

INDIANA PRESERVATION

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023



INDIANA LANDMARKS



10 MOST ENDANGERED

Family Ties

MULTIPLE GENERATIONS
PRESERVE WOLCOTTVILLE FARM

Hometown Proud

AWARD WINNERS RAISE AWARENESS
OF LOCAL LANDMARKS

Our annual list calls attention
to places in jeopardy

Challenge and Opportunity

ICONIC BEST DESCRIBES

New Harmony’s Atheneum. Commissioned by Historic New Harmony in 1976 and completed in 1979, it helped advance the career of acclaimed architect Richard Meier, and its gleaming white surfaces and dramatic geometric forms, which characterize Meier’s work, add to the remarkable architectural continuum that defines New Harmony.



Even though the Atheneum still appears strikingly modern, much has changed since 1979. Like many buildings of its era, it faces challenges related to energy consumption and current building codes. But with the challenges come opportunities.

This past summer, the University of Southern Indiana, through its Historic New Harmony program, engaged Chicago-based architects Edward Torrez of Bauer Latoza Studio and Tom Bassett-Dilley of Tom Bassett-Dilley Architects to examine the Atheneum and provide high-level suggestions for improving its environmental sustainability. One would be hard-pressed to find a better test case for these issues than the internationally renowned Atheneum.

Our hope is that the architects’ study of the Atheneum, funded by the Efroymson Family Fund and our affinity group Indiana Modern, will ultimately lead to a major demonstration project that will benefit not only the Atheneum but will provide practical and sensitive solutions to climate and code issues in other modern landmarks as they age.

Marsh Davis, President

On the Cover

Development pressures and vacancy threaten Plainfield’s nineteenth-century Thomas and Louisa Little House. The new entry on Indiana Landmarks’ 10 Most Endangered list needs protections to safeguard its future. See all the landmarks on this year’s list on p. 8. PHOTO BY EVAN HALE



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STARTERS



EVAN HALE

Cattle Call

THE ROOF ON THE towering brick barn at Plainview Farms in Wolcottville helps tell the story of the place’s history, with giant cattle depicted in patterned asphalt shingles. When it came time to re-roof the barn in recent years, the cows acquired horns, reflecting the farm’s transition from raising dairy cows to Texas Longhorns. Turn to p. 6 to read more about the history of Evers Plainview Farms, winner of the 2023 John Arnold Award for Rural Preservation.



© HARVESTER HOMECOMING



CODY EBBELER

Delightfully Spooky

As Halloween approaches, we pause to consider the unfair typecasting of Second Empire architecture as the traditional haunted house. Big and dark, with a tower and deeply sloped roof, it’s the house style that Charles Addams drew for his charmingly creepy family, and the house on the hill in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*. Once Norman Bates took up residence, there was no going back. One of the finest examples of the style is Indiana Landmarks’ own Morris-Butler House in Indianapolis, which will be open for visitors on our Old Northside Spooky Tour on Friday, October 13. It’s one of 10 places featured on the neighborhood tour where guides will share stories of true crime and cults, spooky architecture, and truly scary renovations. Learn more on p. 19.

532,674

International Harvester Scouts built in Fort Wayne from 1960 to 1980. Read more about the endangered Engineering Building where Scouts and heavy-duty trucks were tested on p. 8.



Local Leaders Promote Hometown Heritage

PRESERVATION LEADERS

look at their communities through a different lens, one that sees history as powerful asset for enriching the future. This year's winners of Indiana Landmarks' annual Sandi Servaas Memorial Awards are using such community-focused vision to foster an appreciation of heritage in Flora and Montpelier.

A century ago, civic-minded residents formed the Flora Community Club to support local businesses and

Since 1923, the Flora Community Club has committed to improving its hometown by supporting local businesses and downtown improvements. In 2013 they took on their biggest project by committing to save the fire-damaged 1908 Vandalia Railroad Depot (above). After years of fundraising and rebuilding, in 2022 the club unveiled the revived landmark, now a local history museum (left), community gathering space, and regional attraction.

PHOTOS BY TOMMY KLECKNER
AND © FLORA COMMUNITY CLUB



uplift their hometown quality of life. They recruited doctors, enhanced the 4-H fairgrounds, helped build a permanent post office, and made improvements to the downtown business district.

In 2013, the club took on its biggest challenge to date: saving the town's 1908 Vandalia Railroad Depot. A symbol of the era when railroads fueled the town of Flora, the depot served daily passenger and freight trains for 50 years before ending service. In 1969, the building was moved from its original location to South Sycamore Street, where it operated as a laundromat. In 2003, tragedy struck when a customer loaded gas-soaked clothes in a washer, sparking a fire that left the depot a charred wreck for the next decade.

With demolition looming, the club realized the time to act was "now or never." "That the Flora Community Club had no idea what it was doing when it committed to saving the depot is an understatement," says Melissa Bishop, project chairman. "We may have gone into it not having any idea how it was going to turn out, but we did try very hard to make sure we were doing the right thing. This building was very important to the history of our town and the people who live here. We had lost a number of historic buildings through the years, and we hated to see one more thing go."

