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**The Cleveland Heights Historical Society**

2721 Colchester Road • Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106-3650

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- \$ 15.00 – The Marcus M. Brown Membership
- \$ 25.00 – The Patrick Calhoun Membership
- \$ 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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2721 Colchester Road  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106-3650

# View from The Overlook



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## Grandeur From the Earliest Days of Cleveland Heights

Many Cleveland Heights residents are aware that one of our suburb's first developments was "Euclid Heights"—the district developed by Patrick Calhoun with financial backing from John D. Rockefeller. They may also know that the development's centerpiece was a majestic strip of homes along Overlook Road—from Cedar Road on one end to the Overlook/Edgehill fork roughly a third of a mile to the northeast.

Sadly, almost all those homes are gone, except for the Alexander house (a.k.a., the College Club), the John Hartness Brown house (on the fork), the Alfred Hoyt Granger home (next to Waldorf Towers) and a slightly

newer French Norman structure just to the South of the Grainger house. The Church of the Christ Scientist (now the headquarters of Nottingham-Spirk) is a pleasant reminder of the neighborhood's grandeur, although it replaced a gothic structure built and inhabited by Cleveland manufacturing magnate Howell Hinds.

In its heyday, the neighborhood attracted a lot of attention from area aesthetes—and no home was more admired than that of local attorney William Lowe Rice. His estate—and it was truly an estate—stood where the architecturally dubious Waldorf Towers now rests. The property's footprint was equal to that of Waldorf, with massive side and back yards.

Neither the fate of the house (torn down more than half a century ago) or that of Mr. Rice (murdered in 1906 at the corner of Euclid Heights and Derbyshire by a person whose identity was never confirmed) is an upbeat story.

*continued on page 3*



# The Cleveland Heights Historical Society



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#### Board of Trustees

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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.

## Preservation Month 2010

Citizens in Cleveland Heights will join thousands of individuals across the country to celebrate National Preservation Month this May. "Old is the New Green" is the theme of the month-long celebration sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Preservation Month 2010 will be observed through three free events at the Cleveland Heights Historical Center at Superior Schoolhouse, co-sponsored by the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, Future Heights and Cleveland Heights Historical Society.

All of these FREE events take place at the Cleveland Heights Historical Center at Superior Schoolhouse, 14391 Superior Road. *Parking at the schoolhouse is limited to the elderly or those with disabilities.* Parking for all others is at the Cumberland Park parking lot.

### Thursday, May 6th 7:00 PM

(space limited; pre-registration required, 216.291.4878)

#### **The American Home Interior: Treatment & Transformation** (slide lecture)

*Kerrington Adams, Cleveland Restoration Society, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist. www.clevelandrestoration.org*

### Saturday, May 8th 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

#### **Space for Place: Event One**

*Ursuline College Students for Historic Preservation Association; Curated by Jessica Wobig, Space for Place Director. www.spaceforplace.webs.com*

### Thursday, May 20th 7:00 PM

(space limited; pre-registration required, 216.291.4878)

#### **Cleveland Heights' National Register Historic Districts** (slide lecture)

*Chris Roy, President, Cleveland Heights Historical Society. www.chhistory.org*

**Learn more about National Preservation Month at [www.PreservationNation.org/PreservationMonth](http://www.PreservationNation.org/PreservationMonth).**

## Grandeur From the Earliest Days of Cleveland Heights

*continued from page 1*

However, in June 1897, both the home and fortunes of Mr. Rice were at their aegis—so much so that the former attracted the attention of John Lane, an editor with *The House Beautiful*, who wrote a lengthy

profile of the home, with all the florid prose typical of that period. It is with great pleasure that *View From The Overlook* presents that article (reprinted in its entirety) along with the piece's accompanying photos.



