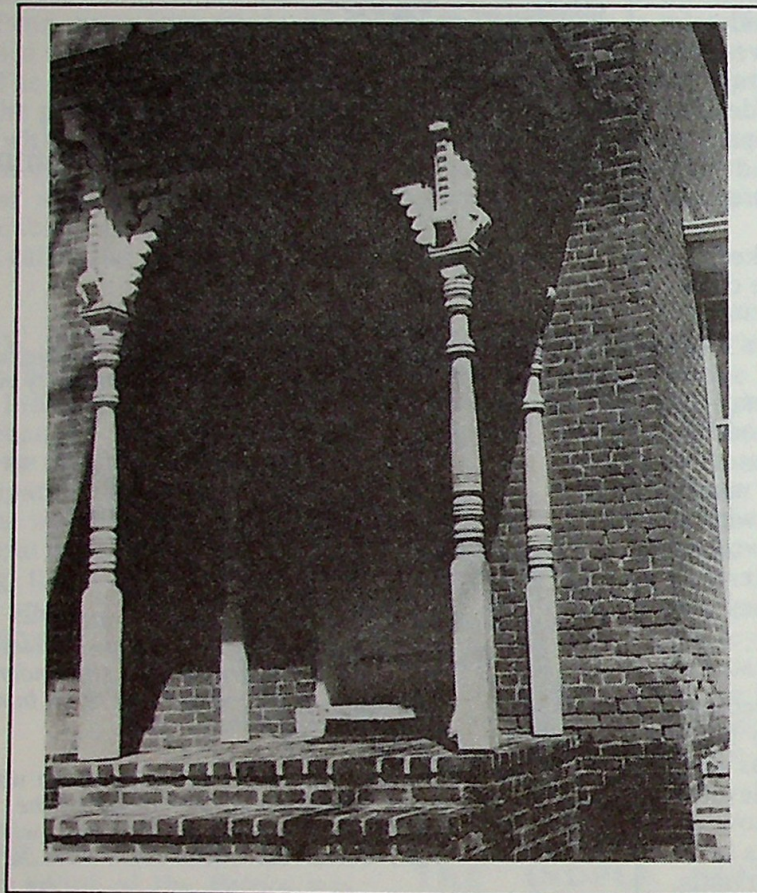


Architectural Treasure Hunting

by JOAN PRAED LYONS



Italianate style home of Kenneth and Joanna Hollis was built by Sidney Legrand Pitzer in late 1860s. The house was given a rating of 'outstanding' in a recent survey of Boone County architecture by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

Oh! Opulante Italianate!

When Sidney Legrand Pitzer built a home for his wife and five children in Boone County in the late 1860's, he chose an Italianate style that was common in towns and rural areas in many parts of the country between 1840 and 1875. The house was constructed on what is now 525S just east of 650E south of Whitestown.

The Pitzer home, located on a hill overlooking Fishback Creek,

was built of bricks that were made and fired on the property, with all walls constructed two bricks deep with an air space between. Lumber was sawn at a sawmill on the property. The roof was covered with slate tiles. It was a house that was built to last.

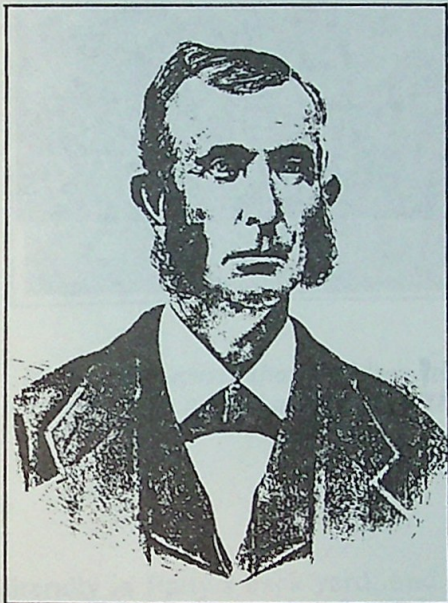
Both S.L. Pitzer and his wife, Virginia Caroline Gilmore, were born in Virginia. Pitzer was born

in 1830 and died in 1879. He was Boone County Recorder Elect when he died.

