

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Story of Drewry Farm

In the nineteenth century, Indian Hill was largely agricultural. Jacob Traber owned a commission house (which handled goods transported on boats) at downtown Cincinnati's Public Landing and property on both sides of Wooster Pike – in Terrace Park and on "the hill". He cultivated grapes on the south facing hillside of his property. He produced wine and stored the casks in handmade stone wine cellars on current day Drewry Farm Lane, where he built a mansion. His home burned in 1893.

In 1914, Mr. and Mrs. Lucius Demarius Drewry purchased the Traber property, consisting of 100 acres. They had a grand residence in town, but used this as their summer residence. Mr. Drewry was with Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Co. The Drewrys developed their summer place with care. Mr. Drewry owned a prize-winning herd of Jersey dairy cattle; and Mrs. Drewry cultivated and maintained an extensive garden. They built a large swimming pool and gazebo about 1915, and converted the wine cellars used by Traber to dressing rooms, where they could change into bathing attire.



In 1936 the Drewry estate was subdivided. Named the Camden Terrace Farm, it was acquired by Reuben Holden. The Camden Terrace Farms Association was established, controlled by a Board of Directors, all of whom were property owners. The swimming pool – said to be the biggest in Cincinnati – and the lane became common property of the Association. Mr. Holden's home was the first graceful residence on what was renamed Drewry Farm Lane. Holden engaged John Garber, real estate broker, to execute the sale of the lots. By 1941 there were seven property owners on the private lane: Holdens, Gatchells, Englaenders, Mitchells, Kittredges, Tuttles, and Skavlems.

In the seventy intervening years, one more residence was built and the homes changed hands several times. Many residents of Drewry Farm Lane lived in their homes for decades. Walter H. Tuttle had the house at 5825 Drewry Farm Lane built in 1939. His son, Walter H. Tuttle Jr., moved into the house in 1951 (after his father's death) until the early 1960s. Another son, Richard S. Tuttle (Dick) and his family moved to Drewry Farm Lane after the death of Elsie Salway Tuttle (Walter's wife) died in 1964. He often said that there was no place he would rather be than 5825 Drewry Farm Lane and that he wanted to be carried out "feet first", just as his father had. Dick fell and broke his hip at his beloved home in December, 1999, and died a month later. He left feet first.

In the years before air conditioning, the commonly owned pool provided relief. Lane residents frequently gathered there, fostering friendships. Every year, there was an Opening Day and Closing Day potluck event. Because it was an old, huge pool, it required a lot of maintenance. The Lane Association made decisions about the pool and the lane. Every two years, a resident was chosen to be Pool Chairman, which was (according to a current owner) a "real headache". The pool had no filtering system and had to be manually vacuumed. Sometimes it turned green from algae and required a chemical shock. And there were problems with non-lane visitors – youngsters who skinny-dipped in the pool in the middle of the night. The Association put up a fence around the pool. That did not help. Then a lock was installed. The youngsters got the lock off. Some daring youths jumped off the roof of the dressing rooms into the pool. After much deliberation, the Lane Association decided to close the pool due to liability issues. They donated it to Indian Hill Green Areas in 1990, with the understanding that the pool would be filled in, and the wine cellars would be stabilized.



Residents of Drewry Farm Lane no longer worry about the pool, but are pleased to reside on a private lane with a fascinating past.