

The Vintage

Publication of the Madeira Historical Society
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Miller House Museum

It's Our 50th Birthday! **1972 - 2022**

September 27, 1972

MADEIRA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ACQUIRES LANDMARK



Mayor McDonald receiving the keys to the historic Baltimore & Ohio Railroad depot from Mr. A. W. Johnston of the B & O Railroad (l. to r.): Mayor McDonald, Councilman Art Smith, Prosecutor Stan Rozick and Mr. Johnston.

Your City officials were successful in negotiating a five-year lease with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company for the historic (1868) railroad station located on Miami Avenue in the center of the business district. The Madeira Historical Society is being organized to plan for the restoration and use of this station, plus any additional historic buildings which the City may obtain in the future. The first (organizational)

meeting of this society, held September 18, 1972, Messrs. Oscar Meyers, Vern Hoffman, Dr. Clifford Crull and Mrs. Harry Messerly were elected by those in attendance as the "incorporators" of the organization.

Mayor McDonald received for the Historical Society two surprise donations at the meeting; \$500.00 from Madeira Manor — Manor Catering and \$200.00 from the Eastern Hills Women's Club.

This was the Beginning, and I was there, 50 years ago. It is not often that content in our newsletter is attributed to an individual, but how can I write about or tell about history that I have experienced firsthand, and not admit that fact. The beginning of the Madeira Historical Society and the acquisition of the B&O Railroad Depot were parallel events. The photo at left, in one paragraph, substantiates that the society was founded for the purpose of Depot Restoration, and "any additional historic buildings" which the city may obtain in the future". Former Mayor Dan McDonald and others, had a vision not seen since. In 1972 the Depot was acquired and the society was founded, I was just turning 26 years of age, lived on Buckeye Crescent with my wife, Ann, and a growing family that would eventually include five daughters.



I have been thinking that I may be the last living member of the first Madeira Historical Society Board, and thanks to our archivist, Carol Heck, the photo at left does prove my 50 years as a member of the society. I can identify in the picture Mayor Dan McDonald swearing us in, Vernon Hoffman is at left and Oscar Meyer is in the middle, back row. I am at right in the back row. This was the beginning. Still identifying the ladies although one might be Millie Ackerman,

and another Gloria Albright.

Society members began meeting at the Depot in 1973, and became responsible for managing events at the Depot. An early memory was the shaking of the Depot as two trains were passing by (two tracks back then) during our membership meetings. I always wondered where the trains were going. The Madeira Manor restaurant was still operating, Cleo Hosbrook was still living in her home across

from the Depot and Cleo's cousin Nell Hosbrook was still living in her home across from the library. The George Meyer Coal & Lumber Company was still on Miami Avenue and our Kroger store was still in their third location on Laurel Avenue. Les LeFevre would eventually build a new office building on the corner of Euclid and Miami Avenue across from Madeira City Hall, City Hall was still in what had been the Methodist Church and there was a Texaco Gas station on Miami Avenue next door to City Hall. Across from city hall there was a residence that would become a Friendly's restaurant, Dot and Mack Baldrige had a grocery store on Miami and Laurel, and Bill Calvin ran his 5 & Dime store on Miami Avenue where you could get a Gold Fish or a stick of gum. In 1972 the Miller Family was still residing at 7226 Miami Avenue, but the home would eventually become the Miller House Museum.



Mayor Dan McDonald had a vision that the young Historical Society would begin the Depot Restoration work, and the society did just that. Partnering with the Madeira-Kenwood Jaycees and other volunteers, that included professional electricians, painters, carpenters, and plumbers, the first complete Depot Restoration began. The project included replacement of the entire electrical system, a

new bathroom, new paint inside and out, and new outside lighting. The above photo includes volunteers from the society, Bob Henke, Oscar Meyer, Jim Kamphaus, Marti Hurst and Doug Oppenheimer. But, the love affair between the society and the Depot would be short lived. Different politicians have different ideas, and that is exactly what happened when new faces appeared at City Hall. The new faces decided that the Depot could bring in big bucks and more foot traffic in downtown Madeira. The historical society became homeless, meetings were held at Sellman Elementary, including a program at every monthly meeting. John Mayhall, his wife Mignon, and Emery and Wanda Gardner brought cookies and coffee to every meeting. Thanks to these four, the society survived and was able to grow. Another turning point was in 1998 when a widow living on Miami Avenue decided that the society was in need of a permanent home. The widow was Elizabeth Miller, but the story began before 1998.

