

IMAGES

... *then and now*

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

Remembering Oliver and Grace Kaiser

Before television was a common feature in American homes, citizens entertained themselves with other pursuits. The Oliver B. Kaisers were avid hobbyists and long time Indian Hill residents.

In 1908 O.B. purchased an 8 room house in Ramona, part of current day Indian Hill. After rebuilding it with his own hands, he sold the house to A.H. Albers and acquired 25 acres of the Stickney farm on Drake Road, where he designed and constructed a new home. As he labored at the site, his wife Grace would read or compose poetry or music. Native creek stone composed the floor, and the Atlee family crest was on the cornerstone. For 12 years, he worked on the dwelling. Originally designed to have 12 rooms, the house grew as family activities expanded. The residence was a half timbered style popular in the 1920s, and they named it Cedar Terrace.

Mr. Kaiser was a renowned patent attorney. Grace, nicknamed "Lady of 100 Hobbies," founded in the 1930's both the Cincinnati Hobby Club and the United Hobby Clubs of Cincinnati. The United Hobby Clubs was the only organization of its kind in the U. S. Its membership of over 300 men and women included doctors, lawyers, teachers, and young married people. Its objective was to develop "spiritual, literary, musical, civic, scientific, and patriotic achievements; to stimulate education; to preserve antiques and objects of historical interest; to promote spiritual and national uplift; to create a spirit of service;... and to work in unity for the spirit of fellowship."

Mrs. Kaiser shared her collections and passions with many through hobby clubs. Mrs. O.B. (as she was known) was famous for her collection of hundreds of fans, from a Japanese dagger fan (for suicides) to one enclosed in a baseball bat. Grace organized social events to share the stories behind her items of antiquity. With her 60-bell collection, she arranged a pageant in Morrow, Ohio in 1942. As bells from various countries were chimed, Mrs. O.B. sang solos while wearing costumes from each nation. On display were bells from camels, milk carts, sleighs, ships, and schoolhouses; as

Mrs. Kaiser's goal was to acquire a bell from every country in the world. She constantly enriched other people's lives with her many free presentations and pageants in which the Kaiser daughters, Ramona and Olive, sometimes participated.

Almost a dozen other clubs spun off from the United Hobby Clubs including the Friendship Chain Club (devoted to helping the infirm), the Doctors and Wives Club, the Literary, Music and Arts Hobby Club, Young Married Couples Club, Lawyers and Wives Club, Teachers and Creative Thinkers Club, Poet, Composers, and Nature Study Hobby Club, and the Wild Life Hobby Club. The Kaisers were members, founders, or sponsors of all of these. Mr. and Mrs. Kaiser opened their home at 7400 Drake Road for potluck dinners with programs, presentations, and pageants. A talented musical and dramatic composer and poet, Mrs. O.B.'s published volumes included *Experience* and *Life's Mirror: Illustrated Poems*.

A former neighbor recalled Mrs. O.B. as a very dramatic lady with "a voice that shattered the clouds." The Kaiser home décor favored elegance, and rooms were draped with taffeta, velvet, and brocade. She was known for her theatrics. Mr. Kaiser constructed a stage beside the stairs for family performances. In one presentation as Grace descended the stairs, dressed in evening attire and wearing a beautiful hat, she tossed flowers to her audience as she sang. She had to stop several times when she got tangled in her garb, but she maintained her composure and volume throughout the elaborate entrance.

Mr. Kaiser died in 1954 at age 76, and Mrs. O.B. in her 83rd year in 1965. These early Village residents were colorful, talented people who followed Mr. Kaiser's credo that "everybody should use leisure time constructively."

