricated Gunnison Homes, it gained National Register listing in 2019 (below).

PHOTO BY RICHARD COLVIN, CHARLESTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

During World War II and in the years immediately following, demand for housing skyrocketed, fueled first by population booms in areas where workers moved to become part of the wartime industries, and later by the return of veterans ready to start families. Many of those neighborhoods built in the ‘40s and ’50s remain, a lasting testament to the American dream.

In 1941, an influx of workers for the new Indiana Army Ammunition Plant swelled the population of Charlestown from 900 to 14,000. To house them, the federal government constructed the optimistically named Pleasant Ridge neighborhood on the edge of town, using pre-fabricated housing to speed construction. New Albany’s Gunnison Housing Corporation won the contract in 1942 to manufacture 750 “Gunnison Victory Homes”—single units, duplexes, and triples—for the new subdivision. Made of tough plywood panels, with windows and doors installed at the factory, houses could arrive by truck to be assembled on site and move-in ready within three days.

After the war, the homes appealed to families as an affordable housing option. Though several houses have been demolished, Pleasant Ridge remains one of the largest collections of Gunnison Homes in the country.

It’s a distinction in jeopardy, as in recent years a local developer targeted vacant homes in Pleasant Ridge to be replaced with more upscale housing. Concerned for their neighborhood’s heritage, residents established the Pleasant Ridge Neighborhood Association and partnered with Indiana Landmarks to nominate the neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places, achieving listing in 2019. Now, some have joined Indiana Landmarks in appealing to community leaders to design infill housing that complements the neighborhood.

Josh Craven, who grew up in Pleasant Ridge, lives in the same house owned by his grandparents and father. As neighborhood association president, he’s led efforts to increase recognition for the neighborhood, worried that upscale designs alongside the historic manufactured homes might put pressure on Pleasant Ridge homeowners to sell their houses. “My hope is that we’ll be able to come up with something that will not affect the historic value of the neighborhood but still attract new residents,” says Craven.

Like other cities around the state, Mishawaka faced a housing shortage for returning veterans. In 1946, the city’s American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars groups joined forces with the local labor union for U.S. Rubber Company—Mishawaka’s biggest employer at the time—to create Normain Heights, an affordable housing subdivision located on 80 acres of farmland north of the city. Working with architect Karl Schwartz, the group developed seven home designs, locating lots along new streets named for World War II battle sites. From 1947-1949, 315 houses were constructed in the preapproved designs. A unique development created by veterans for veterans, it’s believed to be the largest National Register district of its type in the country.

When the City moved to tear down Normain Heights, an affordable housing subdivision, residents established the Normain Heights Neighborhood Association and partnered with Indiana Landmarks to nominate the neighborhood to become a conservation district.

PHOTO BY TODD SEIBERT

Above: Veterans groups created Mishawaka’s Normain Heights to provide World War II veterans an affordable housing option. Today, descendants of the original owners continue to occupy many of the houses. Ruth Pavich, Mary Bath Torma, Arlene Martin, Jerry Enders, and Rachel Fiedenbarg (pictured above) advocated for the neighborhood to become a conservation district.

PHOTO BY RICHARD COLVIN

Right: During a period when many African Americans were denied access to home ownership, Black homebuilder Andrew Means paved the way for Gary’s African American middle class. Under a restrictive covenant and segregation, he’s led efforts to increase recognition for the neighborhood but still attract new residents, worried that upscale designs alongside the historic manufactured homes might put pressure on Pleasant Ridge homeowners to sell their houses. “My hope is that we’ll be able to come up with something that will not affect the historic value of the neighborhood but still attract new residents,” says Craven.

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PHOTO BY RICHARD COLVIN

Right: During a period when many African Americans were denied access to home ownership, Black homebuilder Andrew Means paved the way for Gary’s African American middle class. Under a restrictive covenant and segregation, he’s led efforts to increase recognition for the neighborhood but still attract new residents. Like a number of others in the neighborhood, Torma lives in the home built for her parents. “It’s still a really good place to live,” says Torma. “I was raised in this neighborhood and all my kids have been raised here.”

