

IMAGES

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From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

Dick Taylor: An Architectural Remembrance

Richard "Dick" Taylor's creative lifework has touched all residents of Indian Hill. His architecture can be seen throughout the village, where it has stood the test of time.

A Cincinnati native and the son of prominent architect Charles Taylor, he assisted his father during summer vacations. Skilled at drawing, he worked in his early years as a designer for Rookwood Pottery. A graduate of the Cincinnati Art Academy and a member of the American Institute of Architects, Taylor's first partnership was with Bob Critchell. During the Depression years, when few people could afford to hire architects, Taylor and Critchell joked between themselves that work would pick up if someone's house burned down. By happenstance, the barn of Ethan Stanley on Shawnee Run Rd. (then known as "Beresford Dale") burned to the ground. Taylor (Stanley's nephew) and Critchell were commissioned to design a new barn. In the following years their practice enlarged and business expanded.



When Indian Hill was incorporated in 1941, Council members asked Dick Taylor to design a seal for the Village. After reworking the seal many times, he submitted the Indian, in a natural state, standing on a rise, or small hill, endeavoring to accomplish a mighty task. This seal has been used for over 50 years and is now incorporated into the new village flag.

A later partner of Taylor was Ed Porter, a Kentucky native. Porter was a contemporary architect whose style complemented the traditional colonial and Georgian motifs of Taylor's buildings. One of their notable accomplishments together was the Drake Road Shawnee School, the first exempted school in Indian Hill (1949) built to house kindergarten through twelfth grade students. In 1955 Taylor designed the Village Administration Building, with its style reminiscent of colonial Williamsburg. He also designed the original fire station, which has been remodeled twice.

Many village residences were private commissions of Taylor, and the houses which he designed in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's are still prized for their classic lines and livable floor plans. Fortunately some architectural renderings of these homes were preserved in Taylor's personal files.



One unusual historical project in which Dick Taylor was a major force was the reconstruction of the then Barrett (now Swinehart) home on Kugler Mill Rd. Taylor was retained by Barrett to take apart the Smith-Hemingway house in Connecticut, transport it to Indian Hill, and reassemble it on its current site.

In his 60's and 70's, Dick Taylor remained active and continued to work with developers such as Dryden Jones and Alan Zaring. In his spare time he pursued his hobby of painting from nature, particularly birds. Taylor died in 1977, but he left a legacy to Indian Hill in the many Village buildings that show his prolific talents in architectural craftsmanship.