

Corner of Camargo and Miami; & the Dones Family

by Carol (Klenk) Heck



Or should I say Eden and Miami? I had so much fun with my history story about the names of Madeira's streets that I just had to add a little more information that I recently stumbled across. One of our knowledgeable Madeira Historical Society board members told me that he researched why Camargo was named Camargo, and found that in 1847 the street's name was actually Eden. Sometime after 1847, the story goes somewhat like this; an area postmaster (not sure who this would be), read about Ignacio Camargo, a Mexican soldier during the Mexican War of Independence in 1811. Then later, Mexico formed the Canton Camargo District in Ignacio's honor. Our postmaster loved the name, Camargo, so much, that he petitioned the post office department to change the name from Eden to Camargo. His petition was granted. After that, the Madisonville, O'Bannon and Camargo Turnpike was built in 1857 with tolls along the way. The turnpike changed into what we have today, Camargo Road.

So, I made my own google search and came up with this: "Camargo Road – although its origins remain somewhat obscure – is likely the only street in this area named for a ballerina. Marie Anne de Cupis de Camargo (1710-1770) was known as La Camargo. She was the first ballerina to wear slippers instead of heeled shoes and she was often credited with adopting the shortened skirt for the stage. As her name indicates, she had Spanish roots – Camargo is a very small village in northern Spain – but indications are that it is the dancer, not the municipality, that gave its name to our road." *¹

I had previously written that the name of Camargo Road came about because of the Village of Camargo in Clermont County. Madeira's road was supposed to connect there, but never did.



Now, we have three possibilities of why we have the name of Camargo Road.

But getting back to the corner; I found this old postcard of the corner of Miami Avenue and Camargo. Due to the style, I date this postcard around the early 1900's. The next picture is what it looks like in 2023!

It had been written in the *Madeira News*, by Earl J. Winter, 1932, that the first general store and post office, established before the Civil War (1861-1865), was located on the corner of Camargo and Miami. In the earliest days, the post office keeper would go by horseback to Madisonville, once a week, and bring mail



back to what was known as the *Indian* Post Office on the northeast corner of Miami and Camargo.

Confirmed writings from the *Madeira Journal*, also in 1932, by Lawrence Bonham, calls the first general store and post office the *Indian Hill* post office, where John Dones was the proprietor and post office keeper. He was a postmaster from 1858-1864.

The name Indian, or Indian Hill, could be in reference to the hill and trail up from Madisonville where unfriendly Indians met their demise; not actually the borderlines of the Village of Indian Hill today. The early settlers and the native Indians did not always get along and there were constant threats to one's safety.

John Dones (1821-1888) and older brother, James Dones, (1818-1900), were both born in England.

James lived for a time in Philadelphia where he married and had his first few children. He came to Madeira around 1850. He bought 80 acres of land in 3 parcels on the south side of Camargo and east of Miami Avenue. He lived on the 43-acre lot between Camargo and Miami. James handcrafted his pre-civil war home with trees which he had cleared from the land and other local materials. James was a farmer and had many fruit trees and grapes on his farm. He and wife, Sarah Marvin, went on to have 5 more children here in Madeira. The present Dones Avenue was the entrance to the farm.

The house sat back, off of what is now Naomi. The house frontage originally faced Miami. When subsequent owners made additions to the original structure, the front of the house was made to face Naomi Avenue as it does today, see photo.

