

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

Fifty Years Ago: Wyman Lane and Miralake Drive

Among the illustrious families who lived in Indian Hill for decades were the Philip Wymans. Their large farm at (then) 8450 Shawnee Run Road encompassed all of current day Wyman Lane and Miralake Drive. Mr. Wyman, Vice-President of the Baldwin Piano Company, and his wife Frances Perin Wyman were widely known socially and in civic circles in Cincinnati and New York City. Mrs. Wyman was an enthusiastic horsewoman. Mr. Wyman was devoted to the musical world and became President of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in 1933. Their farm was named Sleepy Hollow. Known to many as Uncle Phil and Aunt Fran, the Wymans gave memorable large parties for the Symphony Orchestra and guests, and used their large lawn as a parking lot.



In 1961, the Wymans decided to develop about 75 acres at the entrance to their property. Indian Hill Homes, Inc. was the developer. Dryden Jones, the principal, was a friend of Rufus Smith, Mrs. Philip Wyman's son. After deciding to develop the front acreage, the Wymans retained their home at the end of Miralake Drive as well as several other adjacent home sites, which were developed much later. Representing his mother's interests, Mr. Smith asked Mr. Jones to develop the property.

Dryden Jones, architectural designer, builder, and land planner, was the mastermind of Indian Hill Homes, Inc. The construction superintendent, Orin Driesbach, (a World War II veteran who had parachuted into Normandy on D-Day) synchronized the subcontractors, including Henry Kenny, landscaping; Walter Williams, carpentry; Hyde Park Lumber, millwork; Bluford Jackson, flooring; Jones Brothers Plumbing; Daniels Roofing; and Rausch Electric.

Initially the overall land tract was divided between one acre and three acre zones. Indian Hill Homes received a variance from the Village Planning Commission to upgrade the one acre zoned lots to two acre home sites, which blended well with the adjacent three acre area.

Each house had a particular style, and about half the homes were custom designed for specific clients. All had high ceilings, stately fireplaces, and tall chimneys. Architectural inspiration came from Colonial Williamsburg, the Deep South, Cape Cod, New England, France and England. Much attention was devoted to details, and old paneling and antique lighting fixtures purchased in England were used when available. Even the color of brick mortar was customized.

A dilapidated old stone springhouse was on the property, and it had not completely fallen down. Legend was that the Wymans once stored fresh milk from their dairy cows in large milk cans in a cistern inside the building. Rather than demolish the springhouse, Dryden Jones restored it, and built a French country farmhouse behind it, reminiscent of Normandy or Brittany. Additionally he installed a plaque on the western wall, noting the history of the structure – surely one of the oldest buildings in the Village. The springhouse still stands at 6645 Wyman Lane, and the current owners have displayed an American flag there perpetually since 9/11/01.



The Wyman/Miralake development took a decade. The exquisite homes are still among the most elegant on "the hill". In the 50 years since they were built, some have been altered or enlarged. Indian Hill Homes, Inc. built other houses locally, specifically on south Drake Road and Councilrock Lane. Also they constructed Williamsburg Court at the intersection of Shawnee Run and Miami Roads. Mr. Jones has stated, "We endeavored to keep the architecture pure". He succeeded.