

# View from The Overlook



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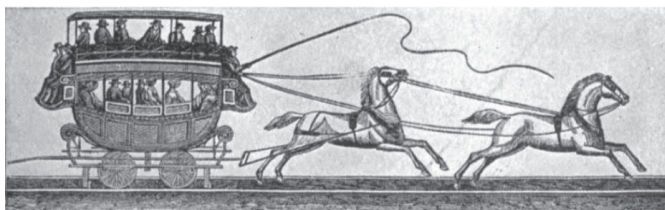
## Ambler Park to Ambler Heights, and the Cleveland and Newburgh Quarry Railroad

*Compiled by Korbi Roberts*



mbler Heights (formerly the Ambler Park allotment) is a notable, historic neighborhood in Cleveland Heights, located

just south of Cedar Glen. Visitors can take a sharp right at the top of Cedar hill onto Harcourt Drive and meander through its lovely streets. This treasured section of Cleveland Heights (a bit is in Cleveland too) has many examples of exquisitely crafted homes, designed by prominent architects of the times. It drew in many of Cleveland's early business leaders yearning to live away from the crowded city and out in the "country" fresh air. How did this neighborhood evolve and what was on this site before the suburban development? A virtual time machine helps us travel "backwards" to piece together a story from old records, maps and land deeds. Much of this information never made it into the history books. Forgotten layers of the past

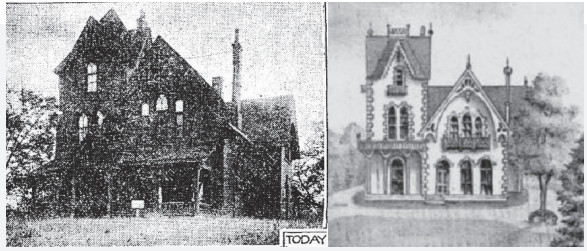


Example of an early horse-drawn railroad

come to light, showing how the land transitioned from untouched forest, to a place of stone quarries (featuring the earliest railroad of Cleveland), to sheep and goat pastures, and finally into the lovely residential "bedroom community" we see today. The neighborhood was first called Ambler Park, and then got redesigned and renamed as Ambler Heights. The lives and scandals of some of the earliest families, such as the Amblers, came to light too.



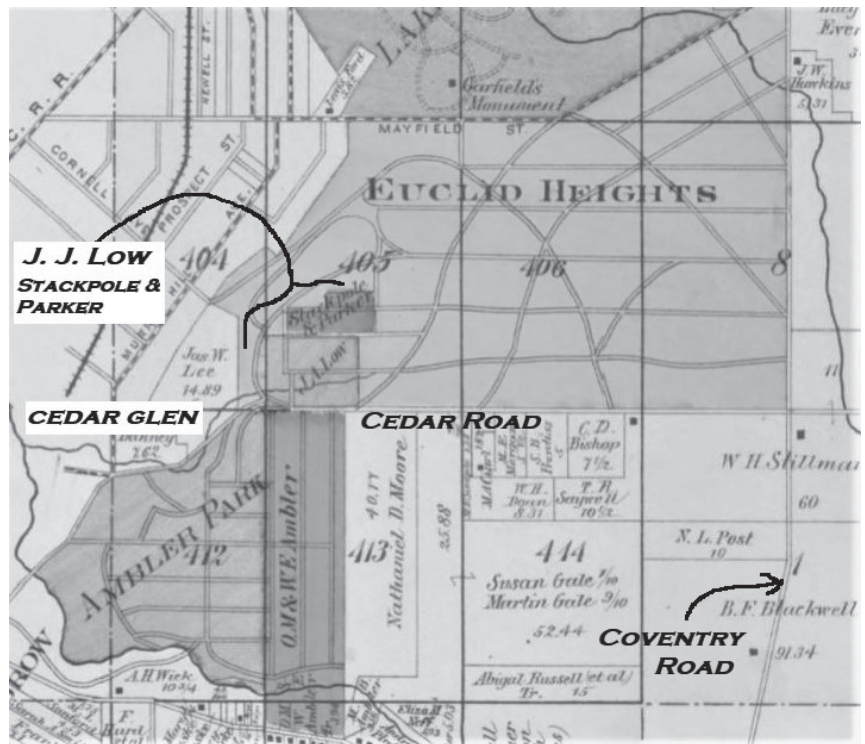
# THE AMBLER FAMILY'S HOME



**THE AMBLER FAMILY'S BRICK HOME CALLED "Rock Rest"** at 8 Fairmount Place. On the left — A ghostly photo of the neglected Ambler home in 1923 before it was demolished for the Baldwin Reservoir (PD). On the right — a drawing of the home in happier times from the 1874 Titus atlas (CPL). The gothic-style home was high up on a majestic hillock across Doan Brook ravine from their Ambler Park (Ambler Heights) allotment.

## *The residential neighborhood of Ambler Park*

**T**he residential neighborhood of Ambler Park was created in 1890 from the real estate vision of Dr. Nathan Hardy Ambler and his wife Martha Buell Ambler. It became the second earliest planned development within today's boundaries of Cleveland Heights, Ohio. It mimicked the first residential development, created by developers Low, Stackpole, and Parker in 1871, located just across Cedar Road.<sup>1</sup> This earliest development was not very successful, likely because of its unappealing design with small rectangular "city style" lots and cramped streets. The streets were known as Edwards, Parker, Franklin



<sup>1</sup> The real estate developers were John J. Low, Thomas Stackpole and James Parker.

and Cliff Streets (the remnant of Edwards still exists). By 1890, Patrick Calhoun (the grandson of former U. S. Vice President John C. Calhoun) created a new neighborhood, called the Euclid Heights Allotment, practically right over the top of this first one. Most of the houses already in place in this first allotment, were torn down to make way for this new plan. Calhoun designed his prestigious neighborhood using “Garden City” and “City Beautiful” concepts with curving, looping streets, roomier house lots, and ample garden and green space. This new Euclid Heights neighborhood, with its appeal and early success, became the inspiration for the redesign of Ambler Park in 1895 into the Ambler Heights we see today. Ambler Heights remains largely intact with most of its original homes still standing. In 2002, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places (Ambler Heights Historic District) and is still a splendid and coveted place to live in Cleveland Heights.

## Four Eras of Ambler Heights

- 1** Quarrying and Logging (mostly early settler families)
- 2** Farming and Pasture period (families of Cows, Sturtevant and others)
- 3** “Ambler Park” residential neighborhood of Martha Buell Ambler
- 4** “Ambler Heights,” residential neighborhood as redesigned by C. W. Pratt Jr., and managed by Martha’s heir Daniel O. Caswell and his wife Elizabeth.

# WILDERNESS INTO QUARRY AND LOGGING PERIOD

**B**efore the 1830s the Cedar Glen and Ambler Heights area was a wild, untouched place with gurgling cool brooks and dense forest. It was the territory of sunning rattlesnakes, howling wolf packs, and foraging bears. Crystal clear waters from natural springs spewed from rocky hillsides forming small brooks. The retreating glaziers of the last ice age had left behind scattered boulders and deep lush ravines in their wake. Many past forest denizens — such as wild cats, beaver, elk, deer, and buffalo — had been pushed westward by incoming pioneers, but left behind their useful beaten paths. Many of these paths followed along Ambler Heights streams down to the Doan Brook glens below. Torrents of water splashed over ledges of the Heights Portage Escarpment creating waterfalls and laying bare layers of ancient shale, sandstone and bluestone. For thousands of years this area had been the rightful hunting and camping grounds of the Native Americans, the last tribes recorded included the Senecas, Ottawas, Delawares, Wyandots, Chippawa, Shawnee, Miamis, Mohawks, and others. The draining rainfall and spring waters of Ambler Heights flowed



# 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...

Here we are presenting you with what we're considering a "double journal," devoted to the history of our Ambler Heights neighborhood – mostly in Cleveland Heights with its western edge actually within the city of Cleveland. You may be surprised to find the neighborhood began as a different tract with a somewhat different street pattern, and there are actually houses that remain from that era. Please visit our website regularly – [clevelandheightshistory.org](http://clevelandheightshistory.org) – where we are finishing the addition of material from our first site as well as adding new material. We are involved in more history programs in the Fall – devoted to more history on Horseshoe Lake, further Ambler Heights history, and architectural history concentrating on Mid-Century Modern in the Heights. They are all to be held at the Heights Lee Road Library. We hope to see many of you; please follow our lively Facebook page for details. Also, the popular Heights Heritage Tour returned September 18th after a four-year hiatus, and the Historical Society once again co-hosted one of the houses. This long-term fall September event is enjoyed even by many who reside elsewhere and is always fun and educational.

