

View from The Overlook



THE JOURNAL OF THE CLEVELAND HEIGHTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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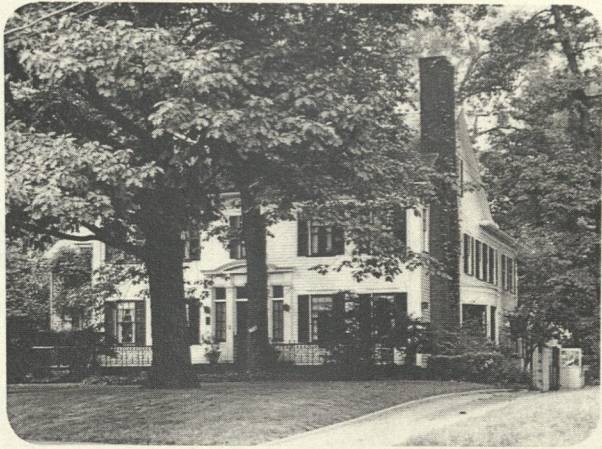
From Overlook Down Murray Hill

By Ken Goldberg

Overlook Road, winding between Cleveland Heights and Cleveland, is really the apex of the “Heights” that looks onto Little Italy’s Murray Hill Road. Much has changed since the early 20th century, when many a fine house graced the acreage from Overlook Road down to Murray Hill Road — eventually replaced by dormitories, the accompanying student dining



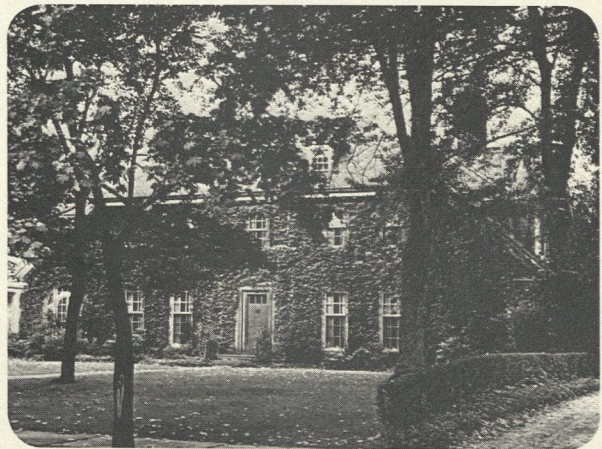
Bascom Little, Jr. house, formerly 2323 Murray Hill Rd.



11957 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11945 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11915 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11905 Carlton Rd. Demolished.

halls, and University-connected Greek houses — at the top, as well as the bottom of the hill. Trails, if not actual streets, once went up and down this part of the escarpment, and there are yet hints of a few.

As has been well documented, Overlook Road was planned by Patrick Calhoun, a Southerner, as the showplace boulevard of his Euclid Heights development.

The tract, first envisioned in 1891, was to

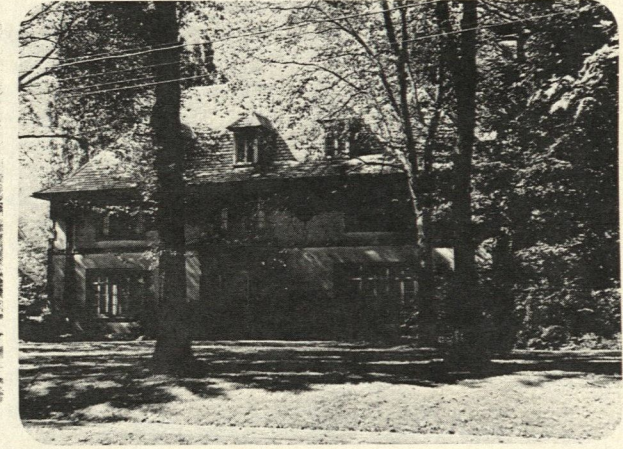
extend up to Coventry Road. Slightly less known is the separate and slightly newer tract, Carlton Park — the short, curving street off Overlook. It, too, was in both Cleveland and Cleveland Heights and lined with fine houses — about half overlooking Cedar Glen — and it ended with a terrific view over the city.

