

# Honoring Lew Wallace

July 19th - 27th, 1886

## Wallace, the Writer

Lew Wallace was a lawyer, a politician, a general, a statesman and, finally, an author of historical novels, poetry and plays.

Remarkably, Wallace's reputation as a writer was established by the publication of his second novel, *Ben Hur*, in 1880. Published by Harper Brothers, the book at first had only modest sales. In its third year in print, the book's sales increased dramatically and grew steadily every year. From 1870 to 1900, Wallace's annual royalties ran as high as \$27,000, a phenomenal financial success for that time.

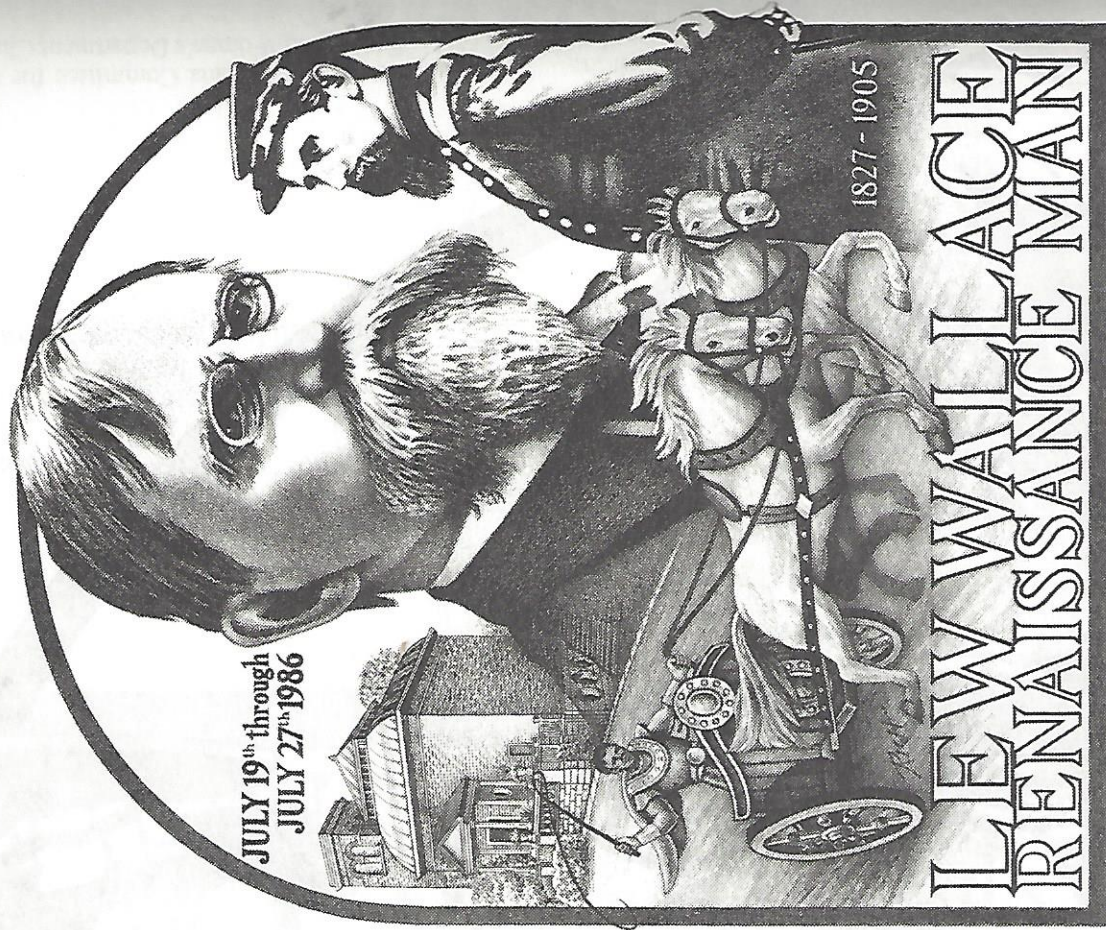
Translated into twenty-nine languages, *Ben Hur* had the greatest circulation of any book in English except *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Macaulay's *History of England*. Special editions were sponsored by both the Vatican and Sears, Roebuck and Company. The novel was adapted for the stage in 1899 and for motion pictures in 1921. The play opened in New York, to the tune of a march composed by John Philip Sousa. The cast numbered more than 400 humans, as well as numerous horses and camels.

