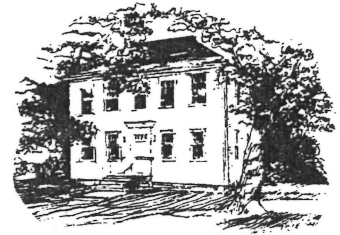


IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

A Look at Camp Dennison's Schoolhouse

In the early 1860's on land purchased from Dr. Alfred Buckingham the Camp Dennison Schoolhouse was erected at its present location on State Route 126, then called Montauk Rd. It was not used as a school until after the Civil War.



The first two-story brick schoolhouse in the Midwest, it had gables with Italianate style brackets at the corners. The first floor had two classrooms, and a winding staircase led up to the second floor that had one large room with a stage. In the school's early years African American children were taught separately upstairs by Mr. Johnson. This practice was soon discontinued, and all pupils were taught on the first floor. The building was heated by stoves, and the downstairs ceiling had registers that allowed heat to rise to the second floor. The large room there was used for community meetings, entertainments, and commencement exercises until 1910 when the Upper Room was designated for the

children in grades 5 – 8, and the Lower Room was reserved for those in grades 1 – 4. In 1890 one teacher taught 47 students, but when the students were split into two age groups, two teachers were hired. As early as 1898, a music teacher (Mrs. Emma Quayle) was employed by the Board of Education.

Local people originally called it the Grand Valley School because they wanted to change the name of their village. However, the railroad refused to use "Grand Valley" on its timetables, creating confusion; consequently there was a return to the military name of Camp Dennison School. Over the years, forty-three teachers and three music instructors taught there preparing pupils from grades 1 – 8. Those who attended high school went to Woodward, Milford, or Terrace Park.

In 1939 the school was remodeled with the addition of two interior restrooms and two drinking fountains (one inside the entry hall and one just outside the building). In the updated school, pupils had new individual lockers, the windows were enlarged providing more light, and the stoves were replaced with a furnace that provided hot water heat.

Over the years many Camp Dennison families sent their children to the schoolhouse. Some of the names that recur in the attendance rosters are Cunningham, Price, Pinkvoss, Buckingham, Walton, Mintkenbaugh, Stewart, and Robinson. Commencement exercises in June traditionally included entertainment, and in the 1800's there were choruses, declamations, recitations, instrumental music selections, tableaux, songs, and dialogues. As many as 50 students participated, displaying their talents to the community. Recitations were on topics like *Human Progress*, *The Charge at Valley Molloy*, and *Do Thy Little – Do It Well*. After the program, the valedictorian delivered an address.

When the Class of 1952 graduated, the school closed its doors. The building was sold at auction to the Ohio Gravel Co. Ten years later, it reopened as the Schoolhouse Restaurant. It has been operated continuously by the Miller family since then. The original slate blackboard has the handwritten menu, and the playground has live animals and a refurbished barn/general store containing wares of local craftsmen. Though the schoolhouse no longer has a curriculum, it remains a popular gathering place for residents of Camp Dennison and nearby communities.

