

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**



Cincinnati Country Day School's Centennial

Cincinnati Country Day School opened in September 1926 as a private independent college preparatory boys' school in Indian Hill. This year marks CCDS's 100th year of providing outstanding education and values to its many graduates.

Twelve men established the country day school, selecting 5 Trustees. The aim was to provide a four-fold program for training boys for college and for life- focusing on scholastic training, character building, all-around (non-academic) training, and body building. The first year, the Headmaster and 5 faculty welcomed 50 boys from primary grades through senior high to the 24-acre campus. Afternoons were devoted to outdoor play, sports, and nature study. A rigorous academic course of study was offered, yet every boy was expected to take part in daily exercise. Football, soccer, basketball, and baseball were the primary sports, and boxing, fencing, riding, golf, and track were also offered. Though some of these are not now practiced, CCDS has a remarkable athletic program with high participation and numerous victories in the current OHSAA. A stated rule of the school was "Don't wait to be a great man; be a great boy." Another tenet of conduct was "Be a gentleman" so the students could bring credit to themselves, their parents, and their school. Close ties to the faculty were emphasized. The school seal was developed in 1930 – a circular emblem with a shield and book in the center and the school motto: "Virtutis Laus in Actione" (Praise of virtue in action).

Through the decades the campus and facilities grew. Originally 24 acres, the Broadwell House was purchased in 1941, adding 2 acres, and in 1956 10 more acres north of that building was added. An anonymous 15-acre donation in 1963 from the former Semple estate on Shawnee Run Road increased the footprint of the campus. Nine acres of play fields on the south were added in 1979, and 7125 Given Road was acquired in 1983. The property currently encompasses 60 acres.

Buildings have been constructed and/or remodeled. The Lower School was built in 1949; the Upper School was remodeled in 1957; Children's Corner (on 5 acres) opened its doors in 1984; and the Middle School was created in 1987. The 21st century ushered in improvements beginning with another remodeled Upper School with the Arts Center, an all-school dining terrace, and a commons. The Lower School has had an addition, and the north campus was spruced up by the Childhood Center as well as improvements to athletic facilities, a modernized stadium, the tennis stadium/pavilion, and a new maintenance building.

Besides academics, athletics, and character development, CCDS offered additional opportunities. The Drama Club was formed in 1930, and the school newspaper, *The Scroll*, began in 1932. A choral group, the Gamboliers, was started in 1950, and the Service Club (students helping needy Cincinnatians) was established in 1962. These organizations enhanced student life and continue in some form today.

The student body was transformed by admissions changes. The Lower School became coeducational in 1953, and girls were admitted to upper grades in 1972. In 1964 the campus integrated, admitting Black students. Becoming racially mixed and coed were important improvements. Country Day also pioneered innovation in education: it launched the first Montessori program in the Midwest in 1962. And the school acquired its first computer in 1971 and soon thereafter introduced upper schoolers to this new technology. In 1996 all students in grades 5-12 and all faculty obtained portable laptops – and used them. Country Day was recognized as a national leader in technology and designated a Microsoft Center of Excellence for its innovational accomplishments in the field in 2003.

Other changes have occurred in the 21st century. Lower School students in 2005 joined one of five houses reflecting character virtues: compassion, courage, integrity, respect, and responsibility – thus building friendships between grades and emphasizing desirable traits. In 2021, the school mascot was changed from the Indian to the Nighthawk. That same year, the mission statement was updated to "Cincinnati Country Day School creates leaders who, through the discovery of their own abilities, kindle the potential of others and better a dynamic world." In 2023, CCDS was the first school to ban smartphones during the day – a practice the many other schools adopted soon thereafter, and which became an Ohio law effective January 2026.

For 100 years, CCDS has been committed to excellence in education. Thirteen Heads of School and a dedicated faculty have ensured that students from 28 months to 18 years achieve their potentials. Parents and alumni have had a significant supportive impact. As the school celebrates its past and begins a bright future, the words of the Alma Mater capture this moment: "Hail Country Day School, Hail!"