The American dream was less accessible to some. Postwar housing options were even more limited for African Americans, who were often excluded from new developments due to restrictive covenants and segregation. In Gary, Black homebuilder Andrew Means made his mark, creating quality housing for the city’s African American middle class. An Army veteran and steel mill worker who had also attended the
From 1943-1946, the camp served as an internment center housing German and Italian prisoners. In addition to working on the grounds, in the kitchen, and doing laundry and other maintenance, some POWs worked on area farms and in local factories. In 1943, Italian POWs received permission to build the modest chapel, using leftover brick and stucco. Inside, they painted the altar to look like it was made of marble and used berries, flowers—even blood, it’s rumored—to create pigments for hand-painted frescoes of cherubs, Madonna, angels, the dove of peace, and, on the ceiling, the eye of God. Open on the south end with cross-shaped cutouts on the east and west sides, the chapel became a gathering place for daily services and Sunday Mass.

By 1989, the neglect and decades of exposure had nearly erased the frescoes. The Indiana National Guard and Italian Heritage Society of Indiana partnered to repair the chapel and conserve the art, encasing the building’s open side with glass. Of the more than 100 buildings constructed for the internment camp, it’s the only one still standing; all the other structures were sold to other Army complexes or auctioned off at the end of World War II.

Each fall, descendants of the POWs gather at the chapel to honor the prisoners and the camp’s heritage. “The Italian POWs were treated really well by the American forces and some of them came from quite humble backgrounds and how their families overseas were being treated by comparison,” says Guy Tedesco, a Louisville sculptor and artist whose father was an Italian POW at Camp Atterbury. “This chapel gave them a place where they got better. It’s an important chapter in Italian, military, and world history.”

SPIRITUAL RETREAT

In southern Johnson County, near the Camp Atterbury Fish and Wildlife area, the diminutive Chapel in the Meadow—measuring just 11 by 16 feet—represents an outsized history. During World War II, the chapel provided a spiritual retreat for hundreds of prisoners of war (POW).

During World War II, Italian prisoners of war at Camp Atterbury in Johnson County built a modest chapel out of leftover brick and stucco, using berries and flowers to create pigments for hand-painted religious frescoes. Descendants of the POWs gather at the chapel each fall for an event honoring the prisoners and the camp’s history.

“IT’S BECOME REALLY HARD FOR BUSINESSES IN SMALL TOWN AMERICA TO MAINTAIN EASY ACCESS TO SHOPS, BUSINESSES, AND HER CHURCH. SINCE THEN, HE’S INVESTED IN DOZENS OF DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES, INCLUDING A GYM, A CENTURY-OLD FURNITURE STORE, A BOUTIQUE CLOTHING SHOP, A FLOWER SHOP, AN ICE-CREAM PARLOR, AND AN EVENT CENTER. IT’S BECOME REALY HARD FOR BUSINESSES IN SMALL TOWN AMERICA TO COMPETE WITH BIG BOX STORES,” NOTES MARRY. “I’VE FOOCUSED SO MUCH OF MY ENERGIES IN RESTORING AND PRESERVING STRUCTURES IN AURORA THAT I’D LIKE TO SEE IT MAKE IT. AURORA AND OTHER SMALL TOWNS HAVE A HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE THAT’S WORTH PRESERVING.”

The Rahes became active in preservation while working in Chicago in the late 90s, restoring the 1928 Noble Judah Estate where they lived in Lake Forest and nominating it to the National Register of Historic Places. They utilized state incentives that froze property assessment on their house for 12 years, provided money saved on property taxes went towards restoration efforts. "It was a great tool we tried to educate others on how to use," notes Marty. "If we could get a established in all states, we could be saving properties across the country."

The two have been members of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Cincinnati Preservation Association, with Marty serving as a director on both boards. Through their efforts in Aurora, the Rahes became acquainted and involved with Indiana Landmarks, where Marty also serves on the board of directors, offering his financial and preservation expertise.

