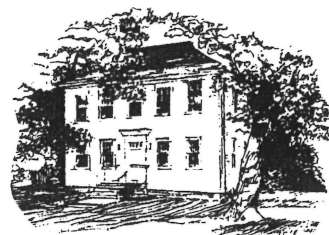


IMAGES

... then and now

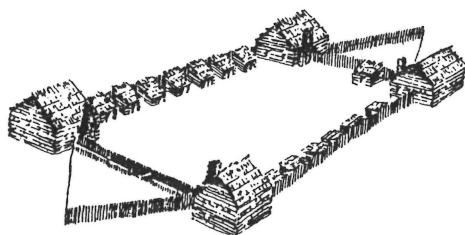
From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

Trials of Covalt Station Settlers

The earliest settlers near Indian Hill chose locations close to rivers because of the fertile river valley soil and the presence of water (as a power source and access to other waterways). One pioneer, Abraham Covalt purchased Section 30 and parts of Sections 22, 23, and 28 of the Miami Purchase, and moved to Ohio in 1789.



Born in Egg Harbor, NJ, he married Lois Pendleton, and the couple moved to Bedford, PA where 6 sons and 4 daughters were born. He was elected Captain of Bedford's company in the Revolutionary War, and two of his sons served with him. Covalt and 45 others moved to the Ohio Lands soon after the Constitution was written. Traveling by flatboat, the group arrived at their land in January, and the men erected shelters for each family. Seventeen dwellings were later built inside a rectangular fort that had four blockhouses – one at each corner. It was a large fort, thought to be 40,000 square feet, and believed to be the

first in the interior of the Miami Purchase. They named it Covalt Station - but sometimes called it Bethany Town. One of a series of about 30 defensive forts built in southwestern Ohio, it is believed to have been at the site of current day St. Thomas Church in Terrace Park.

Relations between Indians and pioneers had deteriorated since the Revolutionary War. The settler concept of individually owned land contrasted with the Indian belief that land belonged to the Great Spirit. Pioneers cleared the land and chopped down the trees, and Indians viewed the white man as a destroyer of sacred ground. Some tribes honored treaties, while neighboring tribes rejected them.

The tightly knit community inside Covalt Station eked out an existence. Their millstone, transported from Pennsylvania, was used in a gristmill near the Little Miami River. It ground corn 24 hours a day, providing 2-3 bushels of cornmeal daily. Covalt encouraged other settlers to purchase land, and offered his parcels at his cost to others. The families of Covalt Station had livestock and plowed fields and raised crops. Besides foodstuffs, they also grew tobacco. Hunting parties were sent out to track game for the settlement; and personal accounts tell of killing deer, opossum, and turkey.

It was during these hunting forays that individuals were most susceptible to ambush by Indians. On one occasion 21-year-old Abraham Covalt, Jr., hunting by Shawnee Run, was shot by Indians and then finished off when "the tomahawk did its work of death". Molestations of settlers were common. Joseph Hinkle was making shingles when his head was cut halfway off and he was scalped. The same fate befell Abel Cook. Those who died were buried at the fort cemetery, outside the walls. Sometimes settler youths were taken prisoner or adopted by migrating tribes. The many frightening incidents prompted the inhabitants of Covalt Station to petition the General of Ft. Washington (downtown Cincinnati) for a few troops, so that they could maintain their settlement. Soon after, when the patriarch Abraham Covalt was killed by Indians, fear grew among those still there; and they abandoned their stockade and moved to nearby Garrard Station. These pioneers shared a desire for mutual protection, and they frequented nearby mills and sometimes held religious services together. By combining with Garrard, they had an increased number of inhabitants, which made for a better defense.

Another Covalt son, Cheneniah, became a guide and spy for Mad Anthony Wayne, whose forces defeated the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. His scouting and fighting skills had been honed at his father's side—near Indian Hill. After the 1795 Treaty Of Greenville, Ohio was safer, and "the woodsman's axe was heard in every direction." Cheneniah and his brother sold the abandoned station in 1796, and the fort burned down in 1810.

The travails of these early pioneers – their bravery in the wilderness and their struggles with Indians – are still astounding. Mary Covalt, Abraham's daughter later wrote, "Think of the many hairbreadth escapes and trials of (our) forefathers and consider it an honor to be known as their descendents".