

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Little Miami River

The Little Miami River runs from its headwaters above the Clifton Gorge in Clark County to the Ohio River at the neighborhood of California in Hamilton County. It has played a major role in the history of Indian Hill and continues to be significant to residents. About 110 miles long, it flows through five counties in Ohio.

The river is named for the Algonquin Native American tribe which lived in the region when white settler pioneers first arrived in the area. The Miami hunted, fished, and bathed along the shores of the river that bears their name. The Little Miami River appears on maps of European explorers as early as 1784. It was the eastern boundary of the Miami Purchase of 1788. This purchase of over 300,000 acres of land was a development organized by John Cleves Symmes, who was instrumental in promoting the area and selling land to early settlers, when the region was the western frontier of an infant nation. Many early pioneers purchased property near the Little Miami River.

Among the early arrivals was the Armstrong family from Virginia. Nathaniel and Hannah Armstrong moved to the Ohio Country where they settled in current day Indian Hill about 1800. Eight children accompanied them. The family established three mills on the Little Miami River, known as the “Upper Mill”, the “Middle Mill”, and the “Lower Mill”. Here early settlers could refine the products of their labor, using harnessed water power from the river. The Armstrongs profited from their mills and purchased hundreds of acres of choice land. They donated the property for the establishment of Armstrong Chapel and adjoining cemetery, which continue to function as a place of worship and a site for internments.

During the Civil War, Union soldiers trained at Camp Dennison, adjacent to Indian Hill. One of the reasons for locating the camp there was the presence of the Little Miami River. It was the source of water for the volunteer recruits. At first barrels of water were used, but eventually the contractor constructed a brick reservoir with wooden pipes to carry water to the troops. As many as 12,000 – 15,000 men at a time resided and trained at the Camp during the War Between the States.

Recreation on the Little Miami River always has been a popular pastime. Canoers and swimmers alike have enjoyed the refreshing water as it courses along. Hiking and biking trails have been constructed along the riverbank, including the Little Miami Bike Trail. And the Miami Boat Club, which was established in 1907, has been the site of many convivial gatherings for Indian Hill residents for more than a century.



The scenic Little Miami River

visual delight and edible meals.

Indian Hill’s drinking water is provided by the Indian Hill Water Works. The water originates from nine groundwater wells located along the Little Miami River aquifer in Hamilton and Clermont counties. Before treatment at the Water Works plant, the water is naturally filtered as it travels downward through semi-solid layers of the aquifer. The water is monitored daily, weekly, and monthly to ensure its safety.

Besides being a factor in historical events of Indian Hill, the Little Miami River has also provided residents with its water source, numerous hours of recreation, and world class experiences with Nature. W. H. Venable recognized it thus in his 1872 poem, *June on the Miami*, when he wrote, “And here Ohio’s fairest stream, Miami glides...” It is hoped that the River will continue as a force in the lives of local people for many years to come. It is an exceptional waterway in many aspects.



One of Armstrong’s Mills on the Little Miami

In 1969 the Little Miami became Ohio’s first designated State Wild and Scenic River. Four years later it was recognized as a National Wild and Scenic River – one of 165 such waterways. These recognitions were warranted because of the river’s outstanding natural features and historic importance. This status helps assure the protection of the waterway for future generations. The Little Miami River contains at least 87 species of fish. Anglers have caught smallmouth and largemouth bass, sauger, walleye, gar, drum, crappie, and catfish. There are many varieties of mussels and along the banks of the river species of turtles, frogs, snakes, birds, and mammals are abundant. The wildlife provides both



Canoing on the Little Miami River