Flora Community Club received grants from Indiana Landmarks and the Carroll County Community Foundation to hire architect Dann Keiser to assess the building and create a phased plan for restoring it. Over the next nine years, the club raised \$400,000 in grants and donations to reconstruct the depot on a site across the railroad tracks from where the building originally stood.

Workers salvaged as much of the damaged depot as possible and incorporated wood flooring and pendant lights rescued from another town landmark slated for demolition. The depot's grand reopening as a local history museum and community space coincided with Flora's sesquicentennial celebration last September. In January, the club directed the momentum toward an even bigger vision: hiring its first full-time executive director to raise the profile of the town and the depot as a heritage tourism destination.

"It's an ambitious vision in a town of 2,200 people," adds Bishop. "I think we sometimes forget what we've done, that this has been nine years in the making. We forget people outside of our community see this as important. Getting this recognition from Indiana Landmarks on a state level is humbling and we're proud and can't believe it happened to us."

In Montpelier, Indiana, educator Ryan Ingram formed the Montpelier History Club in 2017 to share his love for his hometown with local youth. On Wednesday afternoons year-round, students in kindergarten through high school gather to learn about Montpelier's past. They take field trips to local landmarks—such as the historic bank robbed by Dillinger in 1933—and take on community improvement projects, including cleaning local cemetery headstones. They even researched and transcribed wartime writings to publish a book, *The Letters of B.G. Shinn: Correspondence of a Civil War Soldier from Montpelier, Indiana*.

The club has also created several full-length local history documentaries, including a series highlighting lost landmarks called *Ghost Buildings of Montpelier*. Students browse news-

The Montpelier History Club inspires students to learn about their community's heritage, hoping to instill a sense of local pride and foster an appreciation for preservation. Along with visiting landmarks in Montpelier and beyond (photo at right shows the club in Muncie), club members assist in making history documentaries and engage in community improvement projects, such as cleaning local cemetery headstones (below).

© MONTPELIER HISTORY CLUB



paper archives and visit the sites where the buildings stood. "I want the students to know about the fascinating history that took place in their hometown. The hope is that through illuminating the past, it will instill a desire to save and preserve the historic sites that are still standing," says Ingram. "We have a saying that History Club is not just about being better historians but becoming better people. They learn etiquette and community pride, what it means to take care of each other and our community."

As winner of the youth-serving category, the Montpelier History Club receives \$1,000 and organizational winner Flora Community Club receives \$2,000. Both groups will receive Evansville artist John McNaughton's original sculpture "No Doors to Lock Out the Past" at Indiana Landmarks' Annual Meeting on September 9.





Keeping It in the Family

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS OFFER CLUES TO the history of a farmstead in Wolcottville in Noble County. Asphalt shingles on a barn roof read “Plainview Farms,” while stones in the house’s foundation spell out “Myers.” Owned and operated by the fifth, sixth, and seventh generations of the family today, Evers Plainview Farms wins the 2023 John Arnold Award for Rural Preservation from Indiana Landmarks and Indiana Farm Bureau.

In 1854, Pennsylvania brothers Sam, Jacob, and Reuben Myers purchased 80 acres in northern Indiana, establishing a farm that eventually grew to nearly 600 acres. The family harvested corn, oats, wheat, and soybeans, though today hay is the primary cash crop.

The farm owes its imposing brick house and barn to Reuben’s son, Frank. As a child, Frank Myers began gathering stones from the surrounding countryside, with a vision of using the collection someday to build a fine house with a rock foundation. After 40 years of stone-gathering, Frank, with the help of his hired hand and a stonemason, built the house and nearby barn over five years.

Frank, his wife Nellie, and their family became the first to occupy the three-story house, completed in 1923. It’s a showplace, with covered porches, oak, mahogany, birch, and birdseye maple hardwood, and, of course, the fieldstone base. The property boasted grand features as well, including an impressive staircase, sterling silver chandeliers transported by railroad from Toledo, Ohio, and a third-floor ballroom

Multiple generations of the Evers family operate Plainview Farms in Wolcottville, honoring their heritage by continuing to care for the land and buildings developed by their ancestors. Their stewardship merited the 2023 John Arnold Award for Rural Preservation from Indiana Landmarks and Indiana Farm Bureau.

PHOTO BY DEB PARCELL

that still includes the piano lifted in through an upper window before the house was completed.

Frank’s great-grandson, Frank Evers, and his wife Evelyn raised their nine children in the farmhouse, where the couple still lives, overseeing farm operations with their oldest son, Mark Evers, his wife Christie, and his children Nathan, Emily, Andrew, and Olivia. Throughout the years, the family has preserved the original house as much as possible, maintaining the hardwood floors, plaster walls, leaded windows, and bathroom fixtures. Along with providing storage for family artifacts, the ballroom has served as a central gathering space, hosting square dances, graduations, weddings, and other family celebrations.

Nearby, the equally impressive brick barn with rock foundation dominates the landscape, spanning 60- by 120-feet across, with a 30- by 60-foot wing that incorporates a 12- by 40-foot silo. The barn first housed milk cows as Plainview Dairy in the ’20s and ’30s,

supplying milk transported by horse and wagon to residents on Sylvan Lake. Frank and Evelyn resumed dairy operations in 1975. They constructed a milk parlor and added a second concrete silo, turned hog farrowing pens into calf pens, and converted horse stalls into maternity pens.

