

James F.D. Lanier House  
511 West First Street  
Madison  
Jefferson County  
Indiana

HABS No. IND-23

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IND,  
39-MAD,  
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

ADDENDUM  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. IND-23

JAMES F.D. LANIER HOUSE

Location: 511 West First Street, between Elm and Vine Streets, Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana.

USGS Madison East Quadrangle; Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.640280.4288430.

Present Owner: State of Indiana.

Present Occupant: Unoccupied.

Present Use: Historic house museum.

Statement of Significance: The Lanier house was designed by locally prominent Madison architect Francis Costigan (1810-1865) and built in 1843-44. The fine proportions and elegant presence of this classical brick structure are emphasized by the spacious site overlooking the Ohio River and Kentucky hills upon which the structure stands. The Lanier house was one of Indiana's finest in the 1840s, it was declared a State Memorial in 1926, and remains an important landmark in Madison to the present day. The residence was commissioned by James F.D. Lanier, a prominent Indiana and New York banker.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1843-44.
2. Architect: Francis J. Costigan (1810-1865).

Costigan was a prominent architect in Indiana during the mid-nineteenth century. He was born in Baltimore in 1810, and received his apprenticeship as a carpenter and builder in this city. The Baltimore City Directory of 1835 listed Costigan as a carpenter. He moved to Madison in the summer of 1837.

Soon after moving to Madison, Costigan gained a reputation as a leading exponent of fine domestic architecture designed in the classical manner. Of the dozen or more buildings attributed to him many are still standing. His most

important Madison works include the James F.D. Lanier house, 1843-44, the Captain Charles E. Shrewsbury House, 1846-49 (IND-8), and his own home the Francis Costigan House, 1850-52 (IND-87). Costigan also designed the Institute for the Blind and the Odd Fellows Building in Indianapolis, and acted as consulting architect for the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb and the Hospital for the Insane, also in Indianapolis.

The Trustees for the Institute for the Blind payed homage to Costigan in the Annual Report of 1851. They honored "the valuable services of Mr. Costigan, both in perfecting the design, and as architecture superintendent, in controlling the erection of the building."

3. Original and subsequent owners: James F.D. Lanier was the original owner of the land and house. Upon his death in 1861 he deeded the property to his son Alexander C. Lanier, who in turn deeded the property to his siblings. The house passed through the hands of various relatives, and was purchased by J.F.D. Lanier's last surviving son, Charles Lanier, in 1918. Charles gave it to the Jefferson County Historical Society shortly thereafter. In 1926 the State of Indiana acquired the property, restored the residence, and declared the Lanier house a State Memorial.
4. Original plan and construction: While no original drawings of the Lanier house are known to exist, the original structure probably consisted of the main three-bayed section. The mansard-roofed wing is believed to have been added ca.1870. A complete description of the structure is in Part II, Architectural Information.
5. Alterations and additions: In 1926 the house was restored under the auspices of the State of Indiana.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

James F.D. Lanier was a prominent banker and financier in Indiana and New York during the mid-nineteenth century. Born in 1800 in Washington, North Carolina, the young Lanier moved to Madison in 1817 with his family. He entered Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky in 1819 to study law, and established a law practice in Madison four years later at the age of twenty-three. Lanier was also involved in state politics, and in 1824 he was instrumental in moving the capitol from Corydon to Indianapolis, where he became Clerk of the House. When the Second State of Indiana was organized in 1833, the

prospering 33-year-old attorney bought the single largest block of stock, becoming president of the Madison Branch bank in 1842. During the financial panic of 1837, a recession which affected the nation, Lanier went to the Secretary of the Treasury in Washington, D.C. to ensure that the government funds held in the Second Bank of Indiana were secure, aborting any danger of the institution dissolving. Speaking of both the public and private man, one Indiana chronicler wrote in the 1860s, "Mr. Lanier was not only a man of great financial ability, but one whose open manners, social disposition and excellent character commended the esteem of those who became his intimates in private life."

Lanier moved to New York City in 1851 and founded the banking house of Winslow, Lanier & Co. with a son-in-law, Richard H. Winslow. He turned the custody of the mansion over to his unmarried children, with his eldest daughter Margaret acting as the lady of the house.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: HABS measured drawings, 1936 (including site plan, plans, elevation), Julius F. Ehlert and H. McKinley, architects and delineators. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.
2. Bibliography:
  - a. Primary and unpublished sources:

"The Lanier Home," Department of Natural Resources, Division of Museums and Memorials, Indianapolis.
  - b. Secondary and published sources:

Hill, Herbert R. "Madison, Classic Architecture and Apex of Difference." Outdoor Indiana 38 (February 1973): 23-31.

