

View from The Overlook



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Salesmen & Sacred Spaces:

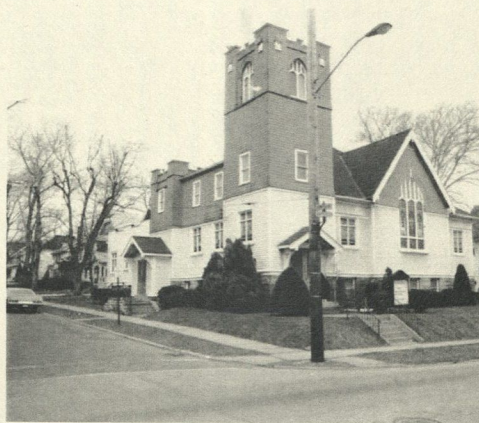
Developers and Congregations in Cleveland Heights, 1901-1951

By Marian Morton

Cleveland Heights history buffs are very keen on the developers who shaped our city's landscape: its broad boulevards; curving, tree-lined streets; gracious homes with well-defined setbacks and stringent deed restrictions. We enshrine these men's memories and their properties on the National Register of Historic Places: Dr. Nathan Ambler's Ambler Heights, the Rockefellers' Forest Hill; Patrick Calhoun's Euclid Heights, B.R. Deming's Euclid Golf, the Van Sweringens' Shaker Farm Historic District, Marcus M. Brown's Mayfield Heights, Grant Deming's Forest Hill. Even the levels of membership in the Cleveland Heights Historical Society are named for them: Marcus M. Brown, Patrick Calhoun, Barton R. and Grant Deming. (John L. Severance tops the list although his large estate was developed only after his death.)

THE CONGREGATION HAD ARRIVED IN 1875 IN WHAT WAS THEN EAST CLEVELAND TOWNSHIP, INTENDING TO SAVE THE SOULS OF THE RESIDENTS OF WHAT THE METHODISTS DESCRIBED, PROBABLY HALF-FACETIOUSLY, AS “HEATHEN HEIGHTS.”

THE “HEATHEN” MAY HAVE BEEN THE WORKERS IN THE NEARBY STONE QUARRIES, FARMS, OR VINEYARDS, OR EVEN THE OWNERS OF THE PROPERTY.



These men of property also shaped our religious landscape: they were very keen on churches. Churches may be sacred spaces to their members, but to these salesmen, churches – like parks or clubs – were amenities. Their dignified buildings and respectable congregants would sell property. And congregations also bought property – often in prime suburban locations that would attract new members from rival denominations and new buyers from rival developers. The result for Cleveland Heights: handsome churches joined the gracious homes along our broad boulevards and curving, tree-lined streets in a suburb closely – albeit briefly – identified as Christian.

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MARCUS M. BROWN
*Fairmount/
Heights Methodist Episcopal Church*
(AND CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR AND
CHRIST OUR REDEEMER A.M.E. CHURCH)

Brown, a lawyer-turned-real estate entrepreneur, began buying properties for his Mayfield Heights development in 1895, a year before he moved his family here. He planned single-family homes, laid out on a grid within the boundaries of Coventry, Mayfield, and Superior Roads and Euclid Heights Boulevard. He bought much of the property from the descendants of John Peter Preyer; it had been the site of his

Heights Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1904 at Hampshire and Superior Roads, is still standing. The congregation is now Church of the Saviour.

vineyards and wine farm. Brown marketed his allotment to a middle-class, white-collar clientele. An 1899 ad claimed that Mayfield Heights had become the home of “Cleveland’s most thrifty,

intelligent and worthy citizens.” These were not the elite buyers pursued by his rival to the west in Euclid Heights, Patrick Calhoun, although the ad mentions that Euclid Heights was nearby¹. Like his rival, but even more rapidly, Brown went bankrupt, losing his property to Cleveland Trust bank in 1908.²

Before this unhappy event, however, Brown had sold property at Hampshire and Superior Roads in 1905 to Fairmount Methodist Episcopal Church for \$4,000.