The surrounding landscape and lettering on the 1950s Harvestore silo inspired the family to name the property Plainview Farms. In the 1930s, the farm’s location along an airmail route between Chicago and New York convinced Frank Myers to rent one of his fields for \$1,400 per year to serve as a landing area and emergency airstrip, where he maintained lights to illuminate the path for pilots. During World War II, a plane nearly hit the barn.

In 2002, the slim profit margins of dairy farming prompted the family to shift operations, first raising replacement dairy heifers for other farms and then expanding into a herd of 150 Angus and Texas Longhorns. To reflect the changes, when it was time for the barn to be re-roofed the family reconfigured the pictorial cows, changing the asphalt shingle to depict Longhorns instead of Holsteins.

For the past 17 years, Evelyn has worked to pass on respect for the land to her grandchildren by operating

Frank and Evelyn Evers live in the 1923 house (left, facing page) built by Frank’s great-grandfather, who incorporated a fieldstone foundation using rocks he collected over a span of 40 years. The home’s top floor ballroom (bottom right) remains a central gathering space for family celebrations. A stand-out example of its type, the barn (top right) continues to support the Evers’ farming operation, which includes raising Angus and Texas Longhorns and cultivating hay. The Evers family (below) accepted the Arnold Award at the Indiana State Fair in August.

PHOTOS BY EVAN HALE



Plainview Playtime, a year-round family daycare and preschool at the farm. Along with learning traditional subjects, children receive hands-on lessons in farm chores and caring for animals, tending sheep borrowed from a neighbor during the summers.

“We’ve sacrificed to maintain this farm to the best of our ability,” says Evelyn. “It’s the real thing. It’s important to us, and we’ve worked to make it important to our kids and the next generation.”

Indiana Landmarks and Indiana Farm Bureau presented the Arnold Award to the Evers family on August 3 at the Indiana State Fair. The award is named in memory of John Arnold, a Rush County farmer who combined progressive architectural practices with a deep respect for the natural and historic components of rural landscapes, including the farm owned by his family since 1820.

10 MOST ENDANGERED

PHOTOS BY EVAN HALE

Since Indiana Landmarks released its first 10 Most Endangered list in 1991, we've called attention to more than 150 threatened or neglected historic places around the state. The designation helps raise awareness, rally support, and attract partners who can help find solutions that lead to rescue and revitalization.

This year's list spotlights the plight of urban and rural landmarks threatened by vacancy, development pressures, and lack of investment. You can help us save these sites by spreading the word, sharing ideas for saving them, and advocating with people who can influence their fates. *(See more photos of this year's entries at indianalandmarks.org)*

International Harvester Engineering Building

FORT WAYNE

In Fort Wayne, few companies loom as large in local memory as International Harvester. From 1923 until 1983, the company manufactured more than 1.5 million heavy-duty trucks and over 500 thousand Scouts (an early sports utility vehicle) from a complex on the city's east side. Its prolific output earned its Truck Plant 1 the nickname "The Heavy-Duty Truck Capitol of the World."

The architectural firm of Albert Kahn & Associates designed the 1950-1952 Engineering Building on Meyer

Road, taking inspiration from the shape of the International Harvester logo. For decades, every truck International Harvester put on the road was designed, developed, and tested at the building and nearby track. The 140-acre complex included labs where engineers could assess the engines and sound of the trucks, as well as a giant freezer to test how vehicles performed in subzero temperatures. From 1986 to 2012, Navistar International owned the building, continuing its use as an engineering facility. It was later acquired by a local developer.

In 2019, enthusiasts launched Harvester Homecoming at the site, a festival that draws hundreds of vehicles and thousands of attendees, and, in cooperation with the site's owner, began using the Engineering Building

to house 65 International Harvester and Navistar trucks, engines, blueprints, photos, models, toys, and other artifacts. It's an arrangement Harvester Homecoming hopes to formalize by turning the building into a permanent museum, but earlier this year Allen County Commissioners acquired a parcel along Meyer Road that includes the Engineering Building with intent to build a new jail on the undeveloped land and consider the building for county offices. Another developer has already demolished the nearby former test track, and Harvester Homecoming is concerned for the landmark's future.

As an important link to Fort Wayne's automotive heritage, the Engineering Building merits protection and a reuse that celebrates and shares its story.





Birdsell Mansion

SOUTH BEND

A drive through South Bend's West Washington Historic District offers a reminder of the city's heyday as a manufacturing hub, a time when wealthy industrialists built elaborate and expensive mansions befitting their elevated status. Among the monumental homes, one stands out for all the wrong reasons.

When it was built in 1898, J.B. "Ben" Birdsell's mansion rivalled Clem Studebaker's Tippecanoe Place and J.D. Oliver's Copshaholm in opulence and prestige. One of the city's industrial titans, Birdsell commissioned the city's leading architectural firm, Parker & Austin, to design a suitably prominent home for his family. With hardwood paneling, ornate fireplaces, and a third-floor ballroom, the new house fit the bill. From their mansion, J.B. and his wife, Olive, entertained South Bend's high society.

