

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

Looking Back at Dr. Charles L. Metz: Physician & Archeologist, Part I

Charles Louis Metz (born January 1, 1847) was the youngest of 10 children of German immigrants, Dr. & Mrs. Francis Metz. As a youth he accompanied his father on medical house calls throughout rural southwest Ohio. At age 14 he served as a drummer for the 9th O.V. I. at Camp Dennison during the Civil War, where he also was a surgeon's assistant to his father at the then largest military hospital in the state. With this experience, he entered medical school at 18 and graduated from Miami Medical College in 1871. Charles and his wife Molly lived in Madisonville, where he practiced medicine and visited the ill in nearby hamlets. One patient in Mariemont, Phebe Ferris, owned land including a parcel she called "pottery field". She gave Charles permission to excavate it, which had a huge impact on his life.



Dr. Metz's home in Madisonville

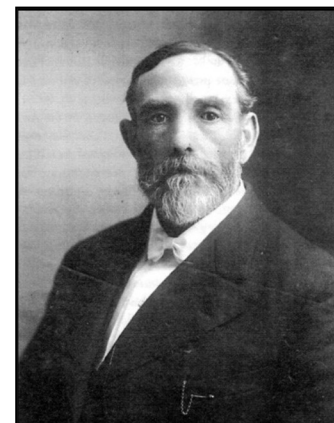
Metz and his friends collected specimens from that site. In 1871 he founded the Literary and Scientific Society of Madisonville, whose members conducted archeological digs locally. Through the 1870s and 1880s they developed a chart of the prehistoric monuments of the Little Miami Valley. The records of the LSSM list thousands of artifacts and the locations of many sites. Ferris' "pottery field", later called the Madisonville Site contained 1450 human burials and more than 1300 storage pits. Digs yielded the remains of Native Americans and their culture: tools, vessels, and religious effigies. Wooden implements had decayed, but bone and stone relics were salvaged including axes, tillers, ceramic jars, arm bands, spades, scrapers, combs, knives, pipes, beads, rasps, and even bird bone flutes. Many of these items were marked with an "X" symbol. This site is still considered one of the most important plots in the history of indigenous peoples of the Ohio River Valley.



Madisonville Site Marker

When his father died unexpectedly in 1873, Charles took on those patients, adding to his workload. He treated sick people in their homes, and also held office hours at his house. He was very active in his community. Metz served as a Madisonville town councilman, was a member of the school board, and helped establish the fire department. Besides weekly meetings with his archeologically oriented friends at LSSM, he was a member of the Jovial Fishing Club and the Orpheus Club (a musical group). Archeology was his main passion, and he published numerous detailed articles about his discoveries in the area. Metz documented the handmade creations and mounds of Native Americans, which was ground-breaking research in the late 1800s.

(To be Continued Next Month)



Dr. Charles Metz



Dr. Metz's office hours

Dr. Charles Louis Metz and the American Indian: Archeology of the Little Miami River Valley was a valuable resource for this article.