The location marked the entrance to Mayfield Heights and was close to Mayfield Road, the village’s major thoroughfare, and to the City Hall. Although not a member of the congregation, Brown, a noted public speaker, is said to have preached there occasionally. If the message of his glowing biography of his neighbor John D. Rockefeller is any indication, Brown might well have told the Methodists about the virtues of the wealthy.³

The congregation had arrived in 1875 in what was then East Cleveland Township, intending to save the souls of the residents of what the Methodists described, probably half-facetiously, as “Heathen Heights.” The “heathen” may have been the workers in the nearby stone quarries, farms, or vineyards, or even the owners of the property.⁴ The Methodists held their first meetings in the East Cleveland Township schoolhouse on Superior. Three years later, the congregation built a modest wooden chapel just to its south. When Cleveland Heights became independent of East Cleveland Township in 1901, the Methodists had been in the

¹ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 10, 1899: 10.

² A full description of Mayfield Heights is <https://www.clevelandheights.com/DocumentCenter/View/203/Mayfield-Heights-Historic-District-2015-PDF>

³ *Marcus Monroe Brown, A Study of John D. Rockefeller, The Wealthiest Man in the World; With His Name Left Out, the History of Education and Religion Could Not Be Written* (Cleveland: n.p., 1905).

⁴ “Marking 75 Years of Methodism on the Heights, October, 1950” (*Cleveland Heights, OH: Church of the Saviour*, 1950), 13.

neighborhood more than a quarter of a century and had become the center for the small village’s social life. Its members were long-time residents and pillars of the community, including the Haycox, Dean, Minor, and Silsby families.

In 1904, the congregation changed its name to Heights Methodist Episcopal Church and built on its new site, at Superior and Hampshire, a shingled Gothic Revival church, designed by Sidney R. Badgley, a noted ecclesiastical architect. Founding members like James Haycox donated stained glass windows that added a touch of elegance to the modest interior.

In less than two decades, however, the congregation had outgrown this building too. After purchasing and then almost immediately selling a property in Grant Deming’s Forest Hill allotment, the congregation worshipped in Roosevelt Junior High School from 1924 to 1928. Meanwhile, it bought several properties on Bradford and Lee Roads and in 1928 completed there the grand Gothic structure for Church of the Saviour, the congregation’s current name.

The little church in Brown’s Mayfield Heights, Cleveland Heights’ oldest church building, was sold first to the Church of the Brethren in 1927, then to Christ Our Redeemer A.M.E. in 1982. It now has a new owner, the United Temple Spiritual Church of Cleveland.

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EMIL C. PREYER
Cleveland Heights Presbyterian Church
(AND FOREST HILL CHURCH PRESBYTERIAN)

John Peter Preyer had left the westernmost portion of his property, along Superior, to his son Emil. Like his father, Emil cultivated grapes and made wine. Emil also went into

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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 you've enjoyed the late fall season and are looking forward to a year whereby more of Cleveland Heights' Master Plan is to be pursued – including a new Landmark Ordinance currently in preparation – and, hopefully, construction of the Top of the Town project finally – finally – will commence! As of this writing, a photo of the two impressive apartment houses that used to occupy that site, as early as the 1920s, heads our Facebook Page. Likewise, the Cleveland Heights “branding” project continues, but surely our particular historic fabric is a major factor that sets us apart from all but a few Cleveland suburbs.

Already planned for the Preservation Month series of events – sponsored jointly by the Historical Society (CHHS), the City's Landmark Commission, and the Heights Library – are talks devoted to sacred landmarks, the “Roaring Twenties,” and preserving windows. There will be more, but we're always interested in your ideas, too. And please consider volunteering for the organization. I'm sure we can use you, in one capacity or another.

