



### **History of Barker Mansion**

The original home which sat on the Washington street property was built by John Barker Sr., it had seventeen rooms.

John H. Barker made the decision of enlarging their home. This project took five years from 1900 to 1905. He hired Frederick Perkins, an architect from Chicago, to do the remodel. He copied the remodel of Barker mansion from an English manor home.

Parts of the old house were removed and new portions and old rooms redecorated. It was furnished in luxury turn-of-the-century style with imported furniture and art objects purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Barker during their travels and through New York art collectors. The most famous of the fireplaces is on the lower level, the one that is hand-carved marble with the walnut mahogany work. The mansion contains thirty-eight rooms, seven fireplaces and ten bathrooms. The main floor rooms are the foyer, library, drawing room, dining room, kitchen, butler pantry, silver safe, valet quarters, Mr. Barker study and bedroom. The second floor contains Catherine's bedroom with its own bath and closet attached, her playroom, a master bedroom with spacious closet and master bathroom, a morning room also attached, the household linen room and the servants' quarters. On the third floor of the house is the ballroom, Catherine Barker's schoolroom, her governess's room, bathroom, and a trunk room where the family's luggage was kept when they were not traveling. The basement was very functional and contained the devices for the vacuum cleaning system, a cooling system, coal bin, summer kitchen, laundry and other storage including an additional safe.

There is a pergola just outside the library and just off of the foyer. The pergola overlooks a sunken Italian garden. On one side of the garden is the garage, which was built in 1924, to house Catherine's Lincoln. On the other is the tea house for entertaining. During the years when horses and carriages were used, there was not a place at Barker Mansion to house them. The horses were kept at a local stable and eventually housed at the Barker farm, which was located near Coolspring Ave.

The Barker Mansion was accepted by the National Registry of historical homes in 1975. Gov. Orr designated it as one of the leading tour homes in Indiana. Today it serves Michigan City as The Barker Civic Center.

Written summer 2015 by intern Keri Jakubowski. Sources available upon request.