



Travels in Time Hoosiers and the Arts

T C Steele House & Studio "The House of the Singing Winds", Nashville (Brown County)

Theodore Clement "TC" Steele and his second wife, Selma Neubacher Steele, purchased the land in 1907 and constructed a home there. Known as "The House of the Singing Winds," the property also housed a studio and acres of landscaped hillside and gardens. Steele was

founding member of the Hoosier Group, a group of regional painters interested in Impressionism. The landscapes in Brown County were what drew the Steeles to the area.



The current site covers 211 acres and includes five hiking trails, the Dewar log cabin, and the 92-acre Selma Steele Nature Preserve.

T.C. Steele State Historic Site
4220 T.C. Steele Road
Nashville, Indiana 47448
Phone: 812/ 988-2785
www.in.gov/ism/HistoricSites/TCSteele/Historic.asp

Guided tours are available. Call for hours.

James Whitcomb Riley Birthplace, Greenfield (Hancock County)

James Whitcomb Riley was born in 1849 in a log cabin. That cabin, constructed in 1847, is now the kitchen wing of the current house. The two story main portion of the house was built by James' father, Reuben, from 1850-1853. Reuben Riley was a lawyer by profession and was the first mayor of Greenfield.

James' education began at home. He would make up



rhymes to amuse his mother. Once he started attending school, his teacher noticed his great interest in literature but little else. He left school at age 16 and never returned.

James spent most of his childhood in this house until the family sold the property in 1864 because of financial difficulties. However, the impact the house had upon his childhood is evident. He often used portions of the house for the settings of his writings. *Little Orphant Annie* was based upon a real orphan named Mary Alice Smith who stayed with the Rileys during the Civil War. She helped raise James and frequently told mesmerizing stories about ghosts and fairies to keep him entertained.

During his young adulthood, Riley spent a few years traveling the state. He eventually returned to Greenfield and worked as the editor of the newspaper there for a few months. He worked at the *Anderson Democrat* in 1877 and while he was there his writings received some national recognition. He then moved to Indianapolis and continued his writings there.

By the 1890s, James Whitcomb Riley had found some financial success. One of his first acts was to purchase his childhood home, which he did in 1893. He leased the house to various tenants until 1912. After that, his sister-in-law, Julia, ran the property. She maintained it until 1916. In 1935 the city of Greenfield purchased the house and it has served as a museum ever since.

250 West Main Street
Greenfield, IN
317/ 462-8539

Guided tours: Tuesday-Saturday 10am-4pm
Sunday 1pm-4pm

James Whitcomb Riley House, Indianapolis (Marion County)

James Whitcomb Riley's writing opportunities increased with his move to Indianapolis. He worked for the *Indianapolis Journal* and continued writing on his own. His first real success came with a series entitled "Benjamin F. Johnson of Boone". Riley wrote in the "American vernacular" and is known as the Hoosier poet. His first book was *The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems*. Some of his more popular works are *Little Orphant Annie and the Raggedy Man*.



He was also an eloquent speaker. Upon his rise in popularity, much time was spent on the lecture circuit.

Riley lived at a brick home in Lockerbie Square, Indianapolis' oldest historic district, from 1893-1916. He did not actually own the 1872 house. He rented a suite of rooms from Charles Holstein for twenty-three years. Much of his later writing was done at this house and famous people came to visit him here. In 1915 Riley had a stroke and he died the following year in this house.

James Whitcomb Riley Museum
528 Lockerbie Street
Indianapolis, IN
317/ 631-5885

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday: 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Sunday: Noon to 3:30 p.m.

Gene Stratton-Porter "Limberlost", Geneva (Adams County)

Geneva "Gene" Stratton, born in 1863 on a farm near Wabash, to nature-loving parents. It is because of their strong influence that nature was a continuous theme throughout their daughter's life as an author, naturalist, photographer, and illustrator. She is "one of Indiana's most widely read authors and one of the world's first and best nature photographers." Gene Stratton married Charles Dorwin Porter in 1886 and they lived in Decatur for a few years before building a home near the Limberlost Swamp in 1895. Gene designed the 14-room house herself and named it after the swamp that covered 13,000 acres in Adams and Jay Counties. The couple and their daughter lived at Limberlost for 18 years until the swamp was drained. In 1913 they moved to Sylvan Lake near Rome City in Noble County.

Gene Stratton-Porter's writing career began with an article published in *Recreation* magazine. She continued to write for them for the next two years. She then moved to *Outing*, a national natural history magazine. She eventually decided to add fictional elements to her nature writing in an effort to attraction a wider audience. Other magazines that she contributed to include *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, *Century*, and *Good Housekeeping*. While she resided at Limberlost, Gene Stratton-Porter wrote six novels and five nature books--the first, *Song of the Cardinal*, in 1903, followed by *Freckles* the next year.

