



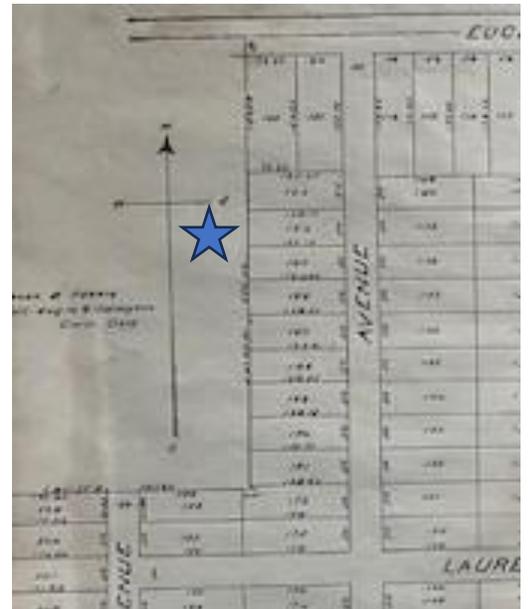
## Who was George Farris?

By Carol (Klenk) Heck

About two years ago, underbrush was being cleared away on the back lot of a property on Mayfield Avenue. The parcel was at the very end of the street going toward Euclid Avenue. At the very back of the property a tombstone was discovered in such a way that it looked like it did not belong to any gravesite. By and by, the tombstone was brought over to The Madeira Historical Society where it is displayed today. It is very clearly inscribed; “GEORGE FARRIS – BORN - JAN. 15, 1848 – DIED - JAN 15. 1922 - At rest”.

This intriguing stone has perplexed me ever since. I thought for sure I would be able to find out some history of the man or his family, especially since I had the date of birth and death. (Did you catch the fact that he died on his birthday?) Through ancestry.com, I was steered to the alternative spelling of Phares” or “Ferris” with an “e”. I am a little hesitant about changing the spelling as it might lead me to the wrong family. On a hint, I even contacted Mariemont Historical Society, but I had no luck there either.

I looked at some maps and I remembered that in 1914, surveyors, J. A. Hosbrook and a man named Ferris (with an “e” and not an “a”), platted the former property of Leonard Fowler. Fowler had owned 52.5 acres from Euclid to Southside Avenue and from Summit Avenue to Miami Avenue. This new platted expansion was named **Madiera Heights**. Shown here is a portion of the map which indicates Euclid at the top, Mayfield having only four lots north of Laurel, (more lots to the south) and showing Summit to the right. These lots were created in 1914, but building on them didn’t start on a wide scale until much later. The section past these first four lots on Mayfield still belonged to a landowner named Wessling in 1914. On an 1888 map, Wessling held 27.5 L-shaped acres of property adjacent to Fowler. Wessling’s property went from Euclid, not quite to Dawson and over towards Summit to the east. The Doerr family married into the Wessling family around the turn of the century.



I want to zero in on the first house of four, on the northern portion of Mayfield’s Madiera Heights. It wasn’t built until 1928. Across the street, the second home was built in 1939. I got a lead from a sweet lady who grew up on Mayfield as a young girl. She lived in this 1939 home. She told me there weren’t many houses after hers for about eight to nine years and how there

was instead a large apple orchard on that part of the land. The family immensely enjoyed the rural setting of their street.

Starting in 1948, Mayfield Avenue was being further developed, but it always remained a dead-end street. My source said that the land owner at the time struck a deal that he would sell the land to extend Mayfield into the apple orchard, but insisted that the street would never connect to Euclid like the other parallel streets; (Summit, Fowler, Wallace, and Maple). Maybe there was even some sort of an official ordinance drawn up that long ago. Could it have been known that there was a family burial plot that would get disturbed?

You can see this tombstone at the Miller House Museum. We have it displayed outside by our chicken coop leaning up on an old fencepost. This also marks the entrance to the Madeira Library property that was built on the Hetzler's homestead. The Hetzler's definitely had a family burial plot. Some of the markers can be seen if you go through the opening in this fence. There is another story about where these tombstones were found and how they were strewn about the Hetzler's corner property.

Another cemetery in Madeira is off of Rollymeade. It started as the family plot of the John Jones family who owned 150 acres on Kenwood. Revolutionary soldier, John Jones, is buried here. Recently an Eagle Scout improved this cemetery to make it less labor intensive to keep it preserved. The wooden rail fence was replaced with a black metal fence and gravel was laid so that cutting the grass was a thing of the past. The neighbor next door keeps an eye out for cemetery visitors and will tell what they know to anyone interested.

If anyone has knowledge of George Farris, or family members, I would certainly like to hear. Contact the Madeira Historical Society at 7226 Miami Ave. Cincinnati 45243, [madeirahistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:madeirahistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or 513-561-9069. Come see the museum of Madeira History and share with us or ask questions of your own. In 2026, we will be collaborating with the Madeira Library and the City of Madeira in the Ohio 250 Events. Check our website for upcoming programs, open house dates, and interesting stories.

Originally written December 2025 and published January 2026.