Finally, the Board wants to make it known we are always seeking new volunteers. We know there are some out there who have a genuine interest in Cleveland Heights' history and many with actual expertise as to how to use the available resources. Special computer skills would also be a plus but are hardly mandatory. And we certainly can use good writers for this journal and, occasionally, other endeavors.

— Ken Goldberg



down to Doan Brook's main channel to the south and also to the north in Cedar Glen. The Cedar Glen branch of Doan Brook would later be called Blue Rock Brook for the bluish-grey stone that lines its banks. All these waters flowed through today's University Circle and then down to Lake Erie. Almost all of the old streams and springs of Ambler Heights are no longer visible today, having been relegated to storm sewer pipes buried under the suburbs.

## THE FIRST SETTLERS

Who was the first to alter this pristine land around the upper reaches of the Doan Brook watershed and Ambler Heights? The first local land buyer was Manson Sherman (b. ~1791) and wife Pamela

(Wilbur) Sherman who purchased land from the son of Connecticut Western Reserve proprietor Ephraim Root in 1833. The Sherman family was a large clan from Massachusetts, and included brothers Peleg and Isaac.

They became early settlers of Euclid Township, fulfilling professions of masons and mill-wrights. Manson Sherman recognized the profitable natural resources along the ravines of Doan Brook — the quarriable Berea sandstone and Euclid bluestone along cliffs, and the timber of the huge original forests.

Mr. Sherman immediately sectioned off and sold portions of his land to others — there would be larger land parcels for timberland, and smaller, more valuable parcels in between for quarrying.



Example of local stone quarrying in the 1800s (this image is from the 1874 Titus Atlas, of the Haycox quarry, once located in Cleveland Heights' Cain Park). When the stone first comes out of the ground, it is wet and more easily sawed, chiseled, and shaped.

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# THE EARLIEST CLEVELAND AREA RAILROAD

*Called the “Cleveland and Newburgh Railroad,” the railroad served  
Ambler Heights and other Doan Brook Quarries*



A railway was sorely needed, as the transporting of stone by wagon was dangerous and grueling work. A local Doans Corners' boy, I.T. Frary, wrote, “All the heavy products of those [Heights] quarries had to be dragged down the hill and to destinations in the city on wagons of prodigious sturdiness, by horses of infinite fortitude, conveyed by drivers possessing unrivalled capacity for brutality, profanity, and liquor.” (*WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio*)

In this Ambler Heights area, early business entrepreneurs purchased these small quarries in three main areas — along the ravine edges of Cedar Glen, up on the smaller tributaries of the Ambler Heights plateau area, and to the south all along Doan Brook's main channel. Some of these larger Doan Brook quarries running along side Fairhill Road remained in operation into the 1890s. Quarry land was typically

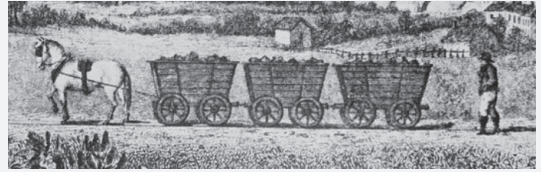
high priced, highly mortgaged, had multiple owners, and changed ownership frequently. The work of digging and blasting out the stone, sawing and chiseling it into sizes and shapes suitable for sale, was grueling and dangerous work. The waterpower of Doan Brook not only ran the waterwheels of grist and saw-mills of the North Union Shakers and other pioneers, but also ran stone-cutting mills there as well (steam power would replace waterpower in the later part of the 1800s).

The quarry operators and landowners used Fairhill Road as quarry access (earlier known as “the Shaker Road” until 1871, and then renamed Fairmount Road for a time) to convey their timber and stone to Cleveland's port. Fairhill Road was made rutty, muddy and impassable by the “evil and uncharted” stones dropped along its path. In the mid-1830s local investors and quarry owners created and utilized Cleveland's first railway called “Cleveland and Newburgh Railroad.” This relatively short-lived enterprise was a unique mule and horse-drawn (and partially gravity powered) system that was used to transport the wood, stone and sometimes even passengers down to the edge of Cleveland's Public Square.

This amazing “all-wooden-track” railroad designed by Ahaz Merchant in 1833 ran from the Heights'

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SOME SIMILAR IMAGES TO OUR  
LOCAL UNIQUE WOODEN RAILWAY



**CLEVELAND HEIGHTS HAD THE VERY FIRST RAILROAD** of the Cleveland area called the “Cleveland and Newburgh Railroad,” receiving its charter by the Ohio General Assembly March 3, 1834. The name Newburgh was chosen because the southwest corner of Cleveland Heights (including Ambler Heights) used to lie in old Newburgh Township (with the later Cedar Road marking the northern boundary and the later Demington Drive marking the eastern boundary). The railroad hauled loads of wood and stone on flat bed, and other cars, pulled by beasts of burden, and it sometimes conveyed passengers on simple and double decker cars. There are no known images of this railroad, so similar versions are shown in this article.

Shaker quarries near Coventry Road and North Park, across today’s Euclid Golf Allotment, down a trestle through wild Cedar Glen, and westward down Euclid Avenue to a railway barn near the southwest corner of Public Square. On its trek downtown, the tracks crossed several Cleveland streams on trestles and even veered north around a huge cranberry bog near E 55th.

This railroad serviced the main Doan Brook quarries as well as the tributary quarries along its wood-en-ribbon path, including those at today’s Fairmount Boulevard and Cedar Roads (the parking lot adjoining Luna Bakery, even looks like an old quarry area).

This primitive, but sturdy, “all wooden railway” was six miles in length, with ties three feet apart, with 4 x 4 stringers (rails) of oak dovetailed into the ties. Along the top of the rails was a strip of maple or beech for added strength (some early railroads used thin strips of iron instead).

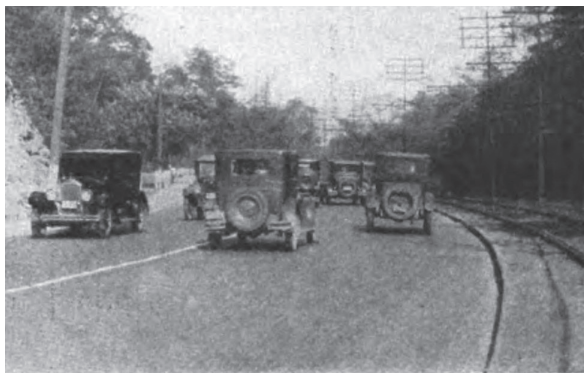
The railway cars with the heavy freight could be unharnessed from the horses, and steered by gravity power down through Cedar Glen. Double decker horse-drawn passenger cars took riders to and fro



for special events. There was only one recorded mishap where a railroad horse became startled and sprinted on without a driver. The lone female passenger got a wild, petticoat rumplining ride, and the horse got fatally impaled on a spike at the end of the line. Stockholders included wealthy Cleveland land developers as well as quarry people such as the Shermans, Billings and Gales. Early taverns along Euclid Avenue serviced the wooden railroad, for

example, Doans Tavern at E. 107th and the Billings Tavern (renamed the Railroad Hotel) at E. 101st and Euclid Avenue. There were three horse barns, one in Martin Gales' pasture in the Heights (not too far from today's Coventry Road), one at the Billings Railroad Hotel and one near Public Square.

The railway was fully completed by 1838, and likely abandoned by the late 1840s. By the 1850s the major steam powered railroads came into the Cleveland area. The abandoned huge railroad ties left along Euclid Avenue caused several accidents over the years as they rose up from the weight of passing vehicles impaling the unsuspecting buggies and sleighs. This early "Cleveland and Newburgh Railroad" is sometimes confused with a later post-Civil War, 3.33-mile street railway using the same name. Interestingly, the original Cleveland and Newburgh Railroad was listed as still in operation in the "American Railway Journal," edited by Henry V. Poor, Vol. II and Vol. XXIV. J. H. Schultz and Co. Publishers. 1851.



**Traffic on congested Cedar Glen Road**

Cedar Glen Parkway which runs along the north side of Ambler Heights shown in 1928 after widening and with streetcar tracks to bring people up from the city. This road has a long history from Native American trail to muddy wagon road, to the modern thoroughfare referred to as the "Gateway to the Heights."

