



WESTWOOD HISTORICAL NEWS

Exploring, Preserving and Sharing the Heritage of Cincinnati's Largest Neighborhood

September 2021
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Westwood Historical Society
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The Westwood Historical Society Newsletter is published 5 times per year.

Newsletters are e-mailed unless members do not have e-mail addresses or indicate they want them mailed.

Annual membership dues: \$15 per household

The Westwood Historical Society normally meets the second Wednesday of scheduled months.

Tentative 2021 meetings (subject to change):

September 8
October 13
November 10
December 8

Message from the President

Dilemma, Dilemma, Dilemma

The Board of Trustees was debating about whether or not to hold our regularly scheduled September membership given the increase in COVID virus cases, including among the vaccinated, since group gatherings can be a point of spread, especially for people who are particularly vulnerable.

As of this writing, we have decided to hold the meeting but **MASKS covering nose and mouth will be required for everyone**. No drinks or food will be available. We also ask those coming to be mindful of space between themselves and others. If conditions change significantly, the meeting could still be rescheduled. Hopefully things stabilize by October!



To stay a thriving organization, the Westwood Historical Society needs to attract new members. Ideally we can attract some of the newer residents who have been moving into Westwood. One of the best ways to do that is to be visible at locations and events where they go. In the past, WHS has participated in a number of community events but in the last 18 months, there have been far fewer. Some outdoor events are once again being held. One upcoming opportunity is the Westwood Art Show/Second Saturday at Westwood Town Hall on Saturday, September 11. The event attracts a wide range of people and is well attended. Ideally we will be able to find enough volunteers to staff a booth to sell Westwood-Opoly games and to be available to answer questions.

A second opportunity is the inaugural "Westwood Open" sponsored by West Side Brewing and Nation Kitchen & Bar to be held at Fernbank Golf Course on Saturday, September 25. This is a less than serious family friendly event that will mix golf with fun challenges, music, food, and beer. They are looking for volunteers from Westwood community groups to help. This would give us another opportunity to be visible.

If you are willing to volunteer a couple of hours at either or have questions, send an email to info@westwoodhistorical.org or call 513-662-1156. Many thanks!

Liz Kissel

September Meeting

Dugout Stories from the 1970-1972 Big Red Machine Era

Wednesday, September 8

7:00 pm

Westwood First Presbyterian Church
3011 Harrison Avenue (enter from Koenig Ave)

Warren Brown, Cincinnati Reds batboy during the 1970-1972 Big Red Machine era, had the opportunity to experience the excitement of those years from a unique perspective and continues to have some ties with the Reds. Hear the story of how he got the job. Take a tour with him into the clubhouse, the dugout, and the field with Sparky, Johnny, Pete, Joe, Tony and the rest of the Big Red Machine!

You will also have the opportunity to see memorabilia from his collection.

MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ALL THOSE WHO ATTEND, VACCINATED OR UNVACCINATED.

If the COVID virus situation worsens, the meeting may be cancelled. An email notice will be sent to those for whom we have email addresses.

HARVEST HOME FAIR

One of the best examples of living history in the local community is the Harvest Home Fair. The parade and fair is back this year! Consider supporting the fair by attending or volunteering. Or compete for prizes. Lots of options exist for adults and youth from the flower and art show to handcrafts like woodworking, models, jewelry, greeting cards, photography, and the ever popular fruits and vegetables competition. Proud of those homegrown tomatoes? Maybe they can win a prize! See details on Facebook or <https://www.harvesthomefair.com>.

Parade: Thursday, September 9, 6 pm

Fair: Friday 5-11 pm

Saturday, September 11, 5-11 pm

Sunday, September 12, noon-8 pm

October Meeting

Is that REALLY a Rookwood Fireplace?

Wednesday, October 13

7:00 pm

Westwood First Presbyterian Church
3011 Harrison Avenue (enter from Koenig Ave)

Not all tile fireplaces in Cincinnati are Rookwood despite what real estate listings state. Many Westside homes feature tile fireplaces that people assume are Rookwood but were, in fact, made by a number of other well-respected manufacturers.