The CHHS wants to fervently thank two Trustees – Christopher Hubbert and Stephen Titchenal – for their four+ years of service on the Board. Christopher, an attorney, has been indispensable with anything legal, and Steve has been our adept Treasurer and has also handled membership. These two individuals have chosen not to run for reelection, but we have two individuals who will officially begin 1/1/19: Angelina Bair and Charles Owen. We are so fortunate to have these two individuals; Angelina Bair has volunteered for us and Charles Owen is back – away several years but our official “founder” and former officer and Board member for many years.

We know you will enjoy Dr. Marian Morton's sharing with us her research regarding ties between Cleveland Heights' major developers and our houses of worship. It is a topic never quite covered before this extensively. Dr. Morton is Professor Emeritus at John Carroll University.

— Ken Goldberg

real estate, planning a small development to the north of his home at 14297 Superior on Alvin Road. Alvin was named for Emil's son; it is now Preyer Road.

Cleveland Heights Presbyterian began as a mission church, sponsored by Beckwith Memorial Church in Cleveland, and initially known as the Mayfield Heights Branch of Beckwith. It worshiped first in a rented home on Radnor Road from 1905 to 1906. Then it moved to the Superior schoolhouse, recently vacated by the Methodists. An early member of the congregation remembered the challenges of this farming village in the first decade of the twentieth century: “Houses were few Sidewalks were few and

far between. Mud everywhere, street lights none, families were few.”⁵

The schoolhouse soon grew too small. In 1908, Preyer, also a member of the congregation, sold it the property at the corner of Mayfield and Alvin for their first permanent home for \$6,000. With help from Beckwith, the congregation raised another \$15,000 for a building. John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie helped pay for the organ.⁶

This building, also designed by Badgley, was only a stone's throw from the Methodists. And like the Methodists, Presbyterian church members included some of the village's prominent citizens, including long-time mayor Frank C. Cain.⁷ The church became the birthplace of the Men's Civic Club, known as Cleveland Heights' movers and shakers. The small brick Gothic structure on the west side of Preyer, just east of the current site of Walgreen's, created a gracious entrance to Preyer's allotment. He sold off the rest of his property in small lots through the 1920s, including a parcel on Mayfield to Cleveland Heights in 1915 for the northern end of the future Cumberland Park.

In 1939 the congregation ceremoniously burned its mortgage. By 1945, the congregation had outgrown the 1908 building and sold it to a Jewish congregation, Gates of Hope or Shaarey Tikvah. In 1950, this congregation renamed itself Mayfield Temple; in 1970, it moved to Mayfield Heights and then to Beachwood. The 1908 building was razed in the early 1970s.

Cleveland Heights Presbyterian moved across Mayfield into the Rockefeller's Forest Hill development and changed its name to Forest Hill Church Presbyterian. (More about Forest Hill Church Presbyterian later.)

⁵ E.T. Austin, quoted in “The History of Forest Hill Church, 1902-1993” (n.p., n.d.), 1-3.

⁶ “The History of Forest Hill Church,” 4.

⁷ “The History of Forest Hill Church,” 9.



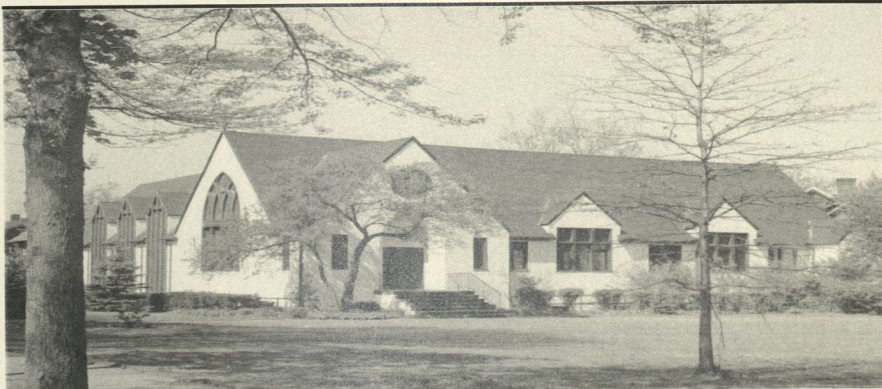
This Superior schoolhouse was the first home of Heights Methodist Episcopal Church and the second home of Cleveland Heights Presbyterian Church, now Forest Hill Church Presbyterian.

