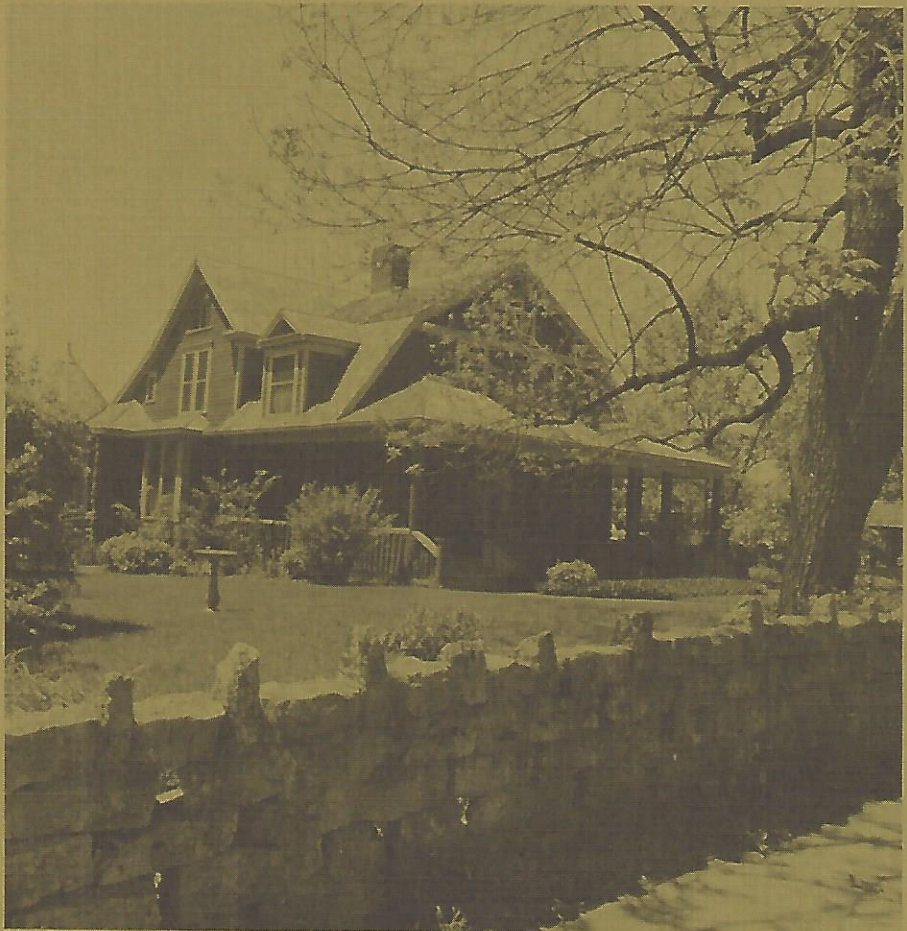




# Limberlost



STATE MEMORIAL



# THE MEMORIAL

Limberlost State Memorial preserves the home where Gene Stratton Porter began her career as a world renowned author and naturalist. The house is located in Geneva, Indiana, and was occupied by Mrs. Porter, her husband Charles, and their daughter Jeannette from the time of its completion in 1895 until 1913.

Mrs. Porter called the home "Limberlost Cabin" in honor of the vast wilderness area of swamps, forests, and marshlands which stretched for many miles just south of the home. This area is said to have derived the name "Limberlost" from an early settler, "Limber Jim" Corbus, who was lost in the swamp's quicksands.

Mrs. Porter, an avid nature enthusiast, was keenly interested in the rare plants, flowers, birds, and animals she found in the Limberlost, and she designed the home and the landscaping to blend with the magnificent natural surroundings. The exterior of the 14-room home is built of white cedar logs from Wisconsin, and the upper story and roof are surfaced with redwood shingles.

The entrance hall, library and dining room of the home are paneled in quarter-sawed oak, ordered especially for the home from Kokomo. On the main floor are a conservatory, library, dining room, music room, two bedrooms, kitchen and bath. There are four bedrooms upstairs.

While living at Limberlost, Mrs. Porter wrote six novels, four books of nature studies, and many nature oriented magazine articles. Since she wrote of the lives and locales that were familiar to her, visitors to her Limberlost home can still see many of the things described in her novels, such as: "the Dream Girl's porch," "Freckles' window," "the Harvester's fireplace," and "Dream Girl's room."

By 1913 most of Limberlost Swamp had been drained, and Mrs. Porter began searching for a new home site which would provide a richer natural environment for her work. This she soon found on the shores of Sylvan lake near Rome City, Indiana.

Limberlost Cabin was presented to the State of Indiana in 1947 by the Limberlost Conservation Association of Geneva. It has been maintained by the State as "Limberlost State Memorial" since then. The Memorial is open year round, and there is a small admission charge.

