

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Farny Exhibit of 1975

For decades the Indian Hill Historical Society has offered a variety of events for members and guests. Forty-five years ago, the Society organized and sponsored an exhibition of the works of Henry Farny, the nationally prominent artist. This celebrated the grand opening of the then newly restored and renovated Little Red Schoolhouse at 8100 Given Road, a project in which over 100 founding members and numerous regular members participated. It also coincided with the nation's Bicentennial.

Henry Farny (1847-1916) was already painting in Cincinnati about the time the Schoolhouse was constructed in 1873. A native of France, Farny and his parents emigrated to America in 1853 and moved to Ohio in 1859. When his father died, Henry left school and went to work in 1863. He drew illustrations for a local newspaper and the Gibson Company, and later for *Harpers' Weekly*, *Leslie's* and the McGuffey Reader series. He traveled to Europe several times, and then to the American West in search of new material in 1881. Thus began Farny's Native American phase. He met many tribe members, collected their paraphernalia, sketched and photographed them, and when he returned to his studio in Cincinnati, he painted using these materials and his memory. He is known to have infused his paintings with the pathos, the philosophy, and the underlying significance of the Native American people. They were depicted in harmony with the land. Farny's western images were richly detailed and featured meticulous brushwork.

From July 2-27, the exhibit was open during select hours. It was the largest exhibit of privately owned Farny paintings ever held and featured over 80 pictures collected from throughout the United States, with many loaned from Indian Hill Village residents. Orchestrating this event was an extraordinary feat for committee members, most of whom were Board members of the then named Indian Hill Historical Museum Association.



Distant Village

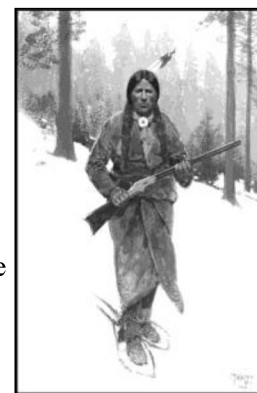
The Historical Society committee effectively arranged for the loans of Farny originals prior to the exhibit. Then the group insured them, provided publicity, produced a full color 30 page catalogue, and arranged for security – with the help of Pinkertons Agency, the Rangers, and volunteers from the community who provided “guard duty” on overnight shifts. Boy Scouts assisted with parking cars, and Girl Scouts acted as hostesses for guests.

Colorful pink invitations were distributed to Village residents and a nationwide selection of art aficionados. The nominal fee to attend was one dollar. Catalogues were available for \$6.00, and raffle for a Farny print (*Snake Dance of the Moqui Indians*) were on-site sources of revenue. Privately about \$3000 was donated. Additionally, the Ohio Arts Council awarded the Indian Hill Museum Association with a \$250 grant to help defray expenses.

Farny's paintings were mounted on pegboards around the perimeter of the Little Red Schoolhouse, and on a standing display in the center of the room. Other items on view included Farny memorabilia such as a pair of Colt 38 derringers he used, a personal letter from Teddy Roosevelt, and a war dance rattle. The collection contained works in the mediums of oil, watercolor, and gouache. The Native American theme was the focus because of the tie-in between Farny, the painter of Native Americans, and Indian Hill Village. Henry Farny's son, Daniel, of Stockton California was the guest of honor at the preview parties and the public opening. He brought items from his own collection to share with attendees.

Reviewers gave the exhibition high praise. Farny captured the western terrain and its inhabitants in a unique way. Other artists of the same era depicted Native Americans as killers, whereas Farny's were “non-violent pictures, Indians sitting quietly” observed Mrs. Truxton Emerson, Jr., the director of the exhibit. The subjects appeared noble and stoic in these illustrations.

The Farny Exhibit of 1975 was the inaugural event of the Indian Hill Historical Museum Association. It was a smashing success! Approximately 3,900 people attended, including visitors from 6 foreign countries and 26 states. It was a harbinger of the fascinating programs that the Historical Society has offered for over four decades.



A Moment of Suspense