

IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

Matilda Cook Reminiscences about Camp Dennison



In a tidy 150-year-old house on State Route 126 lives a lady who has been in Camp Dennison since she was two years old. As a girl, Matilda ("Tillie") Robinson lived on Campbell St. across from the Baptist Church, in a home that has since been razed. One of ten children, Tillie and her siblings shared beds, helped with chores, and were educated at Camp Dennison School.

Henry Robinson, Tillie's father was a farmer who sharecropped tobacco on land in Clermont County. Each year his large home garden had "the prettiest vegetables you've ever seen in your life." Tillie also recalls that all the children gathered blackberries, walking up Cunningham Rd. to present day Indian Hill to fill their buckets. Their mother, Carrie Robinson, made tarts and preserves and

canned the rest for winter pies. Besides a root cellar for fresh storage of apples, onions, and potatoes, they had a garden spot where cabbages were buried upside down and unearthed when needed for meals. The Robinsons made their own sauerkraut and blackberry and grape wine. They raised chickens, and Mr. Robinson fished for carp, catfish, and suckers in his homemade rowboat on the Little Miami River. The children were also sent to pick wild greens in the fields which are currently the sites of Derbyshire Stables and the new Camp Dennison Memorial Park Ball Fields.

Tillie, like all Camp Dennison children, got her elementary education in the current Schoolhouse Restaurant: Grades 1-4 in the "little room" and Grades 5-8 in the "big room." The second floor was an auditorium, and there were two outside toilets. Unruly students stood in the corner, stayed late after dismissal, or got paddled. Everyone walked to school, went home for lunch, and walked back for the afternoon session. Highlights of the school year included field trips when the teachers taught classes outside, the Christmas play when students were treated to peanuts and oranges, and the last day of school when there was a picnic with ice cream bars for everyone. After completing Eighth Grade, students went to Terrace Park High School; but with no transportation and a considerably longer walk, some dropped out.



Schoolhouse
Restaurant

Matilda recalls the church's annual Homecoming, held every August, as a great event, and the food and festivities of this lawn fete continue to be a Camp Dennison tradition today. Some summer days, she waded in the Little Miami River, rode in her father's boat, or stopped at one of the local stores. The current post office was Ed Lieman's Grocery Store, which carried a "pretty full line," including canned goods, lunch meats, bread, and milk. There was a variety store at the northeast corner of Clement and Lincoln Streets named for the proprietor, Alexander Kniceley, whom everyone called "Eck". Besides groceries, he also sold yard goods, dolls, and children's dresses. For other shopping the people in Camp Dennison took the train to Milford. The train ride (along the current bike path) went from Lincoln Road to the junction of Routes 126 and 50 and cost 5 to 10 cents.

Known to a number of Indian Hill families, Mrs. Cook has seen many changes in Camp Dennison, among them the establishment of the gravel pits and the 1950's building of the Waterworks (which replaced cisterns and the old local well and made possible indoor bathrooms.).

Many of the old Camp Dennison families are gone now, and Matilda Cook, who has spent her whole life there, has lost three husbands and is the only one of her immediate family left. She lingers over memories of past years and tours the peaceful streets, commenting, "These grounds know my feet."