

Colby-Jeffery House
302 Elm Street
Madison
Jefferson County
Indiana

HABS No. IN-124-

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34-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

COLBY-JEFFERY HOUSE

HABS No. IN-124

Location: 302 Elm Street (northeast corner of W. 2nd St.), Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana.

Present Owner/
Occupant: Jane W. Jeffery

Present Use: Residence

Significance: The Colby-Jeffery House, constructed in 1838-39 for Daniel Colby, is an interesting example of the Greek Revival style in Indiana. The slender Doric columns and simple pediment mark Madison's earliest Greek Revival house, rivaled later only by the elegant J.F.D. Lanier House (HABS No. IN-23) and the Shrewsbury House (HABS No. IN-8). J.F.D. Lanier, one of Madison's most influential citizens, lived in the Colby-Jeffery House while his own was under construction.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1838-39. When J.F.D. Lanier sold Lot 163 to Daniel Colby in May, 1838, the house was not yet built, as the tax assessment of 1837 showed a valuation of \$1,830 and made no mention of improvements. The deed recording Colby's sale of Lot 163 in August, 1839, to Lanier described "...the same premises whereon said Colby resides...." In 1839 the tax assessment of Daniel Colby's lot had increased to \$1,500 with \$3,000 of improvements.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The legal description of the property is Part of Lot 163 in the Second Addition west of the City of Madison. The following deed references may be located at the Recorder's office of the Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana.

1836 Warranty Deed, dated May 3, 1836; recorded in Deed Book L, pp. 320-321, on July 27, 1836.

John and Ann G. Sheets and William G. and Eliza Wharton to J.F.D. Lanier, lots 163, 48, and 49 for \$4,455.

- 1838 Warranty Deed, dated May 12, 1838; recorded in Deed Book O, p. 493, on June 13, 1838.

 J.F.D. and Elizabeth Lanier to Daniel Colby, lot 163 for \$1,400.
- 1839 Warranty Deed, dated July 27, 1839; recorded in Deed Book Q, p. 379, on August 21, 1839.

 Daniel and Lydia Colby to J.F.D. Lanier, "the same premises whereon said Colby resides and the same Lanier heretofore conveyed to said Colby....," for \$6,000.
- 1853 Warranty Deed, dated August 6, 1853; recorded in Deed Book 9, p. 701, on November 1, 1853.

 J.F.D. and Mary McClure Lanier to Elizabeth Dunn, their daughter, the house and property for \$1 and natural love and affection.
- 1871 Warranty Deed, dated May 12, 1871; recorded in Deed Book 32, p. 406, on May 18, 1871.

 William McKee and Elizabeth Lanier Dunn to William C. Watts, for \$4,200.
- 1872 Warranty Deed, dated April 1, 1872; recorded in Deed Book 36, p. 275, on April 1, 1872.

 William C. Watts to Mark Tilton, for \$5,000.
- 1892 Decree of Last Will and Testament, dated April 20, 1892; recorded in Will Book 1, p. 136, on April 30, 1896.

 Amanda D. Tilton, wife of Mark Tilton, to Elizabeth T. Tennant, all her real estate, including lots 162 and 163.
- 1896 Warranty Deed, dated September 14, 1896; recorded in Deed Book 65, p. 406, on September 26, 1896.

 Elizabeth and W. Brydon Tennant to Ernest Voegler, for \$3,000.
- 1906 Warranty Deed, dated September 24, 1906; recorded in Deed Book 78, p. 460, on September 26, 1906.

Ernest and Josephine Voegler to Anna and Thomas Edwards, for \$2,100.

- 1915 Decree of Last Will and Testament, dated July 16, 1915; recorded in Will Book F, p. 488-489, on August 4, 1915.

Anna Edwards to her mother, Julia Hazelton, all her real estate.

- 1921 Warranty Deed, dated August 22, 1921; recorded in Deed Book 92, p. 5, on August 22, 1921.

Julia Hazelton to Sarah Elizabeth Lory, for \$2,800.

- 1932 Warranty Deed, dated September 20, 1932; recorded in Deed Book 99, p. 402, on September 24, 1932.

Drusilla L. Cravens, John Clements and Clifford McKay, Trustees of the Lanier Memorial Home, to Flora Finch Otrich for \$1 and other considerations.

- 1940 Warranty Deed, dated February 20, 1940; recorded in Deed Book 104, pp, 167-168.

Fora Finch Otrich to Edward and Jane Jeffery for \$1 and other considerations.

- 1974 Warranty Deed, dated February 25, 1974; recorded in Deed Book 158, pp. 257-8, on March 8, 1974.

