

IMAGES

. . . *then and now*

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

Lola Bonnell's Gift: Buckingham Lodge

Many acres of land have been donated by Indian Hill residents, but the uncommon gift of her home to the village was Lola Bonnell's legacy. This remarkable lady descended from two of the earliest village families, and she resided on 8650 Camargo Road for 81 years.

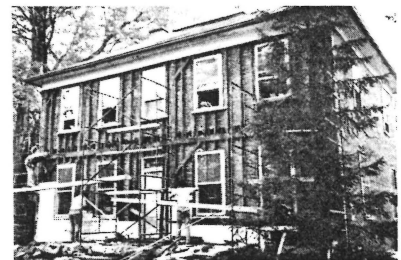
This house was Lola Louise Bonnell's birthplace in 1885. Only daughter of Florence Buckingham and William Jones Bonnell, she attended nearby Washington School. An attractive brunette with sparkling eyes, Lola was an animal lover and an accomplished horsewoman who relished the country lifestyle on her family's 13-acre farm, which she inherited. She cared for her parents until they died, and then devotedly visited their graves in Miamiville. With a keen interest in gardening, Lola tended her vegetable plot east of the home and the old fashioned flowers in her backyard. Neighbors remember her unusual gardening attire; she wore army fatigues and pinned her hair up with clothespins beneath a large straw bonnet.



Indian Hill was important to Miss Bonnell. A loyal member of the DAR, an avid supporter of the Rangers, she shared her strong opinions at Village Council and Board of Education meetings. She walked briskly all around Indian Hill, for she never owned a car. Lola was responsible for saving the bell at the Little Red Schoolhouse and afterward rang the bell to usher in each New Year. She was proud of her village heritage and sought to preserve it even after her death in 1966. Her will requested that her home be named "Buckingham Lodge" and that her land, now Bonnell Park, be set aside as a bird sanctuary.

Because of deterioration, Buckingham Lodge was almost razed in 1988, but a combined effort by the Indian Hill Historical Society, Village Council, and friends in the area saved the structure. Built during the Civil War, the house is of the Italianate style popular at that time. The Village Council provided the money initially budgeted to demolish the house, and a Historical Society fund drive matched it. The renovation work, supervised by Jim Ewell and Ginny White, took two years.

Removal of the 1900's front porch and aluminum siding exposed c.1860 black walnut and cyprus clapboards, probably cut from local forests. Restoration work included repairs to exterior and interior, and local garden clubs contributed to the landscaping. The original barn burned down, but the chicken coop remains. Now Buckingham Lodge continues as a reminder of an earlier rural lifestyle, the founding families of our village, and the generosity of Lola Bonnell.



Currently Buckingham Lodge (a "Historic Landmark") is the office of the Indian Hill Historical Society, and Bonnell Park is a part of the Green Areas. This treasured building also serves as a repository for Village memorabilia, a library, and a meeting place for civic groups.