

Water, Creeks, and Ponds in Madeira by Carol (Klenk) Heck



First published in 1874, *Suburban Homes for Business Men* is a book written by Richard Nelson. Its purpose was to attract homeowners to buy land and raise their families while having accessibility of transportation via the M. & C. (Marietta & Cincinnati) Railway for their employment opportunities. Various Cincinnati

neighborhoods were written up as desirable places to live, Madeira included.

The author states that “the M. & C. Railroad makes a rising grade until it reaches its greatest altitude at Madeira (station) at an elevation of 320 feet above the Ohio River. Also, that the passengers thus landed at a healthy location where there was a great amount of property available for building purposes.” *¹ In his book, Nelson mentions the E. G. Muchmore & Sons grocery store and Odd Fellows Hall, the Methodist Episcopal Meeting House, and about 25 spacious homes having 7-8 rooms each with lovely verandas and sprawling fruit orchards already in the area. He writes that there were also three small cottages in the vicinity of the train station.

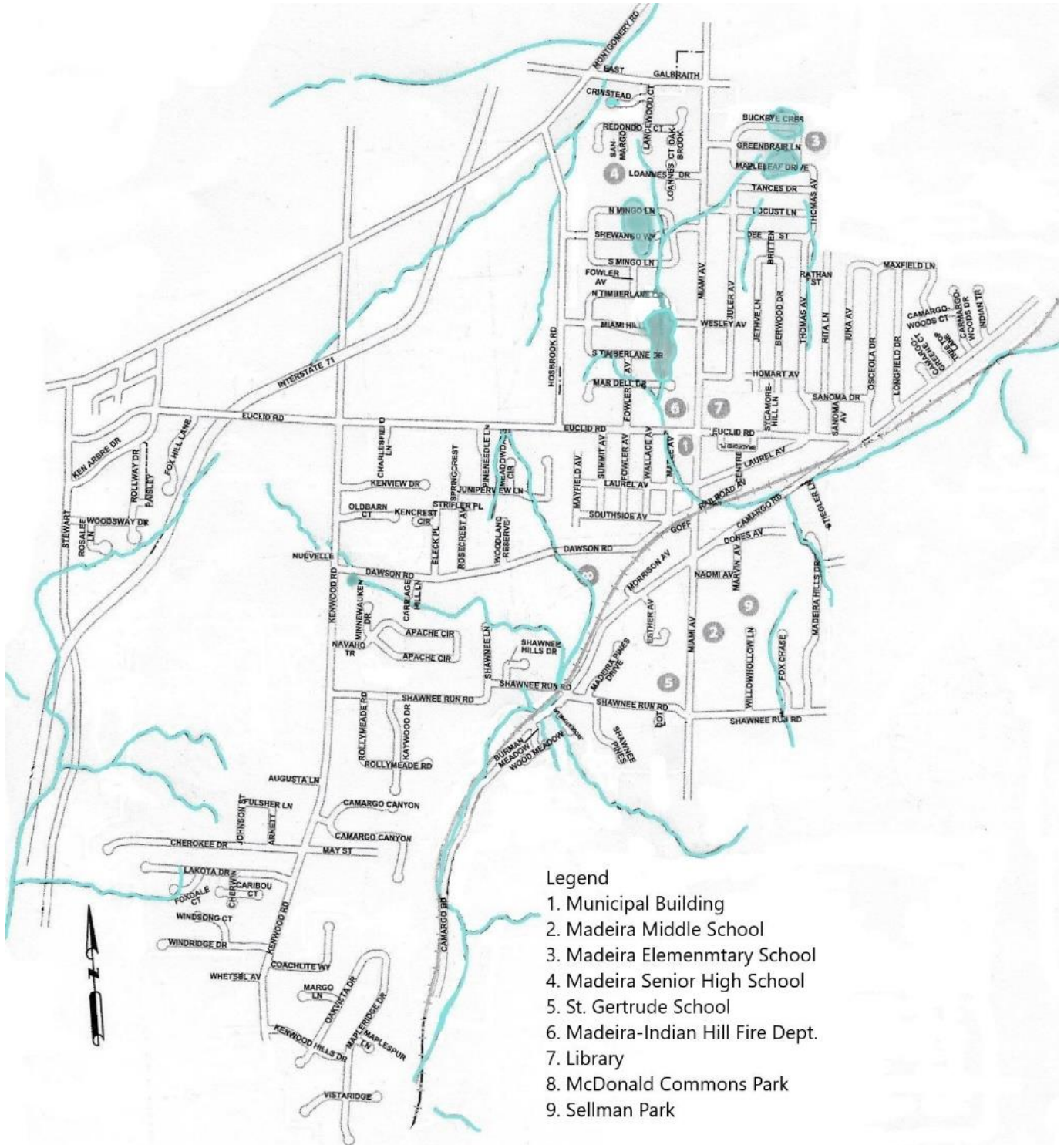
Another attribute about Madeira, as Nelson writes, “is that fifteen feet below the surface of the clay and limestone soil is an inexhaustible supply of pure water. The abundance of the water supply made Madeira a resourceful place for the steam locomotives to stop and refuel”. *² Here is the Madeira water tower that stood next to the current depot “erected at the time the double tracks were laid.” *³ It’s reported that this old tower, shown here, is being dismantled around 1931. To give you a size reference, there are two men inside the tank and one on the scaffolding. Ramona Kaiser wrote in her book that “on the site of the railroad station, Milo Hetzler and Dave Warner ran a pumping station for the old wood-burning engines on the M. & C. Railroad. Madeira was an important fueling station in the old days”. *⁴



Suburban Homes, a booklet, put out by the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern Railroad Passenger Department in 1891,

states that “Madeira is at the summit (of the railroad line) from which flows, in opposite directions, Sycamore Creek and Duck Creek”. *5 They both empty into the Little Miami River at different locations and take completely different paths; Sycamore Creek to the east and Duck Creek from the west and goes southward.