Edward and Jane Jeffery to Jane Jeffery for \$1 and other considerations.

5. Original plan and construction: The Colby-Jeffery house, an interesting example of the early Greek Revival style in Indiana, has an unusual floor plan. The main block contained only formal living areas while the telescoping wing to the north provided the eating areas and the kitchen. Essentially cubical in plan with three bays on a side, the main block rises two and a half stories above raised limestone foundations. Although the pedimented prostyle porch faces south to the Ohio River, the main entrance was placed on the west facade facing Elm Street. The central bay on the south facade, a sham doorway, is placed to create a symmetrical appearance.

The two rooms in the south block were divided by a hall-like space, now used for closets and a bathroom. The entrance hall contains the main stair which faces away from the door. Although there is no physical evidence, a paneled closet under the stairs, now removed, may have provided entry to stairs to the basement.

The dining room in the north wing, encompassing the entire width of that wing, features a simple fireplace surrounded by a small column on either side to support the mantelpiece. The original kitchen was located to the north with another small room at the west, thought to have been a porch. Old photographs, however, do not indicate the evidence of a porch.

6. Alterations and additions: A few alterations have been completed since the house was constructed, but most of the changes have been removed. The major alteration to the original plan was the addition of a wing to the north of the two-story L-shaped extension, ca. 1850. This wing included a one-story and two-story section, and was removed ca. 1950 by the Jeffery family.

During the later nineteenth century, the Colby house was used as a rooming house and some of the larger rooms were divided into smaller ones. A wall parallel to the east wall, since removed by the Jeffery family, provided a hall leading to the rear bedrooms and greater privacy to the front bedroom.

At the same time that the addition was removed, ca. 1950, the rear gable of the main block was changed to a pyramidal shape. Other improvements completed at this time included replacing the balusters and newel post of the west entrance, and replacing the south portico's decorative iron railing with a plain iron pipe. On the interior, the cellar's walls were covered with stucco over wire lath and the floor was finished with cement.

- B. Historical Context: In spite of Daniel Colby's many years in Madison, few details are known about his life. According to legend, Colby arrived in Madison with a trunk filled with money and jewels and entrusted the trunk to the care of J.F.D. Lanier's banking house. Using the trunk as collateral, Colby negotiated a bank loan from Lanier and hired a crew to construct his house. When the house was nearly finished, Colby left Madison on a business trip and never returned. Lanier waited a year to hear from Colby before opening an empty trunk. With the mortgage defaulted, Lanier took possession of Colby's property and lived in the house until his own was finished in 1844.

Colby's name first appeared on the Madison tax list recorded in June, 1837. He was assessed and taxed for one poll, indicating that he was old enough to vote and had established his legal voting residence in Madison.

On October 2, 1837, Colby obtained a mortgage, or note, for \$1,400 from J.F.D. Lanier for the title to Lot 163, payable to Lanier in five years and revertible to Lanier upon default. Colby also secured a second mortgage of \$500 from the State of Indiana on May 12, 1838, which he paid in full on December 24, 1840.

Although the Mortgage Record shows no record of payment for the mortgage to Lanier, the note must have been paid. Colby, a respected citizen, remained in Madison until he moved to Cincinnati in 1849-50. Also, the \$1,400 note to Colby was the exact amount of the consideration of the Colby-Lanier deed of May 12, 1838. In effect, Lanier lent Colby the funds to purchase Lot 163. When Lanier repurchased the property from Colby in July, 1839, Colby netted \$4,600 for the construction of the house. Colby may have worked directly with Lanier on the improvement of the property, either as Lanier's agent or as the architect or builder. The mortgage agreement was made in October, 1837, but not recorded until June, 1838.

J.F.D. Lanier, Madison's most important citizen in the mid-nineteenth century, occupied the Colby-Jeffery house while his own Greek Revival-style house, designed by architect Francis J. Costigan, was under construction between 1841 and 1844. The Colby-Jeffery house remained in the Lanier family until 1871. Lanier's daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, William McKee Dunn, occupied the house after their marriage on March 20, 1841.

In 1809, Williamson Dunn, one of Jefferson County's first citizens and lawyers, moved to South Hanover, Indiana, from Kentucky. Dunn was Judge of the Jefferson County Judicial District for many years and was active in law and politics. His son, William McKee Dunn, was born on his father's farm in South Hanover on December 12, 1814. He received a Bachelor's degree in Theology from the State University of Indiana at Bloomington in 1832. Dunn returned to Hanover where he was Principal of the Preparatory Department of Hanover College from 1833 to 1835. In 1835, Dunn studied at Yale and received a Master of Arts in 1836.