The widow and her generosity: there are still mountains of Madeira Historical Society history leading up to 1998, but it would require reams of paper and too much ink, but nearly half of our fifty years began when we were given the Miller House, 24 years ago, so let's go there. I actually came to know Elizabeth Miller during my years as a member of Madeira City Council. Elizabeth had been trained as an attorney but she never practiced law, instead she married Bruce Miller and they decided that she would stay home, raise their children and manage the family finances. When Morly Thompson's daughter began running a catering business across Miami Avenue in the Nell Hosbrook House, Elizabeth made a visit to a council meeting, threatening that her house and two acres should also be rezoned for business. Less than a week later the catering business in the Hosbrook House ceased. Who could have guessed that in 1988 I would build a house on Juler Avenue, making me a next door neighbor with Elizabeth Miller? That was the beginning of a friendship that lasted throughout the rest of her life

and would influence her decision when deciding that her home and grounds would be given to the Madeira Historical Society.

It was winter in 1998 when Elizabeth asked me to drop by, she said there was something important to discuss, and indeed there was. I sat down in her living room, surprised when she said that the Madeira Historical Society was in need of a permanent home, and was certain that her 1922 Sears's house would be suitable, since many society artifacts and historical furnishings, including the B&O pot-bellied stove were already stored in her garage. She thought about her house becoming a museum serving the community, overseen by the society. She and I agreed that the home would be known as "The Miller House". Her two sons and two daughters agreed with their mom and not long after making her decision, her attorneys prepared the sales agreement. Our then vice president, Les Lefevre signed the documents on behalf of the society accepting the house and grounds. The agreement allowed for Elizabeth to stay in the house for a short time or for her to rent the house out, which she did. The society was given full custody of the house in 2004.



Photo above, Elizabeth Miller on the day of the ribbon cutting, 2004

It was a slow start in 2004, we had an array of mostly "stuff" from the Depot and some donated pieces from all over, but our first two "curators" Marian Brown and Dona Brock made do. It is amazing when walking through the Miller House today how far we have come. We have created a museum, second to none. We have spent 50 years collecting and preserving the history of Madeira, including photos, documents, newspapers, and so much more. Madeira history can be found throughout the Miller House. One room houses historic photos and documents, the library is in the former sun room. Today we are fortunate to have a Museum Director, and a Librarian / Archivist. For most of the past twenty years the society has hosted Madeira first grade students at the Miller House, where we teach the students about history the way it really was. Last year, St. Gertrude's fourth grade students also visited the Miller House.

The society is made up of volunteers that give both their time and wealth in support of the society. One such person was Florence V. Hoffmann. In life, she was there when the society needed help and in death, she left the society enough of an inheritance, wisely invested, that now pays most of our operating expenses. Fundraising and memberships are still important.

In addition to the larger sum of money given to the society, there have been many other members providing monetary contributions including Robert Johnston, Thomas and Peggy Frank and Doctor Bud Johnson and his wife Phyllis. Also, we have been fortunate that our Board members and Officers over the years have been committed and generous. We will be looking forward to the next half century.

Doug Oppenheimer

February Newsletter

Membership Meeting: Saturday, March 19th, begins at noon at our Public Library followed by the “First Person Program, Mary Ingles”, 1PM - 2PM. This program will be presented by Joyce Browning.

Miller House Grounds Clean Up: Saturday, March 26th, 9AM - 1PM, Don't forget your gloves or rake. And Coffee is provided.

Madeira Art Fair: Sunday, May 1st, Madeira Historical Society will have a booth and is in need of volunteers to help promote the society. 11AM - 5PM.

Ferrari's Fundraising Dinner: May 15th, 4 PM until Closing

Madeira Mart Community Wide Yard Sale: Saturday, May 21st, 9AM - 4PM. This is an annual fundraising event that will raise money for projects outside of our normal operating cost. Volunteers are needed to help with pricing and selling. Set-up in our driveway at 8 AM. Accepting donations from now until May 15th. Call 513-561 9069.