Riley Humler, Rookwood pottery expert and long time Gallery Director of Cincinnati Art Galleries, will talk about tile fireplaces and clues as to whether they are or are not Rookwood. Riley is widely recognized locally and nationally as a Rookwood and American art pottery expert and has regularly appeared on Antiques Roadshow. He is now Director of Ceramics at Toomey & Company Auctioneers in Chicago.

If you have a tile fireplace and are curious about its maker, bring pictures.

Program of Interest

Cincinnati Museum Center FREE Online Programs

The Museum Center continues their hour long monthly programs via Zoom.

You must register ahead of time at:

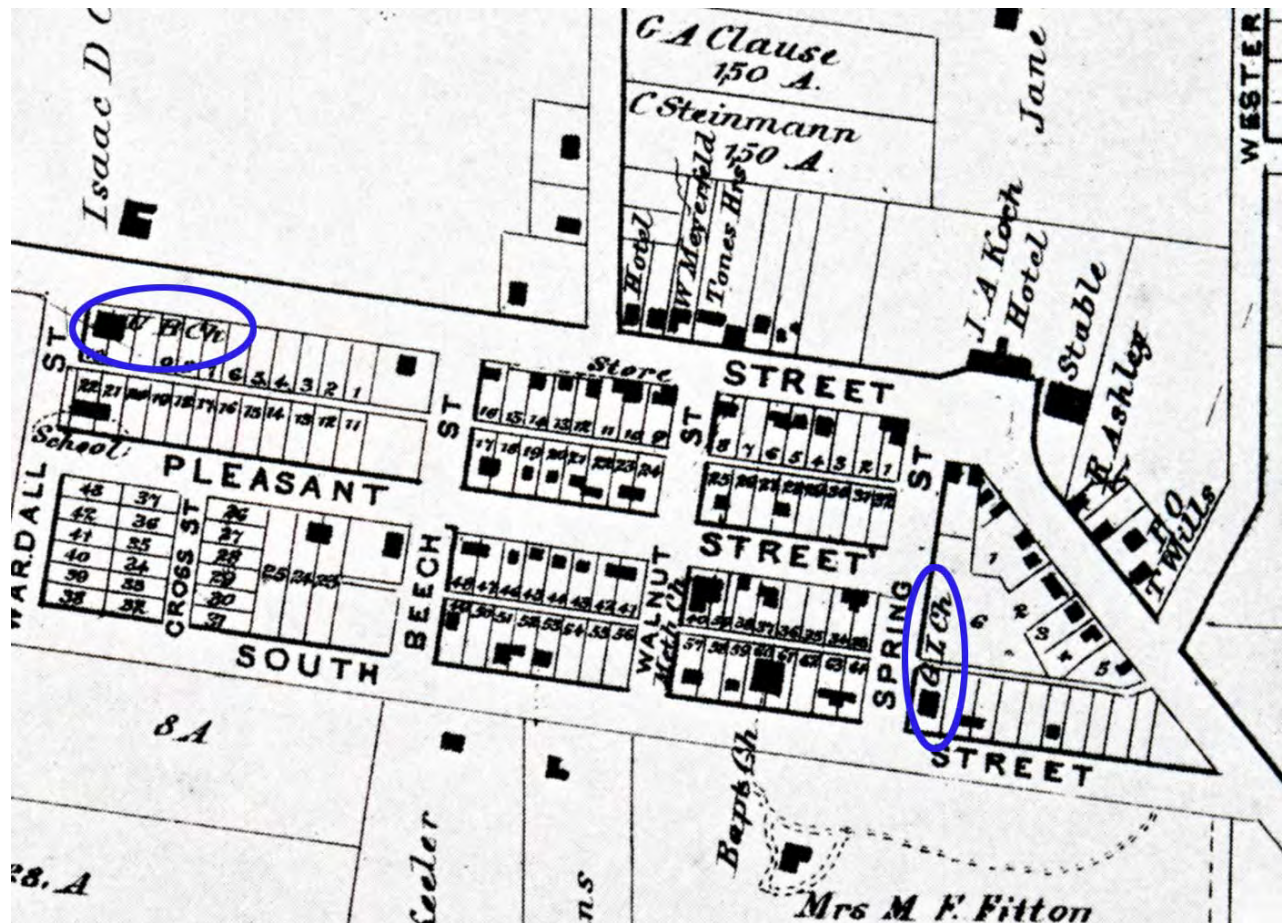
www.cincymuseum.org/heritage-programs/speakers-bureau/