Dunn returned to Hanover, this time to assume a post as Professor of Mathematics. In 1837, Dunn began to study law and was admitted to the Indiana State Bar at Lexington in Scott County. He practiced in New Albany before coming to Madison in 1841. In 1842, Dunn joined the law practice of M.G. Bright and A.W. Hendricks, his partners until he went to Washington, D.C., in 1864.

Dunn's political career began when he won election to the Indiana State Legislature in 1848. Late the next year, Dunn, a Whig candidate, made an unsuccessful bid for a seat in the United States Senate, and ended his political career for nine years. Later, Dunn was elected to the House of Representatives in 1858 and 1860 and was defeated in 1862.

Offered the choice between army appointments as Colonel by General Morton, or as Brigadier General by President Lincoln, Dunn refused both and was named Judge Advocate General of Missouri by General Sumner in 1863. In 1864, Dunn was re-commissioned as the Assistant Judge Advocate General of the United States Army in Washington, D.C. President Grant named Dunn Advocate General of the Army in 1876, a commission he retained until his retirement in 1881. Dunn lived in Washington until his death on July 24, 1887.

Mark Tilton, who purchased the Colby-Jeffery house in 1872, was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on August 22, 1822, the son of James Tilton, a well-established doctor. In 1827, the Tiltons moved to Madison where they remained until moving to Dupont, Indiana, in 1838. After Tilton was educated at Hanover College, he served as a teller at the State Bank of Indiana's Madison branch between 1839 and 1860. In 1860, Tilton was appointed a United States Pension Agent in Madison. When the branch office at Madison was closed and moved to Indianapolis, Tilton moved with the bank in 1872. Tilton received a clerkship in 1877 with the U.S. Pension Office in Washington, D.C., and one year later was appointed Assistant Chief of the Pension Office where he served until his death on March 10, 1887.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Original and subsequent sources:

Deed Books, Recorder's Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana.

Mortgage Record Books, 1813-1847, Recorder's Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana.

Tax lists and assessments of the City of Madison, 1837-1845, City Hall, Madison, Indiana.

2. Secondary sources:

Biographical and Historical Souvenir for the Counties of Clark, Crawford, Harrison, Floyd, Jefferson, Jennings, Scott, and Washington, Indiana, compiled and published by Chicago Printing Co., John M. Gresham & Co., 1889.

Madison Daily Courier, 1841-1887.

Prepared by: John Linn Hopkins
Project Historian
Summer, 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General statement:

1. Architectural character: The Colby-Jeffery House is a good example of a simple but competent Greek Revival-style house.
2. Condition of fabric: good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This L-shaped, three-bay house has two stories and an attic above a raised cellar and measures approximately 42' x 72'.
2. Foundations: Stone with ashlar facing with a projecting concrete ledge under the stone along the south facade.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The exterior is wood clapboard painted white, with horizontal flush board siding on the south facade. A wood sill band runs around the perimeter of the house above the stone foundations. Four large wood pilasters, each with a molded abacus, are placed on the south facade.
4. Structural system, framing: Wood frame construction with large wood joists and rafters as well as load-bearing stone walls.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: A concrete-floored porch across the south facade of the house extends to the roof line and is supported by four large fluted Doric columns with a single iron pipe railing between each column. At the ceiling are boxed beams from each column back to the face of the house, ending at a pilaster. Below each column the stone facing of the raised cellar projects, forming pedestals for the columns.

The wood stoop at the main entrance is on the west side of the house. With eight wood open-string steps on each side, the stoop is covered by a flat wood roof with a boxed cornice and supported by two fluted columns. These Doric columns have square wood bases the same height as the handrail. The handrails and balusters, also wood, extend from two large newel posts, each with a knob on top, across the landing; the balusters support a molded handrail. The base supporting the stoop's landing has wood siding with pilasters below the columns.

A large, two-story recessed wood porch is placed along the east face of the L, supported on the first and second floors by columns. The second-floor porch has a wood railing between the columns.

6. Chimneys: A large brick chimney near the center of the rear wing projects through the roof and a second brick chimney with a projecting brick cap is located at the center of the front wing at the ridge of the roof.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is situated on the center of the west side and has a wood doorway, flanked by pilasters with simple bases and caps. The doorway is framed by a five-light transom and five-light sidelights. The door has a wood sill, threshold, and surrounds.

The rear door leading from an enclosed porch to the exterior has wood surrounds, sill and a door with glass panels at its top. A doorway on the east leads from the stair hall to the porch, and also has wood surrounds and threshold but has a single-panel glass door.

