



THE BARKER FAMILY HISTORY

The Barker story starts in 1836 with the arrival of Catherine's grandfather John Barker Sr. Searching for a new opportunity he had left Andover Massachusetts at the age of 22. John Barker came to Michigan City in 1836 from Andover, having worked his way here in the course of two year. John H Barker and his father John Barker were founding fathers of Michigan City

John Barker married Miss Cornelia Collamer of Sandy Hill, New York in 1841. They had five children their first born son died in infancy their second child was John H Barker, George Taylor was their third child, Wallace C was their fourth child, and Ann S was their fifth and last child.

John H Barker was 23 when he became general manager of the Haskell Barker car company. He became president of the company after his father retirement in 1869. After the prosperous times in the growth it Haskell & Barker, John Barker made the decision to take on the project of enlarging their home, this project took five years from 1900 to 1905. He put Frederick Perkins, an architect from Chicago, in charge of the remodel. Parts of the old house were removed and new portions and old rooms redecoreated. When the house was finished in 1905 it consisted of thirty-eight rooms, ten bathrooms and seven fireplaces.

John H. was married twice. His first marriage was to Jennie M. Brooks. They had three children, who all died before the age of five. He married his second wife, Katherine Fitzgerald in 1893. They had one daughter, Catherine born in 1896.

In 1905, John H Barker, his wife Katherine and his daughter Catherine moved into the newly remodeled home they lived there until 1910. In 1910, when Catherine was only fourteen years old both her parents died, her mother had died after surgery in Chicago, while her father was on a business trip. Her father died of pneumonia that same December.

Catherine was attending Miss Legates School in Detroit. She continued to maintain her residence in Michigan City under the chaperoned guidance of Mr. Ashcroft. Her business affairs were managed by her guardian Mr. James Forgan of the First National Bank of Chicago.

Her formal education continued at Briarcliff on the Hudson and at Miss Finch's in New York City. Catherine was married in 1915. She later divorced and continued to maintain the house as one of her residences until 1949, although only intermittently after 1930 when she was married Mr. Charles V. Hickox of New York.

Catherine Barker Hickox and Charles V. Hickox had a total of six children. They had a set of twin boys that died as infants. They had two daughters Katrina and Sarane, and other set of twin boys named Charles Chatterton and John Barker. They raised their children in New York, but visited Barker Mansion often.

She enjoyed visits to Barker Mansion to show her children where she had once lived. In 1948, Catherine deeded Barker's mansion to Purdue University to be used as an educational center. In 1968 when Purdue established the Purdue North Central campus and at that point the property and building of Barker's mansion was returned to the Barker Welfare Foundation, which Catherine had established in 1924. In 1968 Catherine presented Barker's Mansion to Michigan City to be used as a cultural and civic center in memory of her father John Henry Barker.

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