

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge-1861

Pioneer Springhouse on Shawnee Run Road

A small gabled outbuilding located at a private residence on Shawnee Run Road is one of Indian Hill's oldest structures still in its original setting. The Thomas Boone springhouse was constructed circa 1799 by one of the earliest pioneers in the Ohio Country.



Thomas Boone and his wife Mary emigrated from Pennsylvania in 1785, traveling by flatboat on the Ohio River to present day Maysville, Kentucky. There they lived for five years before moving downriver to Cincinnati. Tom Boone yearned for more wilderness and purchased a tract of land on what is now Shawnee Run Road. The family moved from the comforts of Cincinnati to the remote hill, where they constructed a house (since razed) and a springhouse. Legend has it that Daniel Boone of Kentucky fame was a frequent visitor to his cousin's home on Indian Hill.

Springhouses were necessary buildings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One of many secondary buildings to a house, springhouses protected the source of water and provided a place to store perishables. When early settlers arrived at their newly acquired land, one of their top priorities was locating a spring. This would be their primary source of water. Often they enlarged its basin, deepened it, or lined it with rock, allowing a pool to be formed from which water could be dipped by bucket. Frequently

these natural springs were located at the base of a slope, where runoff occurred. To keep their water source clean and free of leaves, pebbles, and debris, and also to conceal it from wild animals, settlers built springhouses above the spring itself.

Springhouses served as the refrigerators of yesteryear, keeping settler's food from spoiling. Dairy products which needed cool temperatures were kept in springhouses. Also dried, salted, or smoked meats and canned vegetables and fruits were commonly stored in these structures. Usually there were shelves along the walls of these outbuildings.

The Boone springhouse is quaintly nestled amongst shade trees and shrubs, with ivy growing up its primitive fieldstone exterior.

A small window provides air circulation in the one room. Access is available through a lower level door, or up a few steps to the main entry. The structure is banked into the hillside, and several aspects of the building's design contribute to keeping it cool: a wide roof overhang, thick rock walls, and only one tiny window.

The symmetry and simple integrity of the Boone springhouse provide clues to the lifestyle of pioneer families. It is a picturesque part of Indian Hill's architectural heritage.

