

The Long, Long Trail Becomes A Short Cut Of Fascinating Byways Into ...

EMILY EMERSON LANTZ

The Sun (1837-1992); Sep 7, 1919; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun
pg. 3C

The Long, Long Trail Becomes A Short Cut Of Fascinating Byways Into The Land Of One Adventurous Lady's Dreams

Here's A Story You Will Like About A Bit Of Unexpected Leisure And How It Led To The Exploration Of A Number Of The Quaint And Half-Forgotten Little Streets Of Baltimore, Many Of Which Were Important Thoroughfares In Their Day.

By EMILY EMERSON LANTZ.

THESE are doubtless those who on the principle that "the longest way round is the shortest way home," follow unmurmuringly a beaten track, a familiar thoroughfare. They leave a given point, only to reach a fixed destination. They know the road, its length and the time required to travel it. Its accustomed aspect relieves them of necessity for observation and seems to sooth their

spirits. Their natures do not demand change and familiar scenes become endeared to them by long association.

But there be others to whom variety is the very spice of life and who find pleasure in turning aside from main-traveled roads or busy or fashionable thoroughfares to venture into the unknown. To such there is irresistible fascination in seeking short cuts to places, in turning into the quiet of some little streets. Some archway beckons, some waving tree allures, some arcade or bridge invites, and their responsive hearts follow with the eagerness of a bird awing.

Such a woman found herself, one noonday during the past week, with an hour's unanticipated leisure at her disposal and the words of an army ballad echoing through her brain. She stood at the entrance to Crooked Lane, a tiny thoroughfare running south from Lexington street and the words of the song

"There's a long, long trail awinding Into the land of my dreams," had been suggested by the inscription on a bronze tablet affixed to the rear wall of O'Neill & Co.'s department store. The tablet had been placed there in 1914 by members of the Star-Spangled Banner Committee and read:

"This thoroughfare, Crooked Lane, marks a part of the northwest boundary of Baltimore Town as laid out by the Town Commissioners January 12, 1730, and is a survival of the Great Eastern Highway over which General Washington, Lafayette and other notables journeyed from North to South in Revolutionary days."

The inscription was surmounted by an engraved map showing the boundary lines of Baltimore Town as indicated in 1730.

Old Indian Trail.

The woman glanced across at the Fidelity Building and office windows of former Governor Warfield. "I wonder," she mused, "if Governor Warfield ever glimpses this little Crooked Lane and realizes that its use as a road for the feet of men antedates even Revolutionary days? If he, or the pedestrians hurrying to and fro along Lexington street, stop to think that this lane was once the trail used by Susquehanna Indians? They crossed Jones' Falls at the easiest fording place, the David Jones farm, situated about where Bath street now is, and followed a trail southwest that included Crooked Lane to Fayette street, through McClellan alley to Baltimore street and thence on to the Severn river.

"Indians in selecting trails chose short cuts, followed pleasant routes and traveled with observation. I will become temporarily an Indian squaw and seek interesting trails within the very heart of Baltimore's commercial center, and scarcely getting out of sight of the point at which I set out."

She started at leisurely gait up Charles street upon this bold adventure and immediately Clay street running westward caught her eye. Clay street that has sanctified beginning at the gates of Old St. Paul's and that comes to epicurian ending in the vicinity of Lexington Market. It proved an interesting little street, rather bustling, much given over to engravers, art printers, and gold and silver smiths, but more alluring still were the green terraces of St. Paul's rectory glimpsed upon turning into Liberty. She followed this whimsical lead and next to catch the eye was the Stars and Stripes that wave above the Royal Arcanum Building on Saratoga street. This is the home that used to be the residence of Johns Hopkins in the days when the founder of the university and hospital took sociable Sunday night suppers with his neighbors across the street and scolded small boys and girls, who, after the manner of their kind, slid down his high terraces where the grass is still emerald and where his linden trees still sway in the sunshine.

The Road To Arcady.

Just east of this a fascinating trail was found in the Brown Arcade, which the pedestrian entered upon Saratoga street to follow to an unforeseen ending on gaily frivolous Charles street. There are three trails almost parallel to this unique cut-off in city thoroughfares. The wild animal trail, or alley, where former Governor Brown's saddle horse is often seen standing tethered and gazing dreamily at the roses of Sharon blooming in

the old Hopkins garden. The outside trail, paved and within an iron railing along which are stretched a book loan library, and various business enterprises with ferns and potted plants outside their doors. A screened porch, reached by a stairway, extends over one section of this walk and looks like the forward deck of a steamboat to the pedestrian hurrying along below. A third trail, an inside route, runs within the building which used to be Calvert Hall College, and the two latter ways unite in a broad arcade lined with art studios, lunchroom, fashionable shops, etc. To follow these trails is to have a delightful sense of traversing a crystal maze and finding oneself in a world of the unexpected.

An Artist's Byway.

The next inviting little byway to ensnare the modern Minnehaha was Hamilton street, stretching sleepily west and east from Park avenue to St. Paul street's sunken gardens, officially known as the Preston terraces. Here all was cool and tree-shaded stillness. Many quaint houses there were that looked like real homes, whose numerous chimneys bespoke generous open-hearth fires such as burned in the heart of metropolitan New York for "Colonel Carter of Cartersville." There was an artist's studio, with casement windows and flowering window boxes, with a United States flag that had the beauty of a rose aflame upon the door and a red cross, bespeaking sympathy with the world, glowing beneath it. A gray cat luxuriated in the dense shadows cast by branches of trees along the street. She occupied the center of the pavement, and remained there, unafraid, as one conscious of privileges and consideration in her own ter-

ritory. All along the thoroughfare suggested refinement and memories of the past, and there were greenhouses toward the eastern end, where the former stable of the late Mr. Jesse Tyson has been converted into one of the real art centers of the city. The rear walls of such huge modern structures as the Young Women's Christian Association and Young Men's Christian Association, at the north end of Hamilton street, overshadow the modest neighborhood, but seemed not to have disturbed its serenity of atmosphere. Rather they were Gibralters that protected the vicinity against the buffeting waves of undesirable neighbors.

Via Gardens And Airline.

To follow Preston terraces, southward, was to realize what an exceedingly picturesque and stimulating combination of art and nature has been achieved in the city's commercial center. Here was found the straight path for those in haste, with also a willful, wandering, grass-environed trail for those who walked unhurried. Looking upward to the St. Paul street drive, speeding automobiles ceased to be a menacing terror to the pedestrian and become a part of an animated moving picture. Sweeping stairways descending from this height and fountain niches, where water should be flowing, are imposing. It must be admitted that the local habit of regarding the grass plats of public parks as proper repositories for discarded newspapers is scarcely to be commended, but perhaps public and caretakers will some day realize their duty to the municipality, and the terraces are certainly beautiful enough to warrant the strictest care being taken of them.

The fascinating short cut north and

south through the Courthouse from Lexington to Fayette street was too good to miss. "I wish I had time to study the mural decorations," sighted the pathfinder, "but it is trails, not art. I am studying," and this recalled the unique little short cut, the overhead route, connecting the Calvert and Equitable Buildings to

take which skyline she quickly mounted in the elevator of one building, crossed high in air a covered bridge with never a sigh, and descended to earth in the elevator of the other.

Then quite naturally she drifted to the Arcade of the Casualty Building. "Another attractive short cut," she mur-

mured, "where we can have our lives insured, our clothes pressed and get a quick lunch without leaving the trail." She glanced at her wristwatch. "I think I will have luncheon," she laughed to herself. "Perhaps a lunchroom is the land of my dreams, but certainly I have followed an interesting and unusual route to find it."