

# New fence replaces Madison icon



Carlos Bonilla, left, and Victor Mata of the Artistic Fence Company work to replace a 250-foot-long fence in front of the historic Luke Miller House in Madison on Friday. The old fence had stood since the 1950s and was a replica of the first fence built on the property in 1894.

BOB KARP / DAILY RECORD

DAILY RECORD STAFF REPORTS

**MADISON** — A 1950s white picket fence along the edge of the historic Luke Miller property on Ridgedale Avenue was torn down Friday, and a replica began taking its place.

The 265-foot-long fence had been put up around 50 years ago, and had been a historical icon, said David Quirk, the owner of the Luke Miller house. But it had also started becoming an eyesore because it had begun rotting away, he said.

“We had no choice but to replace it,” he said.

He had been trying for a while to get permission from the New Jersey Historic Trust to have the fence replaced, he said. The borough had placed a conservation easement on the property when it bought it from previous owners in 2004. This means that Quirk, who bought the property in an auction in 2005, is restricted in the changes he can make. The house was built around 1730. Last week, in response to

**“We had no choice but to replace it.”**

— David Quirk, owner of Luke Miller house, talking about the decision to tear down a 50-year-old fence

Quirk’s application, the Trust inspected the fence and gave a conditional blessing for a replacement, he said.

The Trust said that the new fence would have to replicate the appearance of the 1950s fence, which, in turn, resembles an original built in 1894, Quirk said.

The new fence is made of solid wood, and the top will run in a gentle, scalloped line, he said.

The work is expected to be completed by next week. But the white paint will have to wait for three months, until the wood dries out completely, Quirk said.