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## The Cleveland Heights Historical Society

2721 Colchester Road • Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106-3650

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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."*

### A complimentary newsletter from

The Cleveland Heights Historical Society

2721 Colchester Road

Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106-3650

# View from The Overlook

THE JOURNAL OF THE CLEVELAND HEIGHTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Before the JCC

### A Pictorial Tour of "Glen Allen"

Enjoy this complimentary issue of "View from The Overlook."  
Become a member! See the application on page 8.

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# The Cleveland Heights Historical Society



2721 Colchester Road  
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(216) 321-9141  
www.chhistory.org

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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.

Heights Community Congress Celebrates Our 30th Annual

# Heights HERITAGE HOME & GARDEN TOUR



**Sunday, September 17, 2006 • 12 - 6 p.m.**  
Preview Party at the Oakwood Club • Saturday, September 16

*Join us for our 30th anniversary  
as the premier home and garden tour  
of Cleveland Heights!*



HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CONGRESS

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Homes shown are from prior HCC home tours.  
Homes for the 2006 tour will be announced in August.

**The Cleveland Heights Historical Society Is Looking for a Few Good Trustees and Volunteers.** If you're passionate about local history and have a few hours available each month, perhaps you'd like to join the CHHS board. For more information, call 216-321-9141 or email us at [heightshistory@aol.com](mailto:heightshistory@aol.com).

# Before the JCC A Pictorial Tour of "Glen Allen"



*Drawing Room, Glen Allen<sup>1</sup>*

By Chris Roy

The Jewish Community Center (JCC) at Mayfield and Taylor Roads is no more. In its place is the rapidly rising Bluestone—a \$35 million development of 79 flats and 31 cluster homes. To commemorate this transition, View From the Overlook offers readers a brief inside/outside look at the glorious estate that comprised this space before the JCC (1960) and its surviving neighbor, Lutheran East High School (1957) were built.

As readers may know, the intersection of Taylor and Mayfield Roads was epicenter of three magnificent properties. Longwood (built in 1904 by John L. Severance) occupied the land that now includes Severance Center and Millikin School, as well as most of Severn Road. Ben Brae housed Severance's cousin, Julia Severance Millikin, and sat on the land now used by the Cleveland Heights fire station and Council

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# Glen Allen

*continued from page 3*

Gardens. Glen Allen, constructed in 1915 by the recently widowed Elisabeth Severance Allen (John L. Severance’s sister), comprised the site later occupied by the JCC and Lutheran East. Her property stretched east all the way to Yellowstone Road and north to what is now Woodridge. The land for Glen Allen and Ben Brae had been “in the family” for several decades previous, serving as small summer farm getaways for relatives living on Euclid Avenue (Figure 1).

Elisabeth Severance was married first to Dudley P. Allen (1852-1915), an eminent surgeon, professor, co-founder of the Cleveland Medical Library Association, and one of the first trustees of the Cleveland Museum of Art. In 1917, she married Francis Fleury Prentiss, founder of Cleveland Twist Drill Co. and president of Saint Luke’s Medical Center. Prentiss also was a director of Lake Shore

Savings & Trust Co., Cleveland Life Insurance Co., Superior Steamship Co., Cleveland Graphite Bronze Co., Osborne Manufacturing Co., and Youngstown Steel Co.

The contributions of Ms. Severance Allen/Prentiss were no less numerous. According to the “Encyclopedia of Cleveland History”, she:

- Established the Allen Memorial Library in 1926 in honor of her first husband.
- Launched the Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation to promote medical/surgical care and research in Cleveland. In late June of this year, the Foundation donated \$7 million to Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital.
- Succeeded her second husband as president of St. Luke’s Hospital.
- Served as trustee of the Cleveland Art Museum and made gifts to its art collection and its endowment fund.
- Donated the building that became the first home of the Cleveland Heath Museum.