Finally, and little known today, were two residences down the hill facing Murray Hill Road — not associated with Little Italy and actually

(All photos unless otherwise noted courtesy of ClevelandMemory.org)



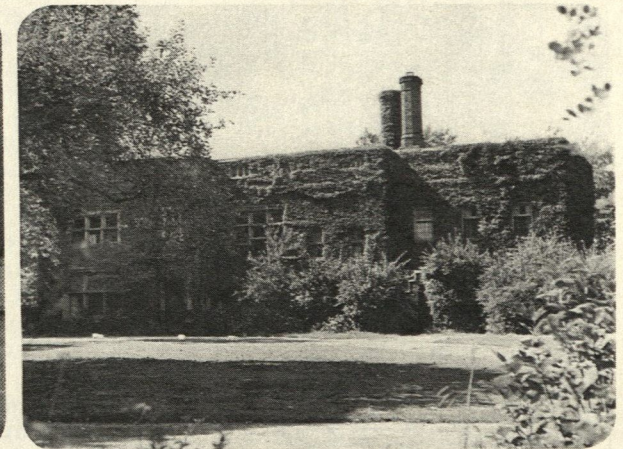
11931 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11925 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11901 Carlton Rd. Extant.



11893 Carlton Rd. Demolished.

in Cleveland Heights. Demolished by the early 1960s, they were both highly distinctive and worthy of recognition.

Overlook Road, in its heyday as a two-block "Millionaires' Row," boasted some sixteen mansions. All five of the residences on the slope side were in Cleveland. The Hinds House, Richardsonian Romanesque in style, was the first Overlook house to be demolished, likely in 1929; in its place was constructed the dramatic First

Church of Christ Scientist.

In that era, in a growing city, it was standard for a mansion to be sacrificed for an institution. The Hinds' Tiffany stained glass window has long been on display at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The Kelley, Cuddy, Sherwin, and Dodge mansions once also stood on that side of Overlook Road, with the first three and their respective carriage houses, for a while, serving Ursuline College and the fourth, the Dodge

The Cleveland Heights Historical Society



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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.

From the President:

I hope everyone has been enjoying our glorious summer — my own personal, second favorite season of the year. The Historical Society will be sponsoring what should be a very special program in October or possibly November — held at one of Cleveland Heights' oldest and most famous residences. There will be a fascinating talk and related materials on display. You can look forward to distribution of information on this event in the near future.

Once again the Cleveland Heights Historical Society — along with the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, the Heights Library, and this time the Cleveland State University Center for Public History + Digital Humanities — will sponsor a series of lectures and tours related to Heights-area history. They are as follows:

LECTURE & TOUR: Saturday, Sept. 5; 10 to approx. noon. Cleveland Heights Rocks and Waters 2015:

Dugway Brook West Branch walking tour; Ensemble Theatre at former Coventry School, 2843 Washington Blvd.; By Roy Larick, Korbi Roberts and Jim Miller. *Walking tour rain or shine. Limited availability, reservations req'd; 216-291-4878*

LECTURE: Thursday, Sept. 10; 7 p.m.; House History Workshop: Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Rd.; By Kara Hamley O'Donnell; *reservations encouraged; 216-291-4878*

TOUR: Saturday, Sept. 12; 10-11:45 a.m.; App-enhanced Coventry Village Walking Tour
By CSU Prof. Mark Souther and a team of Cleveland State University graduate students; *meet at Coventry arch outside Coventry Library*

LECTURE: Thursday, Oct. 1; 7 p.m.; M.M. Brown's Mayfield Heights Allotment By CSU Prof. Mark Souther and Chuck Owen

TOUR: Saturday, Oct. 3; 10 a.m.; Tour of Nela Park
By David E. Korow LC, Senior Lighting Specialist; *Limited availability, reservations req'd; 216-291-4878*

TOUR: Saturday, Oct. 10; 10-11:45 a.m.; App-enhanced Coventry Village Walking Tour
By CSU Prof. Mark Souther and a team of Cleveland State University graduate students; *meet at Coventry arch outside Coventry Library*

Please be on the lookout for more detailed information on the Historical Society's website blog and Facebook page, as well as in Heights library events announcements. There is no limit as to how many events one can attend, but please reserve early.