**NOTICE.**--Notice is hereby given, that a petition will be filed with the Commissioners of Cuyahoga county, at their next session to be held at the Court House in Cleveland; on the 4th day of March, A. D. 1850, praying for the establishment of a county road, commencing on the west side of ten acre Lot No. 72; in the township of Cleveland, at a point in the "Lovers' Lane," so called, where the north line of Newburgh township, extended west will intersect said lane; thence extending east across Ten Acre Lots in Cleveland; & upon the north line of Newburgh township, and upon the lot lines to the track of the old Newburgh and Cleveland Rail Road, in the south end of lot No. 402 in East Cleveland; thence along said track to the top of the hill; thence east upon the lot lines to a county road, running northerly from the Shaker sawmill to the State Road in East Cleveland.  
January 31, 1850--feb1-d1tw3w

## A FORTUNATE *find*

**A NOTICE FOR THE CREATION** of a large portion of Cedar Road in 1850. Try your hand at decoding this ad with all its old terminology. Cedar Road was planned from E. 55th street, then eastward towards the Heights, then up Cedar Glen, and then all the way to Coventry Road (a dirt wagon road version).

The ad gives us important information - that the Cleveland & Newburgh Railroad line took a path up Cedar Glen. "Lover's Lane" was near the E. 55th line in Cleveland, the "county road from the Shaker sawmill" is today's Coventry Road, the "State Road" is Mayfield Road, and the sawmill mentioned here (the ruins of it at least) can still be seen in the ravine at the foot of the Lower Shaker Lake at North Park and Coventry.

The boundaries of "East Cleveland" mentioned here, used to overlay part of today's Cleveland Heights. Early Cedar Road included small bridges here and there to cross over the various creeks. Cedar Glen was eventually widened to accommodate streetcars and automobiles, some ravine sides were sheared off, and the road eventually widened into six lanes.

Cedar Glen's Blue Rock Brook now flows unseen in dark underground pipes through the glen, taking rainwater runoff from the Heights down to University Circle, and then to Lake Erie.



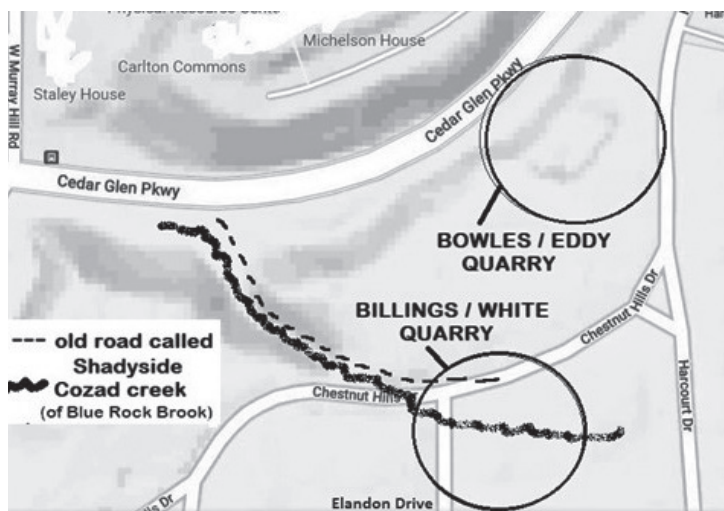
# TWO EARLY UPPER AMBLER HEIGHTS QUARRIES –

*Billings, White, Bowles and Eddy*

There were once two small commercial quarries on the Cedar Glen side of Ambler Heights worth mentioning. The imprint of the sites can still be made out faintly on various topography maps. The first little quarry of Ambler Heights was half an acre, and can be referred to as the Billings/White quarry. It was once located at the southeast corner of today's Chestnut Hills Drive and Elandon Drive (in the general area of the home at 2115 Elandon Drive). There was once a deep creek ravine there, now filled over. One of the deeds mentions the quarry pit was fenced and gated (to keep people and livestock from accidentally falling in). Local residents back then had a habit of freely trekking about "the Heights' ridge" for nature excursions, hunting, horseback riding, fox hunts, and paper chases. Levi Billings was an early Doan Corners resident and was married to Sophia Cody (aunt of famous cowboy and showman William Frederick Cody aka Buffalo Bill). The Billings also ran the Billings Tavern (E 101st and Euclid), later renamed the Railroad Hotel, and Levi Billings was a major investor of the Cleveland and Newburgh railroad. If you go in person to this old Billings/White quarry site, notice how Chestnut Hills Drive dips down near Elandon Drive, and the nearby homes have some stacked stone wall landscaping, the stones likely being from the old creek ravine. If you look northward in the direction of Cedar Glen, you will notice part of the creek still leads down-

ward. Keep in mind that dip of Chestnut Hills Drive is because you are crossing slightly down and up over the old creek spot.

The ravine you still see heading down towards Cedar Glen once had a narrow road running down beside it dubbed "Shadyside" in the Ambler Park era. The creek course there was culverted with a lovely stone retaining wall (remnants remain). The creek water still flows but it is now diverted into sewer pipes underground somewhere. The entrance of Shadyside at the upper level was not as steep as it is now, and nature and other forces have narrowed the path. This small creek drains down to Blue Rock Brook, and it is referred to as "Cozad Creek" on a deed. This Cozad Creek originates somewhere near Delaware Drive from natural water springs and flows across Ambler Heights to the Glen (now flowing in





pipes). This small quarry was owned by the Billings from 1835 to 1852, and then sold on to Oscar F. and Rebecca (Schram) White in 1852. Oscar F. White was a lawyer, brewer, and land investor who moved on to Willoughby. The Whites sold this small quarry to Nathan Ambler in 1869.

The second little quarry parcel of Ambler Heights was 67/100 of an acre (coincidentally in the shape of a coffin), and can be referred to as the Bowles/Eddy quarry. Owner Jonathan C. Bowles is described elsewhere in this article. Dennis Eddy (b.1793) native to Vermont, was married to Sarah Doane (daughter of pioneers Nathaniel Doane and Sarah Adams).

Nathaniel Doane was a member of Moses Cleaveland's surveying party which laid out Cleveland's Public Square and early streets in 1796, and is the namesake of Doan Brook. The Eddy family were early pioneers, and there are two Eddy Roads in the Cleveland area. Dennis Eddy served briefly as a Cleveland constable.

This Bowles/Eddy quarry is now part of the landscaped gardens of the historic Gill-Herget house (the Rudd family's Harcourt Manor property at 2178 Harcourt Drive). This small quarry once had a small access road running from Cedar Glen to Ambler Heights up the hill behind the house. This road, dubbed Westwood during the Ambler Park era, is no longer there but is represented on many past maps. Manson Sherman was the first local purchaser of the land in 1833, and he soon sold the quarry portion on to Dennis Eddy. In 1835 it went to Jonathan C. Bowles (and a Rev. Joel Dabney Jr. owned it briefly in 1837).

This quarry remained under the control of Jonathan C. Bowles, with several investors including Edward Baldwin, Dennis Eddy, and Andrew Cozad for many decades. In 1863 Jonathan Bowles was sued by Wm. S. C. Otis for outstanding debt, and the quarry, and the larger parcel of 26 acres (basically the east portion of Ambler Heights) was sold at auction.

Justus Lafayette Cozad (Andrew Cozad's son) bought it in 1863, and then sold it on to Nathan Ambler in 1871 (*see the 1858 Hopkins map to see this 26 acres with its inner quarry*).