PATRICK CALHOUN

St. Alban's Church

(AND ST. MARTIN'S CHAPEL, ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, THE ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH, TELSHE RABBINICAL COLLEGE, AND CEDAR HILL BAPTIST CHURCH)

Calhoun, a lawyer, streetcar magnate, and real estate speculator, thought big. In 1891, he began to buy the properties for his Euclid Heights allotment, bounded by Overlook, Mayfield, Coventry, and Cedar Roads. Just as he intended, it attracted wealthy families, who built great mansions on Overlook. In 1901, Calhoun built the Euclid Golf Club for these first customers – and for anyone else who wanted to buy property nearby. Other developers, like Brown, referred to its proximity, hoping that some of Euclid Heights' luster would rub off on their own less grand neighborhoods.



The original St. Alban's Church was moved in 1901 from Little Italy to Euclid Heights Boulevard and Overlook Road by Patrick Calhoun.

Further evidence of his big thinking was his generous gesture to St. Alban's Church. Calhoun donated to the congregation, then a struggling mission church in Little Italy named St. Andrews-in-the-East, a prominent site at Edgehill Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard. The building was moved up the hill on rollers in 1901 to its new location, and its name was changed to St. Alban's.⁸ The congregation didn't flourish there either and remained financially dependent on St. Paul's Episcopal Church, then located at Euclid Avenue and E. 40th St. The rector of St. Paul's also served as the rector of St. Alban's until 1912. In 1918, it numbered only 66 active members.⁹

Its difficulties were compounded by a new Episcopalian congregation, St. Martin's, established in 1917 in a more elite location at Fairmount Boulevard and Lee Road. When St. Paul's contemplated its own move to Cleveland Heights, St. Alban's invited the larger congregation to merge and relocate at the Euclid Heights location, even offering to change its name to St. Paul's. St. Paul's, however, rejected the invitation, maintaining that the "neighborhood was largely Jewish, was too near the cemetery," and most

of its parishioners lived closer to St. Martin's. (Given the context, it is likely that the cemetery in question was the Jewish Mayfield Cemetery, rather than Lakeview Cemetery.) St. Alban's had in fact already tried to sell its property to a Jewish congregation and move to the "Forest Hill area," but the Bishop William A. Leonard had denied them permission.¹⁰

St. Alban's remained a small congregation on the periphery of Euclid Heights, close to the Mayfield-Coventry neighborhood, which did indeed become Jewish by the 1950s. (More about St. Paul's and St. Martin's later.)

In the meantime, Calhoun had gone bankrupt, which can't have done St. Alban's any good. Calhoun had left his new allotment for San Francisco, where he hoped to build a new transit system. Instead, he was indicted for bribing public officials and broke a violent strike against his street railway system. He returned to Cleveland in 1911, but too late to rescue his failing real estate enterprise. Cleveland Trust bank, his major lender, took over. The last of his properties were sold at public auction in 1914 and 1915 as Calhoun watched from a vacant lot across the street from St. Alban's.¹¹

⁸ Kara Hamley O'Donnell, *Cleveland's Park Allotment: Euclid Heights, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and its designer, Ernest W. Bowditch*, (Master's Thesis, Cornell University, 1997), 138.

⁹ George Franklin Smythe, *A History of the Diocese of Ohio* (Cleveland: Diocese of Ohio, 1931), 525.

¹⁰ F. Washington Jarvis, *St. Paul's, Cleveland, 1846-1968*, (Cleveland Heights, OH: n.p., 1967), 36. This is probably a reference to Grant Deming's Forest Hill allotment, not the Rockefeller development.