McCulloch, Hugh. Men and Measures of Half a Century. n.d., pp 114-23.

Work Projects Administration. Indiana: A Guide to the Hoosier State. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.

Prepared by Jan E. Cigliano  
Staff Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
January 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Lanier house, designed by Madison architect Francis Costigan, and erected 1843-44, is an excellent work of early nineteenth-century classical architecture. The fine proportions and elegant details are especially prominent on the two-story south portico with fluted columns topped by carved Corinthian capitals, window surrounds, the roof parapet and cupola. The interior is distinguished by a three-story self-supporting spiral staircase and carved decorative trim in the double parlor.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The main three-story section is nearly square and measures 53'-10" (three-bayed south facade) x 52'-10". The rectangular two-story wing at the east measures 35'-8" x 18'-10".
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction, finish, color: Exterior walls are brick painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Load bearing brick construction.
5. Porches, stoops, porticos: The two-story portico on the south facade is supported by four fluted wooden columns with carved Roman Corinthian capitals. The capitals, designed in a motif of rosettes and scrolled acanthus leaves, support an essentially Ionic entablature of architrave and frieze (pierced by three circular windows framed by a ring of leaves) separated by a projecting fillet and a simply molded denticulated cornice. A plain wooden parapet crowned by an anthemion ornament encompasses the roof. The north entrance is framed by a one-story portico supported by a pair of fluted Corinthian columns and plain squared pilasters. All details are smaller in scale and less ornate than on the main portico.
6. Chimneys: According to the typical central-hall plan, four corner chimneys are built into the end walls of the body of the house. Each chimney serves a fireplace in each of the corner rooms. A tall end chimney rises above the wing's mansard roof.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: A classical surround of pilasters supporting a molded entablature frames the recessed south doorway. A paneled door is flanked by pilasters and full-length side-lights. The north entry is framed by fluted pilasters, full-length side-lights and square plain pilasters.
- b. Windows: First-level windows on the north and south facades are six-over-nine double-hung sash, full length windows. They are framed by wooden pilasters, stone sills, and a frieze ornamented with carved wooden rosettes and a scrolled fan-and-leaf motif. The windows on the second level are six-over-six double-hung sash and framed in a similar manner. Tripartite windows with plain surrounds pierce the central bay of the north and south facades.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main section is covered with a low-pitched gable roof of tar sheathing; a mansard roof of wooden shingles covers the service wing.
- b. Cornice, eaves, cupola: An octagonal shaped cupola crowns the roof. The cupola has a wide eave overhang and is adorned with leaf-and-scroll decorative brackets and a string of dentils. Each side is embellished with a recessed diamond panel; a five-pointed star is enstamped in the diamond's center.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: A basement extends under the entire area of the house.
- b. First floor: Central-hall plan, with four equally proportioned corner rooms. The service wing is divided into two nearly square rooms: the service room and kitchen.
- c. Second floor: The second-floor plan of the main section corresponds to the lay-out of the main level. Two small rooms - a study and nursery - are at each end of the central hall. The servants wing houses a bedroom and bath, a servant's bedroom, and the stairway to the first level.

- d. Third floor: Central-hall plan, including two servants' quarters, a nursery-playroom, and a storage room.
  2. Stairways: Three-story self-supporting spiral staircase in the central foyer. The staircase was designed by Costigan and is one of the most distinctive features of the house.
  3. Floorings: Originally white ash covered all floors.
  4. Decorative feature and trim: The double parlor on the first floor is ornately trimmed with fluted Ionic columns framing the wide doorway between the two parlors, egg-and-dart molding articulating the ceiling and on the entablature which frames the openings between parlors, and a denticulated molding on the face of the wall. Black marble fireplaces with gilded mirrors above accent this atmosphere of refined elegance.
- D. Site: The residence is erected upon an expansive site overlooking the Ohio River. The front porticoed facade faces south; the property is bounded on the north by First Street, on the west by Vine Street, and on the east by Elm Street.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION:

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and Historic Madison. The structure was recorded in the summer of 1971 under the direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS, and Melvin M. Rotsch (Texas A & M University), with student assistant architects John G. Albers (University of Florida), Bruce E. Lynch (Washington University), H.T. Moriarity (University of Texas), John M. Szubski (Princeton University), and architectural historian Philip Dole (University of Oregon), at the HABS Field Office in Madison, Indiana. The data was edited and prepared in January 1979 in the HABS Washington office by staff historian Jan E. Cigliano. Photographs were taken by staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1971.

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