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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."*

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View from The Overlook



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Household Names from the Heights



Like most cities, Cleveland Heights has its share of widely known, widely respected and even widely reviled citizens. Building on a research project launched several years ago by Sarah Wean, we bring you the latest version of our "Cleveland Heights Hall of Fame." In addition to Sarah's contribution, we would like to acknowledge two reference sources that greatly helped expand our list: John Stark Bellamy's books on Cleveland crime and the *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, an outstanding local-reference document accessible online at <http://ech.cwru.edu>.

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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.

Household Names from the Heights

ALEX "SHONDOR" BIRNS, legendary arch-



criminal, lived for several years at 2813 Edgehill Rd. A Hungarian émigré, Birns involved himself in rackets, prostitution, theft, assault, and murder from the days of Prohibition until his

death. In the spring of 1975, Birns was killed by a bomb planted in his automobile. No one was arrested for his murder.

MIKE AND JULES BELKIN both graduated from Cleveland Heights High School. In 1966, they were among a small handful of young entrepreneurs at the forefront of the burgeoning rock and roll concert industry.



Since then, Belkin Productions has become synonymous with rock entertainment, and involved in the careers of performers such as Bruce Springsteen, Pink Floyd, Bette Midler, Genesis, David Bowie, Dave Matthews Band, Phish, The Who, Bob Dylan, Pearl Jam, Metallica and The Grateful Dead.

CHEF BOY-AR-DEE, a.k.a., Hector Boiardi, lived at 2501 Arlington Road. Born in Italy, he became head chef at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in New York at the age of 17. After coming to Cleveland, he owned the Giardion

Restaurant, from which he sold sauces and pasta "to go." He started making packaged foods in the early 1930s and parleyed that venture into a multi-million-dollar business.

DR. GEORGE CRILE, respected surgeon and founder of the Cleveland Clinic, lived on the parcel of land now occupied by the Cedar Hill Baptist Church (then 2620 Derbyshire Rd.).



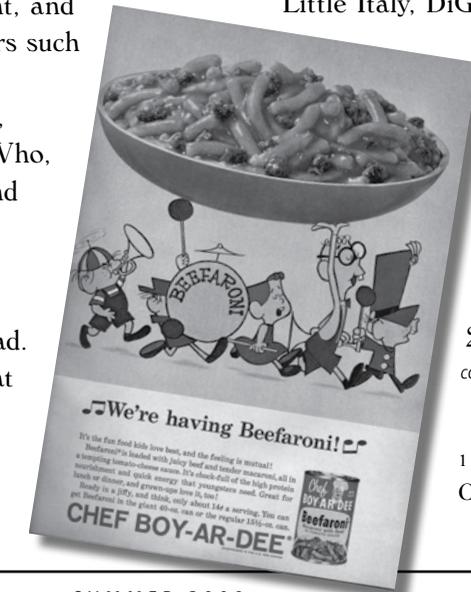
Although the house (which originally was owned by Cleveland Heights Developer Patrick Calhoun) was torn down in the 1940s, the accompanying carriage house at the east end of the property still stands.

PIERINO ("PETE") DIGRAVIO, loanshark and gangster, was shot to death while playing golf at the Orchard Hills golf course on June 21, 1968. Known as the Mayor of Little Italy, DiGravio had recently

made the mistake of bad-mouthing his Mob rivals to a *Cleveland Press* reporter. His murder has never been solved. At the time of his death DiGravio lived at 2589 Norfolk Rd.¹

continued

¹ Source: *Cleveland Magazine*, October 2006.



Household Names from the Heights

DOROTHY FULDHEIM,

lecturer, commentator and the nation's first female television news correspondent, lived at 2480 Kenilworth Rd.

In addition to being an award-winning journalist, she also was a strong advocate of historic preservation, a celebrated gardener and an ardent feminist.

JOEL GREY,

Tony Award winning actor, spent part of his childhood at 2441 Overlook Rd. In addition to his winning stage role in "Cabaret," Mr. Grey also starred in more than a dozen movies beginning in the early 1960s.