¹¹ Marian J. Morton, *The Overlook of Cleveland and Cleveland Heights* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 54.

After Calhoun's bankruptcy, his properties became gracious single-family homes, handsome apartments, and a street of duplexes (lower Hampshire). They also became churches.

In 1932, the First English Lutheran Church bought property at Euclid Heights and Derbyshire Road for \$20,000, probably a Depression bargain. The congregation moved from the East 105th St. and Euclid Avenue neighborhood where it was in the path of the proposed Chester Avenue. However, it ran into financial difficulties when the Guardian Trust bank failed, impounding church funds. The building remained unfinished until 1936. In 2002, the congregation disbanded and sold its property to a developer, who turned the church into condominiums.

Calhoun's own magnificent 30-bedroom mansion, not completed until 1911, became the site of religious controversy. Calhoun was forced to sell his home to Dr. George W. Crile, a founder of the Cleveland Clinic. After Crile's death, an Orthodox Jewish institution, Telshe Rabbinical College, in 1945, asked to buy the building and its four-and-a-half acre site. The college promised to keep Calhoun's mansion intact. But neighbors were outraged at the thought of eccentrically dressed men in their conventional neighborhood.

The Cleveland Heights Planning and Zoning Commission denied the request. Neighbors had fewer objections to a similar request from Hough Avenue Baptist Church, which bought the property in 1955, changed its name to Cedar Hill Baptist Church, and completed its current building in 1956.

St. Alban's original building was destroyed by fire in 1989; it was replaced by the current, more contemporary structure, initially shared by Temple Ner Tamid and Edgewood Community Church.

FATHER JOHN MARY POWERS

St. Ann Church

(NOW COMMUNION OF SAINTS)

Powers was a priest-turned-developer. His first assignment after his ordination in 1902 was as assistant pastor at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in the solidly middle-class Hough neighborhood. In 1915, he was appointed the new pastor of a future congregation, St. Ann, at Cedar and Coventry.

According to legend, on Powers' first trip to the site – by streetcar to Grandview Road and then on foot on a dirt road – he discovered nothing at all except "wilderness." Earlier, however, Powers and some important laymen had arranged a loan from Bishop John P. Farrelly to buy property for the church and some (hopefully Catholic) neighbors. The plan was to be kept secret to hold down nearby real estate prices and to keep Protestants in the dark about Catholics coming up the hill.¹²

The realtor of record was the Meadowbrook Land Company.¹³ The company was already selling properties in the neighborhood bounded by Cedar, Lee, Meadowbrook Boulevard, and Coventry. In June 1915, the company sold the future home of St. Ann at Cedar and Coventry to Bishop Farrelly, providing a grand anchor to the Meadowbrook allotment.

The company advertised widely and boldly, as was the custom of the time. When it became obvious that this was a Catholic effort, St. Ann was mentioned in ads in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*: "St. Ann's, the only Catholic Church on the Heights is now building on this property ...

¹² John Stark Bellamy II, *Angels on the Heights: A History of St. Ann's Parish, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, 1915-1990* (n.p., n.d.), 11.

¹³ Bellamy, 12.

Our lots are nearest to church, school, street-cars, parks." And even more often in the Catholic Universe Bulletin: "The only Catholic Church and School of Cleveland Heights".¹⁴ Upwardly mobile Catholics from St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Agnes, and St. Edwards Churches – and non-Catholics – soon filled the neighborhood surrounding the St. Ann campus: a recreation hall, a rectory, a school, and finally, a new church building.

Like his kindred developers Patrick Calhoun and the Van Sweringens, Powers realized that a successful development needed easy transportation, and he is usually credited with persuading the Cleveland Railway Company to extend its Cedar line east to Coventry by 1922 and eventually to Lee Road, serving not only his church but his neighborhood. And like the Van Sweringens and Barton R. Deming, Powers fought hard to keep his neighborhood exclusively residential, a special challenge in the years before the 1921 zoning code.¹⁵

Powers also made sure that his church would be as grand – or grander – than his Protestant neighbors.