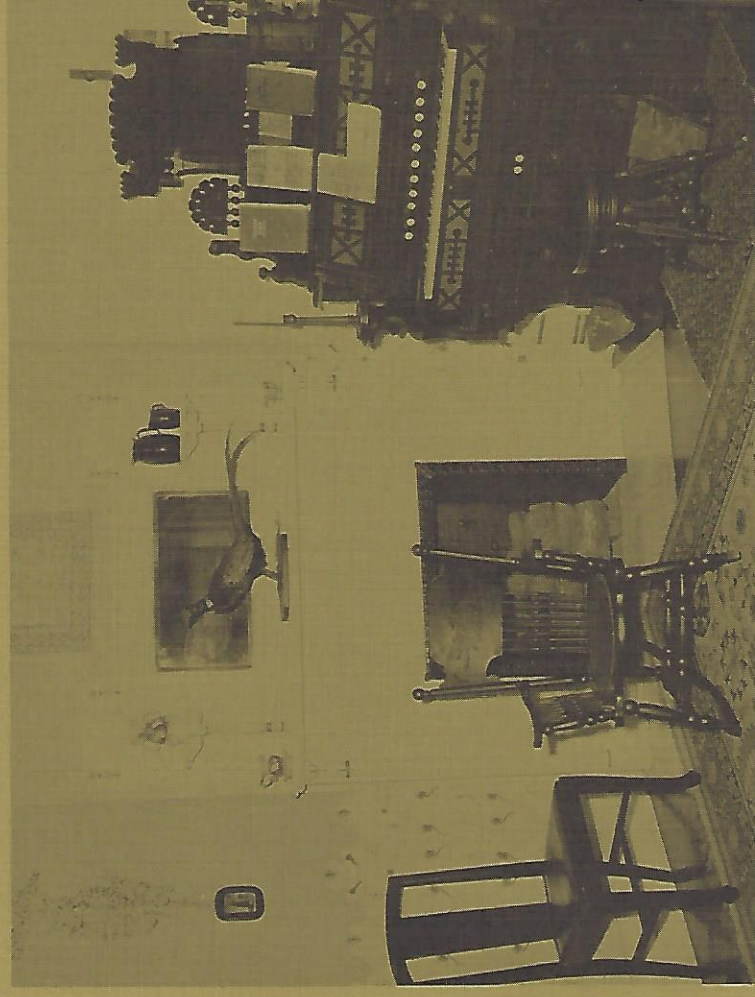
# THE WOMAN

Gene Stratton Porter is one of Indiana's most widely-known woman authors. She wrote twelve novels, seven nature books, a book for children, two books of poetry, one book of essays and numerous articles for *Outing*, *Century*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and *Good House-keeping* magazines.

Mrs. Porter is estimated to have had fifty million readers, and her works were translated into seven foreign languages and braille. Many of her novels were made into motion pictures and were great box-office successes. Mrs. Porter also was a noted naturalist, photographer, and illustrator.

Mrs. Porter was born August 17, 1868, on "Hopewell" farm near Wabash, Indiana. Her parents were avid nature enthusiasts who passed on to their daughter a love of the unspoiled out-of-doors.

In 1886 she married Charles Darwin Porter, a druggist and banker. The couple lived for a short time in Decatur, but after the birth of





their daughter Jeannette, they moved to Geneva, Indiana, where in 1895 they built a new home near the Limberlost Swamp.

Mrs. Porter was fascinated with the wide variety of unusual flora and fauna in the area and soon became a serious student of the local wildlife and wildflowers. In the course of her studies she became proficient at producing extremely accurate watercolor illustrations of plants, animals, and insects.

She also became interested in photography as a means of accurately depicting the natural state. She soon mastered photography so completely that the manufacturer of the photographic print paper she used sent a company representative to ascertain how she was able to get such exceptional results with their brand of paper.

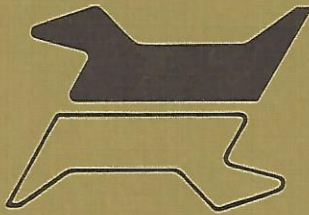
During her first years at Limberlost Mrs. Porter wrote, photographed, and illustrated several nature studies for national magazines. From 1903 to 1911 she published six novels: *Song of the Cardinal* (1903), *Freckles* (1904), *At the Foot of the Rainbow* (1907), *A Girl of the Limberlost* (1909), *The Harvester* (1911), and *Laddie* (1913). During this same period she also published four books for nature studies: *What I Have Done with Birds* (1907), *Birds of the Bible* (1909), *Music of the Wild* (1910), and *Moths of the Limberlost* (1912). The illustrations, cover designs, and layout work for most of these books were also done by Mrs. Porter.

Mrs. Porter spent many hours roaming the Limberlost, seeking material for her books. Her fiction is enriched with her own observations of nature, and the characters in her novels were often drawn from her real-life acquaintances.

Highly self-disciplined, she devoted a certain number of hours daily to writing and refused to be interrupted or diverted. In addition, she spent all of the winter months writing. Because of this ardent devotion to her work, Mrs. Porter was considered aloof by many of the townspeople; however, her friends contend that this was not the case and that she studied human nature as avidly as she did the out-of-doors.

After the magnificent Limberlost Swamp was drained in 1913, Gene Stratton Porter built a new home in a beautiful wooded area on the shores of Sylvan Lake near Rome City, Indiana. Here she wrote three novels, one book of nature studies, and a children's book.

In 1920 Gene Stratton Porter moved to California where she continued to write until her death in an automobile accident in 1924.



**Division of Museums & Memorials**

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