

# James Glass: Architecture, rich history preserved in Madison

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(Photo: James Glass)

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Francis Costigan and William J. Anderson were contemporaries in the vibrant river town of Madison, Ind. before the Civil War. Costigan was a gifted carpenter-builder who became one of Indiana's most accomplished architects. Anderson was an able leader who escaped slavery, founded the Madison African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, and became an organizer of the Underground Railroad. Buildings illustrating the achievements of both men have been preserved, restored, and opened to the public by Historic Madison, Inc.

Costigan, born in 1810, trained as a carpenter in Baltimore and sought new opportunities in Madison during the early 1840s. Madison was then one of the largest cities in Indiana and a major steamboat port along the Ohio River. Costigan designed and constructed several houses, some speculatively, and attracted attention for his well-proportioned structures. In 1844, he was hired by banker James F.D. Lanier to design a Greek Revival mansion with a monumental portico facing the river. The colossal Corinthian columns supporting the portico, well-portioned double parlor, and spiraled stairway in the Lanier Mansion established Costigan's reputation as a master architect.

In 1846, Captain Charles L. Shrewsbury hired him to design a home at First and Poplar streets, also facing the river. Costigan created a smaller scale house with carefully studied details and elegant proportions. Outside he faced the house with red brick and used limestone for the finely carved window lintels, entry surround, and pilaster capitals. Detailing was restrained and simple. Inside, the visitor was greeted by a long entry hall dominated by one of the wonders of 19th century design and carpentry: a largely self-supporting wooden stairway that wound three stories through the center of the house to a skylight.

On the east side of the hall was a double-parlor or drawing room separated at the middle by paired Corinthian columns, with superbly detailed acanthus leaves. The home was purchased in 1948 by a Chicago couple, John and Ann Windle, and they lovingly preserved and restored it. With Ann's passing in 2009, the house came to Historic Madison, Inc., a historic preservation organization founded by John Windle in 1960.

John Staicer, President of Historic Madison, says that his organization has just completed a \$2.1 million restoration of the Shrewsbury House, returning the exterior and interior to their appearance when the house was completed in

1849. Historic Madison intends to give public tours of the National Historic Landmark, interpret its architecture and history to visitors, and hold educational programs on Madison heritage, as well as make it available for rental by individuals and organizations. Historic Madison now owns nine historic properties in Madison, all of them with unusual and differing histories. Costigan's own house, built in the early 1850s, stands on a narrow lot on West 3rd Street and features a spacious drawing room that is fitted ingeniously within the limited footprint.

There is also a fine Greek Revival former Presbyterian church, an early 20th century doctor's office, a unique saddletree factory with all of its equipment intact and in working order, the elegant Jeremiah Sullivan House of 1818, the former St. Michael's Catholic Church of 1838, the early Hyatt House, and the Madison AME church building.

Anderson escaped slavery in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1836 and made his way to Madison, where he became a successful farmer and businessman. He also aided other African Americans to escape slavery as a conductor of the Underground Railroad. Anderson and additional free Blacks settled in the Georgetown section of Madison, where in 1850 Pastor Anderson and his congregation constructed a brick church in the Greek Revival style.

After becoming vacant, that building was acquired by Historic Madison in 2001 and fully restored to serve as a museum telling the story of the Underground Railroad in Madison. That story is unusual in that free African Americans served as the leaders in the Madison area for the railroad. Severe flooding several years ago destroyed the heating and air conditioning units for the building, but John Staicer is hopeful that money can be raised to return the church building to its educational function.

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