

IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Story of the Bicentennial Sculpture



In 1995 Indian Hill Village celebrated its Bicentennial. Many activities marked this significant birthday including a deluxe Fourth of July parade and picnic and the adoption of a village flag. Village Council commissioned a monument depicting a visual tour of Indian Hill's history.

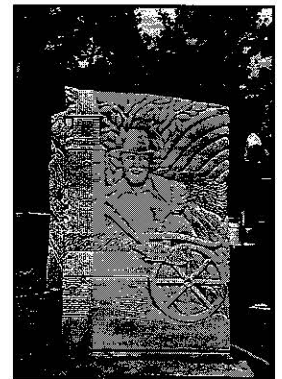
Karen Heyl was selected to create this work of art. Educated at U.C., the Visual Arts Institute, the Art Academy of Cincinnati, and an Italian school, Karen exhibited, judged, and taught both watercolor and sculpture. Increasingly specializing in carving, she did many large scale public works for churches, corporations, park facilities, cemeteries, and hospitals – and one at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton. Her bas relief artistry brought her both local and national awards.

After discussions with members of Council, the Historical Society, the City Manager, and other village officials, Heyl devised a plan for carving images into three separate limestone panels, each representing a particular era. The river – present on all panels – led viewers through history, and signified why this area was settled in advance of other greater Cincinnati communities. Also each panel included vegetation and wildlife, indicative of the area's rich natural beauty and Green Areas Trust.

John Bentley, Village consultant, sited the sculpture at the southwest corner of Stephan Field at Drake & Shawnee Run Roads. He designed the area to encourage visitors to guide themselves while interpreting the art. During the sculpting the area was covered with straw, with a safety zone to insure that stone dust and chips were confined.

In March the artist and interested residents watched as Stone Center workmen installed the massive stones selected by Karen. For seven months, Heyl's temporary studio was Stephan Field. Using a pneumatic hammer and chisel, she etched history into the panels. Spectators, encouraged to stop by and watch her progress, asked questions during her breaks. They saw the artist at work, dressed for the weather – in shorts and using an umbrella on hot sunny days, and wearing layers of warmer clothing and boots in the cooler months – and always with protective eye gear, a visor, and gloves.

The first panel, 6 feet tall, 4 feet wide and 10 inches thick, represents the years of early settlement. One side features an American Indian beside the river. Curving around to the other side, a bearded pioneer and his wife – in a bonnet – show the arrival of settlers. A plough represents the impact of agriculture; and a village barn and the 1831 Armstrong Chapel are depicted. The second panel – 7 feet tall – presents the period from the Civil War through the 1941 incorporation of Indian Hill. A Union Army bugler is there, along with the Little Red Schoolhouse, a mill, and a river vessel. The opposite side of the panel contains images of estates built in the 1920s and 30s, their silos and barns; and it features a griffin crest from Alberly Manor. The Administration Building and Village seal are also easily discernible. The 8 foot tall third panel reflects current day life, with the front giving scenes of the Camargo Hunt and Blome Road Bridge; and the back showing a Ranger, Fireman, the Indian Hill school logo, and children with 1995 sports equipment. The edges of the slabs are also used to tell the story – etched with railroad tracks, the Camargo Hunt logo, and a bluebird house.



The three slabs, vertically placed at visually interesting angles and subtly uplighted for night viewing, have attracted viewers since the Bicentennial Year. Ms. Heyl was honored as a Post-Corbett finalist that year for her historically interpretive artwork. And, when the sculpture was complete, residents had the opportunity to purchase engraved paver stones placed around its perimeter.

Now ten years old, the Bicentennial Sculpture is a treasured landmark. Reminding residents of Village history, it testifies to the passage of time in a unique community – Indian Hill.