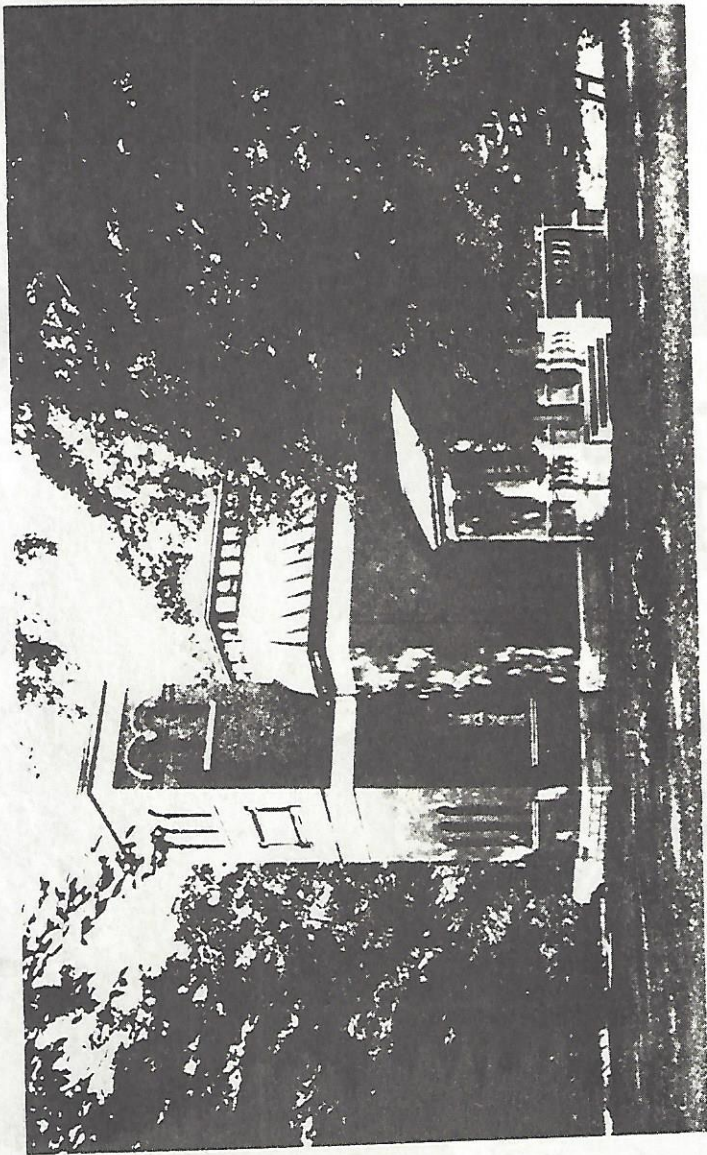
*Ben Hur* maintained a readership

that endured. In 1959, a second movie was produced. Today, more than 100 years after its publication, the novel is known and loved by many as one of the great novels produced by a Hoosier.

Although *Ben Hur* certainly established Wallace's literary fame, it was not his first novel. He had published *The Fair God*, a tale of the conquest of Mexico, in 1873. *Ben Hur's* astounding success put Wallace on the lecture circuit and established him as a successful literary figure. In spite of a hectic lecture schedule, Wallace continued to be a practicing writer. He published a biography of Benjamin Harrison in 1888 and a historical novel about Christ's boyhood in 1889. His *Prince of India* was published in 1893. He also wrote several poems and a two-volume autobiography.

Like many Hoosier writers, Wallace enjoyed success in other careers before turning to literature. How fortunate that at the end of a long military and diplomatic career, Wallace turned his talents to literature and produced the supremely successful *Ben Hur*.





## The Crawfordsville Study

In 1885, Wallace completed his duties as Ambassador to Turkey and returned to Crawfordsville, Indiana. There he built a study, where he enjoyed entertaining the many visitors who came to visit the renowned author of *Ben Hur*. Wallace enjoyed entertaining and was known to invite his guests to fish in the moat that surrounded the study.

Built at a cost of \$25,000, the study was Turkish in architecture: the first of its kind in the country. It rests in the center of grounds once owned by Mrs. Wallace's family, the Eltons. *Ben Hur* was completed under the shade of a beech tree on the grounds. Today, the famous tree's location is marked by a bronze statue of Wallace.

The study is a suitable memorial to the many facets of Wallace's personality. The Turkish architecture is a romantic reminder of Wallace's years as a

swashbuckling Zouave and, much later, a diplomat in Turkey.

The literary Wallace is commemorated in sculpture. On the front of the building, the face of Ben Hur is chiseled in marble. A sculpted frieze portrays other characters from Wallace's books.