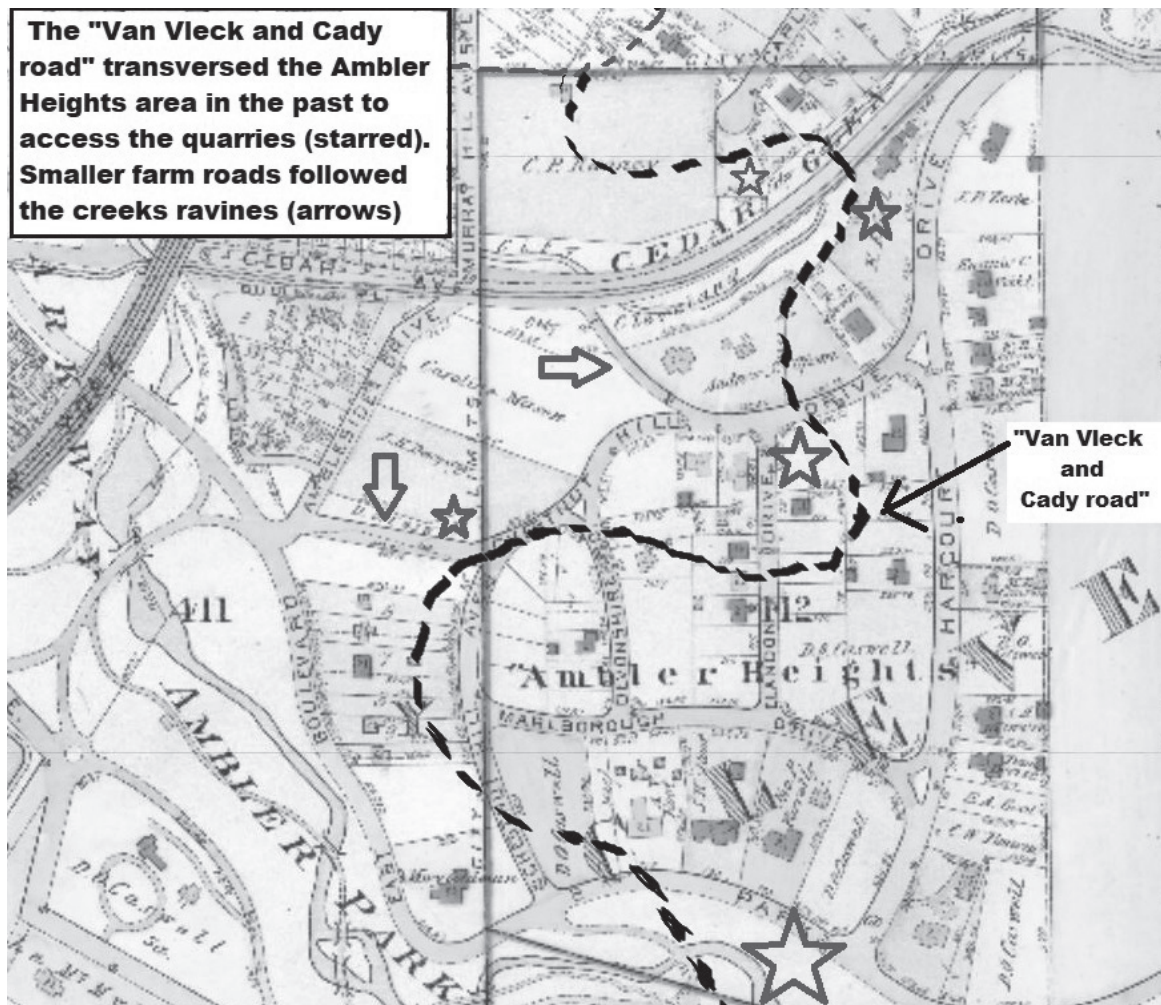
## South of Ambler Heights – *The Larger Doan Brook Quarries*

**THE LARGEST AND LONGEST OPERATING** quarries were located to the south of Ambler Heights along the main Doan Brook channel. Throughout the 1800s, there were many quarries in operation in that ravine from Coventry Road westward toward University Circle, involving the Shakers, local settlers and even investors from out of state.

The stone from these quarries provided building material, flagging for sidewalks, and also large stone blocks used for the creation and filling in of Cleveland's harbor. The detailed history is best for another article, but a few items are worth mentioning. Fairhill Road there between E. 124th and East Boulevard was the site of a quarry settlement for the quarry workers (with a hallmark schoolhouse), with some historic houses remaining to this day. There is an interesting, more modern Tudor-styled suburban era "Belgian Village" (Fairhill Road Village Historic District) nearby.

These bigger quarry sites scattered along the Fairhill Road route were owned by many different people, such as the North Union Shakers (1822-1889), and families by the names of Ingersol, Merchant, Sturtevant, Gale, Cady, Kendal, Williamson, Prentiss, Neff, Sherman, Van Vleck, Horton, Stone, Holloway, Fenton, Denny, Findlater, Brunton, Bruggeman, Keck, Bagley, and many others.

**The "Van Vleck and Cady road" transversed the Ambler Heights area in the past to access the quarries (starred). Smaller farm roads followed the creeks ravines (arrows)**

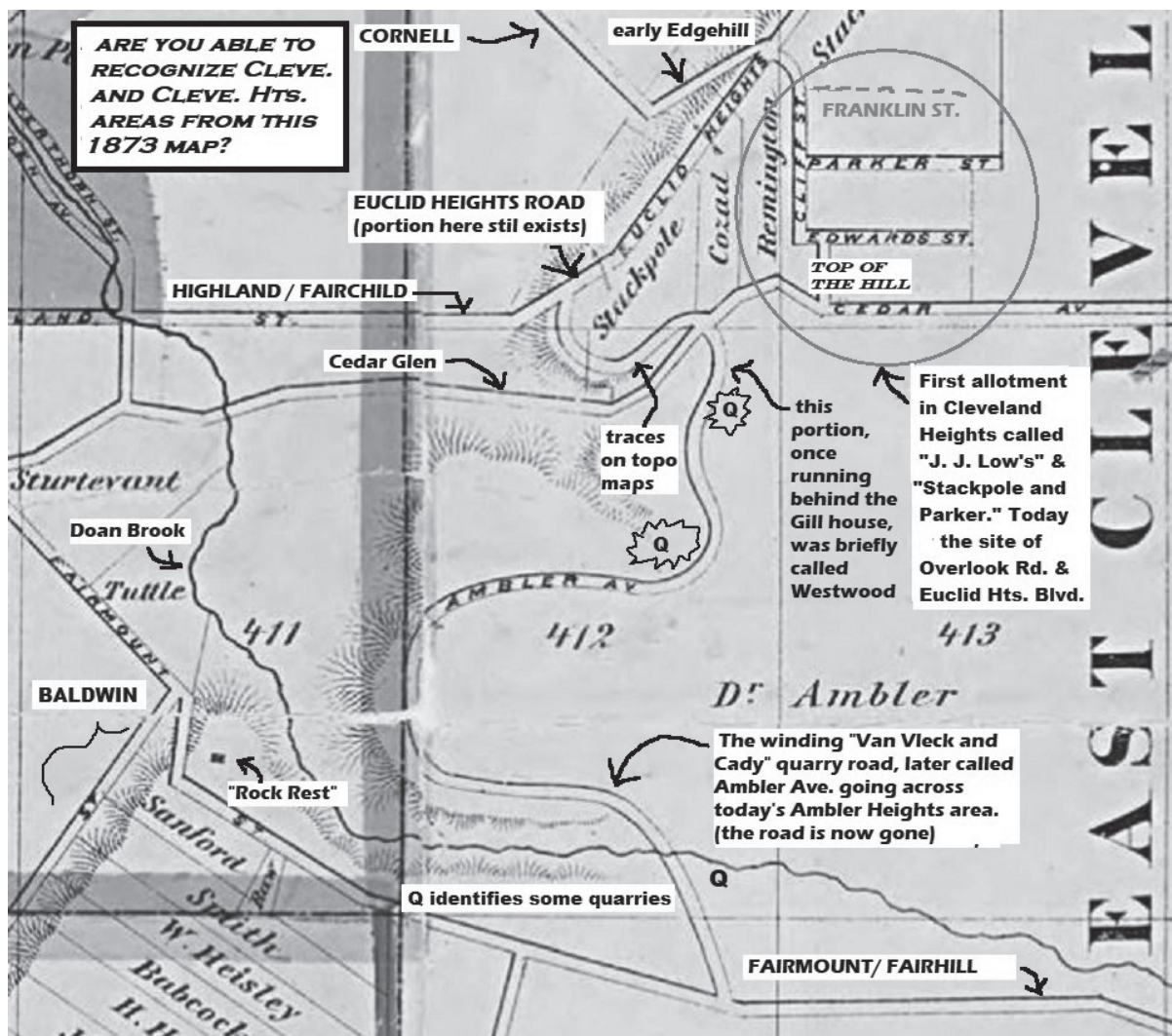


## Early Quarries and Roads of the Ambler Heights Area

During the quarry and farm days, and before there was the enlarged Cedar route through the glen, or North Park south of Ambler Heights, there was a winding quarry road called the "Van Vleck and Cady road" running across the Ambler Heights area (*dotted-line path shown overlaid on a later 1912 map*).