Today, however, the Birdsell mansion's ongoing neglect is cause for alarm. It's been vacant for more than a decade, held by an absentee owner with a growing list of code enforcement issues. Since first appearing on the 10 Most Endangered list last year, conditions have only gotten worse. Plywood and trash bags cover missing windows, and water seeping in from leaking gutters threatens high-style interior finishes. It's an ignominious state for one of South Bend's standout homes.

Time is running out for the Knox County Poor Asylum in Vincennes. Since being added to Indiana Landmarks' 10 Most Endangered list last year, little has been done to secure and repair the long-vacant building, which continues to deteriorate.

The landmark was once part of a statewide plan for caring for the poor and disabled. Between 1831 and 1860, each of Indiana's 92 counties created poor farms where people in need could work in exchange for housing and food. Constructed in 1882 to replace an earlier predecessor, the Knox County Poor Asylum combined elements of Italianate and Greek Revival styles to create a grand first impression for residents and guests. The County continued to operate the facility until 1985, and the building was last occupied in 2004. Today, it's one of a dwindling number of remaining county homes, many of which lost their purpose as federal agencies supplanted them.

The County transferred ownership of the building in 2020 to a nonprofit with plans to rehabilitate the property as a hospice facility, but so far, no significant progress has been made. The Knox County Poor Asylum urgently needs investment to halt deterioration and stabilize the landmark before it is beyond saving.



Knox County Poor Asylum

VINCENNES

Historic Fraternal Lodges

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fraternal orders proliferated across the U.S. Nearly every town in Indiana had a least one fraternal organization, and lodges built by Masons, Odd Fellows, Elks, and other orders became important community landmarks.

Today, participation in fraternal organizations is on a steep decline. As numbers dwindle and members age, more lodges have disbanded, leaving hundreds of significant buildings at risk. In Jennings County, two communities illustrate the plight faced by many Indiana towns and cities.

In Vernon, the 1860 Masonic Building ¹ anchors the square's northwest corner. It's a solid three-story structure built to impress, with large display windows and extra-tall panes to illuminate the Masonic order's third-floor meeting space. Today the town's post office occupies the ground-level storefront, but the upper floors have been vacant for years. A stone's throw away, the International Order of Odd Fellows ⁴ at the south end of Pike Street is condemned, the result of long-term neglect.

In neighboring North Vernon, the Improved Order of Red Men ² occupied the third floor of an 1899 building with an ornamental facade from Evansville's George L. Mesker Company. Behind the distinctive exterior, however, long-deferred maintenance is taking a serious toll. Though the building is on the market, its future remains uncertain.

In small towns like these, dilapidated buildings exert an outsize drag on the local economy and community morale, but larger areas face similar struggles. In Bedford, the monumental 1917 Elks Lodge #186 remains vacant more than eight years after first appearing on our 10 Most Endangered list. And in Shelbyville, the Knights of Pythias Lodge ³ on the city's Public Square is mostly vacant, in need of rehabilitation.

Solidly built and prominently located, historic lodge buildings warrant attention as valuable community landmarks ripe for reuse.





Thomas & Louisa Little House

PLAINFIELD

On the west side of Plainfield along U.S. Highway 40, a stately frame house stands as a connection to the town's early history, but it's an artifact in peril. Hendricks Regional Health purchased the Thomas and Louisa Little House and surrounding 15 acres in 2017, proposing to demolish the landmark and build a new medical facility on the site. Following announcement of Hendricks' initial plans for the property, members of the community protested, creating a Facebook page to draw attention to the house's plight and circulating an online petition that drew nearly 9,000 signatures in favor of saving the landmark.

Built between 1885 and 1891, the large Queen Anne-style home sits on land first settled by pioneer and state legislator Alexander Little in 1830. His grandson, farmer

Thomas Little, hired Thomas Havens to build the home for the Little family, replacing an earlier family farmstead. Today, the Little House survives as one of the county's most significant examples of Queen Anne architecture, incorporating a corner turret, wrap-around porch, fishscale shingles, and wooden windows with diamond-patterned glass. Inside, most of the home's original floor plan and decorative features remain, including original woodwork, built-ins, pocket doors, and fireplaces with tile surrounds.

Public outcry convinced Hendricks to abandon its initial plans and offer the property for sale, but without any stipulations for the Little House's protection. To ensure its future, the property needs a preservation-minded buyer willing to recapture its significant heritage.

