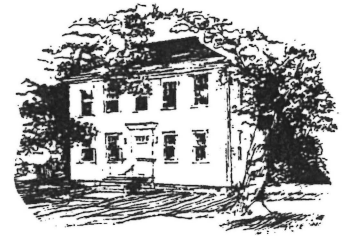


IMAGES

. . . *then and now*

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Ladies Aid Society of Indian Hill



On Feb. 10, 1891, several female members of the Armstrong Methodist Episcopal Church formed a society for the benefit of the church, with Mrs. L. Finch as chairman. Like similar groups across the country, the Ladies Aid Society of Indian Hill sought to do good works. At their first meeting the women decided that members would make regular donations themselves, solicit donations from nonmembers, and find buyers for items made by members. They met at members' houses, socializing as they sewed, quilted, and did handiwork.

In 1899 the Ladies Aid Society incorporated as a nonprofit organization for the purpose of "aiding the poor and needy, and rendering assistance to churches in their benevolent and missionary work." The society purchased the Grange Hall from Jefferson Grange No. 1164 and

rented the hall back to the Grangers for their meetings for 20 more years, as well as to other community members. The Hall was used for celebrations and meetings of Sunday School, Campfire Girls, Band Boys and became headquarters for the weekly meetings of the society. About 1910 a kitchen addition was built at the rear, complete with coal stove, tables, counters, and a 6 by 6 refrigerator, allowing the women to prepare meals more efficiently.

Monthly dues were 5 cents, and if a member missed 2 consecutive meetings without excuse, she was fined 5 cents. Refusal to pay resulted in expulsion. In the early 1900's an initiation fee of 25 cents was added for new members. For years the Ladies Aid Society catered luncheons at the countywide 4-day Carthage Fair, and served chicken or beef, potatoes, slaw, peas, biscuits, rolls, ice cream and berries, with coffee. Monthly fund-raising dinners at the Grange Hall often had a theme – annual game supper, Lincoln Day Dinner, Fourth of July, and Labor Day.

In 1917, the society purchased a cottage next to the Grange Hall "to provide sociability, increase neighborly spirit, and forward community well being." This became known as the Community Center. The Society paid the mortgages on both buildings, and the Men's Club refurbished the interior of the Center. Rentals from gatherings (dances, minstrel shows, and even a spinsters' convention) provided income to cover the expenses of both buildings.

Besides giving funds directly to Armstrong Church, the L.A.S. donated money to the Methodist Home for the Aged in College Hill, Women's Foreign Missionary Fund, Library War Fund (reading material for World War I soldiers), Newtown Aid Society, and other charities. It also helped pay funeral expenses for the needy and purchased an extra acre to add to the Armstrong Cemetery. Once a month in the 1920's they served hot lunch to children at Jefferson School.

Though a small group of 25 to 40 women, the membership included many of the early families of Indian Hill — Armstrong, Finch, Losh, Nelson, Shields, Stevens, Chapman, Flinn, and Norris. Spending hours together, cooking and doing handiwork, these ladies developed close friendships and community camaraderie. In early minutes of the L.A.S., members are referred to as "sister". A branch of the Hamilton County library was located in the Grange Hall, and lectures were given to the group. One topic (after the passage of the 19th Amendment) was *Voting Procedures for Women*. Morally steadfast, the L.A.S. in 1913 presented a resolution to the County Prosecutor calling to his attention a roadhouse in Plainville (Little Miami Clubhouse), requesting that he "abate the nuisance therein."

Because of financial deficits, the last meeting of the society was held in April, 1936; but for over 40 years these ladies had served and improved Indian Hill, pointing the way toward a new role of American women in society.