## FARMING AND PASTURE PERIOD

### *Pre-Ambler Heights*

The farmland and meadow view of Ambler Heights area from the 1858 Hopkins map is shown on the opposite page. Before the Civil War, the Ambler Heights area was pastures, remnant woods, and was dotted with quarries here and there. This map shows the area when it was known only

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as old Newburgh Twp. lots 411 and 412 of East Cleveland Township. Lot 412 was divided in the 1830s into three big land parcels, shown here, and it basically stayed in that same configuration until Dr. Ambler bought them for his Ambler Park neighborhood. Most of the southern quarry owners are not listed on this map. You can make out the Billings/White quarry (Elandon Drive and Chestnut Hills Drive) by the odd squarish jog of a boundary line. Although these farm era parcels

changed hands many times during the first half of the 1800s, the later owners, Samuel Cowls, E. T. Sturtevant, and J. C. Bowles, are worth a mention here (Lora W. Pond was only a short-term owner of the 25.69 acres on the map). This 25.69 acre section seems to be associated with the quarries to the south in the main Doan Brook, perhaps used for pastureland for work horses. Also shown is the 10.75 quarry acres of Sherman, Cady, William Van Vleck and many others.

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## THE FARMING ERA – PRE-AMBLER HEIGHTS – *The Cowls and Sturtevant Families* –

Before Mr. Sturtevant owned the western portion of the Ambler Height area (as shown on the map), it was the farm of “Old Cole,” aka Samuel Cowls, Esquire. Mr. Cowls came to Cleveland from Elyria, Ohio around 1819 and soon went into the law practice with a Mr. Kelley.

By 1821 Mr. Cowls was a Justice of the Peace for Cleveland Township, and was involved in the improvement of public schools. In 1834 he was the President of the Western Seaman’s Friends Society which was aimed at helping destitute sailors and converting them to the Lord. His last position was as an Associate Judge of Cuyahoga County.

He purchased the Ambler Heights areas from Manson Sherman and Dennis Eddy in 1835 [CC deeds 16/303, 16/347] and set to hiring help to remove forest trees and work the stone quarry. When he passed away in 1839 a Herald newspaper ad described this early property for us: 140 acres with 45 improved, a new four room

stone house, two small wood houses, a frame barn and stone workshop.

It mentions the property contained a valuable stone quarry (one of the stone quarries along the main Doan Brook channel in the now Ambler Parkland area). This stone house and farm would next go to the Sturtevant family in 1846 (some inner parcels were sold to others). The stone house stood there on Fairmount Road (now Stokes) as a recognizable landmark just west of the railroad tracks into the 1930’s and was converted to the “Deforest Hotel” for a time.



Gravestone of Ephraim Tanner Sturtevant (1803-1881) and wife Frances Pierce Leonard Sturtevant (1818-1888). Also on the stone are Mr. Sturtevant’s daughter Helen (from his first wife Helen Louisa Oviatt) and son Warren (from second wife Julia A. Deforest) in Woodland Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio).



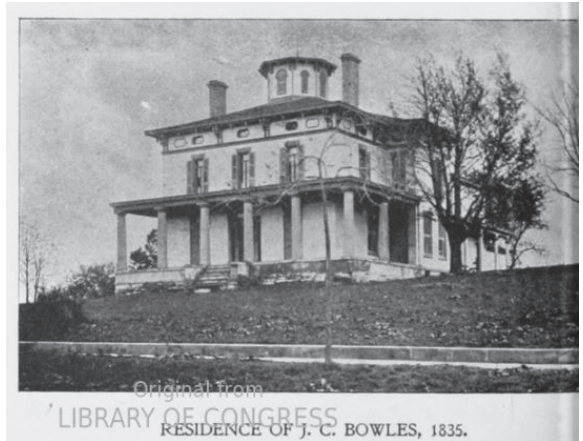
## EPHRAIM TANNER STURTEVANT

Ephraim Tanner Sturtevant was born in Connecticut. His father brought the family to Talmadge, Ohio in 1816 when it was still a wilderness. Ephraim's early life was one of academia and intellectual pursuits.

He graduated from the Talmadge Academy, and then went on to Yale University. He opened his own school and fulfilled roles as administrator and teacher for over 20 years. Business stress prompted him to retire to the farming life and to try his hand at real estate investing. He purchased his East Cleveland Township farm in 1846.

This farm along the old Fairmount Road included part of Ambler Heights (*see map*). His farm included the upper reaches of the Ambler Heights, just east of Doan Brook, accessible by Mapleside Road up the hill. His barn stood at the top of the hill (near today's Chestnut Hills and Denton Drives). His third wife, Frances Pierce Leonard, was by his side. Mr. Sturtevant made his profit from selling fruits, vegetables, and honey from his bee-keeping enterprise. He meadowed his sheep and cashmere breed white goats up on the plateau and sold their wool for a nice profit.

He proudly showed off his prize-worthy Suffolk boar and other fine livestock at the Cuyahoga County and Ohio State Fairs. He eventually sold his quarry land to others and sold most of his farm to Nathan Ambler in 1863. Doans Corners' boy and Historian Charles Asa Post writes that Mr. Sturtevant was a man of many talents, and that at one time he owned much of the present site of Miami, Florida. His daughter Julia Sturtevant Tuttle gave Mr. H. M. Flagler the land for the Royal Palm Hotel there. (*"Doans Corners and the City Four Miles West," page 74, The Caxton Company, Cleveland Ohio. 1930*).



## JONATHAN C. BOWLES

WEALTHY CLEVELANDER AND OWNER  
OF LAND UP ON AMBLER HEIGHTS.

### *A riches to rags story*

**J**onathan C. Bowles and wife Mary D. Bowles, once owned two fine homes along Euclid Avenue, one located on today's Case Campus area. The other, pictured here (from the Centennial Album), was located at E. 101st and Euclid Avenue in Doans Corner. This old house site is where the Cleveland Clinic Cole Eye Institute now stands. Mr. Bowles had been a respected resident, successful businessman, residential developer and an investor of timberland and mineral resource lands. He owned the east portion of Ambler Heights from the 1830s to the 1860s.

The local papers wrote about Mr. Bowles in his younger years as an ambitious businessman who accomplished all he attempted. He ran a hotel on the south side of Euclid Avenue a bit east of the Wade Park Lagoon (taken over by inn-keeper Mr. Silverthorn). Before the major railroads came into Cleveland (1850's), Euclid Avenue had been a crowded road with a continuous stream of covered wagons heading westward. Hotels did a good business.

In 1857, Mr. Bowles set out "west" with other adventure seekers from Cleveland's east end, such as Elias Cozad and Isaac Cody (father of the famous Buffalo Bill), to seek investment land in the newly opened Kansas territory.

Mr. Bowles purchased a tract of land in Grasshopper Valley, Kansas, cut down the timber with teams of oxen and then built 30 homes. His luck began to change soon after though. An arsonist burned his and neighbor's barn along Euclid Avenue causing the loss of wagons and many horses.

In 1863 he was taken to court over Matthew Crawford's sawmill on St. Clair Road. The mill involved mortgages and unknown set-offs that came

back at Mr. Bowles financially.

As a result, Crawford sued and the court took away Bowles Ambler Heights land (this land was then sold at a sheriff's sale to highest bidder, Wm. S. C. Otis, and then sold on to Justis L. Cozad).

Mr. Bowles fortunes did not improve in the intervening years. When he passed away in 1883 he was a forgotten pauper.

The following unflattering mortuary notice appeared in newspapers coast to coast. This one was in "Harper's Weekly," at (Vol. XXVII – no. 1391, New York, August, 18, 1883).

*"An apt Illustration of Will Carleton's poem, "Over the Hills to the Poor-house," has occurred in Cleveland, Ohio. An old man named Jonathan C. Bowles died recently at the city infirmary. Seventy-five years of age, childless, friendless, and alone.*

*Years ago he was wealthy, and owned a large hotel in East Cleveland, on the spot where Adelbert College stands [CWRU], and later was an affluent merchant. He is said to have been twice worth \$100,000, lost in real estate speculations, and to have always possessed a horror about going to the poor-house.*

*Among papers found in his moth-eaten old satchel was discovered a well-marked copy of Will Carleton's poem, "Over the Hills to the Poor-house." Other things in his possession were \$7000 in worthless stock certificates of a Colorado silver mine, a letter certifying that he was a good Methodist, and six cents.*

*These were what remained of two large fortunes. No relative or friend of the poor old man was found to give the body other than a charity burial, and it was interred in the cemetery connected with the poor-house."*



1845  
Bowles, Kirtland, Holden Home  
On Site of Case Institute of Technology

Image from WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio

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## Mary D. Bowles

**OIL PAINTING (C.1840)** of Mary D. Bowles (wife of Jonathan C. Bowles) in the Western Reserve Historical Society Museum, Cleveland, Ohio. (*Image thanks to Whitney Stalnaker and Ann Sindelar of WRHS*). Mary D. (G.) Bowles has an elusive history.

