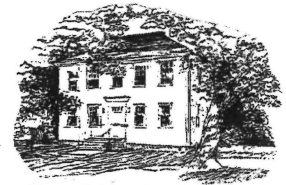


IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Story of the Indian Hill Water Tower

The Water Tower, located at 5535 Miami Road, is a visual landmark of the Village. Its history is linked to the story of water supply for Indian Hill.

In the early twentieth century, local water was supplied by wells and cisterns, often hand pumped by local farmers. In the 1920's water was brought to Indian Hill from Madisonville by the City of Cincinnati. A sewer district was established with property owners paying for their own mains and extensions. Increasing population required larger water volume, so in 1933 the City started construction of the Water Tower. One resident, Miss Beatrice Shillito, contributed \$525 to the venture. The Tower was completed as a WPA project, and the tank had a 500,000 gallon capacity.

Medieval in appearance, the Tower has some notable architectural features. The concrete cylindrical base has an attractive entry with an unusual roof. The exterior is painted in a symmetrical pattern simulating brick, and the shingled roof has subtly flared eaves and two dormers. The Tower is 116 feet high, and massive in appearance. The architect, Charles F. Cellarius, was admired for his accomplishment, but the structural engineer, Fred W. Morrill, suffered criticism because the Tower leaked in its early years.



In 1941, residents voted to incorporate as the Village of Indian Hill, creating a separate entity from Cincinnati, which had hoped to annex this neighborhood. In 1946 Cincinnati's Council passed an ordinance that water should not be delivered to any mains outside city limits unless the users agreed to be annexed to the city. Since villagers relied upon the Water Tower, this would have forced Indian Hill to belong to the municipality.. After two years of legal battles, it was decided that Cincinnati did not have to supply water to Indian Hill. As a result in 1948, the Village adopted its own plan for an independent water supply system. On the banks of the Little Miami River, the Village established its own Water Works plant with wells, mains, a softening plant, and pumping facilities. The City of Cincinnati called for a reimbursement of \$24,776 from the Village of Indian Hill for water usage, but allowed the Village to purchase the Water Tower in 1949 for \$62,075.

Since then the Water Tower has served Village residents with only one interruption. That occurred in 1992 when local youths setting off bottle rockets caused the roof to catch on fire. The Tower was not used for several months during repairs. Water is pumped to the Tower from Camp Dennison, where 3 underground tanks contain 3.2 million gallons of water. A booster pumping station pushes the water into the Tower. The water is stored in a "bowl" located 50 feet about the original dirt floor. Water pressure is maintained by electronic sensors monitored by Water Works personnel, under the supervision of Jason Adkins, Water Works Superintendent.

The Water Tower serves the majority of the Village. A small part of northern Indian Hill uses Cincinnati water. The Water Tower provides water for 2137 residences in Indian Hill, and a total of 5400 addresses, which include customers in the neighboring communities of Madeira, Terrace Park, and sections of Montgomery, Remington, and Milford. The current Water Main improvement project will allow more water to be pumped to the Tower, thus keeping the level more static.

Located on one of the highest elevations in the Village, the Water Tower was designated an "American Water Landmark" in 1988 by the American Water Works Association. Its fascinating architecture complements its important function in Indian Hill.

Thanks to Jason Adkins for assistance with this article.