*Lowe Ridge*

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, when travel in foreign lands was much restricted, and the great mass of even the well-to-do were kept close to the ideas and models of their immediate neighborhood, it was not difficult to keep one's house strictly correct in one style or another. Much of the so called restraint of those somewhat idealized days can be explained under the hypothesis more correctly than upon the one so much harped upon, of the better taste and judgment of our forebears. It is really difficult with our present cosmopolitan

associations, to keep this congruous ideal well in hand when furnishing a house, so tempted are we on every side by the wares and beauties of the various styles so freely at each man's disposal in our present year of grace.

How many have failed to resist this temptation, a most casual contemplation of the houses that one knows will well illustrate. Not only will the architect so mix his styles that in a house perhaps professedly of Tudor inspiration will be found Japanese rooms,

*continued on page 4*

## Grandeur From the Earliest Days of Cleveland Heights

*continued from page 3*

Turkish corners and Marie Antoinette boudoirs, so that in wandering from room to room one becomes dizzy with the sudden leaps from Constantinople to Petite Trianon, while the judgment staggers as it looks from a Japanese tearoom through a Colonial oval window out upon the cross-beamed gable of the time of Good Queen Bess. That there are many houses of so non-descript design as to admit of such curiosity shops in the way of rooms is of course evident, and there can be no law compelling a free-born citizen to eschew any vagary which suits his exotic taste: but without reference to the very extreme cases, it is truly seldom that a house is found entirely furnished and designed in a fit and seemly manner.

No style has suffered more, perhaps, in these respects that that which we are pleased to designate Colonial; partly perhaps, because its very simplicity could not have been developed except in a colony shut off from any aggressive outside influence, and partly because its elements, unchanged, are not compatible with the customs and requirements of our present life.

That the colonial feeling can well be incorporated into an essentially modern house in which the decorations and furnishings, although in every way meeting the present requirements, are still thoroughly in harmony with the architecture, is proved by the house illustrated. This, known as Lowe Ridge, on Euclid Heights, Cleveland, is the residence of Mr. William Lowe Rice, and was designed by Mr. Alfred Hoyt Granger. Barring a few minor details, the result is very interesting, the more commendable as the house is of

exceptional size and the temptation for over-elaboration in ornament, therefore, the harder to resist. The particular branch of the colonial idea is rather more of the south, Maryland or Virginia, than the more compact and severe types seen in New England examples. This is in itself very well, as the misuse of the manor style house style upon small buildings and the equally unsatisfactory employment of the rigid outlines of a modest small town dwelling for a huge ungainly pile has been one of the most frequent vagaries of the dabbler in this style. It is a pity that the noble façade should not be set among the softening branches of some fine old trees, that the lawns should not have lilac and snowball bushes scattered on an unbroken expanse, and finally that it is not seen over a low brick wall backed by a hedge of green. But such accessories do not come in a day, or often in a generation, although they add untold beauty and tone down the clear-cut outlines of the architecture.

In a building of sufficient size, as this is, the tall colonnade is very effective, giving to a house a dignified manorial appearance, very attractive. The windows of the upper story are often darkened however, to an uncomfortable extent; here this trouble seems to have been mitigated by running out wings on either hand, which insures good sunlight in a great number of rooms, if not in all.

The whole façade, of red brick, white trimmings and green shutters, is pure in style; not a single freak of what might be called "Modern Colonial" can be detected, while the greatest fault of all modern imitators seems totally absent. This fault is the one already mentioned, of crowded ornament, so inconsistent with the best old models of our seaboard towns. The pre-revolutionary

architect would use a certain oval window in one house, a curious broken pediment in another, a fan-light doorway in a third, a series of urn-shaped ornaments in a fourth, or even on rare occasions a wreath or festoon, carved in wood or stone. His modern disciple uses them all at once, in a small



*Lowe Ridge Hallway*

and insignificant façade, with results pitiably clumsy and unsatisfactory. In this house there can be no such criticism.

Within, as is seldom the case, the anticipations of the exterior are well fulfilled. There is a breadth and hospitable amplex, which is to be expected of one hundred and twenty feet of frontage and a depth of forty eight, but there is also a warmth and pleasantness which is much harder to attain.