Memorial Day March: Monday, May 30th. Join other members of the society marching from Madeira Middle School to McDonald Commons where Military veterans will be honored including speeches from city officials and others. Meet at the Middle School around 9AM. March begins at 9:30 AM

Heritage Village, program presented by Steve Preston, will be held at Madeira Branch Library on Saturday June 11th from 1 – 2 PM.

Please note that seating at our programs may be limited by Library.

Other Society News

Thanks to the generosity of our members and a grant from the State of Ohio, the Miller House will get a new coat of exterior paint in April. The Sherwin – Williams Paint Company will be donating the paint, saving the society the cost of up to 20 gallons of paint. The store is located at 7712 Montgomery Road, in Kenwood (across from Skyline). Sherwin – Williams donated paint ten years ago, the last time the Miller House was painted.

Our Museum Director Liz Frederick, and President, Bob Bartlett, have reviewed the Miller House and made recommendations for maintenance issues that included replacement of lighting fixtures, second floor flooring, and faulty dry wall material. The lighting fixtures have already been replaced with LED fixtures. Estimates have been requested for other more complex maintenance concerns.

Plans for a memorial that would be placed on the Miller House grounds have been delayed while other projects are progressing. The memorial project has not been forgotten about and a committee will soon be formed.

Additional Madeira High School yearbooks have been added to our library. Our archivist Carol Heck is still hunting for many yearbooks from the 80's decade.

The Madeira Historical Society has new elected officers and board members for 2022. Your new President is Bob Bartlett, Vice President, Doug Oppenheimer, Treasurer, Donna Lienhart, Recording Secretary, Robin LeFevre, Board members, Tim Brock, Liz Frederick (also serves as Museum Director), Tom Frietch, Les LeFevre, and Carol Heck, (also Archivist / Librarian).



***Newly Elected Officers:**
From left to right, Doug Oppenheimer, Tom Frietch, Carol Heck, Tim Brock, Robin LeFevre, Bob Bartlett and Les LeFevre.*

Missing from photo, Donna Lienhart and Liz Frederick



Bob Bartlett & Donna Lienhart receiving the 2020-2021 Florence V. Hoffmann Service Award at our Christmas Membership Dinner held last December.

*Dear Membership,
Board members and officers thank you for your support during the past 50 years. Your newsletter staff is interested in your feedback, comments, and opinions regarding our newsletters. We want you to know that your newsletter is written, printed, and mailed out 100% in-house, at a cost lower than outsourcing, this allows us to save money by doing our own design and printing. Please send your comments to maderiahistoricalsociety@gmail.com - attention newsletter staff.*

*Sincerely,
The Vintage Newsletter Staff*

Letter from Our President.....

February 28, 2022

Dear Members & Friends,

I am your "new" Madeira Historical Society President for 2022-2023, (I was President for 2016-2017 so I have some experience at this post). We have a great, dedicated group of Officers & Board Members and we have some openings for persons interested in being considered for a board position. Please call me at 513-561-9069 if you are interested or want some additional information.

At our 2021 Christmas Dinner & Annual Meeting at the Kenwood Country Club we reported that 21 of our members have passed away since 2017. I am listing the Members below that have passed away with the date of their death.

All of these individuals contributed to our organization in many ways and will be missed, and our prayers go out to their families.

Edward Hasselbeck (2/5/15)

Harold Verbarg (12/7/20)

Nelson Wittman (11/18/17)

Ray Meyer (12/11/20)

Marion Brown (9/1/18)

Mary Crull (2/6/21)

Carol Campbell (11/1/18)

Ann Lukey (2/27/21)

Joseph Schirmer (1/12/19)

Ruth Denecke (3/24/21)

Regina Villiers (1/1/20)

Dr. Lionel King (3/31/21)

Cecilia Lemming (4/5/20)

Billie Yeomans (9/9/21)

Charles Lemming (11/23/20)

Tim Yeomans (9/16/21)

Dona Brock (6/26/20)

Robert Wick (10/22/21)

Nancy Hasselbeck (10/22/20)

Sharon Fox (11/6/21)

Shirley Seeger (11/11/20)

If we have missed the passing of any other Madeira Historical Society Members since 2017 please let me know.

I look forward to seeing many of you in 2022 at our Miller House Open House events, Historical Programs at the Library or at the events listed in our Calendar. Call 513-561-9069 or email us at madeirahistoricalsociety@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer with us at an open house),

Sincerely,

Bob Bartlett

President, Madeira Historical Society