"Once Upon a Time" by Carol (Klenk) Heck

…a small, little village wanted a library. In 1905, there existed only a Library Delivery Service. At the very least, that was a way for Madeira to get their resources and education from books.

Books hold valuable information, history, poems, lessons, and stories that needed to be kept as precious commodities. Madeira knew so well the importance of books and wanted a library of their own.

"Miss Nelle Hosbrook, (seen here,) was the first person in charge of the community's branch library when it was established in 1930. Nelle served as librarian for the branch until 1949." [1] That first library was located (on the second floor) in one room of the elementary (Camargo Primary/Perin) school building (located on the southwest corner of Miami and Camargo). When the school needed that space, the library was moved to the rear of Bauer's General Store on the northeast corner of Miami and Laurel. That area in the store became available because the post office had moved out.

On the left, is a picture of Russel Grubbs standing across Miami Avenue from Bauer's General Store mentioned above. I believe this photo to be circa late 1920's. The store building extended down along Laurel Avenue. Now People's Bank occupies that corner.

Behind Bauer's was, and still is, this building seen on the right. Now it is the Shoe Repair Shop at 7710 Laurel. This Laurel Avenue building first served as the post office, circa 1929. But the library was moved here sometime between 1937-1945 after being in Bauer's Store. The black sign in the picture says "Public Library of Cincinnati Station". There are also offices for the police, council chambers, mayor's court and building inspector.

"Carol Haas was the Children's Librarian starting in 1931 and again, part-time, on Laurel Avenue in 1951. In 1960, Carol Haas was named Branch Librarian." [2] "In 1959, the library operated as a branch under the supervision of the Madisonville Branch. However, Madeira separated from Madisonville in 1961." [3]

Previously in 1957, the village of Madeira had just purchased the large Methodist Church on the southwest corner of Miami and Euclid. After renovations to the old church building, the government offices and the branch library moved from the Laurel building to their "new" city hall building in 1961.

Also in 1961, Indian Hill and Madeira were both trying to get a brand-new library building for their community. It was a bit of a battle, because both communities wanted to have it. Only one was to be granted. Indian Hill provided a parcel of land for the library by the corner of Shawnee Run and Miami which was formerly Raymond Motors. At the same time, Madeira was looking for a spot to build on. I believe demographics were compiled and pros and cons were scrutinized closely. Because of the abundant foot traffic, location in regards to area schools, and a $30,000 gift from city council (Mayor Dan McDonald), Madeira won.

Land was purchased on the northeast corner of Miami and Euclid, catty-cornered from the Municipal Building. Once, this land was owned by Jacob and Elizabeth Hetzler in 1796 and then later by Captain James T. DeMar and his descendants. It was divvied up into smaller lots over time.

Here is a picture of Blaine DeMar's house that was torn down to build the Madeira Branch Library of today. There were also some old graves belonging to the original owners on this parcel of land. Some grave markers were relocated up onto the land above the north retaining wall, accessible from a small path next-door at the Madeira Historical Society. Actual gravesites are thought to have been originally underneath the present library structure. Descendants of the DeMar's believe that some graves were moved to another cemetery in Madisonville before the construction. Some headstones were found scattered on the property and some were even laid in the garage or used as paving stones. Some remains might still be beneath the library today.

The new Madeira Public Library building was opened and dedicated in June 1965. The architect was Carl Strauss. Carl received the Gold Medal Award by the local Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for his library design. The library was very successful and very well attended. This turned out to be the best choice for its location. Here is a picture of the first building specifically for housing our library.

After twenty-six years, Madeira grew in popularity, and the library needed to expand also. One issue was to obtain more space for books and more parking. Upon examination of the structure prior to the upcoming remodel, it was evident that the front hillside was caving in and there was also some slippage of the structure which had to be shored up. Appalachian coal miners were hired to dig deep shafts to allow for large pillars to be installed. These pillars would get the building pulled back into position and into the proper alignment.

During this remodel in December of 1991, "the library's temporary home was the former Calvin's Tropical Fish and Five and Dime Store, which had closed that summer. The shelves at the old store, once stuffed with craft supplies, toys, fabric, and pots and pans, then held magazines, encyclopedias and other materials". [4] The building still exists at 6930-6932 Miami Avenue which is now Coffee Please. (Photo courtesy of Hamilton County Auditor, 1993.)

After the massive expansion of the library, everything went back to the repaired and beautifully renovated building. The dedication of the present public library was held in April of 1993. The new name was The Madeira-Indian Hill-Kenwood Regional Branch of the Public Library of Hamilton County. It held that title until 2001. The building's size was almost doubled, the collection of volumes more than doubled, the parking increased close to fivefold. The expansion was financed by state money from The Library and Local Government Fund.

In 1996, the library won the Beautify Madeira Award.

Today, there are 40 branch locations within the Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library System. Madeira's Branch is rated number one for programming and attendance.

This branch ranks fourth in circulation. There have been 257 programs as of early August 2022 and 8,977 people have attended these programs. The collection/circulation of materials is on a rotating basis, so when an item is borrowed from Madeira and returned to another branch, it stays there until another check-out takes it away. Inventory is calculated automatically, and therefore ever-changing. The Madeira Branch of the Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library is by far a favorite place to many. It has been, and will continue to be, an integral part of

Madeira and surrounding neighborhoods. The folks there are very friendly and people of all ages enjoy the assistance from the staff, programs, and the meeting rooms.

1. *The Post & Times Star*, April 18, 1967, Suburban Scene, by Jack Metz.
2. *Southeast Suburban Life*, Aug. 1, 1974.
3. Audio interview with Kathy Kennedy-Brunner, available on Madeira Historical Society website, Madeirahs.org, /audio tours landmarks / Madeira Branch Library.
4. *The Cincinnati Enquirer,* Friday, November 8, 1991, Madeira Library Ready to Take a Hike, by Janet C. Wetzel.

Thanks to Kathy Kennedy-Brunner, Madeira Library Branch Manager for her informative collection of articles and her recollections of the library's history.

Most photos courtesy of The Madeira Historical Society.
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Also see, "You've Got Mail" under Post Offices, and "Madeira Village Hall, Then and Now".