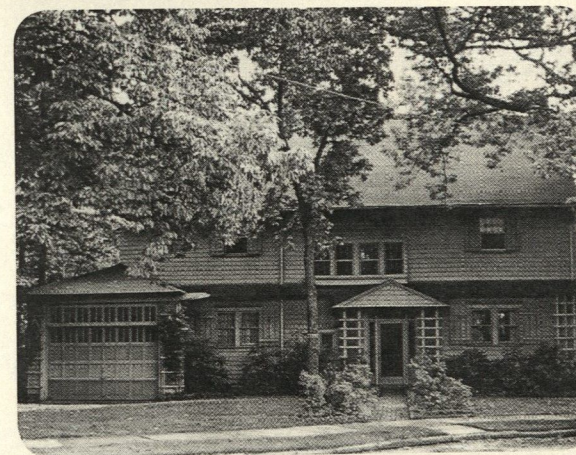
— Ken Goldberg



11894 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11896 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11898 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11900 Carlton Rd. Demolished.

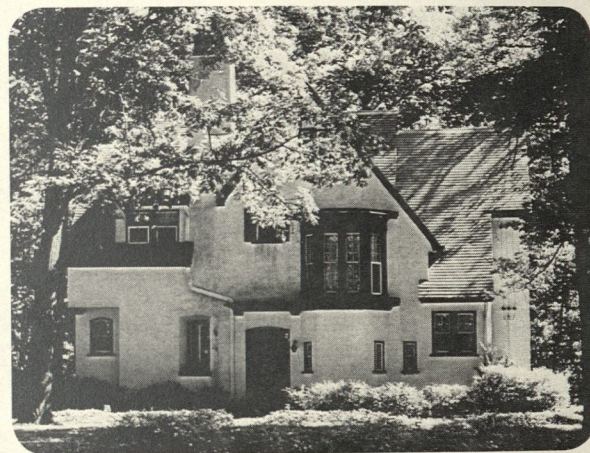
residence, housing general offices. These former residences dated from 1898 to 1905 and were demolished in the 1960s with no publicized plans for new development.

Carlton Park, the tract along Carlton Road which dates from about 1910, was developed by the Fred A. Lee Realty Company. Case Institute of Technology was solely responsible for the eventual demise as a street of beautiful single homes. Not counting two fancy carriage houses,

belonging to the two mansions flanking the entrance to Carlton Road but actually on Carlton, the street was originally lined with sixteen homes, with seven all or partially in Cleveland Heights. The street was actually an early cul-de-sac, with its more prominent houses on the circle overlooking Cleveland — on large lots extending down the promontory. These — numbers 11893 and 11894 — were not constructed until about 1923, meaning residents in the earlier houses



11916 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11920 Carlton Rd. Extant.



11930 Carlton Rd. Demolished.



11936 Carlton Rd. Demolished.

had originally enjoyed a clearer view toward downtown. The homes of 1923, along with 11896 and 11898, were entirely in Cleveland Heights, and the properties at 11901, 11916, and 11920 were partially in the suburb.

The street itself remained intact until the early 2000s, when CWRU shortened it, eliminating the circle for traffic. A very pleasant residential street for just over 50 years, and one of the closest streets to downtown Cleveland

with homes of this quality, Carlton had echoed Ambler Heights, across Cedar Glen and also straddling both Cleveland Heights and Cleveland. Ambler Heights, which featured still larger homes than Carlton Park, was developed earlier and is still intact.

Early Carlton Park residents included George N. Sherwin, a Vice President of the Union Trust Company; Ermine Barrows Jones, the widow of James M. Jones, a Common Pleas

Judge; the Jones' daughter, Myrta L. Jones, noted social reformer and women's activist; and Mrs. Henry L. Sanford, a founder of the Women's City Club. At least six of Carlton Park's large houses were designed by the Cleveland firm of Walker & Weeks, which had also designed many houses in the Wade Park Allotment about the same time.

Four of these Carlton Road houses, and the years designed, were: the Sherwin Residence, 1911-12, at 11898; the Frank E. Abbot Residence, 1913, at 11905; the Sanford Residence, 1913-14, at 11930; and the Arthur D. Brooks residence, 1916, at 11936. In general, the homes of Carlton Park were comfortably sized, with three or four bedrooms and servants' quarters. Many facades featured asymmetrically placed windows; they were of shingles, clapboard, stucco, and brick; and many houses had side bay windows or sun porches. Almost all houses were center entranced and several had attached garages facing the street — a most unusual feature for this construction period.