*continued on page 6*



Figure 1: In the 1880s, Elizabeth Severance Allen and her cousin, Julia Severance Millikin established small farms along Mayfield Road near Taylor Road.<sup>2</sup>

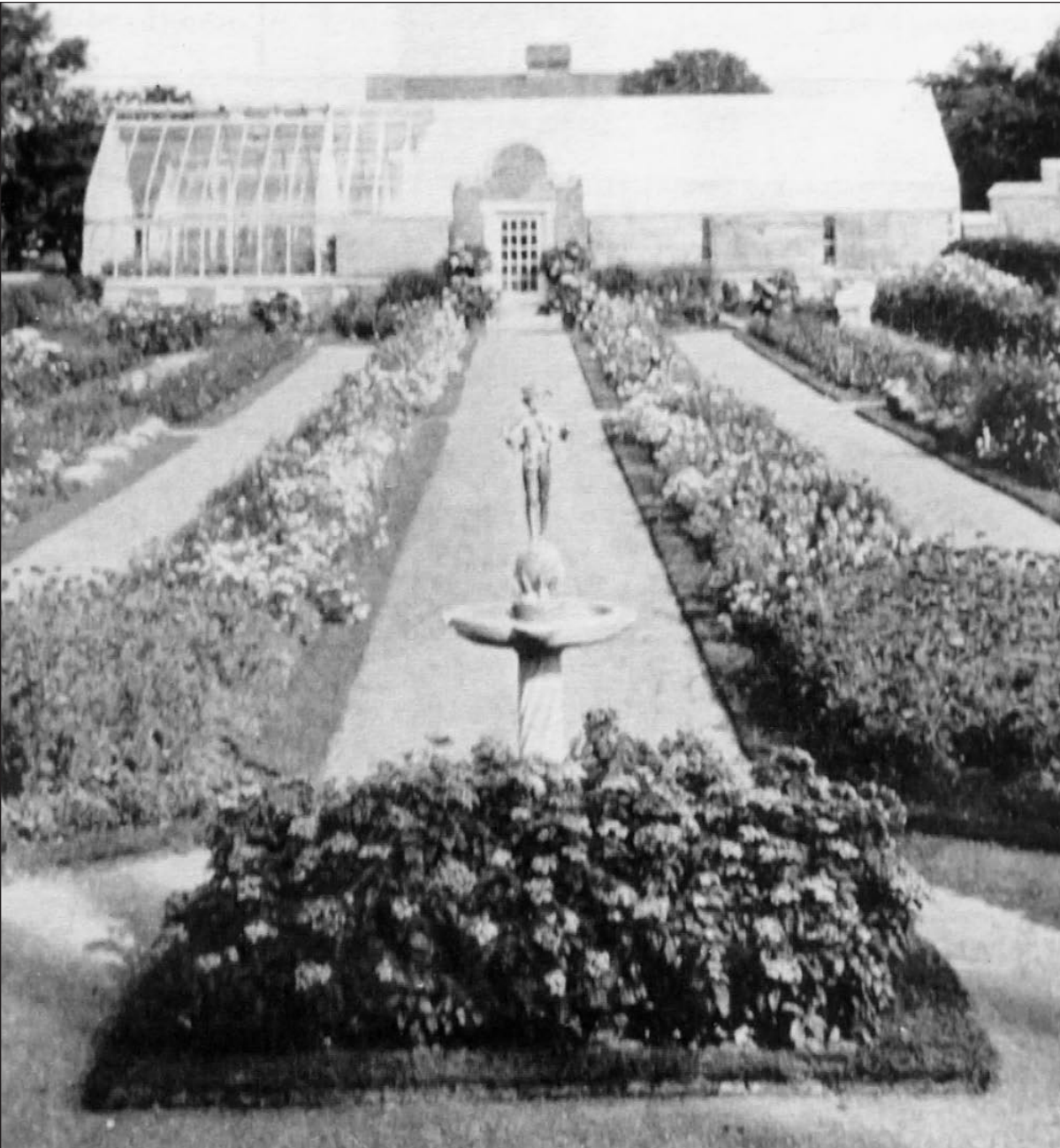


Figure 2: Gardens and green house at Glen Allen.<sup>3</sup>





Figure 3: Glen Allen.<sup>4</sup>

## Glen Allen

continued from page 4

Glen Allen was designed by the renowned architect Charles Schweinfurth, whose only surviving Cleveland Heights structure is the large mansion at 2504 Fairmount Boulevard. Glen Allen represented the English manor style of architecture. Like Longwood and Ben Brae, it was mostly brick, with stone detailing and a combination of gabled and flat roofs. An ornate metal and glass awning framed the home's entryway. Inside, the walls were hung with French tapestries, important paintings and rare prints. Extensive formal gardens surrounded much of the 45-acre property (Figure 2).