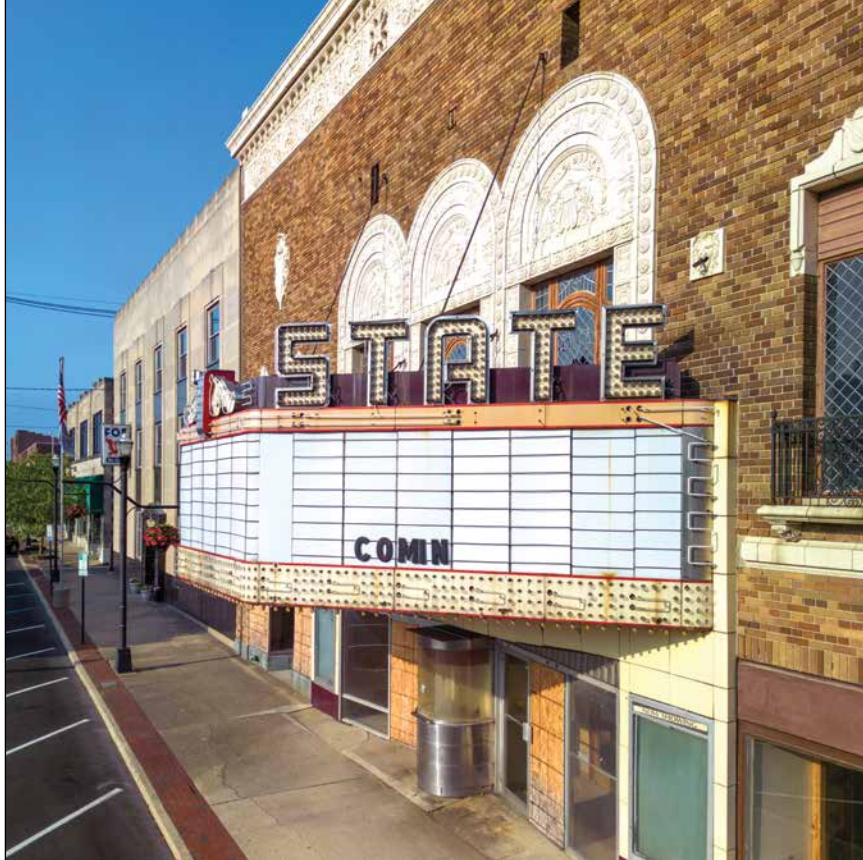
Hulman Building and Garage

EVANSVILLE

Since first appearing on the 10 Most Endangered list last year, the towering Hulman Building on Evansville's Fourth Street remains in limbo. Built in 1929 as a bank and offices, the 10-story skyscraper draws attention as a rare Art Deco standout. The Indianapolis firm of McGuire and Shook designed its exterior with stylized zig-zag, floral, and wave motifs in metal and stone, along with carvings of transportation and industrial scenes. The theme continues inside in the marble and brass lobby. Today, the landmark still exudes a back-in-time opulence that could lend itself to redevelopment as a boutique hotel.

In 2022, an out-of-state buyer purchased the Hulman Building and neighboring 1927 garage in an online auction and relisted the properties for sale as separate parcels, a move that makes redevelopment of the site more problematic. An interested developer emerged in 2022, but plans for the building fell through, and today the Hulman Building remains on the market.

Without concrete plans for the building or protection for its high-style features, the skyscraper languishes, its time capsule interior at risk of being stripped and sold.



State Theatre

ANDERSON

In the early twentieth century, downtown Anderson flourished, fueled by a gas and automotive manufacturing boom. Meridian Street became a hub for downtown theaters; just one four-block stretch was home to 16 theaters over the years. Today, only two remain: the Paramount Theatre and the State Theatre, movie palaces built by the Publix Theater Corporation of Chicago in the early twentieth century. The Paramount remains a showplace hosting movies and live shows, but the State Theatre sits vacant and in need of a new use.

Opened in 1930 at the corner of 13th and Meridian streets, the State Theatre featured an eclectic Spanish Baroque façade, with white glazed terra cotta. With seating for over 1,500 movie-goers, the interior incorporated state-of-the-art systems, including modern sound and projection technologies and an early form of geothermal heating and cooling.

The theater closed in 2008, and a series of subsequent attempts to redevelop and reopen the property stalled. A pending lawsuit discouraged progress, alleging the City of Anderson contributed to water damage at the landmark in the 1990s by failing to shut off water to the building. The City purchased the theater from an out-of-state buyer in 2019 to resolve the legal issues, hoping the site can become part of downtown redevelopment efforts. As a significant local landmark in the heart of Anderson's downtown, the State Theatre deserves a second act.



First Friends Church

MARION

For nearly 20 years, trailblazing African American architect Samuel Plato lived and worked in Marion, designing houses, schools, stores, an apartment complex, and churches. Today, only a few of his designs remain in the city, and another one—First Friends Church on Adams Street—is in serious jeopardy.

In the nineteenth century, the Quaker congregation that established First Friends Church championed efforts to treat the local Black community equitably, supporting Abolitionist efforts and aiding residents of Weaver, a nearby African American settlement.

When the congregation outgrew its first church, members hired Plato in 1914 to design a new house of worship, paying \$13,824.94 for the Gothic Revival-style building that stands today. The church is simple, but elegant—a tabernacle-style sanctuary with semi-circular seating facing a large proscenium, with artful stained-glass windows to illuminate the interior. Today, however, vacancy and neglect are slowly destroying the graceful features. Plywood covers one of the large windows, and water infiltration from a rotten roof precipitated crumbling plaster, buckled flooring, peeling paint, and mold.

