

THE Oldest Building in Madeira by Carol (Klenk) Heck

We now know from the “Ohio Historic Inventory” that this 184-year-old one-room schoolhouse was built by Oliver Jones on .33 acres of land that was acquired from Rebecca Jones McCullum in 1839. It was the brand-new school building at that time. During my recent tour, I was told that President Andrew Jackson was responsible for encouraging the building of schools so that the settlers would take up residence in these desirable areas. Schools made areas attractive to homesteaders, as they still do today. And the exemplary teachings of Madeira’s early teachers were just the start for Madeira’s educational high standards.



This school was called McCullum School, but had been later nicknamed, “The Old Stone School”. I was told it is numbered as Union School #0001, and there is another “Old Stone School” in Akron (Union School #0002) which is preserved and open for visitors. Both these schoolhouses were constructed around the same time.

Our Madeira school was built on McCullum Road. Prior to that, McCullum was called Stoney Lane, but today, it is called Shawnee Run Road. Being a naturally rocky location, it was a great place to build this stone structure. Oliver Jones chiseled the stones to form “building blocks” and stone chips were used, along with the dirt, under the wooden floor. There is a small crawl space under half of the original floor on the righthand side of the building.

There was an outside well on the left side of the school which has been recently discovered. Also, a metal school bell close to the well can be seen in the old 1890 photo, (see below). There was no indoor plumbing, in fact there was an outhouse behind the school. The school room was heated by a large pot-bellied stove which vented out of the roof through the chimney. The interior walls were plastered and then painted with “bone black” paint. These walls served as blackboards. Students sat on family benches and had a blackboard on the wall assigned to each bench. If you ask the current owner, Ken Cummings, he will show you a partial signature on the far corner blackboard which he says is Andrew Jackson’s and an impression of a flag.



In Madeira, McCullum School was for those children who lived south of Euclid in Columbia Township. There was another grade school building in Sycamore Township for Madeira children who lived north of Euclid. That school

was not made from stone and it sat where the St. Paul Community United Methodist Church is today.

Back in the mid-1800’s, the church congregations, a combination of Methodist / Episcopal, and Presbyterians, worshipped on this McCullum property. In 1873, the Methodist / Episcopal congregation left and built their own church. The Presbyterians went elsewhere. The school was in use until 1875. Another plot of .22

acre was acquired to the west of the schoolhouse, going up the hill. The building and combined land was sold as a private residence in 1879 to Daniel S. Hosbrook (1844-1936), grandson of the first teacher in Madeira, Daniel S. Hosbrook (1785-1868) who had the same name. Sometime in the early 1900's, an addition with a basement



was added to the old schoolhouse building using one of the original back windows as a doorway to the newly added kitchen. This addition also had a bathroom and a second-

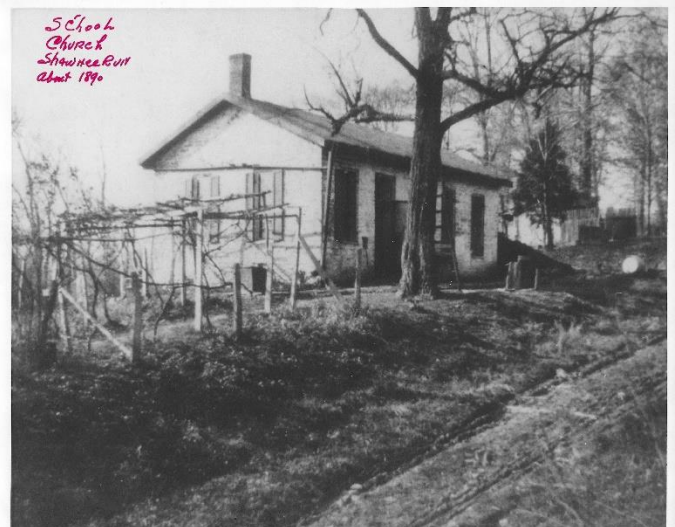


floor bedroom. The original front room had walls installed to create three areas; a living room on the left side and two bedrooms on the right side. A basement was dug out under "the new living room" on the left side for a furnace. Owners glued wallpaper to the plaster and the blackboards got covered up. When the wallpaper was taken down during this last

decade, the blackboards were found. Unfortunately, most of the "bone black" paint came off, too. There are remnants of a covered back patio and a foundation of a detached garage. A lot of blacktop was put down but not much is left now. More than one family lived in this house over the years.



I have added a black and white picture from 1890. Notice the grape vines growing to the east. I was told by the current owner that there was a road-side horse barn down by Camargo Road (then called Gilbert) that was a stop-over to refresh and change horses as travelers were on



their way to Lebanon. (Camargo Road is close by.) See the shiny round barrelhead on the right in this old picture. Could there have been wine for travelers?

So, that's the rich, historical significance of the school's background, but the question is...what is to

become of this 1839 landmark? Ken Cummings hadn't an inkling of the discoveries he was about to find when he purchased the land and ventured into the building. What he had purchased was amazing! He had no idea that



he was acquiring a piece of Madeira's treasured history. It's unfathomable to him that all may be possibly torn down in the future. He has researched his schoolhouse and found that there exists a handwritten "Day Book" about one and a half inches thick at the Cincinnati Historical Society Library in the Cincinnati Museum Center, that records day by day expenditures of the McCullum School, district No. 11, Columbia Township, starting at the beginning in 1839. There are at least 30 parents' names of the students attending the school in 1847.

Ken's passion for the school has led him to remove interior walls "down to the studs" to reveal artifacts that would have been otherwise lost. He has saved everything including the nails and boards. He unearthed the well and has kept this place from total destruction. What we want now is preservation. Ken has done what he can. He has asked us and other historical societies, the city, and the Madeira School Board to help his dream come true, and that would be to restore the schoolhouse as it was and have people, historians, scholars, and students come see what Madeira schools were like 184 years ago.

Another vision Ken has is for this spot to be a park with the schoolhouse intact, a learning center, or an architectural tour stop. And why shouldn't Madeira have a school landmark? Sharon Woods Village has a historic schoolhouse, and so does Indian Hill, also New Carlisle and Akron, plus others! There have been some student tours here but there could be many more, if only the right connection can be made. At this time, he has not had any takers. How does something like this get done? Is there anyone out there with enough compassion for history who could offer help?

Ken cautions; "Don't wait too long, come see this remarkable place, now". There is ample room for parking to bring groups through. The current address is 7137 Shawnee Run Road. Please contact The Madeira Historical Society for more information. madeirahistoricalsociety@gmail.com or 513-561-9069

Information compiled from Ken Cummings, "Ohio Historic Inventory", and Warren Joy's notes at the Madeira Historical Society. Photos courtesy of Madeira Historical Society and Carol (Klenk) Heck. Originally written Dec. 2023