Wallace was an amateur painter, exhibiting his works at the first Art Exhibit, held in Indianapolis. The works shown there are now on display in the study. In the unpublished biography of his wife, Wallace wrote of himself, "He is an artist and for positive has covered his walls with pictures."

Open to the public, the study is a delightful reminder of the colorful, beloved Hoosier general and writer. It is, as Wallace said of it, a "pleasure house for my soul."



Friends of Indiana Literature

Sponsored by Indiana State Museum Society  
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Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

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## Auditorium

### Indiana State Museum

202 North Alabama Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204

**Saturday, July 19, 1986, 2:00 p.m.**

Lecture: "Lew Wallace, Renaissance Man"  
by Raymond Shoemaker

**Saturday, July 26, 1986, 10:00 a.m.**

Symposium: Lew Wallace

Author - Donald Thompson  
The Artist - Peg Shearer  
Statesman - Dr. Lee Scott Theisen  
Military Man - Richard Skidmore

Moderator - Dr. Dominic Bisignano

There will be a break at noon for a box lunch.

**Sunday, July 27, 1986, 2:00 p.m.**

Recital: Music composed for *Ben Hur* -  
Dr. John Gates

There will be a reception following this concert

## Cropsey Auditorium Indianapolis-Marion Co. Public Library

40 East St. Clair, Indianapolis, IN 46204

**Tuesday, July 22, 1986, 7:00 p.m.**

Films: *The Chariot Race* (1906)  
*Ben Hur*, starring Ramon Navarro (1925)

**Wednesday, July 23, 1986, 7:00 p.m.**

Film: *Ben Hur*, starring Charlton Heston (1959)  
Part I

**Thursday, July 24, 1986, 7:00 p.m.**

Film: *Ben Hur*, starring Charlton Heston (1959)  
Part II

**Friday, July 25, 1986, 7:00 p.m.**

Films: *The Chariot Race* (1906)  
*Ben Hur*, starring Ramon Navarro (1925)

Coordinator: Joe Farah

## Indiana Committee for the Humanities

This program has been made possible through a matching grant from the Indiana Committee for the Humanities in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## About the Illustrator, Rich Ernsting

Rich Ernsting designed the poster for the Friends of Indiana Literature's Lew Wallace festival. Born and raised in Indianapolis, Rich graduated from North Central High School in 1965. He attended the Frank Reilly School of Art in New York City. Returning to Indianapolis, he has been a working Indiana artist ever since.

He has received many awards for his art, including prizes from the Hoosier Salon, Indiana State Fair and Indiana Artists Club. A versatile representational artist, he works in varied media, portraying subjects that range from landscape to portrait.

## Tour Of Crawfordsville Sunday, July 20, 1986

A bus trip to Crawfordsville, IN to see the Lew Wallace Study, Lane House, the Old Jail. Dinner at Crawfordsville Country Club, summer home of Lew Wallace. Tour Director: Martha Reed, 632-5007.

Use this form to make your reservations  
for bus tour and box lunch:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I want \_\_\_\_\_ reservation(s) for the Bus Tour,  
Sunday, July 20. \$25.00 each.

Yes, I want \_\_\_\_\_ box lunch(es) for the Saturday,  
July 26th Symposium. \$4.00 each.

Enclose your check and mail to:

Friends of Indiana Literature  
c/o Indiana State Museum  
202 N. Alabama St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

# LEW WALLACE

## BIOGRAPHICAL CHRONOLOGY

1827	Born in Brookville, IN on April 10.
1837	Father, David Wallace, elected Governor of Indiana
1846-47	Served in Mexican War
1849	Admitted to the bar
1852	Married Susan Elston
1853	Moved to Crawfordsville, IN
1856	Organized the Montgomery Guards (Zouaves)
1861-65	Served in the Civil War
1866	Served on the courts martial that tried the Lincoln conspirators and investigated the Andersonville atrocities.
1873	<i>The Fair God</i> published
1878-81	Appointed territorial governor of New Mexico by President Hayes
1880	<i>Ben Hur</i> published
1881-85	Appointed Ambassador to Turkey by President Garfield
1888	<i>The Life of Benjamin Harrison</i> published
1888	<i>The Boyhood of Christ</i> published
1890	Patented "combined joint bar and railway tie"
1893	<i>The Prince of India</i> published
1897	<i>The Wooing of Malkatoon</i> and <i>Commodus</i> published
1905	Died in Crawfordsville, IN on February 15.