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The Cleveland Heights Historical Society

2721 Colchester Road • Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106-3650

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- ☐ \$ 50.00 – The Barton and Grant Deming Membership*
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**The Deming and Severance Memberships include one free admission to the Historical Society's annual fundraiser and periodic acknowledgement in "View from The Overlook."*

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View from The Overlook

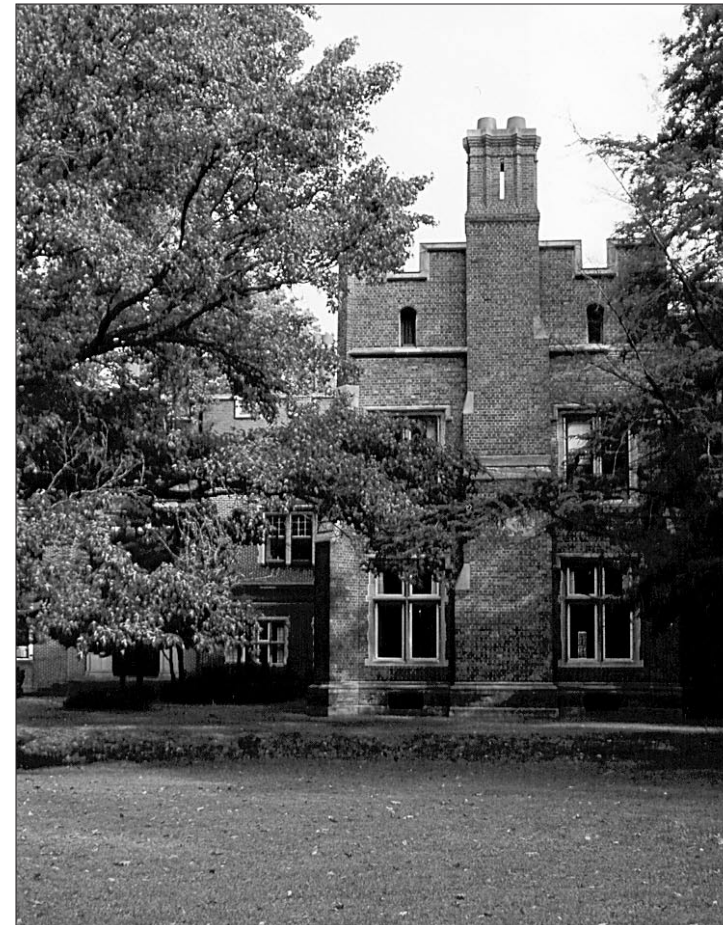
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WWW.CHISTORY.ORG

Drive By History: The Painter Estate



By Mazie Adams

The beautiful stone walls at Lee Rd. and Fairmount Blvd. surround not only Beaumont School, but a vibrant history that includes wild animals, exotic birds and a bank embezzler.

In 1903, John Vickers Painter, a wealthy banker, railroad man and associate of John D. Rockefeller, purchased 8.5 acres in Cleveland Heights and hired Frank Skeel to design a summer home. After Painter's untimely death, his wife and son Kenyon continued construction. The 65-room Jacobean-style house was completed in 1905, surrounded by an estate that had grown to more than 50 acres.

Despite his family wealth and successful business dealings, Kenyon Painter's life was marred by misfortune. He married Mary Chisholm in 1889. Their infant daughter Jean died in 1894 and Mary passed away in 1901. Painter then married Missourian Maud Wyeth in 1909, the same year that his mother died. The new couple had four children, but their five-year-old daughter Leola was killed in a car accident close to home.

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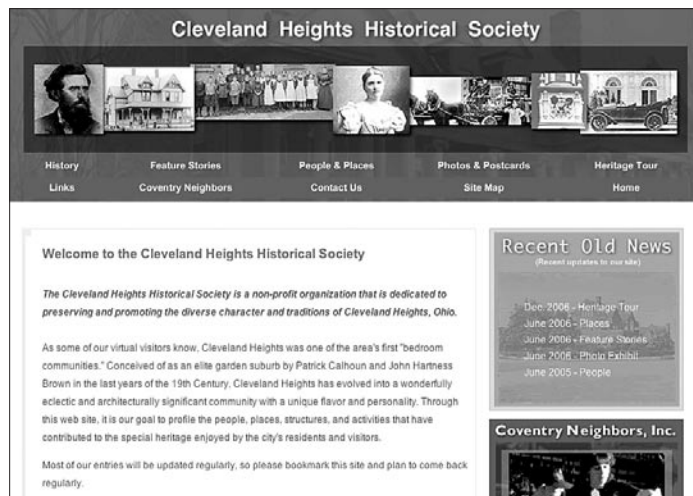
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The Cleveland Heights Historical Society, founded in 1983, is a state-chartered, 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization.

