

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Indian Hill Horticultural and Agricultural Society of the 1870s

On March 8, 1870, a group of local farmers and fruit growers met at the house of Colonel Isaac F. Waring (on current day Waring Drive) and created the Indian Hill Horticultural and Agricultural Society. The purpose of the group was to promote and investigate the science of these two fields for the general welfare of the community.



After tasting “numberless bottles of Ives seedling wine vintage 1868” (according to the Minutes), a constitution was adopted, establishing goals, selecting officers, and making provisions for by-laws, dues, amendments, and monthly meetings. Twenty-five members signed the document – many were prominent men of Indian Hill at that time. Some of them now have roads named for them, e. g., Thomas Graves, E.G. Muchmore, Wm. T. Keller, and James DeMar. Others had generations of their families reside on the hill, e.g., Louis Finch, James Beekley, J.C. Stevens, and A.J. Bush. The group selected Isaac Waring as

President, a position he held through 1877. Dues were set at 50 cents annually, and three committees were formed: Vegetable, Fruit, and Flower. The Society agreed to share salient information with other groups such as the Hamilton County Agricultural and Horticultural Society as well as other state organizations.

The Indian Hill Horticultural and Agricultural Society was most likely modeled on the older Cincinnati Horticultural Society. The Cincinnati organization attracted members from many neighborhoods, including Lockland, Avondale, Walnut Hills, Covington, KY, and Clifton, and also Indian Hill. It had weekly meetings and exhibitions throughout spring and fall. Indian Hill residents who were members of this older group included Henry Finch, Lewis Finch, M. Varner, J. H. Gerard, W. T. Keller, and Louis Ritz. Clearly the field of horticulture was of great interest to the general public in the latter 19th century.

According to the Minutes, most meetings were held at Colonel Waring’s wine house – where his wine casks were stored. This was an outbuilding near his primary residence.



Special meetings were held at other locations, such as the Sans Souci Farm – to view the 200 varieties of strawberries of Louis Ritz, or the vineyards of S. A. Knight, Leonard Fowler, and I. G. Flinn.

Displays of various crops were common, with members showcasing their produce. Fruits, field crops and vegetables were exhibited. J. Printy grew a beet weighing 13 pounds, and James DeMar had a sweet potato 4 feet 2 inches long. Occasionally Mrs. Graves submitted flower bouquets. And there was always a wine sampling- on one occasion 11 different samples were “presented and fully tested by the members.” By 1874 the group changed its name to the Indian Hill Horticultural, Agricultural and Wine Growers Association.



Besides the exhibits, various topics were discussed at the Society’s meetings. Over the years, these ranged from *Pruning and Trimming* to *The Best Method of Manuring Lands*. Lively discussion, described as “animated” ensued about such matters as whether to burn fields before plowing them, if deep or shallow cultivation of crops was preferable, and different methods of pruning and trellising grape vines. The Minutes reflected that “members gave their views at length.” Certainly opinions differed. President Waring often shared his own poetry with the group.

The collected Minutes of this organization encompass the years 1870- 1877 and are located in the Historical Society archives. It is not known whether the group continued much longer. Membership had dwindled to fifteen. Later topics discussed were *How to Change our Mode of Farming that It Will be More Profitable*, and *Causes of the Blight*. During its existence, the Society benefitted members, enabling them to discuss practices and compare produce while providing “comfort for neighbors to meet together.” The group reflected the Indian Hill of that era, a community of farms in eastern Hamilton County.

Corrections and Additions to Images articles about Beatrice Shillito: (1) Beatrice’s grandson John (not her brother) was a neurosurgeon in Boston. (2)The Shillito schooner model is on display at the New York Yacht Club in New York City. (3) Beatrice had two other homes- in Paris, KY and Delanco, NJ. (4) Beatrice’s hair color was auburn (not brunette). (5) Beatrice told the Music Hall Board she would pick the color of the paint because she was the major donor and foreman of the project.