September 28 (2 pm): **The Restoration of Cincinnati Union Terminal**

Westwood First Presbyterian Church Marks a Special Milestone

The population of Westwood was under 900 in the mid 1880s, but there was no shortage of different religious congregations beginning to take root. As early as 1823 there was evidence of a Presbyterian mission in the now Cheviot-Westwood area. They struggled and nearly dissolved around 1840, however, they persevered, and the

"Old Presbyterian Church of Cheviot" built a church on the corner of what are now Mozart and Cheviot Avenues. In 1844 they purchase land to build a church on the northeast corner of what is now Mozart and Higbee Avenues. Tradition says there were 13 families in the congregation. That building still exists today. It was used by the Westwood Salem Presbyterian Church until 2009, later bought by City on a Hill, and is now owned by Cincinnati Public Schools to use preschool education.



1869 Atlas of Green Township, Hamilton County by C. O. Titus.

The circle to the right marks the location of the German Presbyterian Church where the future Westwood First Presbyterian Church initially met. That building is still there. They also later met at the Church of the United Brethren circled to the left. That site is now occupied by Smalls Pro Hardware. Note that there were also Methodist and Baptist Churches within the footprint of the map.

The main street across the middle is Harrison Avenue. Note the following street name changes: Pleasant Street = Gamble Avenue; South Street = Mozart Avenue; Wardall Street = Davis Avenue; Beech Street = Everett Avenue; Walnut Street = Cheviot Avenue; Spring Street = Higbee Avenue.

The street running north off the center of the map is present day North Bend Road. Present day Boudinot Avenue is shown running north on the far right.

Stability of the small Presbyterian congregation continued to be a problem and in 1865 a German Protestant congregation was allowed to use the building. In 1870, that group debated about whether to formally align with the wider Presbyterian organization, partly because of the potential for some financial assistance. There were, however, two factions. The conservative group favored formal affiliation. The liberal group, however, was not interested in being subjected to all that comes with being part of a larger organization. Plus they supported the ability to have beer parties in the church that the conservative group was not in favor of. The liberals eventually split off and built a church in Bridgetown.

The conservative group applied to the Cincinnati Presbytery in April 1871. They became the Westwood German Presbyterian Church with 46 charter members. They were financially dependent on the Presbytery until around 1890. In that same time frame, another group in Westwood was interested in forming a Presbyterian congregation. According to an entry in John M. Miller's diary, a meeting with the German congregation was to take place on September 12, 1881 to decide whether to join with them or to petition the Cincinnati Presbytery to start their own congregation. Apparently the decision was to proceed with a new congregation. According to Miller's October 4, 1881 diary entry, a group of 16 "met in Council and agreed to ask the Com. of Presbytery to organize them into a church one week from the next Sabbath." The group included Miller and his wife.

On Sunday, October 16, 1881, the Committee of Presbytery came to Westwood to officially organize the "Presbyterian Church of Westwood." They met with about 26 people who had letters of dismissal from other churches or who were felt to be suitable congregants. The new

church negotiated with the German congregation to use their building, agreeing to do maintenance and upkeep as part of the bargain. In official minutes, the name of the congregation at the time was the First Presbyterian Church of Westwood.

In April 1883, they made arrangements to relocate their services and began meeting in the Church of the United Brethren, also a German congregation. It was located on "Harrison Pike near Dr. Williams" according to John Miller. They quickly realized that this was not a good long term solution and they would need to eventually have their own church building.

In April, 1888, a decision was made to buy a lot at the southwest corner of Cheviot and Fairview (now Montana) Avenues. That property is now home to St. James Episcopal Church. Mr. Miller noted on August 25, 1888 that Architect Hannaford submitted plans for a new church building estimated to cost \$6000-\$7000 but it did not meet the approval of the group, presumably because of cost. Several months later a committee decided to build a church that would cost no more than \$4000.