Number 11893, a three-story residence with flat roof, became the home of Western Reserve University President Robert E. Vinson. Number 11894, probably the street's largest residence and also three-story, was Jacobean style, and resembled baronial homes in Shaker Heights and the Fairmount Boulevard National Historical District. It was built by Bascom Little, Sr. — prominent Cleveland building contractor, for his family — and its property extended down the hill. Later the house was owned by Albert and Maxine Levin — the latter known by the early 1970s as one of the movers and shakers of the architectural preservation movement in Cleveland.

By the early 1960s, a period nationwide of huge numbers of colleges and universities

building new student residences, Case Institute of Technology administration proposed several residential complexes along Carlton Road. At the time, the residential street was still considered prestigious by many, with the houses well maintained into the decade. Western Reserve University was planning a new complex of dormitories in the vicinity of Magnolia and Mistletoe Drives, cutting off Magnolia Drive.

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Over a six-year period Case purchased 18 parcels along Carlton, leaving five houses still privately owned in early 1966. The owners of these five, all prominent citizens, still had hopes that rezoning from one-family to multiple dwelling use would not be approved, though several houses had already been demolished — all or mainly on the Cleveland Heights side.

A *Plain Dealer* article of 1/8/1966 quoted Mrs. Marjorie Jamison, former Cleveland Public

Library Board member, as stating at a Cleveland Board of Zoning Appeals meeting that the zoning change was "urban renewal in reverse," in that the Institute should instead be moving in the direction of Carnegie Avenue, where derelict properties were abundant. She referred to Carlton Road as a "beautiful street of architectural gems" and stated the Rapid tracks and hills were a "natural barrier" between the University Circle institutions and a residential district. She spoke of having already donated color slides to the Western Reserve Historical Society such that there would be a record of what the street was once like. Murray Hill residents also attended the meeting to oppose the zoning change. Paul Minnillo, restaurant owner, stated that the new dormitories built above Murray Hill Road caused the sewers to back up and had

(The Carlton Rd. photographs have been reproduced with the permission of the Case Western University Archives.)

created a major parking problem in the district.

A *Plain Dealer* article of 1/22/66 described a Cleveland Planning Commission meeting whereby Ernest J. Bohn, chair of the Commission, submitted that Case really needed only one of the still private residences for its building needs. Planned in the proposed \$6.6 million project were four six-story dormitories to house at least 400, four Greek houses, and a dining hall commons. In opposition to Bohn's idea of not rezoning four properties, Councilman George L. Blaha, D-33 and a member of the Commission, and Councilman Anthony J. Garafoli, D-19, whose ward included the University Circle area, called this "spot zoning" and declared it would not win City Council favor and would be a greater disservice to remaining residents than rezoning the entire area. Bohn's proposal was defeated 4-2.



Above: Nineteenth-century house and barn structure refashioned by the Little family, in 1940, into a sprawling, enchanting Cape Cod. **Right:** Facade of former Little house, 1941.



Page from Cleveland Press, 7/9/1949.

A *Plain Dealer* article of 2/25/1966 announced a "partial victory" for the five remaining private property owners in that the Planning Commission agreed to delay any final vote and study the situation further — possibly visiting the site. Parking had also become a major issue. There was a proposal for a "moving stairway" and an escalator going up and down the hill. Forty-five-year resident Lockwood Thompson stated: "We don't want

to be pushed into the suburbs" and he referred to Carlton Park as a "Shangri-la." Meanwhile, T. Keith Glennan, President of Case Institute of Technology, stated that if Cleveland does not approve rezoning the college would plan to first build on the Cleveland Heights portion of the street, where a zoning change had already passed.

The *Plain Dealer* reported on 4/9/1966 that Neil J. Crothers, President of the University Circle Development Foundation, offered off-



Top Right: Two brick walls are visible in this view of the 2323 Murray Hill Rd. terraces. Presumably, the wall remaining today is one of these.

Bottom Right: Recent photo of brick wall standing near the "elephant steps" that run between Carlton and Murray Hill Rds. Why this wall was left during demolition is a mystery. (Photo by Ken Goldberg).