GEORGE GUND,

familiar to most Clevelanders as president of Cleveland Trust Bank and benefactor of the Gund Foundation, lived at 2665 East Overlook Road. Prior to his banking career, he owned the Kaffe Hag Corporation, which made decaffeinated coffee. He refined the process and subsequently sold it to Coca-Cola.



SAMUEL HALLE,

co-founder of the Halle Brothers Department Store in 1891, lived with his wife Blanche at 2165 Harcourt Drive. Many illustrious people were entertained during the 40 years that the family occupied the house, including Cole Porter, Sinclair Lewis, George Gershwin, Artur Rubenstein and Sir Winston Churchill.

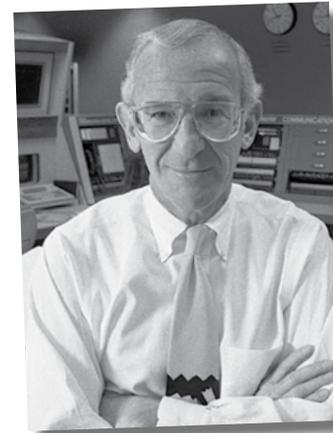
JEAN HARRIS, well-known headmistress of an exclusive east coast girls' school—until she became even better known as the murderer of Scarsdale Diet Doctor Herman Tarnower—lived at 2237 Demington Drive. As unique as her life was, her explanation of why she killed the doctor was even more unusual: She claimed that the gun accidentally went off while she was trying to persuade him to kill her!



DIANA HYLAND, film and television actress, grew up at 2184 Bellfield Avenue. Known mostly for her television work, the former Diana Gentner was seen on *The Twilight Zone*, *Wagon Train*, *The FBI* and *Dr. Kildare*. She also was John Travolta's first love interest. She died of cancer in Travolta's arms on March 27, 1977.



OWEN KILBANE lived at 12920 Cedar Rd. from the 1970s until he was imprisoned for life for his participation in the murder-for-hire killing of Euclid Judge Robert Steele's wife Marilyn in 1969.



PETER B. LEWIS graduated from Cleveland Heights High School. In 1965 Lewis took over his father's company—Progressive Insurance—as chief executive officer. At that time Progressive

had 100 employees and \$6 million in revenue. In 2007, the Mayfield Heights-based company employed almost 27,000 people and reported revenue of \$14.7 billion.

DEAN MARTIN, movie star, Rat Packer and crooner extraordinaire, married Elizabeth Anne "Betty" McDonald at St. Ann's Church in Cleveland Heights in 1941 (that's amore). They lived at 2820 Mayfield Road. In his early life Martin also delivered bootleg liquor, served as a speakeasy croupier,



dealt blackjack, worked in a steel mill and boxed as welterweight.

ELIOT NESS, the Prohibition lawman of "Untouchables" fame, resided at 1265 Inglewood Drive. Ness came to Cleveland in 1935 to become Public Safety Director. During his tenure, he developed a reputation as "the cop who couldn't be broken." Other aspects of his life, however, were far more breakable: He was married three times, ran unsuccessfully as Republican candidate for mayor in 1947, suffered serious financial reverses, and died in 1957 at the age of 54.



PAUL NEWMAN lived in Shaker Heights for a time, but he also resided at 2100 Renrock Road. In fact, this was his first residence (his parents resided there when Paul was born). He graduated from Shaker Heights High School, spent some time at OSU, served as a radio man in the South Pacific during WWII, graduated from Kenyon College, and then went on to make more than 50 movies.

continued

Household Names from the Heights

EUNICE PODIS was a renowned, internationally respected pianist who made more solo appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra than any other musician. She grew up at 3587 Washington Blvd. in Cleveland Heights and graduated from Cleveland Heights High School.