In 1947 the cabin was given to the State of Indiana by the Limberlost Conservation Association of Geneva. It is maintained by the State as a historic site and has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Limberlost State Historic Site
Box 356
200 E. 6th St.
Geneva, IN 46740
Phone: 260/ 368-7428
www.in.gov/ism/HistoricSites/Limberlost/Historic.asp

Open April-November: Call for hours

Gene Stratton-Porter Cabin "The Cabin in Wildflower Woods", Rome City (Noble County)

In 1913, Gene Stratton-Porter designed the family's second home near Rome City on Sylvan Lake. She intentionally designed the house to blend in with the natural setting. "The Cabin in the Wildflower Woods" is a two-story log cabin and originally included 150 acres. Gene Stratton-Porter planted over 3000 plants throughout the property. She also created a formal flower garden, orchards, and a small stone pond. In 1920 Gene Stratton-Porter moved to California for health reasons. She continued to write until her death in 1924. Much of the family's furniture and personal items remain in the cabin, including Gene's library.

During her career, Gene Stratton-Porter wrote 12 novels, 7 nature books, 2 books of poetry, a children's book, and many magazine articles. Eight of her novels were turned into movies. One, *The Harvester*, was even filmed at "Wildflower Woods."

In 1947 the State of Indiana was presented with 13 acres of property including the cabin, formal flower gardens, orchard, and pond. It is maintained by the State as a historic site and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Gene Stratton-Porter State Historic Site
Box 639
1205 Pleasant Point
Rome City, IN 46784
Phone: 260/ 854.3790
www.in.gov/ism/HistoricSites/GeneStrattonPorter/Historic.asp

Open April-November: Call for hours

The Hermitage, Brookville (Franklin County)

Located outside of Brookville along the east fork of the Whitewater River, the Hermitage was the home of Hoosier School artist J. Ottis Adams. Adams and fellow Hoosier School artist T. C. Steele, happened across the house in 1897 and purchased it because the natural setting was perfect for their Impressionist style landscapes. They added a studio to each end of the original 1835 house along with a large front porch. The interior was reconfigured to accommodate each artist, their separate families and any friends or visitors to the house.



The pair intended for the Hermitage to be a summer retreat but Adams married Winifred Brady in 1898 and it became a more permanent home. Steele also married but his first wife, Libbie, died in 1899 from tuberculosis and after her death he lived in Indianapolis. He later remarried and established his own studio in Nashville, Indiana. Steele was a frequent visitor and often spent summers there. Winifred Adams, also an accomplished artist, ended up using the south studio instead.

The Adamses had many visitors at their Brookville home. Another member of the Hoosier School, Otto Stark, was a frequent guest. J. Ottis Adams also ran an art school from the house for several years. He lived there off and on until his death in 1927. Winifred split her time between the Hermitage and Indianapolis until her death in 1945. Some of their furnishings and belongings remain in the home today.

The Hermitage now serves as a bed and breakfast. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

The Hermitage Bed & Breakfast
650 East 8th Street
Brookville, Indiana 47012
765/ 647-5182
<http://www.bbonline.com/in/hermitage/>

Marie Webster House, Marion (Grant County)

Marie Webster revolutionized quilt making at the beginning of the 20th century. Previously quilt designs were passed down through families by women. These predominantly geometrical designs were pieced together and often had regional similarities. Webster's designs were based on the Arts and Crafts movement and made quilting a true art form. Although she was quite adept at hand sewing, Marie Webster did not design her first quilt until she was 50 years old (1909).



Webster's designs had appliqué pieces in curvilinear forms that had never been seen before. She sent them to *Ladies Home Journal* and the editors decided to print four of her designs. They were such a success that she was selling quilt patterns within a month after the spread in the magazine. She ended up having 14 different quilt patterns printed in *Ladies Home Journal* in less than two years. The quilt designs continued to grow in popularity and she eventually formed Practical Patchwork Company to sell the patterns, quilt kits, and finished quilts. The company operated out of her house with the help of friends and family until 1942.

Her widespread popularity also resulted in a request from publishing company Doubleday, Page and Company. They approached Marie about writing a book on the history of quilting and pattern names. The 1915 book was titled *Quilts: Their Story and How to Make Them*. It was the first book to discuss the history of quilting and to demonstrate how to make a quilt. The book was reprinted six times between 1916 and 1948. In 1990, Marie's granddaughter Rosalind Perry published a new edition of the book.

The house is a National Historic Landmark and is now home to the Quilters Hall of Fame Museum. The house is currently undergoing restoration.

926 South Washington St.
P.O. Box 681
Marion, IN 46952
765/ 664-9333
<http://www.quiltershalloffame.org>

Call for hours.

General Lew Wallace Study, Crawfordsville (Montgomery County)

General Lew Wallace, born in 1827, was a soldier, politician, and writer during his seventy-eight years. He served in both the Mexican War and the Civil War and rose to the rank of Major General. Wallace's foray into the political arena included a term in the State Senate (1856), an appointment as the governor of the New Mexico Territory (1878), and an appointment as the Minister to Turkey (1881).

Amidst his public service, Wallace began to write. In total he wrote seven books, the best known being *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1880). Although sales were slow at first, they eventually picked up to the point that the book is now the third most popular novel in American literary history.

Separate from the house, the General Lew Wallace Study is a free-standing structure that Wallace designed. A mix of Romanesque, Greek and Byzantine elements, he also supervised the construction from 1895-1898. The study was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1976 and currently houses a museum.

