

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society

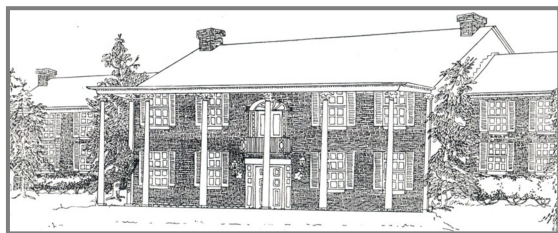


Buckingham Lodge-1861

Remembering DeWitt Balch

One of the families who moved to Indian Hill during the 1920s to benefit from country living was the DeWitt Balch clan. The Balchs lived in East Walnut Hills before they purchased about 100 acres and built Dalvay Farm at 8650 Hopewell Road. Mr. Balch influenced the development of the Village and the Camargo Club.

DeWitt Woodford Balch was born in 1896, and was considered a sickly child and susceptible to illness. His father, George Balch, took young “Dewey” to Florida for the winter months, and there the boy began to play golf. He excelled at the game. He won the 1913 Ohio Amateur Championship on his 17th birthday and repeated his tournament victory in 1919. He graduated from Yale University and earned his law degree at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. He was a practicing attorney with Frost & Jacobs until he established his own law practice in 1932.



Dalvay Farm

DeWitt and his wife, Elizabeth “Libbus” LeBlond Balch resided on Annwood Street in East Walnut Hills. As their family grew, they decided to move and constructed a substantial estate in Symmes Township, now considered Indian Hill. Dalvay Farm was named after a previous family home in Clifton, which was named for a castle in Scotland. It was a red brick Georgian Colonial with two stories and six pillars in the front. Surrounded by rolling wooded acreage and farmland, it had a greenhouse, formal gardens, a tennis court, and a swimming pool.

As Mr. Balch’s law practice was downtown, he engaged tenant farmers to manage the property. Other staff at the estate were the maid, cook, chauffeur, butler, and laundress. Also there was a head gardener and his assistants who managed the flower and vegetable gardens, which were encircled by an evergreen wall of *Taxus cuspidata*. Dahlias, roses, lilies, peonies and delphiniums were abundant, as well as a variety of produce in the summer. Daffodils were grown on the grounds as well. Besides horses, there were cows, pigs and free range turkeys. The Balchs raised four daughters here; and the whole family enjoyed outdoor pursuits.

DeWitt Balch served on the Indian Hill Planning Commission, the Green Areas Advisory Committee, and the Board of Trustees for the Indian Hill Rangers. He was on the Board of the Camargo Club from 1928-1962, serving as its President from 1946-49. An avid horticulturalist, he worked to create visual beauty on the golf course by planting new specimens and identifying old growth trees that should be preserved. He even moved some oak trees from Dalvay Farm to the golf course.

Balch continued playing golf. He won the Cincinnati Metropolitan Championship twice, and was a runner-up once, the Metropolitan Senior Championship in 1951, the club championship at Cincinnati Country Club three times, and the club championship at Camargo Club four times. He also played competitively in tournaments located in Bellaire, FL, Pinehurst, NC, and Vermont. Known for his approach shots and putting ability, DeWitt Balch was once described by the *New York Times* (when he upset an opponent) as a “giant killer”. He was named “Mr. Golf of Cincinnati” by the Greater Cincinnati Golfers’ League, and was posthumously honored as one of the “Legends of Cincinnati Golf”.



DeWitt Balch

Mr. Balch took pleasure in riding horses and hunting, fly-fishing, and horticulture. He liked taking pictures and home movies of his family and playing cards after dinner. He propagated specimen flowers and was a member of the Men’s Horticultural Club. Widely respected in the city, he served as a director and vice-president of Cincinnati Terminal Warehouses, Inc., a director of Globe-Wernicke Co., and a director at Robert A. Cline Co.

DeWitt Balch died in 1972 - an accomplished man. His daughter, Miggie Jacobs characterized him as “very, very happy – a positive man, with a wonderful sense of humor and a marvelous laugh.” An active man, he led a full life, and had a very positive impact on our community.