Here is the current street map from the Madeira Directory compiled and published by Boy Scout Troop #209. I did a color overlay of the ponds and creeks from an 1881 map so you can see



where these creeks and ponds were 142 years ago. Today the creeks would have been slightly re-routed or piped underground or still naturally flowing underground. For the Kenwood Country

Club and annexed Kenwood area, I called the Hamilton County Conservation District to get their current map of streams since this was not part of Madeira then. The Stream Conservation Program Manager told me that basically all the water that flows eastwardly through Remington and east on Camargo Road is part of the Sycamore Creek and all the water that flows south to Silverton feeds Duck Creek. The main branches of creeks have names, but there are also small unnamed tributaries.

Duck Creek, according to Hamilton County Conservation Manager, starts around the Kenwood Country Club by Interstate 71. You can see on my map, that also draining from the eastside of the golf course, is a creek that flows eastward under Kenwood Road finding its way to the south side of Dawson Road. (Just a year or so ago, there used to be a pond behind an older home on Kenwood and Dawson. The home has been torn down. Developers have laid pipe to allow the water to flow underground and have subdivided the land.) From here the creek finds its way to the south end of the mobile home park and the south tip of the McDonald Commons Park. Today, McDonald Commons is undergoing major renovation and addressing the water flow issues once again. Huge pipes were recently installed to carry more of the creek water underground. There is an existing culvert on Shawnee Run Road where the creek will continue to empty out.

When I researched online, I found “*Little Duck Creek*”. I traced it to the current creek that flows from the area of Madeira Millennium Plaza, where the fountain is, westward along Dawson, and then south down the railroad tracks to Shawnee Run and Camargo, through Fairfax, under Columbia Parkway to the south curve of Red Bank Road. Little Duck Creek joins into Duck Creek and flows along Wooster then turns southeast and runs north of Beechmont Levee until it flows into the Little Miami River north of Lunken Airport.

In a 1932 article for The Madeira News, it says that “Muchmore Hall, on Miami Avenue, was at one time covered by a large duck pond and was a noted spot, for people from far and near, to come and shoot wild duck. At another time this spot brought fame to this little town because of a huge wood yard which covered it and where thousands of cords of wood were stored.” *6

The duck pond would have had to have been there before 1874. I can’t believe that that long ago, with so many options of where to build a large store, that E. G. Muchmore would have built right on a pond. I did not include the drawing of that pond on the map, but I believe the article.

At one time, a creek ran through the Hosbrook farmland and fed their two connecting ponds. (See the black and white photo of the creek running through the woods.)

From Hosbrook farm, some of the water flowed down to the depot. It would have flowed downhill either way, as water will. Part of that water flow can be seen on Laurel



Avenue by a concrete wall and from Railroad Avenue by the guardrail next to Woellner Enterprises, the antique restoration shop.

Next is a 1927 picture of three Madeira girlfriends sitting on the concrete wall on Laurel. The wall is still there. Maybe you remember the garden store next to the creek. It was lost due to a fire just a few years back. Or maybe you can remember when the building was Shawnee Market in the 50's and 60's or Madeira Meats.



From here the creek goes south under Railroad Avenue until it comes out along the railroad tracks and heads northeast along Camargo Road. That is Sycamore Creek. Some of Sycamore Creek flows into the hamlet of Remington.



The most published photograph of Hosbrook Pond is this one with the man-made footbridge. This picture is what the present-day eastern intersection of Miami Hills Drive and North and South Timberlane looked like before. The featured picture, at the beginning of my story, is one of the Hosbrook Pond with what looks like reeds growing in the shallows.

I had previously written about the natural underground fresh-water spring that John Hosbrook discovered in 1794 and that it was why he built his family's cabin here and settled in Madeira. The spring came out somewhere on the hillside east of Hosbrook Road, north of Euclid and west of the Nelle Hosbrook Bird Sanctuary. It seems to me to be around the upper vicinity of Mar Del Drive. I could be a little off.



There was also Juergen's farm between Miami Avenue and Montgomery Road that had a spring-fed pond. Here is a 1960's picture of the property. The farm was sold to developers in 1968.

Two other ponds were indicated around Buckeye Crescent and Mapleleaf Drive.

Going back to the picture of the directory map, I wanted to say that where I placed the ponds, is only an estimate. I did find on the 1881 map, someone

before me had taken a pen and indicated where the ponds were and even some run-offs. I studied, read stories and looked at photos to estimate where to put them. I did not include any present-day ponds on the Madeira map.

I have talked to board members of the Madeira Historical Society who have a lot of water issues when it rains hard and for a long while. They believe they may have a natural spring on their property as well. It wouldn't surprise me! What seems to have been a natural blessing is now a troublesome annoyance.

1. *Suburban Homes for Business Men*, by Richard Nelson, entered accordingly to Act of Congress in 1874.
2. *Suburban Homes for Business Men*, by Richard Nelson, entered accordingly to Act of Congress in 1874.
3. *The Madeira Journal*, by Lawrence Bonham, June 9, 1932.
4. *Glimpses into the Past*, by Ramona Kaiser, 1940.
5. *Suburban Homes*, by Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern Railroad Passenger Department, 1891.
6. *The Madeira News*, by Earl J. Winter, May 26, 1932.

Special thanks to Adam Lehman, Hamilton County Conservation Manager.

Photos courtesy of Madeira Historical Society, Cleo Hosbrook and Cindy Leischer Vornberger.

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Also see, "Drinking Water at its Best" under Drinking Water, Creeks and Ponds.