“I think Indiana Landmarks leads the pack of preservation groups across the country,” says Marty. “It’s reach throughout the state is unmatched. We must continue to get the word out and educate people on how preservation can help their communities.”

Passion for Places Inspires Couple to Support Preservation

MEMBER PROFILE

DURING LIFELONG CAREERS IN INTERNATIONAL banking, Indiana Landmarks members Marty and Maribeth Rahe have lived in Chicago, New York, London, and Europe, giving them firsthand perspective on how historic buildings offer a sense of history.


THE MOVE TO CINCINNATI IN 2003 BROUGHT THE COUPLE CLOSER TO AURORA, INDIANA, WHERE MARTY SPENT HIS CHILDHOOD. HILIFOREST, AN 1855 MANSION BUILT FOR INDUSTRIALIST THOMAS GAFF OVERLOOKING DOWNTOWN, WAS ONE OF THE FIRST HISTORIC HOUSES THAT MARTY REMEMBERS MAKING AN IMPRESSION ON HIM. YEARS LATER, HE AND MARIBETH PURCHASED A NEIGHBORING HOME REMOVED TO BE BUILT AROUND AN EARLY LOG HOUSE. UNDER THE ADDITIONAL WORKS, UNCOVERED THE C.1820 HARRIS CABIN, WHICH THE RAHES DONATED TO HILL FOREST TO HELP TELL THE STORY OF THE COMMUNITY’S EARLY PIONEERS.

AFER HIS FATHER PASSED AWAY IN 1985, MARTY PURCHASED THE 1930s DOWNTOWN BUILDING HE OWNED, REHABBING IT WITH AN APARTMENT AND ELEVATOR SO HIS MOTHER COULD STAY IN AURORA AND MAINTAIN EASY ACCESS TO SHOPS, BUSINESS, AND HER CHURCH. SINCE THEN, HE’S INVESTED IN DOZENS OF DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES, INCLUDING A GYM, A CENTURY-OLD FURNITURE STORE, A BOUTIQUE CLOTHING SHOP, A FLOWER SHOP, AN ICE-CREAM PARLOR, AND AN EVENT CENTER. IT’S BECOME REALLY HARD FOR BUSINESSES IN SMALL TOWN AMERICA TO COMPETE WITH BIG BOX STORES,” NOTES MARRY. “I’VE FOCUSED SO MUCH OF MY ENERGIES IN RESTORING AND PRESERVING STRUCTURES IN AURORA THAT I’D LIKE TO SEE IT MAKE IT. AURORA AND OTHER SMALL TOWNS HAVE A HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE THAT’S WORTH PRESERVING.”

THE RAHES BECAME ACTIVE IN PRESERVATION WHILE WORKING IN CHICAGO IN THE LATE 90S, RESTORING THE 1928 NOBLE JUDAH ESTATE WHERE THEY LIVED IN LAKE FOREST AND NOMINATING IT TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. THEY UTILIZED STATE INCENTIVES THAT FROZE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT ON THEIR HOUSE FOR 12 YEARS, PROVIDED MONEY SAVED ON PROPERTY TAXES WENT TOWARDS RESTORATION EFFORTS. “IT WAS A GREAT TOOL WE TRIED TO EDUCATE OTHERS ON HOW TO USE,” NOTES MARRY. “IF WE COULD GET IT ESTABLISHED IN ALL STATES, WE COULD BE SAVING PROPERTIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.”

THE TWO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND THE CINCINNATI PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION, WITH MARTY SERVING AS A DIRECTOR ON BOTH BOARDS. THROUGH THEIR EFFORTS IN AURORA, THE RAHES BECAME ACQUAINTED AND INVOLVED WITH INDIANA LANDMARKS, WHERE MARTY ALSO SERVES ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OFFERING HIS FINANCIAL AND PRESERVATION EXPERTISE.

“I THINK INDIANA LANDMARKS LEADS THE PACK OF PRESERVATION GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY,” SAYS MARTY. “IT’S REACH THROUGHOUT THE STATE IS UNMATCHED. WE MUST CONTINUE TO GET THE WORD OUT AND EDUCATE PEOPLE ON HOW PRESERVATION CAN HELP THEIR COMMUNITIES.”
OUR RESTORATION OF SAMARA, THE FRANK Lloyd Wright-designed John and Catherine Christian House in West Lafayette, is getting a $1 million boost.