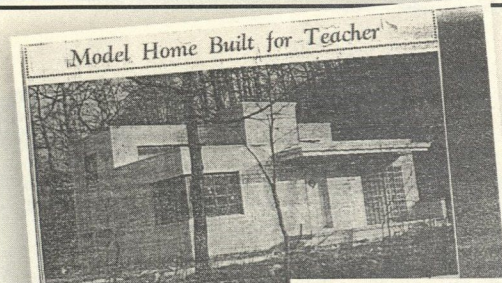
street parking off Murray Hill Road and also the temporary use of Clark Field. According to another *Plain Dealer* article, dated 3/19/1967, one more house had by then been purchased by Case, and the full project went ahead — leaving four houses on Carlton Road. The Austin Company provided the architects and engineers for the new construction.

Number 11901, the brick Lockwood Thompson house at the north end of the current street, was retained by Lockwood Thompson and currently is Phi Sigma Rho sorority and Scholars House. Number 11920, the Barry House, is the charming stucco house overlooking Cedar Glen and currently a CWRU guest house. Interestingly, the stucco house that was 11930 closely resembled 11920 but was larger. A garage for one of the houses on the north side of Carlton remained until recent years. Houses at 11945 and 11957 also remained — near Overlook Road. Mrs. Jamison continued to reside at 11957, a dignified New England Colonial Revival house demolished about 2000. An old, mysterious wall — concrete or cement on the east side, of boulders on the west side — stands behind some of the Nottingham-Spirk property. Could all or part of it be from the Hinds House era? There is also, I've been told, remnants of another path down the hill, starting near 11901, and it can be seen from a distance when the foliage is bare.

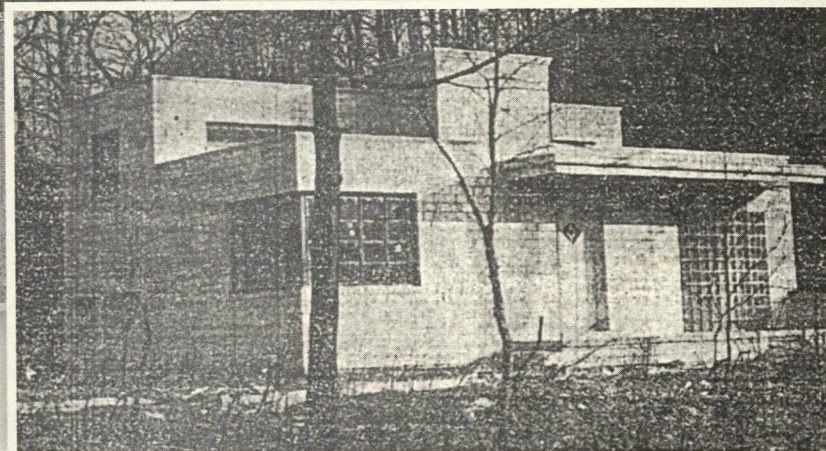
Few are aware of today that there were once three houses partway up the slope from Murray



Hill Road, though really above the lower road. The two houses in Cleveland Heights did not at all resemble the other houses along Murray Hill Road, which has lost other houses and apartment buildings as well. The Cleveland Heights house



Anna Rasmussen house, formerly at 2365 Murray Hill Rd. and featured in Cleveland Press article of 1939.



NOW virtually completed is the new model five-room home located at Murray Hill and Cedar Roads which for several months has been attracting the attention of thousands of motorists who daily drive up and down Cedar Hill.

It was built by the Wagoner-Hucek Development Co. for Miss Anna Rasmussen, a teacher at Marion School, on a lot 50 feet by 120 feet, purchased from Bascom Little. Approximate cost of the home and lot was \$7,500.

Construction of yellow tile cavity brick, the house has strictly modern lines and its rooms are built on four levels. On the first level is the garage and utility room, on the second the kitchen and dinette, on the third the living room, and on the fourth the two bedrooms and bath.

Modern touches include the translucent glass brick panels which screen one side of the dinette and the bath and the General Electric air-conditioning unit which regulates the temperature the year round.

George W. Engelhardt was architect.

closer to the foot of Cedar Glen Parkway was constructed in 1938 or 1939 by the Wagoner-Hucek Development Co., according to the design of Cleveland architect George W. Engelhardt, as a home for Anna Rasmussen — a teacher at the Cleveland Central neighborhood's Marion School. Miss Rasmussen had purchased the property from Bascom Little, Sr., who lived up the hill.

