

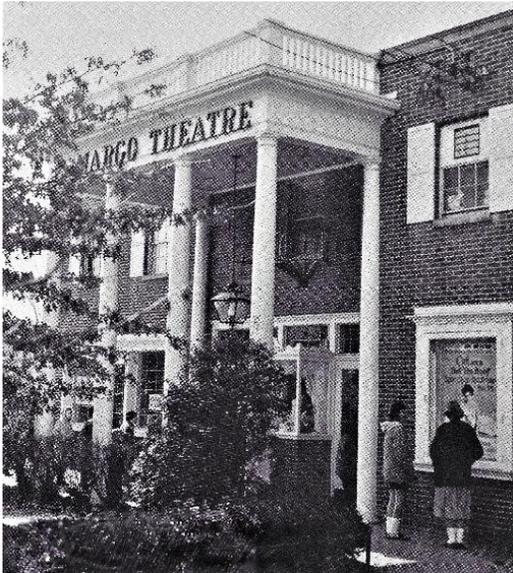
The Camargo Theatre and Beyond by Carol (Klenk) Heck

Let us start with the land when it was an empty lot. The youth of Madeira found this lot to be an excellent place to have baseball games, and once a year, when the circus came to Madeira, they would use the area to “set up tent”, elephants and all. This first photograph was shot from the yard of the historic Hosbrook House at 7014 Miami Avenue in 1922 looking out across the field. The photo shows the black iron fence and gate that still can be seen from the front porch of La Grassa Gelato.



The historic house was once owned by Charles and Maude Hosbrook and their only daughter, Cleo. You can see the empty lot across Miami Avenue and try, if you will, to notice the large house way back on Maple (which is still standing there even today). To the far left of the picture would become the public parking area and next to that would become the theater, leaving room for one more building. But more about the Kroger story in a future issue.

During her lifetime, Cleo loved to snap many photographs. Sometime after her passing, The Madeira Historical Society became the recipient of some of her photo albums which are rich in Madeira history.



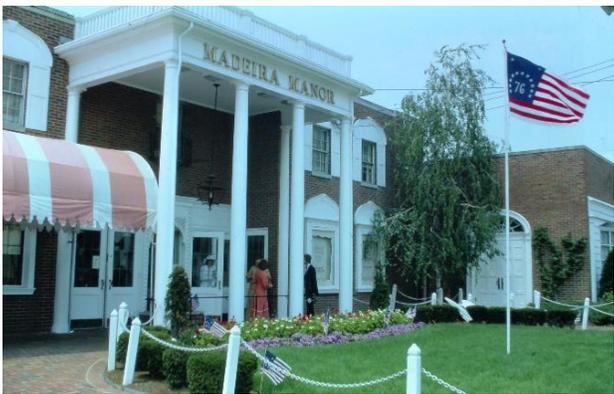
Built in 1947, The Camargo Theatre was an impressive Colonial Revival style building where children, and adults alike, could enjoy a movie or two and snacks from the snack bar. They even had a fireplace as some people remember. What a childhood delight it was for me to go to the theatre. It was within walking distance and it was a magical world for this young child.

We only had three channels at home on the sixteen-inch TV set; channel 5, 9, and 12. You could sometimes pull in two channels from Dayton, Ohio; 2 and 7, but they were snowy, no matter how you adjusted the rabbit ears, also known as the antenna, that sat on top of the TV. Most shows were in black and white even though we owned a color TV. The only show that I can remember viewing in color at home was “The Wonderful World of Disney” on a Sunday evening. Tinkerbell’s introduction was as grand as the big theatre’s screen with color, music, and sparkles. The Camargo Theatre was very cool to have in our own downtown.

The theater opened on January 20, 1948. “Tickets were 35 cents and popcorn cost 10 cents in the 1960’s. Owners, Mr. and Mrs. R. Strauss, were strict with children and if you didn’t

mind your manners, Mr. Strauss would signal the projectionist to stop the movie until order was restored. Mr. Strauss or the ushers would yell at the children to behave and so they knew they had to get quiet in order for the film to restart. When racy previews came on the screen, the sound would be muted and the ushers were instructed to distract the children. This provided a family-oriented setting in which parents felt comfortable dropping off the kids for a matinee double feature.” *¹ Some of the movies shown during my time were “That Darn Cat”, “The Three Lives of Thomasina”, and “My Friend Flicka”. The theater showed its last movie in 1967. Two of the reasons being, that the new Kenwood theater had opened around this time and patrons sought out the wide screen. Also, television made some leaps of development which I guess reduced attendees at the movie houses.

Around 1966-67, the building had undergone a lot of inside renovations and a few changes outside. It opened its doors as The Madeira Manor; a grand, upscale restaurant fit for celebrities, wedding parties, rehearsal dinners, and banquets to name a few. The owner embellished the place with antique furnishings and valuable art from around the world. Many



memories of special times are associated with Madeira Manor! Later, the right side of the original



brick building was extended to the next-door building, connecting the old Kroger store to the bigger restaurant. (By this time, Kroger’s had been doing business in a new building on Laurel Avenue for quite a few years.) The picture above was taken during the summer of 1976 bicentennial celebration and the other was March 1980 during a heavy snow.

The Madeira Manor, both parts, were torn down in the summer of 1988. The spot is now home to Subway and Starbucks. Along the south end parking lot are a few more businesses, Bruegger’s Bagels,

Great Clips, and CVS. The Mar-Jean Building and its driveway are still there to the north of Subway. This seems to be an important area in the heart of Madeira seeing



as how residents still flock there to meet people and catch-up with their neighbors.

Many miss the movie theater, the restaurant and maybe even the empty field. But progress has to give the people what they want. Thanks, Madeira, for the memories. It was a great place to grow up and live.

¹ Images of America – Madeira, by Stephen Johnson and Cheryl Bauer.

Thank you to Cleo Hosbrook, Warren Joy, and friends for photos of Miami Avenue through the last 100 years. Originally written January 2022 and published in February 2022.