

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Renovation of Buckingham Lodge

When Lola Bonnell died in 1966, she left her home and property at 8650 Camargo Road to the Village. Her will stipulated that the residence be named Buckingham Lodge and that the 13-acre adjacent parcel of land be set aside as a public park or bird sanctuary. The house – originally constructed circa 1852 by Lola's grandfather – deteriorated and was almost razed in 1988, but a combined effort by Indian Hill Historical Society, Village Council, and local residents saved the structure.

The Buckinghams came to Ohio in 1791 and were major landowners in Symmes Township, amassing 1,192 acres. The Italianate block house was built from walnut and pine, mostly from the 185 acres on Camargo Road owned by Aaron Bonnell, and whose son, William, was Lola's father. It is one of the few Civil War era buildings in Indian Hill.



The initial restoration by the Historical Society, with additional funds from Council and private individuals was completed in 1990. It was a community project, and the building became the administrative office, library, and repository for the Society. For the last 50 years, historical data, genealogies, period antiquities, oral histories, and other memorabilia relating to the area and its former and current residents were accumulated. A capital campaign in 1997-1999 resulted in an endowed library and appropriate period furnishings for the structure.

Before the 50th anniversary of the Indian Hill Historical Society, the Board of Trustees embarked on another interior renovation to refresh the Lodge. A committee of Trustees undertook this project in 2022. While maintaining the integrity of the building, the objective was to combine traditional and modern elements to update the décor and usability of the space. Approval to proceed was granted by Indian Hill Village.

A space planner was engaged to evaluate the building's functionality and purposes. Fire resistance, uniform file cabinets, improved lighting, table space, cabinet space, plaster work, electrical outlets, shelving, flooring, furniture, and paint were some of the initial considerations. A plan was developed. It was revised and re-revised. Many meetings later, the plan was adopted, and bids were submitted. The low bidder was awarded the contract in May 2024.



To start, the office's structural stability had to be improved. The first floor was braced in order to hold the weight of larger file cabinets. Existing furniture was marked to be saved, discarded, or auctioned. The offices of the administrator, archivist, and historian were all transferred to the parlor as were some files. Rooms were sealed off with plastic sheeting to reduce noise and dust throughout the office. Construction started in December 2024.



The work began. A stairwell in the kitchen was demolished to add more space there and in the upstairs file room. The antique porcelain tub in the 2nd floor bathroom was removed. The Hauck Library, filled with books, genealogies, scrapbooks, directories, yearbooks, and other collections, was moved to a larger room, allowing for expansion and easier access to historical data by researchers. The old library room was converted to an Archive Room to hold maps and archive boxes. New shelving was added to both the library and file room. One happy surprise was the discovery of old wooden floors beneath linoleum tiles and carpet in three rooms downstairs; they were refinished and now add authenticity. Fresh paint and window blinds were additional improvements.

Then the new furniture arrived and was put into place along with the pieces which had been kept. The 1852 farmhouse now has a brighter feel. Original features (e.g. the original single pane wavy glass windows) were preserved, showcasing the building's unique character. Office personnel moved back to their redecorated rooms in March. Though a few more details remain to be completed, Buckingham Lodge has been successfully renovated, retaining the family homestead that has been a significant part of Indian Hill's heritage for more than 170 years.