Virginia Pitzer continued to live in the house after her husband's death until about 1897 when she moved to Whitestown for about a year, and then to Zionsville, where she died two days after her 71st birthday, on December 25, 1899. She was buried in the Pitzer Cemetery as was her husband.

Several members of the Pitzer family lived in the house until about 1919 when Emory Schooler bought the property and moved in with his family, including a son, Charles B., who still lives in the rural community. Charles Schooler says he was 16 when his family moved in, and he lived there until he was 30.

Victorene Bates of Whitestown and her former husband, J. Robert Bates, bought the house



S.L. PITZER
COUNTY RECORDER ELECT.
EAGLE TP (1879)

from Emory Schooler in 1953. During the eight or nine years they lived there, they installed the first plumbing and a coal furnace with a stoker.

In the early sixties, the house was sold to James Scott of rural Whitestown who rented it to itinerant workers until 1971.

The walls of the house are still "as solid as when they were constructed" according to Joanna Hollis who, with her husband Kenneth, lives there today. The roof is the original and so are all the windows, although the Hollis' have done much restoration work

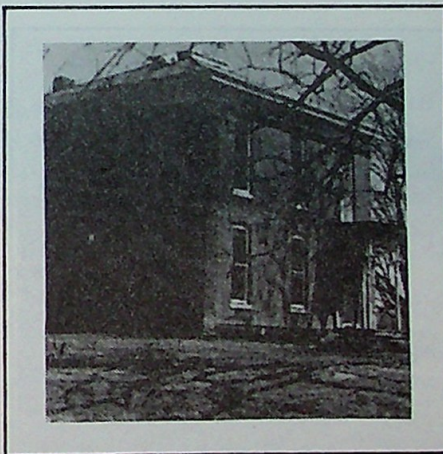
since they became owners in 1971.

They were especially pleased to be able to rescue a Victorian porch from the C.S. Riley house on SR 32 before it was razed. When the porch was installed on the front of their home, they found that it perfectly matched the paint lines from the original porch. The house has ornate bracketed eave cornices, painstakingly reconstructed by Mr. Hollis, and windows with arched brickwork, both distinctive traits of the Italianate style.

In a letter to the Hollis', Stella Pitzer Games, granddaughter of S.L. and Virginia Pitzer, wrote the following:

"My grandmother knew nothing of any kind of work when she married and she never did learn how successfully, but she was a typical Southern lady and everyone, especially we grandchildren, loved her."

The family of Nash Pitzer,



When the porch was installed on the front of their home, they found that it perfectly matched the paint lines from the original porch.

Sidney's father, brought several slaves with them when they came from Virginia, and records differ as to how many remained in Indiana. Mrs. Games remembered that a cabin was built for a former slave, Uncle Zeke, down by the creek.

"He died and was buried there with a pile of stones for a marker," she wrote. The grandchildren kept the pile straight as a token of their respect for his memory.

After her grandmother left the house, Mrs. Games' father, Emmett Pitzer moved in with his family. Stella Pitzer Games was married in the house in 1904 and recalls coming down the stairway as a bride.

Although structurally sound when they moved in, the Hollis' found the house badly in need of restoration, with vines growing in at the upstairs windows. A crew of carpenters was kept busy all summer taking down woodwork, numbering it, refinishing it and replacing it. They also removed all the windows, rehung and recaulked them. A second furnace was added to replace the old coal stove in the living room and supplement the oil furnace.

The house was given a rating of "outstanding" when the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana made a recent survey of Boone County. This rating means that the house was recommended for potential nomination to the National Register of Historic Places since it "meets the basic criteria of possessing outstanding significance on the national, state or local level for history, architecture, environment, and/or integrity."

Do you know of an architectural treasure in Boone County to share with our readers? Send information and photographs (if available) to: Joan Lyons, c/o Boone County Magazine, P.O. Box 291, Zionsville, IN 46077.