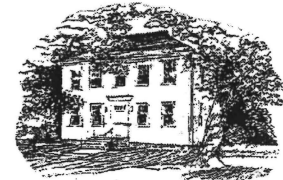


IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Miami Boat Club: The Early Years



Located in Miamiville at 6071 Second Street, the Miami Boat Club has been the site of many convivial gatherings for Indian Hill residents, past and present. Its history spans more than a century.

In 1896 sixteen men formed a club for recreational pursuits. They investigated sites on both the Great Miami and the Little Miami Rivers, and by 1897 they purchased “the Island” – at the current location of the club. The original clubhouse had only two rooms, and members slept on cots in tents while camping. A Constitution for the Island Canoe Club was written, allowing 20 male members. It expanded to 30 members by 1900, when a large addition was made to the clubhouse, including a veranda and an updated plumbing system.

In the early years the club was open to members and guests on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. Meals were served at fixed charges to those who ordered in advance from the Quartermaster. Members could engage “the Island” for private use on weekdays for an extra fee. Hammocks were not permitted at the house. Pets were not allowed on the property. Loaded firearms were prohibited from the clubhouse, and guns could not be discharged on Sundays. Members were subject to a fine if they took the club’s boats and canoes through the riffles. A House Committee was responsible for managing the club.

Records refer to “numerous merry parties” and the “happiest, gaiest, freest times when every man and girl was a good fellow, and every good fellow was allowed to do just as he pleased”. One overnight, three members thought they heard trespassers, and went out in the middle of the night to defend “the Island” with a bat, a hatchet, and a bottle (which later proved to have been empty). On another overnight a member claimed to have seen Robert Fulton coming up the Little Miami in a steamboat. These were “glorious occasions, great while they lasted, and funny too.” Due to a change in ownership in 1907, the name of the club changed to the Miami Club.



Baseball was popular at the Miami Club from 1908 through World War II. Men used to take the train to Miamiville to play against local and semi pro teams. An undated photograph of one team shows Indian Hill residents Conroy, LeBlond, 2 Harrisons, and a Yeiser. Another photo features Messrs. Pogue, Pease, Eustis and Sutphin in uniform. In 1936 a gala reunion of ball players from 3 decades was held and all were “expected to come early and stay late” after the ball game. This event was nicknamed the “Big Round Up”. Other activities included trap shooting, tennis, bridge and sniff games. In the 1930s, the

club was renamed the Miami Boat Club to give members reciprocity with other yacht clubs in the United States.

By the 1950s and 1960s the Miami Club no longer fielded a baseball team. It was utilized mainly for social gatherings. The 50 person membership roll remained all male. The officers were responsible for the grounds, the clubhouse, and organization of 3 or 4 parties each year - catered dinners with live music. Village residents who served as Club President included Harold LeBlond, Jr., John Lillard, and Jack Quackenbush. One tradition was that when the group sat down for dinner, the President raised his glass and intoned a note, and all the men joined him and sang a humorous ballad. In that era, a roof was erected above the current pavilion, thus protecting guests from rain. The club and its membership had thrived for more than six decades.

“The Later Years” will be in the next Bulletin”