The doorway on the second floor to the east porch has wood surrounds, threshold and door. The door to the cellar has wood double doors, surrounds, and a segmental arch with three stone steps to the interior. On the south facade, in the center of the first and second floors, boarded openings with wood surrounds echo the window design.

- b. Windows and shutters: All windows are wood-framed. Those in the cellar have six-light, hinged sashes with wood surrounds and sills. On the first floor the windows are six-over-six-light single-hung sash, with the exception of two nine-over-nine-light jib doors.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: A gable roof covers the front wing of the house and a hipped roof covers the rear wing, both protected by standing seam metal.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A wood architrave and frieze are located under the boxed cornice on the front wing of the house, and there are both horizontal and raking cornices at the south gable. The rear wing of the house also has a boxed wood cornice. Both front and rear wings have metal gutters.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Cellar: The cellar, underneath the entire house, has a concrete floor, plaster walls and ceiling and is used for storage and to house the furnace. The cellar contains brick chimney supports and vaulted brick hearth supports.
- b. First floor: The main entrance, near the center of the west facade, opens into a stair hall that leads through the house to a doorway on the east. West of the stair hall is the dining room. Northeast of that is the kitchen and northwest of the dining room is the breakfast room. There is an enclosed porch east of the kitchen. South of the stair hall is the library. The library's east wall has a fireplace with chimney breast, flanked by a door to a small toilet.

The doorway on the east wall of the stair hall leads into a large living room extending the length of the front of the house. A fireplace with chimney breast is situated in the center of the living room's west wall.

- c. Second floor: The second floor has bedrooms on the south and east sides, connected by a bathroom. Double doorways in the stair hall lead into the attic stairway and to a closet under the stairway. A doorway on the north gives access to a bedroom at the rear, which leads to a bathroom and a small bedroom.
- d. Attic: The finished attic has a sloped ceiling and is used for storage.

2. Stairways: The stairway to the second floor climbs to a landing, and continues up two steps to the stair hall. The wood open-string bracketed stair has a simple wood rail with two balusters per tread. The railing reaches from a spiral on the first floor to the landing, curving to the second floor where it turns and ends at the wall. The spiralled first step curves to support the newel post. The stairway is decorated by a bracketed spandrel at the opening and a beaded board sloping soffit.

The wood winder stair to the attic is enclosed and has a vertical wood board railing around the attic opening. The wood stairway to the cellar is also enclosed.

3. Flooring: Wood board flooring on the first and second floors is covered by rugs and linoleum while wider boards were used in the attic.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls and ceilings are covered by wallpaper and cornice trim in the living room and library. There are chair rails in the dining room, breakfast room, living room, library and second-floor bedrooms. Plaster walls and ceilings have been painted in the attic.
5. Doorways and doors: Wood doors on the first floor have a single raised panel with wood surrounds. Doorways in the front of the house have blocks at each side of the head. On the second floor the doors have four smaller panels below two large panels.
6. Decorative features and trim: The dining room fireplace has a large wood mantelpiece with a shelf and a plaster surround atop a stone hearth. Fireplaces in the living room and library are linked back-to-back; wood mantelpieces have shelves and stone hearths. The second-floor fireplaces are treated in the same manner.

Elaborate window trim in the living room, library, and two second-floor bedrooms extends from window head to the floor, forming a wainscoted panel under the sill.

7. Mechanical equipment: Modern lighting fixtures and modern heating with convectors in rooms.
- D. Site: The house faces west at the corner of West Second Street and Elm Street in a residential neighborhood with houses across the street and on each side. Several large trees are located at the curb at the south and west, and a small yard is situated on the east. A concrete sidewalk runs along the south and west sides of the house. An iron fence encloses the south and east borders of the property.

Prepared by: John White
 Project Supervisor
 August, 1978

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with Historic Madison, Inc., and the Indiana Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief, HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Jr., Principal Architect, the project was completed during the summer of 1978 at the HABS Field Office, Madison, Indiana, by John P. White, Project Supervisor (Associate Professor, Texas Tech University); John Hopkins, Project Historian (Skidmore College); and Student Assistant Architects Richard Berliner (Rhode Island School of Design); Jon Lourie (University of Maryland); Eric Swanson (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute); and Peter Whitehead (State University of New York at Buffalo). The written data were edited by Jan Cigliano, HABS Historian, in November, 1978, and by Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Historian, in December, 1984.

ADDENDUM TO
COLBY-JEFFERY HOUSE
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