A single Ancestry.com family tree has her as Mary Davis Godfrey Bacon. Census records indicate she was born about 1796 in Massachusetts. She was recorded as “Mary Bacon” when she married Jonathan C. Bowles in Medina, Ohio in 1831. Widow Mary Bacon was about 13 years his senior. Her daughter, Emmeline Bacon (c.1817-1903),

married an Ambler Heights area quarry owner Isaac Sherman, a business associate of Mr. Bowles. He was said to be a nephew of Manson Sherman.

The 1840 census for Cleveland, Ohio shows the Bowles family with two additional younger males in the household. One cannot rule out that these were other children of Mary’s.

Mary lived quietly and preceded her husband in death. She last appears in the records in the 1870 East Cleveland Federal census living with her daughter Emmaline in Doans



Corners (and curiously without Jonathan). Emmeline Sherman and family are buried in the East Cleveland Township Cemetery.

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# The AMBLER FAMILY

## *The Namesake of Ambler Heights*

**I**n the early 1860s and into the 1870s, Nathan Hardy Ambler, local dentist and real estate developer, and his wife Martha Buell Ambler, began buying up land around the Fairhill Road and Cedar Glen area, that included Ambler Heights, with plans to create new residential neighborhoods. They predicted that the growing Cleveland population was heading in the direction of the rural Heights and would be looking to build homes. Meanwhile, the rural land near the top of Cedar Glen would remain a picturesque place where locals hiked, collected wildflowers, and gathered nuts. It was known informally as Turkey Ridge and Heathen Ridge, as it was where a small tribe of gypsy immigrants from “Old England” enjoyed putting up seasonal camps under the stars, and peddling handicrafts and fortune telling to the locals.



**NATHAN H. AMBLER.**

## **DR. NATHAN HARDY AMBLER**

Genial Dr. Nathan Hardy Ambler (1824-1888) was born in Burlington, Vermont — son of Selah Ambler and Charlotte Caswell. In 1845, he married Martha S. Buell (1825-1906) born at Huntington, Vermont. They had one child together, a daughter (1847-1848), who died as an infant.

Nathan Ambler became a fortune seeking “49er”



joining other daring adventurers travelling overland to the California gold rush. He later returned east with his gold dust bag and measuring spoon, as treasured mementoes. He made a nice profit, mostly from fixing miners’ teeth. In 1852 he joined Dr. B. F. Robinson’s dentistry practice in Cleveland at the corner of Superior and Seneca Street (between W. 6th and W. 9th). He built an early family home near Euclid Ave. and Bolton Street (now demolished).

**MR. AMBLER WAS TALENTED**, energetic, and quick thinking. He was said to have great personal magnetism and physical strength. He contributed greatly to the expanding field of dentistry with his advancement in dental techniques. He was also an amateur inventor having filed a U.S. patent on a firearm improvement. He retired from dentistry early to focus on his love for real estate specula-

tion and allotment planning. During the Civil War he bought a large tract of land from the Sturtevant family along Doan Brook (1863 CC deed 122/303) for a family estate. This same sprawling parcel would also become the western portion of the Ambler Heights neighborhood eventually. To the south of Doan Brook, on a lovely hill, the Amblers soon built a home called “Rock Rest.” It was on a remote promontory, much later nicknamed “Fairmount Place” and “Ambleside.” Handsome Mr. Ambler enjoyed his fine horses and bred Collies (scotch shepherd dogs) for a hobby. The 1870 Federal census shows the Amblers employed three paid staff to help run the property – George Whitfield (the hostler), Anna Johnson (house domestic), and William Johnson (the gardener), all three listed as black, and native to the state of Virginia.

**DENTAL CARD.**  
**U. F. Robinson, Dentist, is happy to in-**  
**form his friends and the public, that he**  
**has recently associated with him, Dr. N**  
**H. Ambler, late of Burlington, Vt.**  
**Dr. Ambler has had ten years experience in the profes-**  
**sion and the public are assured that all operations per-**  
**formed by him will be done in the most substantial man-**  
**ner.**

Cleveland Plain Dealer ad January 10, 1853

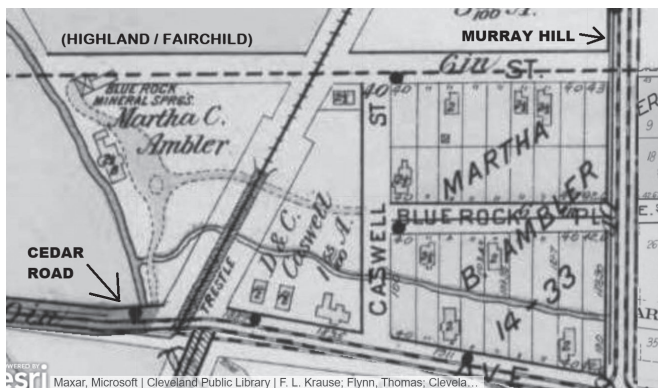


## MR. AMBLER AND REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ambler purchased many other parcels about town and tried his hand in residential developing. One such neighborhood in the southwest corner of Woodland Hills and Holton (south of Buckeye Rd.). Today, there is still an Ambler Avenue to mark his memory. There was another allotment south of Doan Brook he named “Maplebrook.” This neighborhood, just north of the old Luna Park (amusement park), overlooked Baldwin Road, and was briefly included within Cleveland Heights boundaries (early 1900s). Old “Maplebrook” in fact is where Captain Levi Tucker Scofield built his own stone mansion, still standing and awaiting refurbishing. Scofield is best known as the designer and sculptor for the Soldier and Sailors monument at Public Square, as well as the architect for many other notable buildings. Nathan Ambler sold seven acres in this Maplebrook neighborhood to the City of Cleveland for the Fairmount water reservoir (now part of Baldwin Reservoir). Another Ambler development was on the north side of Cedar Glen just to the west of Murray Hill Road in Little Italy, originally it was transformed into the Ambler’s Blue Rock Mineral Springs Sanitarium and park. Martha Ambler redesigned part of the old park into a residential neighborhood (today we know it as a tiny neighborhood off Murray Hill with E. 114th, Glenwood, and Fairchild).

## THE BLUE ROCK SPRINGS SANITARIUM

At the foot of Cedar Hill, in the northwest corner of Cedar Glen Parkway and Murray Hill, was the Ambler’s Blue Rock Mineral Springs Sanitarium and park. The land was purchased from E. T. Sturtevant in 1863 and by 1877 Mr. Ambler was “fitting up his property” for a Water-cure resort (it was in business from about 1880 to 1908). The Amblers



hired Dr. Martha A. Canfield, and a nursing staff to run the sanitarium. They also sold the medicinal, sulphur-tasting mineral water in bottles. After Nathan Ambler’s death, Martha Ambler would go on to create a residential allotment over the old back picnic grounds of the park (with the help of Daniel O. Caswell). A few original houses from this Blue Rock Springs development have survived to this day. Caswell Street is now called E. 114th , and Blue Rock Place is now called Glenwood. [This Blue Rock Springs property was purchased from E. F. Sturtevant by Nathan Ambler in 1863 CC deed 122/303].

## NATHAN AMBLER’S SECRET

Nathan Ambler died in 1888, at age 64, from “brain congestion” (stroke), setting off an event that soon raised eyebrows far and wide. Unbeknownst to his wife and even some of his closest friends, the respected doctor had a secret second family, with two children who owed their paternity to him. Witnesses to Dr. Ambler’s last will and testament came forward hoping to persuade the judge Nathan had not been in his right mind in his last years. Martha tried to keep the revelation private by offering a quick settlement. The “dirty laundry” got a public airing anyway. It turns out that Dr. Ambler,



## A DUAL LIFE.

### A Will Case Reveals a Big Scandal in the Life of a Wealthy Doctor.

CLEVELAND, O., March 31.—Dr. Nathan Ambler, one of the oldest residents of this city, and for many years the leading dentist, died in November last, leaving an estate valued at half a million dollars and two wills. The attempt to probate these wills revealed a big scandal in Dr. Ambler's life that was carefully suppressed until to-day. One of the wills, it now appears, divided the estate between Mrs. Ambler, who had no children, and the doctor's brothers and sisters. The last will, executed in August last, leaves one-third of the estate to Nathan and Rosamond Rose, minor children of Miss Welthea Rose of Berea. It appears that for many years Dr. Ambler maintained illicit relations with Miss Rose, and was the father of her children. She is 32 years old, handsome, but her hair is almost white. The boy is 13 and the girl 5 years of age. The parties had a meeting and agreed to a settlement whereby the Rose children will receive \$150,000. This was consummated to-day, and to facilitate the settlement the probate judge declared both wills invalid from undue influence.