After adding the church to our 10 Most Endangered list last year, Indiana Landmarks commissioned an engineering assessment that determined the building is structurally sound, and our Black Heritage Preservation Program secured grant funding for a new roof to halt further water damage. However, until the building is in the hands of an owner with adequate resources to tackle complete restoration, Marion could lose yet another significant landmark designed by one of the early twentieth century's most prominent African American architects.



Stinesville Commercial Buildings

It's easy to see the mark of Stinesville's limestone history in the five buildings that line Main Street. A small community located 15 miles northwest of Bloomington, Stinesville developed in the 1850s as the limestone industry took hold in southern Indiana.

Constructed between 1884 and 1894, Main Street's two-story I.O.O.F. Lodge and four limestone-faced commercial buildings are all that remain of Stinesville's once-bustling downtown. The historic lodge houses the Stinesville Mercantile and local post office, but the other four commercial buildings have been vacant for decades and make a repeat appearance on this year's 10 Most Endangered list.

The City previously offered the four for \$1 to anyone who could stabilize and restore them, but got no takers. As part of the National Register-listed Stinesville Commercial Historic District, the buildings are eligible for rehabilitation tax credits, but in such a small community (pop. 200), it's hard for potential developers to make the numbers work.

It would be a shame to see these last remnants of Stinesville's proud heritage crumble into oblivion, but with each passing year, prospects for saving them fade.



Starr Historic District

RICHMOND

Beginning in the 1860s, Richmond's well-to-do flocked to an elite residential neighborhood north of the city's downtown, where they built large homes reflecting their elevated status. Named for early residents Charles and Elizabeth Starr, the neighborhood's architecture captures the range of house styles popular during the later nineteenth century, including Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, and Queen Anne.

At one time, architecture enthusiasts considered the Starr Historic District one of the Midwest's best-preserved Victorian-era neighborhoods. Today, however, the area is better known for its ongoing decline.

Most of the large homes built for wealthy families have been divided into multi-unit rental housing, much of it controlled by negligent or absentee owners. A 2018 study by Ball State University found that less than a quarter of the district's homes are occupied by their owners, and several properties have been abandoned altogether.

Though revitalization is on the rise in downtown Richmond, it has yet to spread to the Starr neighborhood in any substantial way, and the district's National Register status offers no protection against neglectful property owners. Local designation under a historic preservation commission would help, as would strengthened ordinances against absentee owners and landlords.

Local stakeholders, including Richmond Columbian Properties and Richmond Neighborhood Restoration, are trying to turn the tide, promoting community engagement initiatives and advocating for improved code enforcement.

Indiana Landmarks is adding support by investing in select properties and relocating our Eastern Regional Office to the formerly endangered Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church, now operated by a local nonprofit as The Reid Center.

In the meantime, the Starr district struggles, and blight continues to erode the neighborhood's former grandeur.



Celebrating Progress

WHEN THE MID-CENTURY

ranch house of Gary entrepreneur Geter Means landed on Indiana Landmarks’ 10 Most Endangered list last year, it was barely visible, deteriorating behind overgrown vegetation. Today, the appearance—and the property’s outlook—is much improved, as workers replace the failing roof and commence exterior rehabilitation.

Built in 1954, the home plays an important role in telling the story of the Means Manor neighborhood, the legacy of brothers Andrew and Geter Means. In the 1920s, discouraged by the lack of quality housing options for Gary’s Black community, the Means launched their own home-building business. By the 1950s, Means Brothers, Inc., had become one of the largest Black-owned real estate com-

Prospects have significantly improved for Gary’s Geter Means House since it landed on Indiana Landmarks’ 10 Most Endangered list last year. Indiana Landmarks acquired the historic residence of a notable Black home builder and commenced exterior rehabilitation in preparation for listing the property for sale.

PHOTOS BY BLAKE SWIHART



panies in the Midwest, constructing almost 2,000 homes and rental units in Gary alone.

They built Means Manor, a development of bungalows, ranches, and other houses—including their own—that became the preferred neighborhood for Gary’s Black middle class. Where African American homebuyers were denied mortgage loans, Andrew Means supplied promissory notes and let potential homebuyers help pay for their houses by helping to build them.

Yejide Ekunkonye’s grandparents were among those original homebuyers. In 2020 during the pandemic, she became more deeply connected with her family’s heritage by helping care for the Means Manor house built by her grandfather, the place where her father was born and raised, and which she recalls visiting as a child. Today, she sees Means Manor still mostly living up to the ideals of its founders, with well-kept houses and well-tended lawns. “It’s a strong community of neighbors helping neighbors,” says Ekunkonye. “There’s a pride of place that stems from the neighborhood’s inception.”

She founded the non-profit SayYestoMeans to help preserve the neighborhood and tell its story, inviting others to share their memories on its website, sayyestomeans.org. She and other neighbors have partnered with Indiana Landmarks to raise awareness of the Geter Means House, including cleaning up the exterior of the neglected property.

In May, Indiana Landmarks acquired the ranch house and began stabilizing it. We’ll rehabilitate the exterior and make other repairs before seeking a preservation-minded buyer. “We’re so grateful Indiana Landmarks took on the project, knowing their past record,” says Ekunkonye. “We hope whoever purchases the house will appreciate its history.”