General Lew Wallace Study and Museum
P.O. Box 662
200 Wallace Avenue
Crawfordsville, IN 47933
765/ 362-5769
<http://www.ben-hur.com>

Call for hours

Paul Dresser Birthplace, Terre Haute (Vigo County)

Paul Dresser gained notoriety both nationally and internationally as a songwriter. His early career started with a part in a medicine show in Indianapolis. From there he worked as an actor, playwright, songwriter, producer, and music publisher. His career spanned the late 1800s and early 1900s. Of the hundred or so songs he wrote, the Indiana state song "On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away" is one of the most well known here. Despite being the number one songwriter in the late 1890s,



when Dresser died in 1906 he was practically a pauper. The publishing house he started was a financial failure and he was overly generous with his money. The Vigo County Historical Society owns the Paul Dresser Birthplace, located in Fairbanks Park (corner of 1st and Farrington Streets), and runs it as a house museum.

To contact the Vigo County Historical Society:

1411 South 6th Street
Terre Haute, IN 47802
812/ 235-9717
web.indstate.edu/community/vchs/dresser.htm

Call for hours.

Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis (Marion County)

One of the four original diagonal streets of the 1821 plan for Indianapolis, Indiana Avenue was the core of African American life in Indianapolis. Businesses along the avenue, particularly the 400 and 500 blocks, provided food, housing, entertainment, consumer services and, most importantly, a sense of identity for African American residents. Some businesses were run by European immigrants but interspersed among those were African American owned businesses. By the late 19th and early 20th century, more and more African American business owners, residents, and consumers frequented Indiana Avenue. The Indiana Avenue of the 1920s provided goods and services for African Americans not admitted to downtown stores. The cultural identity created by segregation led to the Harlem Renaissance atmosphere of the area. At that time, jazz clubs and theaters abounded.



By 1940 there were over 25 clubs on Indiana Avenue and, consequently, became a stop for many African American acts. Musicians, in particular, made Indianapolis a regular stop and developed a derivation of jazz known as "Indy Sound".

George Ade House, Brook (Newton County)

Hazelden, known as "The House Where Laughter Dwelt", was the home of writer George Ade. He started as a weather reporter for the *Chicago Record* in 1890. In 1893, he was assigned to cover the Columbian Exposition in Chicago and his series

"All Roads Lead to the Fair" was a huge success. Because of the appeal, Ade was given his own column and he started "Stories of the Street and of the Town".

In addition to his regular column, George Ade wrote ten books from 1900-1920 including "Fables in Slang". Mixed between articles and books were fourteen different plays. Three of them, *The County Chairman*, *The Sho-Gun*, and *The College Widow*, were featured on Broadway in 1905. His plays in particular resulted in amazing wealth.

By the mid-1920s Ade decided to retire and he purchased property in his native Indiana and constructed a manor of his own. Here he threw lavish parties and hosted Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Warren Harding, and Calvin Coolidge. Many others spent time at Hazelden including James Whitcomb Riley, Booth Tarkington, Will Rogers, Ernie Pyle, and Douglas MacArthur.

The George Ade Memorial Association restored the house in 1966. Also on the grounds are an 18-hole golf course and a hospital.

George Ade Memorial Association
SR 16
Brook, IN 47012
219/ 275-4011

Call for hours.

Overbeck House & Pottery Studio, Cambridge City (Wayne County)

The Overbeck sisters—Margaret, Hannah, Elizabeth, and Mary Frances, started a pottery studio in 1911 in the basement of their parents' home. They created functional pieces and small figurines utilizing metal, wood, fabric, water colors, and oil. The Overbecks were influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement and crafted individual pieces using clean, simple lines. Overbeck Pottery, Indiana's first art pottery studio, was known for the use of soft colors and distinctive glazes. The sisters continued to produce their award-winning pieces until 1955.



Overbeck House & Pottery Studio
520 East Church Street
Cambridge City, IN 47327
765/ 478-5993

<http://www.waynet.org/waynet/spotlight/2001/010723-overbeckhouse.htm>

This is a private residence—tours are by appointment only.

To view a collection of Overbeck pottery, visit the
Cambridge City Public Library
33 West Main Street

Cambridge City, IN 47327
765/ 478-3335

**Allen County Courthouse, Fort Wayne
(Allen County)**

The Allen County Courthouse is among the most ornate and intact county courthouses in the Midwest, completed in 1902 to the plans of architect Brentwood Tolan, a Fort Wayne architect. An outstanding example of the Beaux Arts style, the building is awash in ornamentation. There are mosaic tiles, layers of multi-colored and gilded plaster moldings, stenciled coffered ceilings, historical and allegorical murals, sculpted relief, and stained glass. Experts from around the country have commented on what an outstanding courthouse this is. The senior curator of the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Art called it "one of the finest Beaux Arts-style public buildings in the nation." A multi-million dollar restoration was completed in 2002. In 2003 the building was designated a National Historic Landmark, the only county courthouse in Indiana to earn this honor.

The courthouse is located at:

715 South Calhoun Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

Contact the Allen County Courthouse Preservation Trust for tour information
260/ 449-4246