From the St. Joseph (Missouri) Daily Gazette. 4-1-1889. Page 5, proving that the news travelled far.



Martha Buell Ambler's stone (next to Nathan's) in Lake View Cemetery.

at around 52 years of age, had started a love affair with 19-year-old Wilhelmena J. Rose that lasted over a decade. At Nathan's probate hearing, Wilhelmena, also known as Wealthy, and Welthea, told the court that Nathan had visited her in Chagrin Falls quite often, and stayed weeks at a time, posing as her uncle. She said the neighbors never caught on. After Dr. Ambler's death, Miss Rose continued her guise as a widow, raising her children out of the public's eye. The 1880 Federal census for Middleburgh Twp., Ohio shows her at a boarding house with little son Nathan as "Mrs. Walker" (believed to be an alias). The Cleveland city directories in later years listed her as Mrs. J. H. Walker and Mrs. J. W. Walker.

The two children of Dr. Nathan H. Ambler and Welthea Rose Walker, were brown-haired, blue-eyed Nathan Hardy Walker (born May 8th, 1877) and his sister Rosalind G. Walker Moore (born March 27, 1885). Nathan Senior, in failing health, and in a tight spot, had added a codicil to his will for the children's sake, but Martha was thrown "under the carriage wheels" as a result. The eventual settlement to his second family was small by the time the court and Martha saw to it. It did not include some initial promised property, but enough funds for Welthea to purchase a home at 307 Dunham Street in Cleveland (E. 66th near the Dunn baseball field). Welthea passed away in 1908, in her early 50's. Nathan Ambler's progeny (aka the "Rose Children") eventually relocated to New York City and Pennsylvania and then onward.

## MARTHA AMBLER

The scandal left Martha Ambler shielding her eyes from the social spotlight and navigating around wagging tongues. What could she do but hold her head up high and go about her charity work, and managing the real estate sales of her several allotments. When she passed away in 1901, her cause of death was officially listed as "exhaustion."

Her last Will and Testament left bequests to family members (including Daniel O. Caswell), the Unity Church, Huron Road Hospital, the Spiritualist Society, and the Women's Suffrage Federation Club. She was a great appreciator of literature, and her friends reported she was a skillful and delightful writer. She had previously left 23.5 acres of the Ambler land to the City of Cleveland on the condition they keep it protected and reserved only for a public park (this promise was not kept over time however).

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# THE CASWELLS

**D**aniel Orvis Caswell (1857-1906) born in Litchfield, Ohio was treated like an adopted son of the Amblers and was an actual much younger first cousin of Nathan Ambler. (They were descended from siblings Charles Caswell and Charlotte Caswell. Charles was Daniel's father; Charlotte was Nathan's mother.) Daniel Caswell was related to Moses Cleaveland, as well as the founders of Painesville. His parents, Charles Caswell and Sarah A. Landon, arrived in Medina County, Ohio from Vermont in 1831 with no more than an axe and 25 cents with which to start their new lives.

Mr. Caswell, was trained initially to be a pharmacist. Dr. Nathan Ambler called for his young cousin to come to Cleveland, to help plan a new Water-cure resort at the foot of Cedar Hill at the natural mineral springs located there (about where the CWRU Sears Thinkbox/old Lincoln Storage building is now). Daniel Caswell was in his early twenties at the time, and it is said he is the one who came up with the name of "Blue Rock Springs Sanitarium." Mr. Caswell entered the real estate profession through Dr. Ambler, and eventually started his own business. After Nathan passed away, Mr. Caswell worked faithfully with Martha conducting the family real estate business and was likely the driving force behind the redesign of "Ambler Park" into the more appealing "Ambler Heights" we see today. Mr. Caswell was elected to Cleveland City council (1892-93), and served several times as the Captain for the Gatlin Gun Battery. In 1898, Mr. Caswell married Elizabeth May Stutte (1865-1929) and the Ambler's "Rock Rest" eventually became their home.



An interesting revelation to the Ambler Heights story, is that it was Elizabeth (Stutte) Caswell who conducted most of the sales of the Ambler Heights allotment. After the death of Martha Ambler, and then the death of her own husband Dan Caswell as well, it fell on her shoulders as the "administratrix de bonis non," (an administrator appointed by a court to replace an administrator of a will) to sell the lots. It was her efforts that made sure the elegant neighborhood became populated, and the Ambler's real estate dream realized.

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# AMBLER PARK

*1890-1900*

**B**y the early 1890s, after Nathan's passing, Martha B. Ambler took over the family's real estate vision. She was the moving force for their housing allotment called Ambler Park, which was a respectable, family neighborhood allotment near the top of Cedar Hill, the entrance to the Heights. It was modelled for "country living" away from the city noise and pollution. Martha's deeds stipulated that only single dwelling homes, and of reasonable value could be built, with no spiritous, vinous or malt liquors made or sold from the premises. It was still the horse and carriage era, and the deeds indicated that any stables needed to be a certain distance from the road. On a lower level of the allotment, west of Ambleside Avenue (now known as Ambleside Drive) was the "Buell Place" section. Here were 26 house lots, including those along the circular "Buell Place" road. Up on the higher level of Ambler Park there were a total of 276 lots, many of them very small, and it turns out not that appealing to would-be buyers. The lower Buell Place level hosted about eight homes in its heyday, and a brick apartment building with nice awnings called "Amblerside." All these structures were demolished over time, and now apartment buildings occupy the spot (one apartment building is the historic 1927 Cedar Glen Apartments added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1994).

## ROADS WITH A VIEW

The house lots all along the bluff edge, were the largest lots of Ambler Park, and came with a panoramic view of the city and Lake Erie. These house parcels backed up to early roads called "Chestnut Hill" and "Beacon Hill" and had special sections nicknamed "Bellevue," "Point Lookout," and "Glen

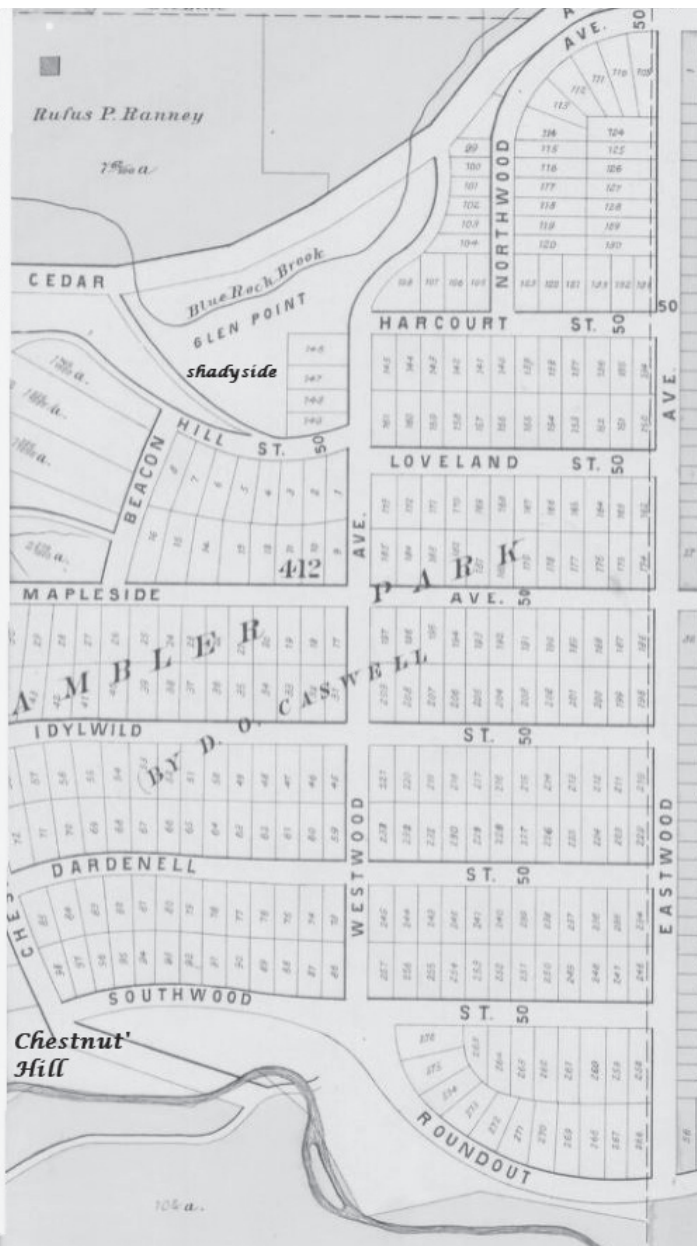
**MAP (RIGHT):** Ambler Park included the Buell Place neighborhood west of Ambleside, at the foot of the hill and located over the border on the Cleveland side. You may notice that Ambleside was originally Amblerside. Martha Buell Ambler's "Ambler Park" development shown here on the 1892 George Cram, Atlas of Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland (CPL), shows the division line shown between Cleveland and East Cleveland Township (eventually Cleveland Heights). Buell Place is on the far western portion. The allotment was nestled in by two gorges, Blue Rock Brook branch of Doan Brook (Cedar Glen) to the north, and Doan Brook main channel to the west and south. Notice that the Ambler Park lots once extended all the way down to the bank edge of Doan Brook (this was taken away when the new boulevard was cut through).

