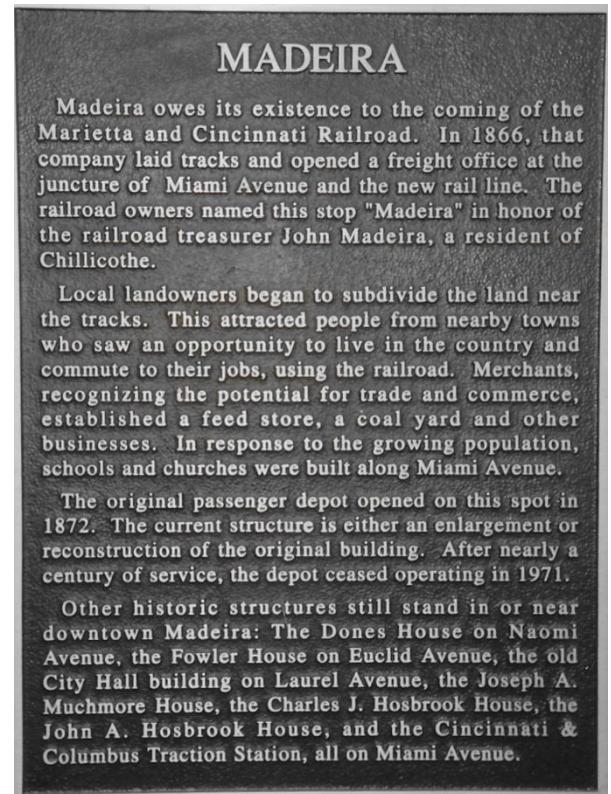


The Depot: Beginnings

by Carol (Klenk) Heck

I don't want to go into how the Madeira train stop was named after John Madeira, the treasurer of the railroad line. I don't want to go into how John had a large hotel in Chillicothe and never really lived here, even though he owned some land here known as Section Woods. But I do want to start with our quaint little railroad depot. Seen here is the current plaque as it was erected at the depot.

First, before that, I have learned that the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad laid tracks through Madeira creating a new line called "The Cincinnati Extension". The project was completed in 1866. The first train to use the newly laid tracks went through on February 17th that same year. The original small freight office was built then too, and was located next to the Muchmore building on the west side of Miami Avenue. We know that E. G. Muchmore held the title of freight agent by 1874. It's unclear if he might have been the original agent, also.



On February 8, 1871, the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad Company acquired land from J. L. Hosbrook on the east side of Miami Avenue. We know that the first passenger depot opened at the current location in 1872. Eventually the freight office moved over

there also. "There is some evidence that yet another station building may have been built or enlarged on this spot in 1892 or 1893." *¹

The picture above is looking north on Miami. It is from the early 1900's. You can see the Muchmore Hall building as just a sliver on the left-hand edge. Across the dirt road, next to the

large two-story residence, you can see the depot with its large roof structure and what looks like two chimneys. Notice, if you can, the two sets of tracks. We also had an additional siding on the east side of the depot where engines or extra cars could be left.

The depot was heated at one time by a pot-bellied stove. There was a desk for the station master to work from as he kept ledgers, typed correspondences, scheduled trains, weighed packages, sold tickets, sent and received telegrams, and communicated to other depots. The station master also had to work the lanterns and signals for the trains. For his use, he had tools and unloading equipment. There was a long black waiting bench indoors. He had to keep the fire going in the stove. The above items that I mentioned are all on display at The Miller House Museum at 7226 Miami Avenue. (April through December.)

The depot flourished and created opportunities for large landowners to sell off pieces of their land holdings to prospective buyers. Lots were available for farming and homes. Supplies could easily be delivered to Madeira by rail. There was an abundance of underground water, so a water tower was erected to supply the steam engines. (The water tower was torn down in 1931).

Businesses began to crop up close to the depot. We had a lumber and coal yard, blacksmith and wagon maker, shoemaker, builders and a plasterer. Food markets sprang up and soon you had a growing community.

When the station was doing well, it was active 24 hours a day until the 1940's. Passenger trains were no longer routinely stopping in Madeira after 1960. "In its heyday, there were as many as twenty trains through Madeira throughout a day." *¹ The train depot was not always financially sound some of the years, but it sure did help Madeira's development. Villagers rallied around the station for some very special events. Presidents would come through and stop on their campaign trails. In 1976, a replica of the Liberty Bell was delivered by rail to our Madeira station. Funds for the bell came from residents and school children. There was a big gathering of residents who came out to the depot to see its unveiling. The Liberty Bell is now on display inside the Municipal Building lobby.

The Madeira Station operated from 1866 until the last train used the depot in 1971. At the end of its usefulness to the railroad, much repair and upkeep was needed. The city rented the building from B. & O. for \$1.00 a year starting in 1972 until October 1998. That is when the city of Madeira purchased the depot from CSX Transportation Inc.; the name of the railroad company at that time. The contract was for \$71,000.00. The station building is historically significant because it is one of the few remaining stations on this particular line. Most of the other stations have been torn down.

Consequently, fifty years ago in 1972, The Madeira Historical Society was established and needed a regular place to hold monthly meetings. The city granted the usage of the depot to the newly formed Historical Society. The Madeira Historical Society, Madeira businesses, organizations, residents, and Madeira-Kenwood Jaycees worked long and hard to give the building new paint, electrical upgrades, drywall, tiling, plumbing, carpentry, gas heating, locks, exterminating, landscaping and whatever it needed. This facelift continued for about eight years

or so, as documented by the records at hand. Many generous donations of funds, time and materials made this all happen. The Madeira Historical Society was also in charge of scheduling other social “public and not-so-public” Madeira events that wanted to use the depot. Parties, however, were prohibited.

The city decided in the late 1980’s that the depot should be rented out to businesses for extra city income. The Historical Society moved out and did not have a home until 2004. The first such business was a **Gift Shop run by Mary Alice Carpenter** and her sister. We don’t remember the exact name of this shop. They conducted business here for a short while ending in 1990 when the **Madeira Police Department** needed the space while the current Municipal building was under construction. In 1992, we had **Wally’s Ice Cream** in the building followed by **Café at Madeira Station** in 1995. And they were the one that placed the model train around the upper portion of the interior, thrilling kids of all ages. Around 1997, another shop moved in called **Foster’s at Madeira Crossing** serving comfort food and they continued the ice cream tradition. Then finally, in 2000, **Choo Choo’s Restaurant** became the hot spot. They were the longest successful tenant. In 2014, you could visit the depot and partake in food from **Root Beer Junction**. Then another short-lived eatery was **La Soupe** sometime in 2015. **Depot BBQ** held the location for about three years from 2016-2019. And now, since the summer of 2021, **Redden Fine Meats and Seafood** have a very nice carry-out store here with outdoor seating available only when weather permits.

Please be sure to let me know if you have any more information to add to this story. Be sure to visit and read the brass plaque erected outside of the depot. An update to the plaque is that the Fowler House on Euclid and Summit is no longer there. Hopefully any questions can be answered by the members of The Madeira Historical Society. 513-561-9069, 7226 Miami Avenue. Madeirahs.org (Happy 50th Birthday Madeira Historical Society!)

¹ Warren Joy, Madeira Historical Society historian, report written in 1974.

Photo credits go to Cincinnati Historical Society, and Carol (Klenk) Heck.

Originally written December 2021, edited with an additional photo of plaque 12-2025.

Also see, “Summer Days at the Fountain”, “Tootin’ Our Horn: Turning 50 Years Old”, “Water, Creeks and Ponds in Madeira”, under Drinking Water, Creeks and Ponds.