The National Park Service recently awarded a $500,000 Save America’s Treasures grant for repairs at the house, which Indiana Landmarks co-stewards with the John E. Christian Family Memorial Trust, Inc. The public grant will be matched by $503,000 in private funds from the John E. Christian Family Memorial Trust, Inc.

“Samara is truly one of America’s treasures, not only because the home was designed by America’s most famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, but because it’s one of the most complete, fully implemented Wright-designed projects, with original landscape, graphic motif, interior furnishings and exterior structures,” says Marsh Davis, president of Indiana Landmarks. “We’re pleased that it has risen to such national prominence.”

Dr. John and Catherine Christian commissioned Wright as architect, working with him from 1950-1956 to develop design and construction details. During a visit to Taliesin, Catherine gave the famous architect a 28-page booklet, “What We Need for How We Live,” detailing the couple’s space needs and how they would use each room—from family gatherings to hosting guests. Dr. Christian provided exceptional care for the home until his health began to fail in later years, says Davis. “Thanks to his care, the home remains stunning, but, as one might expect with a 64-year-old home, it is ready for some structural restoration.”

Harboe Architects—noted for its restoration of the Wright-designed Unity Temple and Robie House in Chicago—conducted a conditions assessment in 2019 to determine the most pressing repair needs and outline a restoration plan. Settling in the southeast corner foundation has escalated in recent years, resulting in several exterior and interior conditions that demand attention to ensure the long-term integrity of the landmark home. Repair work is expected to begin next spring. Follow the work online at facebook.com/WrightsSAMARA.

Samara affords guests a rare insight into Wright’s design philosophy. Indiana Landmarks led a years-long effort to get the building designated a National Historic Landmark in 2015, which made it eligible for federal grants like the Save America’s Treasures Grant.

“Dr. Christian provided exceptional care for the home until his health began to fail in later years,” says Davis. “Thanks to his care, the home remains stunning, but, as one might expect with a 64-year-old home, it is ready for some structural restoration.”

More than $1 million—including a $500,000 Save America’s Treasures grant—will spur restoration of Samara (above), West Lafayette’s Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house. This summer, a team of students (right) from Washington University in St. Louis and Purdue University used ground-penetrating radar and cloud mapping to create digital models that will help analyze structural issues, including cracks in concrete pavers (below). PHOTO BY LEE LEWELLEN (ABOVE) AND LINDA EALES (below).
CARES ACT SUPPORTS CHARITABLE GIVING

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES, H.R. 748) was signed into law by President Trump on March 27 of this year. The Act is intended to help Americans deal with the economic impact and health crisis brought on by the outbreak of COVID-19. Among its provisions are two opportunities of particular note for charitable giving:

• The legislation includes a universal (or non-itemized, above-the-line) deduction allowing all taxpayers to deduct up to $300 in charitable contributions (cash donations, not in-kind contributions) made in 2020.

• For those who claim itemized deductions, the CARES Act also raises the charitable deduction limitation from 60 percent of adjusted gross income to 100 percent; and for corporations, raises the annual limit from 10 percent to 25 percent.

If you would like to discuss a charitable gift to Indiana Landmarks, please contact Sharon Gamble, Vice President for Development, Sharon Gamble, 317-822-7921, sgamble@indianalandmarks.org. Please consult your own tax advisor for advice.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

To help slow the potential spread of COVID-19, all Indiana Landmarks offices and properties remain closed to the public. However, as our staff continue to work from home, you can reach us at 800-450-4534, 317-639-4524, or check our staff directory at indianalandmarks.org/staff.

Our sincere apologies for the inconvenience. We appreciate your ongoing support of Indiana Landmarks and hope you will work with us to stay safe and healthy!

