

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge-1861

Remembering James “Jimmy” Rheinstrom

James “Jimmy” Rheinstrom, moved to Indian Hill during the Estate Era (1920’s), and was a resident for 51 years. His 30 acre Clearwater Farm on Graves Road was so named as an approximate translation of the German words “rhein” and “strom”.

When he was 18, his father died, and he assumed Presidency of Rheinstrom Brothers, manufacturers of liqueurs, cordials, and later glazed fruits. Company brands included “U.S. Mail Box Rye” and “Dragon Gin.” The brick building with the “Rheinstrom Bros.” sign was a landmark on Columbia Parkway for many years. When the company closed its doors, the building was donated to establish Riverview Neighbors House, a favorite charity of Rheinstrom’s. Mr. Rheinstrom later was President of Keifer Machine Co., a manufacturer of packaging machines.

Clearwater Farm was elegant. The main house was a shingle style structure, and there was a large U-shaped barn complex south of the residence. A stone blacksmith’s shop from an earlier era was preserved and restored by Rheinstrom. The emblem for Clearwater Farm on the Map of Camargo (1928) was a saddle, symbolizing the owner’s favorite pastime – riding.



Jimmy Rheinstrom, a member of the Camargo Hunt, rode to the hounds twice a week and often went hacking with friends on days he did not hunt. Members of the Camargo Hunt recall Jimmy being the first person to transport his horses to a meet by vehicle. Having his mounts trucked in assured that they were fresh at the beginning of the Hunt. Jimmy loved the camaraderie of the Hunt and welcomed guests to his home, “located on Graves Road, Indian Hill Village, in the fox hunting country of Ohio... Members of the Camargo Hunt are welcome every day of the year.” Meticulous about everything and always immaculately attired, he was formal in his manner. Proud of his barn,

Rheinstrom remarked, “One might say that the house at Clearwater Farm is second in importance to the barn.”

The barn surrounded a courtyard with a wishing well and a horse mounting block. At one end, the foreman, (Philip Sickinger) resided with his family. Inside the barn were Rheinstrom’s workshop, storage space for vehicles and equipment, an area for cows and feed, and five stalls for horses. At the opposite end of the complex was a wood paneled tack room, with a fireplace and splendid décor- including an antique mammy’s bench.

Regularly on Sundays, friends met at Clearwater Farm for a ride. Horses were individually escorted to the mounting block by the groomsman. Rheinstrom always wore exquisite garb and the appropriate hat. His horses were impeccably clean – hooves painted with oil, manes clipped, and bits polished, so exquisite that royalty could have mounted them! Rides over Indian Hill’s trails lasted 2 -3 hours with Jimmy, who loved to ride fast, leading the group.

Jimmy remained a bachelor all his life, and together with his sister, Elsa, who lived with him for many years, held frequent soirees with musical entertainment after dinner. Rheinstrom hosted many Hunt Teas and events. His humorous invitations were like mock Life magazines, with photographs of members of the Camargo Hunt, fake advertisements, and a summons to “drinks and eats”. Though he entertained lavishly, he was also known – in the midst of winter, when the lake on his property froze for ice-skating – to bring a sack of potatoes to the lake, build a fire, and roast potatoes for the neighborhood children.

Rheinstrom died in 1977 and willed Clearwater Farm to Indian Hill for a park. After years of study, the Village razed the buildings and made the property part of the Green Areas. Then the Recreation Commission constructed a one mile long circular trail around the property. Currently residents use the park from dawn until dusk and enjoy the terrain that composes Rheinstrom Park. Jimmy Rheinstrom left a great legacy..