A frame church building was completed in October 1889 on that lot. They finally had a church building of their own.



Westwood First Presbyterian Church as first built in 1926

The 1920's saw a large population growth in Westwood. Many of the Arts and Crafts style bungalows and Tudors now scattered throughout Westwood were built during that time. The local organizations and institutions like schools and churches also saw growth, including the Westwood Presbyterian congregation.

On March 12, 1925, the congregation officially incorporated as the Westwood First Presbyterian Church. Other changes took place as well. The next year, 45 years after their official founding, they dedicated their current church in grand style on November 7, 1926. The entire congregation and Sunday School marched from the Montana and Cheviot Avenue location that had served them well for over 35 years to their new home at 3011 Harrison Avenue. The building is attributed to Hannaford although the firm by then was known as Hannaford & Sons. Samuel Hannaford essentially retired around 1895 and passed away in 1911. One of his sons was likely the lead architect.

At the time of the dedication, only the sanctuary section of the church was built and amber glass filled the spaces where art glass was planned for future installation. The stained glass windows were installed and dedicated in April 1928. They were designed and crafted by the Tyrolese Art Glass company (Tyroler Glasmalerei Anstalt) founded in 1861 in Innsbruck, Austria. The company is still in existence.

Ground was broken for construction of the north wing closest to Westwood School on June 7, 1935. Joseph Steinkamp was the architect. The last wing was added in 1957 to the south and west of the original structure. It includes the lower level dining room and current administrative offices.

The Westwood First Presbyterian Church congregation has been an active member of the community all these many years through various ministries and committees and clubs such as Boy Scout Troup 107 which was authorized in November 1922 and is still sponsored by the church.

Their music ministry has been an important part of their culture and since 1981, they have offered the popular Westwood First Concert Series featuring a wide range of local, national, and international performers of all genres. After a hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, the series is set to begin again on November 7, featuring the Faux Frenchman.

The congregation has long shown its hospitality by making space available for use by groups like the Cheviot Westwood Kiwanis and fledging churches, and has partnered in recent years to host the City Gospel Mission Thanksgiving Exchange and Christmas Store at the church. They have also welcomed the Westwood Historical Society allowing us to hold membership meetings there since 2003.

Westwood First Presbyterian Church will celebrate its 140th anniversary at the 10:30 am worship service on October 17. They will also offer a presentation tentatively set for 1 pm that afternoon by Diane Heilmann about the beautiful stained glass windows, Mark your calendars for "Masterworks in Stained Glass" if you would like a closer look at the windows and hear the stories behind them. Check the church's website to confirm as the date gets closer. We will post the information on the Westwood Historical Society's website as well.



Information for this article was provided by Diane Heilmann from Westwood First Presbyterian Church and gathered from the Diaries of John M. Miller. He was one of the founding members and remained active with the congregation the rest of his life. In his daily entries about his life in Westwood, he noted information about the earliest days of the church.

The Diaries of John M. Miller of Westwood/Cincinnati, OH Excerpts from 1869-1870 and 1881-1894. Compiled by Susan R. Alexander, 1993

Copies are available for purchase through the Westwood Historical Society.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

The white frame church first built by the Westwood Presbyterian congregation in 1889 at the southwest corner of Montana and Cheviot Avenues is a prime example of the 3 R's (pictured here around 1910).

When the Presbyterians moved to their new Harrison Avenue church in 1926, they offered to sell the original building to St. James Episcopal Church which was about to break ground on a new church at Epworth and Montana Avenues (now site of Westwood Library). It was an offer they could not refuse.

St James was very familiar with that intersection having used the Westwood Tennis Club building across the street (now YMCA property) at the time of their initial organizational meetings in 1910.



REPURPOSED

When St. James Episcopal Church needed to build a larger church in the late 1950s, the white frame church they were using was rolled across Cheviot Avenue to the property used by the YMCA and adapted for the summer YMCA activities. It served that purpose until it was demolished in the 1960s to make room for the current YMCA building.



The Westwood Historical Society

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