

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge-1861

A Look Back at the Atkins Family

The 1920s were known as the beginning of the Estate Era in Indian Hill. In 1924, the Camargo Realty Company initiated the development of a country settlement for prominent leaders of Cincinnati. Options were taken on 12,000 acres of land, shaped as a four by five mile rectangular parcel. About 70 homes were built in the dozen years after Camargo Realty was founded. Most of these were on estates/farms of at least 25 acres, and were fabulous residences costing astronomical sums, even by today's standards.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles H.M. Atkins purchased 44 acres of meadows and woods located on current day Buckingham Road in 1924. Mr. Atkins was the President of the Warner Elevator Company, a company established by his grandfather, Warren Warner, who built the first hydraulic elevator in America and started the company. The Warner Elevator Company ranked third in the output of electric elevators in the U.S. The business thrived with Atkins at the helm. Charles Atkins was an officer or director of several other Cincinnati financial enterprises. In 1897 he married Lilla Jones, daughter of a steamboat captain from Maysville, Kentucky. The couple had one son, Warner Lewis Atkins.

Before moving to the country (Indian Hill), the family resided at 4008 Rose Hill Avenue in Avondale. In *Cincinnati – The Queen City 1788-1912*, a portion of Charles Atkins biography states “No man in the business circles of the city is more freely accorded the honor and respect of his associates and contemporaries.” Their country residence was located on one the highest elevations of the hill, and they named it Four Winds Farm. Their home was reminiscent of the gracious mansions of the American South.



Warner Atkins and Lowry Watkins

The Atkins' son, Warner, was an avid horseman and active member of the Camargo Hunt. Four Winds was one of 20 meets for the Hunt, where members congregated prior to their foxhunting pursuits. He played polo at the Camargo Club (the “home ground”) and traveled with the team to Dayton, Cleveland, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Louisville and Lexington to play matches against other teams. Due to the De-

pression, polo competitions ceased in the 1930s.

In 1940 the Atkins family hosted the first Camargo Hunter Trials which were held annually at Four Winds Farm for decades. The all day autumn gathering attracted horses and riders from all over Ohio and neighboring states. Participants entered in various classes and competed on courses filled with jumps, fences, and through trails in the woods. It was a thrilling event for both riders and spectators, and the tradition continues today (at Clipping Field). The Atkins also hosted the Point to Point Race in the spring at Four Winds.

In 1947 Charles Atkins died. His son Warner (a graduate of Yale Scientific School) inherited his estate, including Four Winds. Warner then became President of the Warner Elevator Company. He married Veronese Beatty, a talented equestrienne, who exhibited and won ribbons at Camargo Hunt events. (Two of her horses were Colonel Crow and Decoration.)

In the 1950s Warner Atkins sold the elevator company to his employees, and the couple moved to Southern Pines, N.C. The Atkins also maintained a summer home on Mt. Desert Isle, Maine. They returned to Cincinnati periodically, and participated in the Hunter Trials. Warner Atkins died in 1987, and his widow Veronese celebrated her 103rd birthday in November 2012. Four Winds was sold in 1965 and has changed ownership four times since. It is privately owned, and remains one of the most elegant estates in the Village. The Atkins' hospitality at the Hunter Trials and the Point to Point was remarkable, and they helped establish the awe-inspiring equestrian traditions of Indian Hill.



Hunter Trials at Four Winds