In 1925, he bought ten marble pillars and other elegant furnishings of First National Bank, destined for demolition. These would lie idle through the dark days of the Depression and the scarce years of World War II.¹⁶ But in 1952, the new church would finally open, designed by Cleveland's leading architects, Walker and Weeks. Its Beaux Arts style distinguished it from the Gothic Protestant churches built in the 1920s and from the colonial-style churches of the post-World War II period.

Powers remained a charismatic pastor and a powerful figure in Cleveland Heights until his retirement in 1966. Cleveland Heights Mayor Kenneth Nash described him as 'The Guardian

Angel of the Heights" for his efforts on behalf of the city.¹⁷

In 2010, St. Ann was caught up in the sweeping reconfiguration of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese. It was merged with St. Louis, St. Philomena, and Christ the King Churches and became part of Communion of Saints Parish.

ORIS P. AND MANTIS J. VAN SWERINGEN

*the Shakers, Fairmount Presbyterian,
and St. Martin's Chapel*

(AND THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST,
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS)

The Vans, of course, are the entrepreneurs who transformed an entire religious community into affluent suburban properties. These are now the city of Shaker Heights and the neighborhood in Cleveland Heights known as Shaker Farm Historic District, bounded approximately by Roxboro Middle School on the west, Fairfax Road on the north, Lee and Ashton Roads on the east, and Fairmount Boulevard on the south.¹⁸ Given its sacred origins, the Shaker Farm Historic District quite appropriately became the site of two churches, two permanent and one short-lived.

The North Union Shakers called their community in Warrensville Township "The Valley of God's Pleasure." It was founded in 1822 after the conversion of property owner Ralph Russell to this offshoot of the Quakers known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming.

¹⁷ Bellamy, 16.

¹⁸ For the complicated boundaries of this district and further details see <https://www.clevelandheights.com/DocumentCenter/View/204/Shaker-Farm-Historic-District-2012-PDFCity> written by Mary Dunbar.

The Shakers built lakes and dams to power their small industries and large dormitories to house, separately, men and women. They became known for their handcrafted household goods. In 1840, the Shaker community had about 200 members. In 1889, however, the membership had dwindled to 27, and these remnants of the community migrated to other Shaker communities.¹⁹ The property was sold first to a group of investors from the South, then to the corporation that became the Shaker Heights Land Company in 1895. This in turn sold properties along North Park Boulevard to the Van Sweringens in 1895. Their successful sales inspired the Van Sweringens to keep on buying. Eventually they owned all of the former religious utopia, transforming it into a utopia of a different kind.

Their initial efforts were in the Shaker Farm Historic District. According to deed restrictions on the properties, the development was to be strictly residential: the single-family homes, large, gracious, and architect-designed in more contemporary suburban styles than the solemn mansions on Calhoun's Overlook. In 1907, at the Van Sweringens' urging, the streetcar ran up Fairmount.

Fairmount was the centerpiece of the development, the site of the most elegant homes that would define this as an elite neighborhood. The Van Sweringens maintained two real estate offices on Fairmount. Fairmount Presbyterian was born at the office at Fairmount and Wellington Road. The Presbyterian Sunday School met there beginning about 1911. So congenial was the location and so hospitable were the Van Sweringens that in 1915, the Presbyterian Union bought lots just to the west of the office at Fairmount and Coventry: "[the site] respects a central and commanding location," explained the congrega-

tion's officers, near a streetcar line and in the midst of flourishing neighborhoods. Spurred on by fears that Methodists were planning to build a church across the street (this didn't happen), the Presbyterians built a small temporary chapel on the lot next to theirs, lent to them by the Van Sweringens.²⁰ Fairmount Presbyterian Church was formally organized in 1916. The congregation acquired more properties at Coventry and Scarborough for a permanent structure. Their current sanctuary was completed in 1942.