The house was demolished in 1945, one year after Ms. Allen/Prentiss' death. Interestingly, there was a partly successful effort to overspread the entire property with a housing subdivision to be called Prentiss Park (Figure 5).



Figure 4: Glen Allen rear view, c. 1928.<sup>5</sup>

Some homes were built along Glen Allen Drive and Birch Tree Path, but most of the property became the new homes of Lutheran East and the JCC three years later.

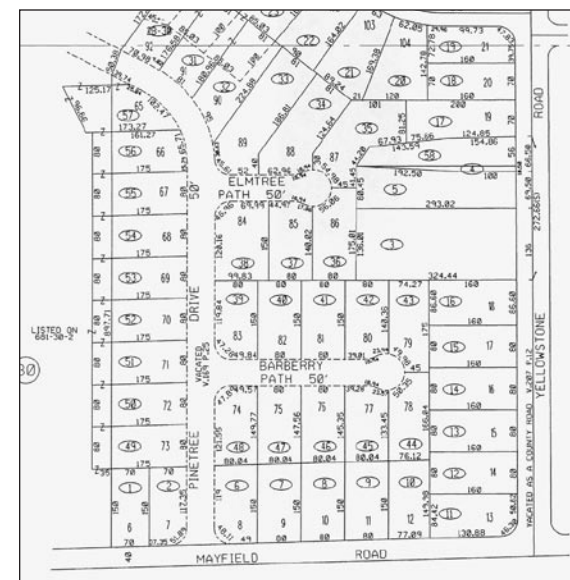


Figure 5: Proposed layout of a section of Prentiss Park, comprising the area mostly occupied by Lutheran East High School.<sup>6</sup>

### What Has Survived?

Remnants of the Glen Allen estate are more numerous than one might imagine. They include the stone wall that runs along Mayfield Road; the stone pier at the southeast corner of the Lutheran East property; a bridge from the estate hidden in the rear yard of a Glen Allen Drive home; and possibly a low stone wall behind the homes on the south side of the streets near the intersection of Woodridge and Edison Roads. In addition several complete structures survive, including an old farmhouse at 3555 Birch Tree Path that the Allens incorporated into their property, and may have been used for hired help (Figure 6).

With gratitude, the Cleveland Heights Historical Society acknowledges the use of

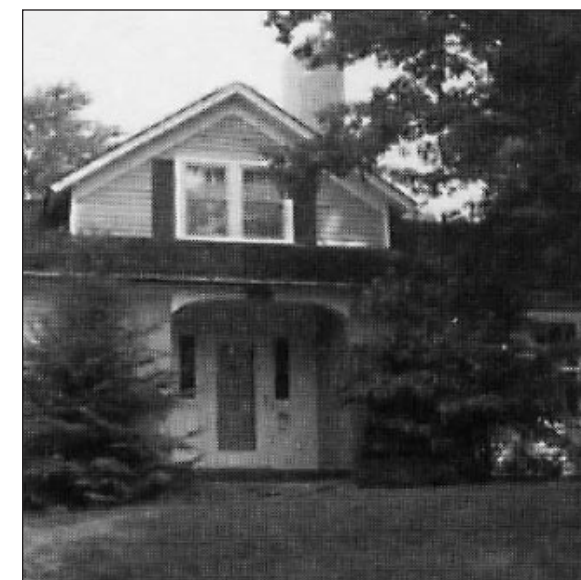


Figure 6: The Adams-Long House. This mid-19th-century farmhouse at 3555 Birch Tree Path was formerly part of Elizabeth Severance Allen's estate, Glen Allen, and probably used as a caretaker's or farm laborer's cottage.<sup>7</sup>

information and/or photos previously published by the City of Cleveland Heights, the Landmark Commission of Cleveland Heights, Heights Community Congress, and the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History.

(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Photo from "In Our Day," edited by Suzanne Ringler Jones, © Heights Community Congress, Cleveland Heights OH.

<sup>2</sup> Photo from "Focus on the Heights," ©2005, City of Cleveland Heights.

<sup>3</sup> Photo from "In Our Day," edited by Suzanne Ringler Jones, © Heights Community Congress, Cleveland Heights OH.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Photo from the Western Reserve Historical Society.

<sup>6</sup> Image courtesy of the City of Cleveland Heights.

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