

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Swing Line of the Early 20th Century

In the early twentieth century, an electric railway went through Indian Hill. This interurban line was the Cincinnati and Columbus Traction Company, but was also referred to as the Swing Line (for its major investors), the Hillsboro Short Line (a destination) or the Green Line (for the color of its cars).

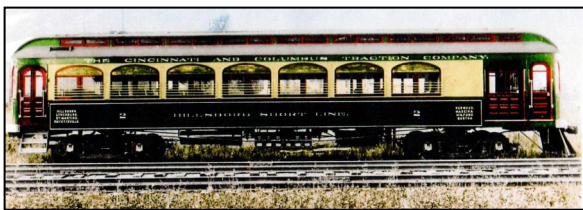
Judge Peter Swing and his two attorney sons, along with Henry Burkhold, A.J. Becht, and Frank Suire incorporated the company in 1901 investing \$10,000. The group hoped to attract additional investors, make a profit, and provide transportation between Cincinnati and the state capital. Franchises had to be obtained from towns along the route, allowing the CC to lay track and feed wire. A major problem was that other syndicates sought to build interurban lines through or to the same places.

After Oakley turned down the C&C, Norwood became the terminus for the line. The local paper lauded this contract, saying “It will make Norwood a central point and people will be able to travel in all directions for 5 cents.” The C&C route started at Harris Avenue, went to Duck Creek Road, along Ridge Road to Madison Road, along the B&O railroad tracks to downtown Madeira, where a station was located on Miami Road. Then the line followed Camargo Road, veering right to the center of current day Indian Hill at the corner of Drake and Shawnee Run Roads. There it stopped at Ramona Station, which was located where the current Village Administration Building is. From there it went behind the elementary school, descended into Redbird Hollow, and continued to Given Road, then crossed a creek near Stepping Stones and proceeded to go across the Little Miami River into Milford. It traversed Clermont County hamlets, including Perintown, Stonelick, Monterey, and Marathon, next through Brown County, and ended up in Highland County at Hillsboro. The entire route was 53 miles, making it one of the longest of the Cincinnati interurban lines.

In 1906 the C&C started operations. There were 4 regular trains and 2 express cars. It took around 2 hours for regular trains and 1 ¼ hours for the express to travel between Norwood and Hillsboro. The cars ran on rails, with overhead cables. The handsome chrome green cars were elegantly appointed, with mahogany finished interiors, plush upholstered seats, empire ceilings, and toilets and racks for parcels. The cars were enclosed in winter and open sided in summer. Each car was 57 feet long, and the trains could travel as fast as 50 miles per hour. Both the motorman and the conductor wore blue uniforms.



**Swing Line bridge over Mill Run near
Camp Stepping Stones**



Swing Line car

At first the C&C was a popular alternative to horses and regular railroads. People rode from one location to another, and a variety of freight was carried, including milk, coal, fertilizer, livestock, lumber, agricultural implements, and farm produce. The C&C was popular for group outings – to the Cincinnati Zoo or the Clermont County Fair. Commuters used it to get to work at factories in Norwood. And because Hillsboro and Milford were temperance towns, passengers often rode the interurban to saloons in nearby village that permitted alcohol.

But problems arose. The C&C was never able to consolidate with other interurban companies. The bridge across the Little Miami River to Milford collapsed. Income was marginal. And the advent of the automobile eventually doomed all interurban railways. In 1919, the company was insolvent, so operations ceased, and by 1920 the line was dismantled, and the real estate was sold.

Remnants of the C&C can be seen locally. The Madeira station is currently a retail building. Near Stepping Stones and in parts of Redbird Hollow, remains of the abutments that once supported lines are visible. These vestiges of the Swing Line serve as reminders of travel in an earlier era.

Much information is from Cincinnati and Columbus Traction Co. by David McNeill.