As we have seen, the Episcopalians also migrated east — first to St. Alban's and then to St. Martin's Chapel. The newer congregation met first at Fairfax School and in 1917 at the Van Sweringens' second site at Lee and Fairmount. By then, the realtors' offices had moved elsewhere as the brothers concentrated their attention on developing the village of Shaker Heights. The property had been donated to the congregation by a member. St. Martin's graceful stucco and frame building, completed in 1919, created an attractive entrance to Shaker Farm from the east. The little congregation lived only long enough to worry St. Alban's. In 1928, St. Martin's, already sharing staff and services with St. Paul's, formally merged with the more powerful congregation.

A 1914 advertising brochure for the allotment had made much of the churchly presence: "The Presbyterian Church has acquired a very important corner at the junction of Fairmount Boulevard and Coventry Road. The Episcopal Church is making arrangements to build on the corner of Lee Road and Fairmount Boulevard."²¹

The site at Fairmount and Lee was sold to the First Church of Christ Scientist, Cleveland Heights. The congregation built there its current Colonial Revival church.

²⁰ Frances B. Bayless, *A Jubilee of Christian Service Past and Future* (Cleveland Heights, OH: Fairmount Presbyterian Church, 1992), 9, 10.

²¹ "Shaker Heights Subdivision of Shaker Heights," *Shaker Heights Historical Museum*, 8815, 1914.

¹⁹ Virginia P. Dawson, *Hands on the Past: Celebrating the First 50 Years of the Shaker Historical Society* (Shaker Heights, Ohio: Shaker Historical Society, 1997), 6.

In 1913, Plymouth Church too had contemplated a move to Cleveland Heights.²² Instead the congregation moved to its current location at Coventry in Shaker Heights on a site donated by Van Sweringens, who had learned from their Cleveland Heights experience that churches attracted the right kind of buyers.²³

Although the Shaker Farm Historic District and much of Shaker Heights survived intact, the Van Sweringens' even greater ambitions for a real estate empire collapsed during the Depression, leaving their dream of a suburban utopia in Shaker Heights only partially fulfilled.

BARTON R. DEMING

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Deming developed much of what had been Calhoun's Euclid Golf Club. The club was short-lived, collapsing in 1912 as his fortunes were about to hit rock bottom. However, its site – bounded approximately by Coventry, Nottingham Lane, Grandview Avenue, and West Saint James Parkway – was ripe for development.²⁴ Thanks to the Van Sweringens, the streetcar on Fairmount would benefit the new allotment. As in the Shaker Farm Historic District, Fairmount would be the centerpiece. The boulevard and the streets running north and south would be lined with gracious single-family, architect-designed homes.

The development was well underway when in 1924, St. Paul's Church, no longer able to resist the lure of "the heights," bought from Deming a

²² *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 26, 1913: 3.

²³ <https://case.edu/ech/articles/plymouth-church-of-shaker-heights>

²⁴ Deanna L. Bremer and Hugh P. Fisher. *Euclid Golf Neighborhood* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2004). Also by the same authors, <https://www.clevelandheights.com/DocumentCenter/View/207/Euclid-Golf-Historic-District-2002-PDF>.

large corner lot at Coventry and Fairmount. St. Alban's protested vigorously that St. Paul's was encroaching on its territory. Fairmount Presbyterian also objected strenuously, as did the Federated Churches of Cleveland.²⁵ But to no avail. In 1928, St. Paul's, strengthened by its merger with St. Martin's Chapel, opened its parish hall, designed by Walker and Weeks, the first of several buildings on its campus. They provided – and still provide – a handsome anchor to Deming's Euclid Golf allotment. Deming continued his career as the developer of residential properties, helping to plan John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s Forest Hill.²⁶

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER JR.,

B'nai Jeshurun (The Temple on the Heights)

(AND FOREST HILL CHURCH PRESBYTERIAN)

John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s ambitious plans to develop a portion of his father's estate, Forest Hill, date from the mid-1920s, but disagreements with the city of Cleveland Heights over the location of Monticello Boulevard stalled the developer through the decade. The first homes were not advertised until 1930. Only 81 got built because even these stylish French Normans were a tough sell during the Great Depression.

