

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

Mrs. Stiegler's Nursing Home in Indian Hill , Part 1

From about 1922 until 1960, Mrs. Stiegler's Nursing Home existed at the southeast corner of Kugler Mill and Camargo Roads. Owned and managed by Pauline Nierczwichy Stiegler, it provided care for patients who needed assisted living during those decades.

Pauline Nierczwichy was originally from Poland. There are various stories about how she came to America. By one account she immigrated to become a nun, then left the nunnery. Another possibility was that she and her father (a physician) moved to Columbus, Ohio to care for wounded soldiers after World War I. Then Pauline worked as a nanny for a well to do family there. When she had enough money, she moved to Cincinnati. Pauline stated that she had trained at a nursing home in Germany. Her exact credentials are not public record, but it is believed that she was an R.N.

Pauline opened the nursing home circa 1922 in a three-story house in Indian Hill. The house served as the office and the residence of Pauline and 4 -5 patients. There was a detached garage, a small caretaker's cabin, and a barn. Until the 1950s, there were cattle and poultry on the site. According to census and newspaper reports, Pauline married Charles Stiegler sometime between 1930 and 1938. In 1938, an advertisement in the *Cincinnati Post* for Stiegler's Rest Home was published noting that it "specializes in nervous and mental cases. Beautiful country home in the environment where the sun shines, excellent food, and cared for by trained nurse at reasonable prices..."



Nursing Home Office & Residence



Cottage

Later in 1938 a nine-room cottage was constructed to accommodate more patients. The next year, two women clients died in the basement, accidentally asphyxiated by fumes from an oil burning stove. There was an investigation of this incident, resulting in licensing requirements for private nursing/rest homes beginning in 1940. Testimony included Pauline's statement that 19 patients resided at the rest home at that time. Presumably her husband helped with the many responsibilities of tending for them. In 1943 a press article said that Charles Stiegler died "as a result of injuries suffered when he jumped off the Eighth Viaduct." Then widow Pauline handled operations on her

own.

In the 1950s Pauline contacted members of her family to invite them to the states either for a visit or to stay and work at the nursing home. First to come in 1953 were her niece and grand-nieces from Germany, war widow Helena Klobutowski and her two daughters, Brigitte (17) and Renee (15). They moved into a ranch house at 8475 Camargo Rd., a short distance from the main house and cottage. They all shared a room, with Helena sleeping in a twin bed and the girls sharing a double bed. Renee went to school, but Brigitte went straight to work. Pauline monitored 10-12 patients at the big house. Helena took care of 4-5 patients at 8475, and Brigitte took care of about 23 patients in the cottage. The teenager worked from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. 365 days a year, and her paycheck was \$100 each month.

The normal daily routine began with rousing the patients, feeding them (some needed to be spoon fed) and letting them rest or watch television until lunch, then rest again until 5:00 dinner. After that the patients went to their rooms; some rooms had several beds. Those considered risky or who might wander during the night were shackled to their beds overnight. Most patients could not feed or dress themselves. Many had what is currently called Alzheimer's Disease, which was then considered a "mental case". Those who could not put their own clothes on wore dresses and no underwear. The 1950s was an era before Depends were invented. So patients had to be cleaned periodically. Also their rooms had to be swept, mopped, and kept tidy.



Brigitte with patient

Brigitte Vielhauer, Ann Ward McFarland, and Stella Ward Schafer assisted with this article.