BRIEFLY NOTED

Rita O’Donohue is Indiana Landmarks’ new member concierge and data specialist at our Indianapolis headquarters. She holds experience in tourism, membership, and data management from her work at several Indiana organizations, including Drum Corps International, Prosperity Indiana, and the Sisters of Providence/Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Calvin Nguyen joins Indiana Landmarks as Indianapolis Preservation Coordinator. Nguyen holds a master’s degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania, and previously worked on history-based projects around the country, including historic site management assessments of civil rights sites in Montgomery, Alabama, and Historic American Buildings Survey documentation in Los Angeles’ Chinatown for the National Park Service.

Several Indiana Landmarks employees have moved into new positions within the organization. **Tara Elliott** is director of special events; **Jessica Kramer** is communications manager; and **Mary Scharnberg** is associate director of Sacred Places Indiana, all in Indianapolis. **Mitchell Knigga** is director of Indiana Landmarks’ Southeast Field Office and Veraestau Historic Site in Aurora.

HELP INDIANA LANDMARKS ACHIEVE EVEN MORE BY:

FOR SALE

LANDMARKS ON THE MARKET

see more at indianalandmarks.org/for-sale



Krenke-Goff Building 1018 16th Street, Bedford, IN

1898 commercial building offers over 10,000 square feet in Bedford’s Courthouse Square Historic District and retains pressed metal cornice, cast iron storefront pilasters, and limestone date plaque. Recent improvements include new roof and guttering. Inside is ready to be built to suit. Building will be sold with preservation covenants.

\$155,000
Blaine Parker
Keach & Grove
812-276-1802

Have a historic home or commercial building for sale?

Ask us about options for advertising your property here or on our website. Contact Paige Wassel, 317-639-4534, editor@indianalandmarks.org.

- Renewing your membership
- Making a donation in addition to membership
- Including Indiana Landmarks in your estate plans

For more information talk to Sharon Gamble, 800-450-4534 or visit indianalandmarks.org

Tours & Events

September/October 2023



Automotive
Heritage Tour
OCT. 19

63rd Annual Meeting & Awards Presentation

Sept. 9, Indianapolis

Join fellow members and guests at Indiana Landmarks Center to elect directors, applaud winners of the Servaas Memorial Awards, Williamson Prize, Cook Cup, and new Renaissance Award, and hear highlights from our work around the state in the past year.

Preserving Historic Places, Indiana's Statewide Preservation Conference

Sept. 19-22, Muncie

Hear from experts on a variety of creative preservation techniques and explore historic preservation's role in creating a vibrant city. Sponsored by Indiana Landmarks, the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, and Indiana University. Online registration through Sept. 8, then prices increase for on-site registration. Visit bit.ly/PreservingHistoricPlaces (link is case sensitive) to learn more.

INDIANAPOLIS TOURS

Athenaeum

On select Sundays, May through Nov., one-hour guided tours explore the history, architecture, and preservation of the Athenaeum, as it evolved from German clubhouse to a hub of modern urban life. Tours depart at 1:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Sept. 17 & Nov. 5. Advance ticket encouraged. \$12/adult; \$10/member; \$5/child (age 6-11); free for children ages 5 and under.

Bier & Building

Sample German-American heritage through beer, appetizers, and activities on this adults-only (ages 21+) version of our Athenaeum tour. Tour departs at 1:30 p.m. on Oct. 1. Advance ticket encouraged. \$30/general public; \$25/member.

City Market Catacombs

Join a guided tour of the remains of Tomlinson Hall, hidden beneath the Indianapolis City Market. Tours begin on the market's second floor and include a brief history of the building's development. Tours offered on

select Saturdays: Sept. 16 & 30; Oct. 7 & 21. Tours depart every 15 minutes from 10 a.m.-2:45 p.m. Advance ticket required. \$15/general public; \$12/member; \$10/child (ages 6-11); free to children 5 and under.

City Market Catacombs After-Hours

Order a beverage from the Tomlinson Tap Room before a relaxed, adults-only (ages 21+) tour of the Indianapolis City Market Catacombs. Offered on select Thursdays: Sept. 21 & Oct. 26. Tours depart from 6-7:30 p.m. \$20/general public; \$17/member.

Monument Circle Historic District

On select Saturdays, one-hour guided walking tours explore Indianapolis's most recognizable district, highlighting how and why these blocks have become a symbol of the city. Tours depart at 10 a.m., Noon, and 2 p.m. on Sept. 2. \$10/general public, \$8/member, \$5/child (ages 6-11); free for children ages 5 and under.

Logansport Window Workshop

Sept. 23, Logansport

Learn from experts in the field about the operation and rehabilitation of historic wood windows, including best practices for tools, materials, and improving energy efficiency. \$10/general admission; \$5/member.