In the meantime, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun had made its move from E. 105th St. in the heart of Glenville, becoming Temple on the Heights, and in 1924, had begun construction of its Byzantine-inspired temple on Mayfield, just east of Lee and farther east of the Mayfield Cemetery. It was across the street from the Montefiore Home and Rockefeller's planned development. Rockefeller offered the congregation a larger site on Superior, and the congregation briefly halted construction

²⁵ Jarvis, 36-38.

²⁶ Bremer and Fisher, 17.

of the new building until the offer came to an end when the Rockefellers and Superior Road property owner could not agree on a price.

In this context of a growing Jewish presence and perhaps, with the Van Sweringens' precedent in mind, Rockefeller set aside a large lot for a community church at the important intersection of Lee and Monticello Boulevards, across from the park he had donated in 1938 to the cities of East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights. In 1946, this lot was purchased by Cleveland Heights Presbyterian Church. In 1951, the congregation held its first services in its Colonial-style church, which blended comfortably with the new homes around it.

In 1948, Rockefeller's Abeyton Realty had sold its remaining properties to another developer, George Roose. He in turn sold to other builders, who completed the development in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁷ The original Rockefeller dream of 600 French Norman homes never came to fruition.

The congregation re-named itself Forest Hill Church Presbyterian, assuming the identity of the developer and the development. The deeds to these properties, not incidentally, included restrictive clauses that made it difficult – although not impossible – for Jewish (and other minority) persons to buy there.²⁸ In 1948, the Supreme Court ruled that these restrictions could not be enforced. In 1968, Congress passed the Housing Rights Act that made illegal racial or religious discrimination in housing. By then, both the congregation and the neighborhood had already begun to move toward racial integration.

CONCLUSION

Many other churches joined those above, and in 1927, the Heights Press boasted that Cleveland

²⁷ Sharon E. Gregor, *Forest Hill: The Rockefeller Estate* (Charleston, S.C., Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 91.

²⁸ <http://teachingcleveland.org/deferring-dreams-racial-and-religious-covenants-in-shaker-heights-and-cleveland-heights-1925-to-1970-by-marian-morton/>

Heights was "the city of churches."²⁹ This proliferation of congregations was due in no small part to the sectarian rivalries that first pitted Protestants against Protestants, then Catholics against Protestants, and then Protestants against Jews, as they competed for the souls of the residents of "heaven heights."

But the city of churches could also thank these developers, who hoped that sacred spaces would sell property. With the exception of Preyer and Powers, these men were proselytizers not for any religious creed but for their own developments. Nevertheless, the Cleveland Heights they bought and sold became identified as Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Catholic – in short, Christian – at least for the moment. The salesmen, of course, are long gone.

We will never know for sure if the churches attracted the hoped-for buyers although it seems likely that they did. We do know that despite St. Alban's and Heights Methodist Episcopal Church, Calhoun and Brown received few earthly rewards for their investments in sacred spaces. Similarly, we don't know if their prime locations won the new suburban churches new members although this too seems likely.

We do know that with the exception of the original St. Alban's, St. Martin's Chapel, and Cleveland Heights Presbyterian Church, the sacred spaces – with new names – long outlived the salesmen.

And as St. Alban's, Cleveland Heights Presbyterian, and the Rockefeller realtors had good reason to know, Cleveland Heights had itself begun to change as early as the 1920s: temples and synagogues soon joined the churches.

And as we also know, the religious landscape created by the salesmen and the sacred spaces has continued to change. ♦

²⁹ Quoted in Marian J. Morton, *Cleveland Heights: The Making of an Urban Suburb* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 109.

JOIN TODAY!

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The Cleveland Heights Historical Society

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