Our Mission

The Cleveland Heights Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the diverse character and traditions of Cleveland Heights.

As a community-based historic organization, the Society encourages and facilitates greater knowledge, understanding and awareness of the heritage of Cleveland Heights.



WWW.CHISTORY.ORG

Faster than DSL. More powerful than a search engine. Able to leap through cyberspace at a single bound. Yes, it's the new www.chhistory.org – the Cleveland Heights Historical Society's heroic portal into local history.

Since last fall, CHHS and mild-mannered web guru Lisa McCampbell have been working on a complete update and redesign of www.chhistory.org – and it's now ready to go. On the one hand, there's a whole new look, with extensive graphic enhancements and dynamic displays. We've also added significant amounts of new content. There's an entirely new section dedicated to Coventry Village and Coventry Neighbors – our city's best-known and most influential civic-betterment organization. This new destination on www.chhistory.org contains background on Coventry Neighbors, a photo gallery of Coventry Road and complete digitized versions of more than 100 issues of "Coventry Village News" – CN's official newspaper from 1973 to 2002.

Another significant enhancement is the Heritage Tour section – complete profiles and photos of the 225+ homes featured on Heights Community Congress' "Heritage Home Tour" since 1977. This section of www.chhistory.org is now searchable by Tour Year and Date of Construction, as well as by Street Name.

New look, new features, new capabilities; but no secret identity! Check out www.chhistory.org soon!

Drive By History: The Painter Estate

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The Cleveland Heights estate served as a refuge throughout Painter's adult life. It became the family's permanent home in 1915. In 1928, Maud hired a Missouri architect to design an addition, and coordinate an extensive remodeling to create an overall Tudor style. The main roof was raised and flattened and the cornice crenellated. The addition of Gothic details, buttresses and twisted Tudor chimneys transformed the architecture of the mansion. By that time, the estate contained several outbuildings, including a garage, stable, zoo/aviary, playhouse, library, two trophy rooms, and a separate house for Mr. Painter's secretary. The former carriage house, now 17412 Shelburne Rd., was converted to a dwelling in 1919.

Painter traveled extensively. His favorite destination was Africa, where he hunted big game and collected exotic birds. The first of his many safaris was in 1907 to Arusha in Tanganyika (formerly German East Africa). Over time, he bought 11,000 acres of land outside the town and developed the region's premier coffee estate. He gave the town its first post office, built a church, a hospital, and then an advanced coffee research center at a place called



Kenyon and Maud Painter (center and right, on oxcart) during their three-month honeymoon safari, 1911.

Tengeru, sixteen miles from Arusha. Altogether, Painter invested eleven million dollars in and around Arusha. His single story New Arusha Hotel was one of the region's most noted landmarks, and was headquarters for the Tanganyika Tours and Safaris Company.¹

Back home, Painter's trophy rooms were built to display the numerous mounted heads and skins

¹ Source: <http://www.ntz.info/gen/n01278.html#id03804>.



collected during his safaris. The aviary, stocked with hundreds of birds from around the world, was valued at \$500,000 in 1912. Many of these specimens and animals were eventually donated to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, various zoos and other institutions.

The Dark Side

Kenyon Painter was most famous for the complicated multi-million-dollar financial fiasco that resulted in his 1935 conviction for "abstracting and misapplying funds." Mr. Painter was both the director and largest stockholder of the Union

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Drive By History: The Painter Estate

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Trust Bank. Over a one-year period, he also became its largest individual borrower, receiving ten loans totaling almost \$3,000,000 using his real estate holdings as security. Painter claimed he used the money to purchase stock in the bank, trying to help it during the bank crisis of 1933. However, he was unable to pay back the loan and the bank failed. The case, which went all the way to the Supreme Court, was frequent fodder for the Cleveland papers. In 1935, Kenyon was sentenced to 1-30 years, which he began serving in a Columbus hospital. Ohio Governor Martin Davey pardoned Painter six months into the term, stating that Painter was “hounded by certain newspapers” and that the security for the loan was “more than ample.”