Total cost of Miss Rasmussen's house, which was given the address of 2365 Murray Hill Road, was stated in a newspaper article of 1939 as \$7,500. It was constructed of yellow tile cavity brick, with strictly modern lines and rooms built on four levels. On the first level were the garage and utility room, on the second the kitchen and dinette, on the third the living room, and on the fourth two bedrooms and a bath. As an International Style house, there were translucent glass bricks along one side of

the dinette and bath, and a General Electric air condition unit was installed.

The home could be seen by the thousands driving up and down Cedar Parkway daily. It always attracted considerable attention but was only up 23 years. There is now a dormitory tower exactly or near where the house had stood. A *Plain Dealer* article of 4/13/1963 entitled "House, 'Modern' in 1950s, Bows to 1963," states that the house had already been demolished. Miss Rasmussen, who had by then moved to a house on Lee Road, was quoted as saying she had had the house built "to probe that housekeeping could be convenient for a working person," and that a man at the loan company had told her a house of this material "would outlive any frame house."

Further up Murray Hill Road, also part-way up the hill on the east side and on a property of

3 1/2 acres, was a beautiful Colonial residence, also — but more loftily — situated on multiple levels. It was given the address of 2323 Murray Hill Road. What had been a rundown barn and hayloft combined with a small house, all probably dating from the 1880s, was in 1940 turned into a rambling, multi-level home by Mr. and Mrs. Bascom Little, Jr. Actual construction work was carried out by C.A. Lohmiller — Mrs. Little's father — of the Hunkin-Conkey Construction Company.

Mr. Little (1910-1965) was an architect associated with Maier & Walsh, Architects, as well as a musical composer. In 1940-1 the Littles took this old structure and kept its basic outline — creating

a New England Cape Cod — and added a two-car garage, connected by a screened porch. Above the garage was Mr. Little's studio. What had been a small house was transformed into a three-story tower. Some windows had been enlarged, dormers were made more graceful, shutters were added, and factory-type frames were installed along one living room wall.

The first floor housed the living room (installed from stall space), a small barroom, a lavatory, and a utility room — as the barn had had no cellar. The two-level living room overlooked the house's three terraces. The second floor contained the dining room and kitchen, as well as a combination sitting room and master bedroom two steps up — the bedroom took over the hayloft space. On the tower's third floor was a guest bedroom and bath. A *Cleveland Press* article of 2/5/1941 on the home stated "every small nook and corner ... is utilized..."

A *Cleveland Press* article dated 7/9/1949 revealed that the Little house had become even more dramatic. It was stated it had some eleven different levels, and the house had been dressed up with dark red paint and white trim. Among the photo captions, the author also wrote that only one terrace at a time was in the sun, and that the width and placement of each terrace overhang were mathematically figured to give

maximum sunlight in winter, minimum during hot weather.

Mr. and Mrs. Little left this remarkable house about ten years later and moved to a new home on Lyndway Road, which Mr. Little had also designed, in Lyndhurst. In February, 1965 Mr. Little died there in a fire, at age 55 — about the time Case's dormitory complex was going

On 2365 Murray Hill Rd.:
THE HOME COULD BE SEEN BY
THE THOUSANDS DRIVING UP AND
DOWN CEDAR PARKWAY DAILY.
IT ALWAYS ATTRACTED
CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION BUT
WAS ONLY UP 23 YEARS.

up above Murray Hill Road.

Clearly, expansion of Case Institute of Technology and Western Reserve University was responsible for the disappearance of these Carlton and Murray Hill homes. Were this not to take place, the Cleveland Heights/Cleveland border might yet be filled with beautiful homes relatively convenient to all that University Circle and downtown Cleveland offer. The 1960s was a decade when it was rare for a building from the earlier part of the 20th century to be considered worth saving if another option for the site were to materialize. Too bad!

Mr. Goldberg is President of the Cleveland Heights Historical Society, a member of the Cleveland Landmark Commission, and is the author of "Lost Cleveland Heights" — a featured article on the Cleveland Heights Historical Society's website (chhistory.org).

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All members receive the benefit of knowing that their membership dues help advance historic preservation opportunities for Cleveland Heights. Memberships are tax deductible.

The Cleveland Heights Historical Society

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