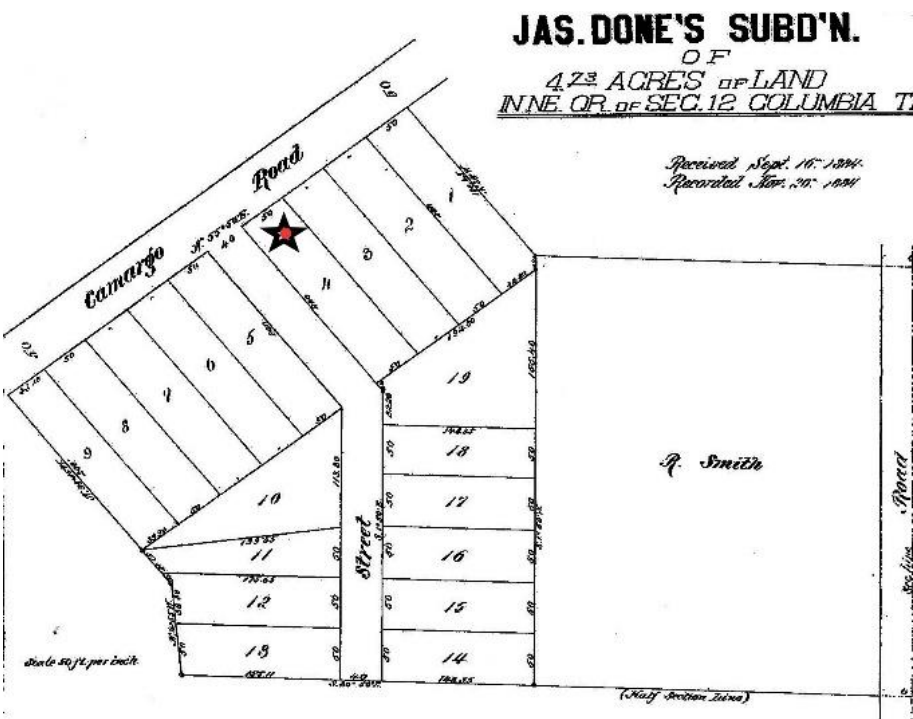
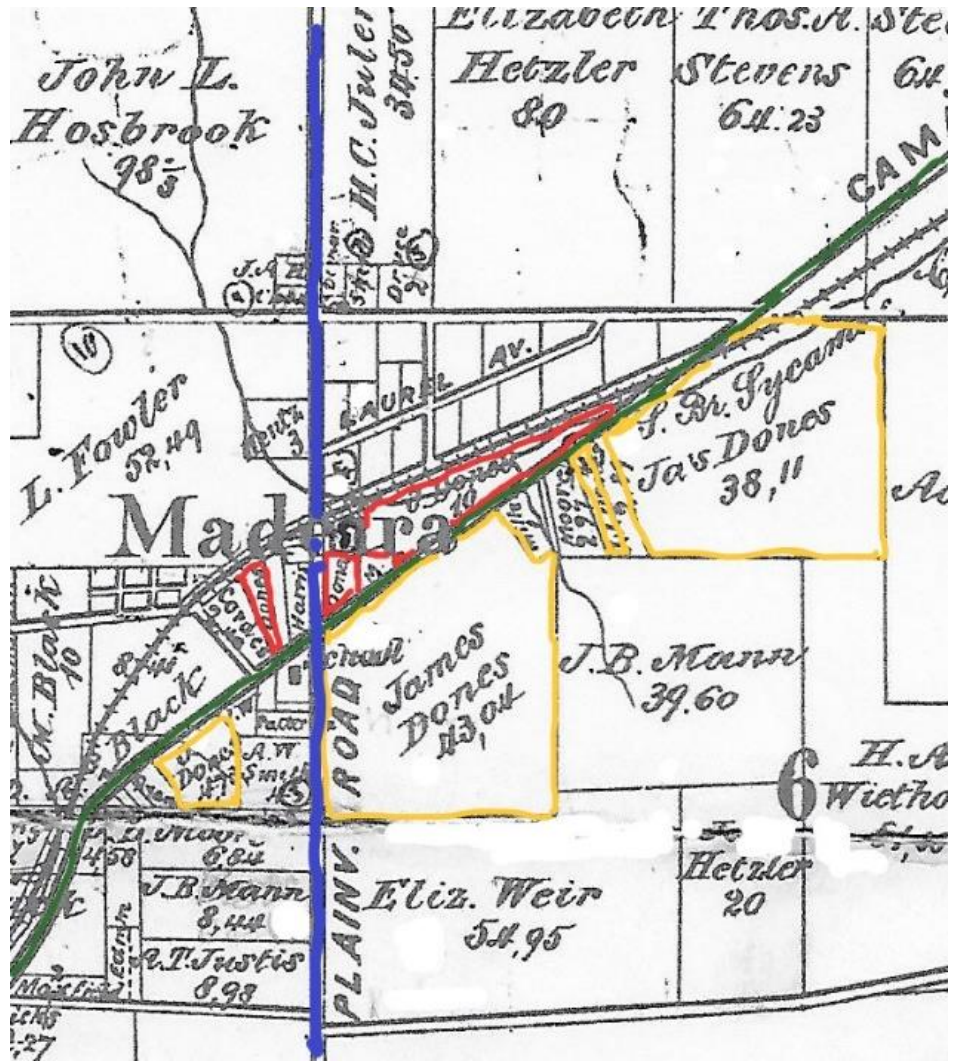
There is a wonderful audio given by a former owner of the historic house, Renee Beach, on The Madeira Historical Society website, madeirahs.org. Click on Audio Tour Historical Residences- then scroll to James Dones Home, as she lovingly describes the house. Go back and click on Additional Information (James Dones Home) to see photographs. We have another informative presentation on *Madeira's Historic Homes* given by Les LeFevre, click on Program Video Archives under Madeira, *A Small Ohio*,