Following his pardon, Kenyon Painter returned to the Cleveland Heights estate to live the rest of his life in rigid seclusion. He passed away in March, 1940.

The Ursuline nuns purchased the property in 1942, moving from their school at East 55th Street and Scovill Avenue. Classes opened that Fall with 100 students. The outer buildings were later converted to a fine-arts complex and offices, and the largest trophy room became first a gym and later a music and reception room. A new main building was opened in 1964 and the mansion is now used exclusively as a convent. Over time, the Ursulines sold off parcels for residential development and the land that would become Ruffing Montessori. In 1979, the Painter Estate was declared a Cleveland Heights Landmark. It also has been featured on the Heights Community Congress’ “Heights Heritage Home & Garden Tour.”

Begun as the summer home for a wealthy Clevelander, the estate has seen many changes over the years. But the walls and mansion are still there to remind us of the richness and fluidity that is Cleveland Heights history.



May is National Historic Preservation Month

Throughout May 2007, the National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org) and its thousands of partners across the country will demonstrate the importance of our nation's heritage as they highlight the preservation movement, including historic travel, heritage education, historic homeownership and community revitalization.

The Cleveland Heights Historical Society – in cooperation with The City of Cleveland Heights

Landmark Commission and FutureHeights – will honor our community's longstanding support of historic preservation with a series of enjoyable and informative events. All are limited to 50 attendees (30 for the High School tour) and are free, with the exception of a \$3.00 charge for the House History Workshop (payable at the door). Reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 216-291-4878.

Saturday, May 5 • 10:00 a.m. – Noon

Tour Historic Heights High School

As you drive down Cedar Road, you may not be aware of the beautiful school obscured by a 1959 addition. Take a step into the courtyard and be astounded by the beauty of this elegant high school, completed in 1926. Learn about the school's history, explore its architectural beauty and take in its interior detailing, which includes Tiffany chandeliers in the auditorium. Learn about recent efforts to restore and preserve this historic structure, while remodeling it to accommodate the educational needs of today's student body. P.A.T.H. (Parent Ambassadors to Heights) volunteers will also explain the Small Schools transformation process that has taken place over the last four years. Tour guides: Lita Gonzalez, P.A.T.H. Project Coordinator; Stephen Shergalis, Director of Business Services, Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District; and Julie Langan, Executive Director, FutureHeights. Tour will meet under the portico on the east side of the High School. Park at the east end of the parking lot off of Washington Boulevard.

Wednesday, May 9 • 7 p.m.

Cleveland Heights House History Workshop

Kara Hamley O'Donnell, Cleveland Heights' Historic Preservation Planner, will teach the "who, what and where" of researching your home's history. Attendees must call to pre-register and leave the address of the property they wish to research. Participants will be walked through the research process with a PowerPoint presentation. They also will be given some basic information to start investigating, and detailed instructions on how to continue their research. Historic maps will be available for viewing. Location: Cleveland Heights

Historical Center at Superior Schoolhouse. Parking is located at the Cumberland Pool parking lot. Handicapped ♻ parking for those with limited mobility is available in the small parking lot adjacent to the Schoolhouse.

Saturday, May 19 • 10 a.m. – Noon

A Walk Through the Inglewood Neighborhood

Hosted by Diana Woodbridge and Kara Hamley O'Donnell, participants will walk through this beautiful neighborhood and learn about the history, architecture and gardens of the Van Sweringen-developed area just north of Severance Town Center, and of the former Severance family estates that once thrived in this area. See the interior of two of the homes and two beautiful hidden gardens – one containing remnants of the former Glen Allen estate. Park at the Euclid Avenue Christian Church, 3665 Mayfield Rd. Rain or shine – dress appropriately and wear comfortable shoes.

Tuesday, May 29 • 7 p.m.

Historic Landscapes

Michael Fleenor, Director of Preservation Programs at the Cleveland Restoration Society, will discuss themes in historic landscape design, from Victorian through Arts & Crafts and Colonial Revival influences. Cleveland Heights' own Ann Rosmarin, landscape designer extraordinaire (annrosmarin.com), will show examples of appropriate landscape design in historic neighborhoods, including her work at the historic Tremaine-Gallagher house on Fairmount Boulevard (see photo on opposite page). Location: Cleveland Heights Historical Center at Superior Schoolhouse. Parking is located at the Cumberland Pool parking lot. Handicapped ♻ parking for those with limited mobility is available in the small parking lot adjacent to the Schoolhouse.