

IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society

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Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Story of the General Ulysses S. Grant Portrait

The Indian Hill Historical Society recently loaned its historic painting of Ulysses S. Grant to the Brown County Public Library in Georgetown, Ohio. The history of this portrait is noteworthy.



Mr. Andrew C. Hauck, Jr., former Indian Hill Village Mayor and a founder of the Indian Hill Historical Museum Association (now the Indian Hill Historical Society) reveres America's past. He authorized the purchase of this work of art at an Atlanta, Georgia auction. The monumental painting depicts Grant in full dress uniform after his commission to General by Abraham Lincoln in 1864. Mounted in its original 19th century wood and gesso frame, it was completed circa 1868. Unsigned, it is attributed to Benjamin Franklin Rinehart (1829-1885), an associate of the school of American Realism and a long-standing member of the National Academy. The portrait was prominently featured in Andrew Hauck's office for many years.

In the 19th century, it was standard procedure for schoolhouses to display a picture of the current President. Recognizing that the Little Red Schoolhouse was built in 1874, which coincides with Grant's term of office, Mr. Hauck donated the work of art to the Historical Society.

This year the Board of Trustees decided to share the painting with a larger Ohio audience. In spring a committee of 5 Board members traveled to Georgetown, Ohio, also known as *The Land of Grant*, to view possible places to display the elegant canvas. Hosted by John and Judy Ruthven, the group decided to loan the painting to the Mary Shelton - Brown County Library because of this site's visibility in the community.

Georgetown was the childhood home of U.S. Grant. His restored home and the Grant Schoolhouse are owned by the Ohio Historical Society and managed locally. In 1970 the U.S. Grant Homestead Association was formed to manage activities commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of U. S. Grant. Since then an annual celebration has been held, additional programs and activities have been offered, and the Association published its first newsletter in 2007. The Library is the repository of numerous relevant volumes and an elaborate timeline documenting the life of Ulysses Grant. Grant was the leading Union General in the Civil War and the first U.S. President from Ohio, and, at the time, the youngest man (age 46) elected to that office.

The formal unveiling of the Grant portrait was held Saturday, November 3rd. Townspeople, Trustees and friends of the Indian Hill Historical Society gathered for the celebration. President Barbara Hauck recounted the provenance of the portrait, and explained the collegial collaboration of two organizations from different Ohio counties. Andrew Hauck III cut the cord, uncovering the grand 66" by 54" painting to resounding applause. A festive reception was held at the U.S. Grant Homestead nearby.

The historic portrait will be appreciated in *The Land of Grant*. It is fitting that the painting of Grant - a true American hero - will be shared with more people due to the Historical Society and one of its founders, Andrew Hauck, Jr.