81 French-Norman homes in the neighborhood east and north of Mayfield and Lee Roads.

VIKTOR SCHRECKENGOST, who died in January 2008 at the age of 101, lived much of his life at 2265 Stillman Rd. and graduated from the Cleveland School of the Arts in 1929. Schreckengost was one of the world's most influential industrial designers: everything from dinnerware to Murray bicycles to world's first cab over engine—a design that remains the standard for almost every city bus.²



ADELA PRENTISS HUGHES, the first woman to establish and manage a major symphony orchestra, lived at 2400 Kenilworth Lane. In that house, she entertained some of the world's famous musicians, including Toscanini, Pavlova, Casals and Stravinski.



JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, our suburb's most famous (and wealthiest) citizen spent most summers at his Forest Hill estate. The actual house (formerly a sanitarium) stood in what is now East Cleveland, right at the top of the giant sledding hill in the northwest region of the (then) 800-acre tract. His son, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was the developer of the Forest Hill subdivision in the 1930s;



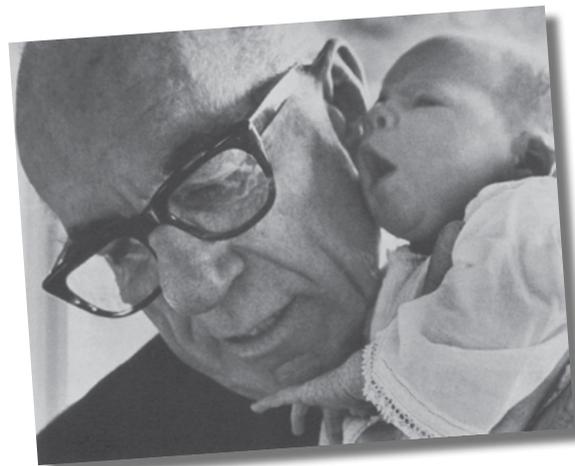
DR. SAM SHEPPARD, Bay Village's not-so-favorite son, spent his boyhood at 3062 Euclid Heights Blvd. As most of us know, he was convicted of murdering his wife Marilyn in the early 1950s. The verdict later was overturned. After leaving prison, Dr. Sam became a professional wrestler—not a common or prestigious profession for ex-physicians. He died of liver failure in 1970.



NICOLAI SOKOLOFF, the first conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra

² Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viktor_Schreckengost.

(from 1918 to 1933), lived for a time at 1812 Cadwell Avenue. Although considered brilliant and innovative, he also was tempestuous, unfriendly, and generally difficult to work with.



DR. BENJAMIN SPOCK lived at 1285 Inglewood Drive. Born in 1903, he became a psychiatrist and, later, the most famous pediatrician in history. From 1955 until 1967, he was professor of child development at Western Reserve University (now CWRU). Attributing his longevity to a macrobiotic diet, Spock died in 1998 at the age of 95.



DEBRA WINGER spent much of her childhood at 3795 Severn Rd. She also attended Cleveland Heights High School but moved prior to graduation. Ms. Winger twice was nominated for Academy Awards: for “An Officer and a Gentleman” and “Terms of Endearment.”



SEAN YOUNG, who appeared in “No Way Out” with Kevin Kostner, and “Wall Street” with Michael Douglas, grew up on Exeter Road.

BELA ZABOLY—not an immediately recognizable household name—lived at 2889 North Park Blvd. in Cleveland Heights. A former student of the Cleveland Museum of Art and Cleveland Institute of Art, Zaboly assumed the role of artist for *Popeye the Sailor* and Thimble Theater cartoons in 1939.



The Heights also has been a favored residence of several famous people's relatives. For example: **ADELA PRENTISS HUGHES** (2400 Kenilworth Lane) was the aunt of billionaire eccentric Howard Hughes.

ANNIE CUTTER (who resided at 2160 South Overlook Rd.) was the aunt of Anne Morrow Lindburgh. It is thought that Charles Lindberg proposed to Anne in the house.

JESSIE SCHNEIDER (2721 Colchester Rd.) was the aunt of shipping magnate and New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner.

Between 1930 and 1941, the parents of Bob Hope lived at 3323 Yorkshire Rd.