Conversations in Indiana African American History and Culture

Sept. 28, Oct. 19 and Nov. 16, Indianapolis and online

Freetown Village presents historians, researchers, and educators sharing their knowledge of Indiana's Black heritage, followed by a question-and-answer session. Sponsored by Indiana Landmarks' Black Heritage Preservation Program, Indiana Humanities, and IUPUI Africana Studies. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. at Indiana Landmarks Center and talk begins at 6 p.m. in person and online. Free with RSVP.

Old Northside Spooky Tour

Oct. 13, Indianapolis

Indiana Landmarks hosts an evening of spooky fun, local lore, and seasonal treats while visiting 10 places in the Old Northside, including a peek inside Indiana Landmarks' 1865 Morris-Butler House. Costumes encouraged (but not required). \$18/general public; \$15/member; \$13/child (age 6-11); free for children ages 5 and under. Learn more on p. 3.



FIRST FRIDAY

Oct. 6, Indianapolis

Our Rapp Family Gallery hosts a free art show, "More Than Stitches: Glimpses of Artistry, Ancestry and Alliance," 6-9 p.m., featuring the work of Akoma Ntoso Modern Quilt Guild of Central Indiana. Guests will also have an opportunity to see Indiana Landmarks' restored headquarters.

SAMARA TOURS

Apr.-Nov., West Lafayette

Explore Samara, one of Frank Lloyd Wright's most fully realized Usonian designs, on regular public tours offered at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Wednesdays-Sundays, except when the house is closed for private events. \$20/general public; \$18/member; \$5/child (ages 6-11); free to children ages 5 and under.

FRENCH LICK & WEST BADEN SPRINGS TOURS

Discover the fascinating history of two turn-of-the-century hotels and their award-winning restorations on daily guided tours. (Tues.-Sat., June-Dec. & Wed.-Sat., Jan.-May)

West Baden Springs Hotel
2 & 4 p.m.

French Lick Springs Hotel
Noon

Tickets cost \$15/adult, \$13/member, \$8/child ages 6-15, and are free to children age 5 and under.

Behind-the-Scenes Tours

Get an exclusive peek at spaces not normally open to the public at West Baden Springs Hotel on a two-hour tour beginning at 2 p.m. on select Thursdays, March-December. Sept. 14 & 28; Oct. 12 & 26; Nov. 9 & 16; Dec. 7 & 14. Tickets cost \$50/person, \$45/member. Advance ticket purchase required.

Twilight Tours

Costumed characters depict famous guests at West Baden Springs during its heyday in the 'teens and '20s. Tours depart at 7 p.m. on July 22, Aug. 19, and Sept. 9; Tickets cost \$25/adult; \$20/member, \$10/child ages 6-15. Advance ticket purchase required.

indianalandmarks.org/french-lick-west-baden

Wabash Home Tour

Oct. 14, Wabash

Tour six homes in Wabash's East Wabash Historic District showcasing the area's diverse residential architecture, from the 1849 Alber House to a 1972 California Contemporary-style home, and highlighting Indiana Landmarks' impact in the neighborhood. \$15/general public; \$12/member. Learn more on back cover.

Automotive Heritage Tour

Oct. 19, Indianapolis

Indiana Landmarks' affinity group Indiana Automotive heads to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum for an exclusive tour of the 1976 landmark before multi-million-dollar renovation begins. Guides will highlight the site's history as part of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, share insights on the museum's history and its collections, and preview future plans. \$15/general public and Indiana Landmarks members; free to Indiana Automotive members with RSVP.

Trades Training Workshops

Aug.-Nov., South Bend

Trades training workshops presented by Indiana Landmarks, South Bend TradeWorks, and South Bend Historic Preservation Commission equip historic homeowners with DIY knowledge and contractors with in-demand skills for historic building repair. Visit our website for individual workshop details and pricing.

SEPT. 6 - Masonry Repair

OCT. 4 - Plaster Repair

OCT. 18 - Wood Window Basics

NOV. 1 - Rehab Safely



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AND FINALLY

Wabash Revival

“BE PART OF THE CHANGE

you want to see,” is a motto we’ve taken to heart in Wabash, where Indiana Landmarks has partnered with city leaders and private owners to champion rehabilitation of several historic buildings. On October 14, we invite the public to see the results on a tour showcasing six properties dating from 1849 to 1972, featuring landmarks undergoing rehabilitation alongside completed transformations.

Tourgoers can visit one of the city’s oldest homes, the 1849 Alber House, saved from demolition and artfully rehabbed as a comfortable residence. Three houses purchased through our initiative to increase homeownership in the East Wabash Historic District will be tour stops as well, including one we’re partially renovating before offering for sale. The tour also includes a look at the formerly endangered Wabash Sheriff’s House and Jail being rehabbed as offices and apartments, and a California Contemporary home regaining its late mid-century appeal. Visit indianalandmarks.org/tours-events for details and tickets.



On October 14, Indiana Landmarks offers a tour spotlighting revitalization underway in Wabash, including a Second Empire house rehabbed as a transitional home for women (top), an Italianate house we’re improving before offering it for sale (left), and the Wabash Sheriff’s House and Jail (bottom), a former entry on our 10 Most Endangered list.

PHOTOS BY EVAN HALE (TOP AND LEFT) AND LEE LEWELLEN (BOTTOM)