OTHER WAYS TO CONNECT

Though you may not see us at our usual public events this year, rest assured Indiana Landmarks' staff is still hard at work saving the places you love. Keep up with what we’re working on by following our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts or by signing up for our e-letters at indianalandmarks.org/e-newsletter-signup. We’ll share photos of works-in-progress, celebrate buildings saved, and alert you to opportunities for virtual talks and tours.

BRIEFLY NOTED

A gift of membership in Indiana Landmarks delivers our bimonthly magazine, e-letters full of interesting news, and discounts on special events, and it supports our historic preservation work around the state. For the holiday season, buy gift memberships to new uses, with captivating photos that help tell the story. Proceeds from the sales of the coffee table book support the work that help tell the story. Proceeds from the magazine, e-letters full of interesting news, and discounts on special events, and it supports our historic preservation work around the state.

For the holiday season, buy gift memberships at a discounted rate: $10 off the regular price of $29.95 for individual and household memberships.

A gift that gives! A feel-good gift? Look no further. Tours & Events

Tours & Events Nov/Dec 2020

Century of Progress Virtual Talk & Online Look

In lieu of our popular in-person tour of the five Century of Progress houses in the Indiana Dunes National Park this year, we’re offering a short, free behind-the-scenes online look at the 1933-34 Chicago World’s Fair homes before, during, and after restoration. Bonus: Watch “Our Fair House,” a conversation with lessees of the Florida Tropical and Restmore houses, as they share the laughs and headaches in converting temporary show houses into weekend retreats.

We hope the talk and preview will bring you deeper appreciation for these unique homes when our tour returns in 2021. Registration required. Visit indianalandmarks.org/tours-events for details.

DEC. 3 “The Magic of Ayres”

Join Ken Turchi, author of L.S. Ayres and Company: The Store at the Crossroads of America, for a delightful discussion of Christmases past, present, and future at the historic building on the corner of Meridian and Washington streets in Indianapolis. The conversation will be Dan Evans, Jr., whose father worked at Ayres from 1948-1976, rising through the ranks from personnel staff to president and CEO; and Paul Smith, restoration project manager for the iconic Ayres Clock. Reminisce about the glory days of the department store and find out what it takes to give a 3-foot-tall cherub a facelift. 5:30-6:30 p.m.

FRENCH LICK & WEST BADEN SPRINGS

Ongoing tours for overnight guests:

West Baden Springs Hotel

Wednesday-Saturday, 2 & 4 p.m.

French Lick Springs Hotel

Wednesday-Sunday, noon Tours depart from our Landmarks Emporium shops in the hotels. Discount for members on tours and in shops. Reservations recommended. 812-936-5870, swoodward@indianalandmarks.org. Please note Landmarks Emporium and Tours will be closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve beginning at 4 p.m., and Christmas Day.

Twilight Tours & Behind-the-Scenes Tours

All Twilight Tours and Behind-the-Scenes Tours in 2020 have been cancelled.

NOTE: All tours are subject to hotels being open to the public and only open to overnight guests of French Lick Resort. Check our website for current status and ticket info.
IN 2016, INDIANA LANDMARKS SPEARHEADED a campaign to repair the inner workings of Indianapolis’s iconic Ayres Clock. This year, we turned our attention to the exterior, where a team of local craftsmen assembled to repair, clean, and wax the clock’s historic bronze case.

L.S. Ayres Department Store installed the 10,000-pound, 8-foot-tall clock at the southwest corner of Washington and Meridian streets in 1936. The store added to the clock’s cachet in 1947 with the addition of a bronze cherub, which magically appeared to perch on the clock from Thanksgiving through Christmas (read more on page 3).

Along with the clock’s case, the cherub is being cleaned and waxed in preparation for its Thanksgiving eve arrival.

Indiana Landmarks is leading repair and financing efforts for the project, which is estimated to cost around $65,000. Donations of $100 or more will receive a custom commemorative pin depicting the Ayres clock and cherub, a perfect holiday accessory!

To learn more and contribute to the project, visit indianalandmarks.org/ayres-clock.

PHOTO BY EVAN HALE

Watching the Clock