2018. If you only want to view about the Dones Home, you can fast forward to about 50 minutes into the program.

On this circa 1888 map, Miami Avenue is **Blue**, Camargo is **Green**, James' land is **Yellow**, John's land is **Red**.

In 1884, James also bought land west of Miami including what is now Ester Lane. It was 4.73 acres which included 9 lots on Camargo and 10 lots down both sides of Ester until it reaches the bend before the cul-de-sac. The drawing, "JAS. DONE'S SUBD'N" shows these 19 lots. I think his brother John was living at 7601 Camargo, lot #4, (see star), in 1888 when he died. This would not be the house that is on the corner of Ester and Camargo now.



The story of younger brother, John Dones, goes like this; John followed his brother to Madeira possibly from Madisonville a short time after 1850, and bought a few small pieces of land north of Camargo Road, close to the intersection of Miami. John owned one acre of what is now, I'm guessing, Kroger's back driveway and loading dock area straight down to the railroad tracks. He owned the corner of Camargo and Miami where the old postcard, on page 1 shows

MADEIRA

Hamilton Co. Population 200.

Bond L. H. attorney
DeMar J. T. attorney
Dones John, dry goods and groceries
Heddleston W. J. carpenter
Hosbrook D. S. surveyor
Hosbrook J. L. notary public
Isdell R. B. blacksmith
Johnson L. E. attorney
Lesman Fred. boots and shoes
Moore J. D. carpenter
MUCHMORE E. G. & SON, Dry Goods, Groceries and Coal
Richison Joseph, broom manufacturer
Rogers S. W. architect
Rudolph Joseph, boots and shoes
Sparks J. M. wagon manufacturer

that large building, and it extended about half way down to the depot. And John owned another partial plot, behind where Walgreens sits now, stretching down to the tracks. He and his wife, Mercy Davis, had 3 children that grew up in Madeira.

After John was no longer postmaster, he continued to be the proprietor of that general store. His competition was E. G. Muchmore & Son's General Store down the street. As you can see from the clipping, shown next, taken from the Williams' Ohio State Directory, 1875-76, John

Dones is in the business of dry goods and groceries in Madeira. And E. G. Muchmore & Son has dry goods, groceries, and coal. Note the population of Madeira was 200.

I couldn't find any information on what happened to John's land holdings after he died in 1888.

In 1900, James Dones died at the age of 81. From James' land holdings, the land was willed to his family and later, subdivided into many smaller lots. Many of you are living on the original land purchase made by James Dones. When I find out more about this area, I will type it up and save it at the Madeira Historical Society for another article on Madeira history.

Thank you, readers, for letting me tell you about the Dones'. Ever since I did my first article on the post offices of Madeira, I felt that I had missed something because I didn't know about this real early pre-civil war post office. I also feel that back then, the main hub of Madeira was at this intersection, Eden (Camargo) and Miami, and not at the depot and historic district as it is today. I suppose when the railroad tracks were laid in 1866, and mail started being handled out of the Muchmore Hall, the downtown focus of Madeira shifted down the hill.

1. *Cincinnati Magazine*, A Passel of Curious Cincinnati Street Names, part one, A to E, By Greg Hand, October 11, 2022

Photos and maps courtesy of Madeira Historical Society and Carol (Klenk) Heck.

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Also see, "You've Got Mail" under Post Offices and "What's in a Name?" under Street Names.