The hall running longitudinally with the house shows no effort in economizing space,

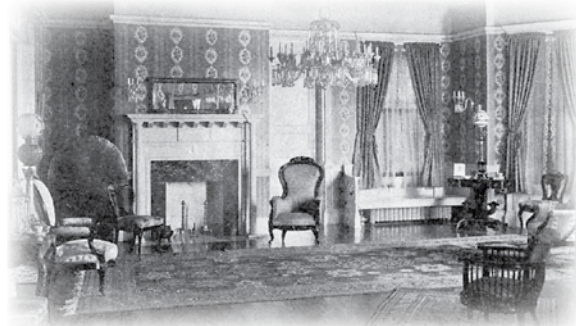
and although it is a hall or leading passage to other rooms, and nothing more, yet its first suggestion is one of fitness for entertaining in a large Colonial fashion, and the numerous sofas ranged along the wall but confirm this impression. The woodwork is fittingly finished in white enamel and mahogany, a combination

to which our ancestors were prone, and one which is always rich, but never somber. The staircase, with its generous landing, is wainscoted in white, while the hand rail and voussoirs of the arches are of the darker color. The walls of rich canary yellow increase the sunshine of the whole appearance, which is in no way better illustrated than by the few black shadows in the photograph. The sofas mentioned and the chairs and table are all of fine mahogany, in good colonial designs, many of them here, as elsewhere in the house, being heirlooms of the family. Fine rugs upon the polished floor lead through the broad mahogany doorways into the other rooms.

The drawing room is in its way quite perfect. It has the elements of dignified and formal life without a touch of coldness nor any feeling of holding one at arm's length for inspection. This is hard to make in such a room, especially as it is 46 feet long by 25 feet wide. A close inspection by a rigid critic may discover here or there some article for which strictest purity could have been spared; but all in all it is a fine and stately room in which it needs no stretch of our imagination

*continued on page 6*

## Grandeur From the Earliest Days of Cleveland Heights



*Lowe Ridge Drawing Room*

*continued from page 5*

to conceive of beruffled beaux and powdered dames. The woodwork here is white enamel throughout, the hangings of apple green, and the walls of the same color in a striped design indicated in the illustration. How cool and fresh this is one can well imagine, while the mahogany furniture and floors and the fine Oriental rugs give tone and balance to it all. It is curious to see again a crystal chandelier, so a long time has passed since such a thing has come within our sight, yet the appropriateness of its use in this room is so apparent that we wonder where they have been hiding all these years.

Almost hidden beneath a wooden seat is a steam heater painted white, the more concealed the better. When will architects realize that these are dreadful things, and not insist upon their occupying the point of vantage in each room they build? Once in place there seems no hope escaping them, and here is a plan in which each long suffering client may now insist upon.

The dining room is wainscoted to the ceiling with mahogany, while the panels in the

ceiling are of gold leaf lacquer. The hangings and the chair seats are of rich foliated tapestry. The gas logs upon the hearth and the curious little window over the sideboard are unfortunate, as they do not appear to be in keeping; while on the other hand, the dining table is worthy of especial attention.

The living room is as huge as the drawing room, or larger, and yet, as is quite apparent in the illustration, is essentially a room of comfort and pleasant association. The woodwork and the heavily beamed ceiling are of oak, stained very dark, while the walls are sage green and the hangings of velours of the same restful color. Rugs and books and easy chairs abound and complete a room very livable despite its proportions. It is less rigidly Colonial and more modern in its general aspect, yet not sufficiently so to jar upon the nerves. It is neither Egyptian nor Moorish, but simply American, and such a room as in the natural order of things might grow in a century's time out of the older style of the balance of the house. This is as it should be, and is a further merit of the house which seems in every way to be full of judgment, taste and a keen feeling for harmony.



*Lowe Ridge Dining Room*



*Lowe Ridge Living Room*