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Point." There were early access roads going down the hill sides — Mapleside, Shadyside, Buell Place, and Westwood (Westwood being that old quarry road that used to run behind today's Harcourt Manor). The rest of the Ambler Park plan followed an unexciting grid pattern (streets at right angles) with streets called Northwood, Southwood, Eastwood, Westwood, Dardenell, Idylwild, Loveland, Roundout, Harcourt and Chestnut Hill. These roads were listed on an old street railway schedule as reachable by certain streetcar stops (Whitworth Brothers Street Directory and Electric Railway Guide of Cleveland and Suburbs. 1904).

## A STALL ON SALES

From 1891-1896 Martha managed to sell lots only on the "overlook" hill periphery, in the Bellevue and Glen Point areas, to families such as Wright, Cramer, Keys-Churchill, Morris, Mason, Bulkeley, Biggar and Smith. The more inner house lots were not selling. A large longish barn and stable structure can be seen on the 1898 map, off Chestnut Hill(s) Drive, likely the barn left over from the Sturtevant family. One of the problems with attracting new home buyers was that the area was still lacking a water system hook-





up. There were likely several natural water springs (locations now unknown) that could be utilized for piped water, and water wells, but the area needed to be hooked into the city lines eventually. There was a lack of sewer hookup as well. The City of Cleveland had to deal with complaints about the Ambler Park cesspools oozing filth down onto the new Ambler boulevard (MLK) after it was completed.

The other big issue was inaccessibility. The original dirt roads up to Ambler Park were steep and inconvenient, especially for the new automobiles. These lot sales along the rim of the hill were the last ones in Ambler Park before Mrs. Ambler passed away in 1901. In her last years, there had been few customers interested in this allotment, which prompted the need for change.

## Martha Ambler's "Buell Place" section of the lower level of the Ambler Park Allotment

**THIS VIEW WAS TAKEN** from above the railroad that crosses Cedar Glen at the bottom. The old streetcar line up Cedar Glen can be seen below. Buell Place, part of the Ambler Park Allotment (*see map on page 23 courtesy of [Clevelandmemory.org](http://Clevelandmemory.org)*), was a quaint neighborhood on a semi-circular road, was just west of Ambleside Drive. These houses, and an apartment building shown (all demolished now) reflect the



original vision of Ambler Park as a place for the city's working folk to get out of the pollution and closer to country living. Early buyers were not as interested in the upper level of Ambler Park, as it was not as easy to reach at this time. The redesign of Ambler Park into to Ambler Heights, with new curvy roads, lovelier look, and roomier home lots, would eventually attract the more well-to-do buyers. To the right in the photograph you can see Doan Brook with two small recreation lakes. This is the land Martha Buell Ambler graciously gifted to the City of Cleveland on the deed stipulated condition they keep it as a public park. Unfortunately, the parkland lakes and stream are now buried in underground sewer pipes, and the park has been developed with massive underground sewer interceptor tunnels.





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# Ambler Heights

## *1900-present*

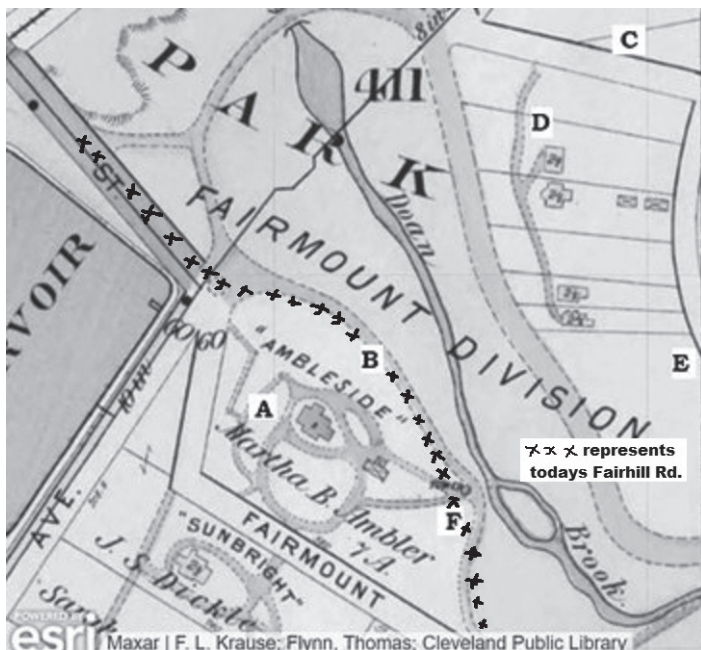
In her last few years, Martha B. Ambler, with her “adopted son” (actually Dr. Ambler’s first cousin), Daniel O. Caswell’s influence, had the whole concept of “Ambler Park” redesigned by Charles Wheeler Pratt, Jr. (1865-1947). Mr. Pratt was a civil engineer and landscape architect and had worked under Ernest W. Bowditch in Boston on waterworks and sewer design projects. Mr. Pratt came to Cleveland in 1893 and worked as chief engineer for the Cleveland Park board, completing many projects, including the downtown “Group Plan.” He also worked for the private sector and was hired to redesign Ambler Park into a more upscale residential section renamed “Ambler Heights.” The roads were reconfigured using the trendy “Garden City” plan which meant prettier rounded and looped streets and property spaces large enough for mansions, natural green space, and landscaped formal gardens. The Pratt design reduced the 276 lots down to about 102 lots. Water, gas, electric and sewer services were planned in (gas wasn’t installed though until after 1913), the roads were redrawn around the five or six houses already standing (including the Keyes-Churchill house).

English sounding street names were added, such as Marlborough (but then later renamed Denton), Devonshire (originally Nathan), and Elandon. Two

early streets, Chestnut Hills and Harcourt were retained.

Nearby, another “City Beautiful” style development, the “Euclid Heights” allotment, was attracting some of Cleveland’s wealthiest clientele as a second choice to living on Cleveland’s famous Euclid Avenue “Millionaires’ Row”. This top of Cedar Hill area of the Heights had J. D. Rockefeller’s influence all over it, from his own real estate buying to his “Forest Hill” estate eastward down Mayfield Road. The new Tudor-Revival Euclid Country Club and golf links nearby along Cedar Road and Ambler Heights allotment were also a big draw for new homebuyers. By 1916, Ambler Heights was well on its way to being more than a third filled with high quality, attractive, architect-designed homes.

The northwest corner of the allotment had property belonging to Caroline Mason and James Dempsey (the four original “Point lookout” lots on Beacon Hill Road). In 1916, it was bought by the Warren Bicknell family for their new estate and formal gardens [CC deed 1852/202 and 1852/204], The Bicknell’s mansion still stands today, largely preserved, at 1801 Chestnut Hills Drive, as part of the Judson Park Retirement Community complex (*see our last “View from The Overlook” issue on the Bicknell family*).



Map showing the 1860's Ambler family estate along Doan Brook, once located to the south of their 1890 Ambler Park Allotment.

know as Fairhill Road today. The original Fairmount Road portion running to the south of Rock Rest no longer exists and is now part of the property of the Baldwin Reservoir.

**C) An original access road to “Ambler Park” called Mapleside used by Mr. Cowl and Sturtevant family in the farm era.** This is along the same ravine path that later became the Warren Bicknell mansion formal gardens designed by the famous Olmsted brothers.

**D) Front carriage road along the hill for the earliest homes in the Ambler Park’s “Bellevue” section of Ambler Park.** Some decorative parapet-looking stonework still graces this old horse path.

**E) Chestnut Hills Dr.**

**F) The site of Ambler’s tower** (aka old fort tower, Indian tower, and round tower) at the foot of his driveway. The tower is featured on many golden era penny postcards of the early 1900’s. Nathan Ambler, at the very least, embellished the tower (now demolished), on top of what may have been older period stonework.

## ROCK REST

**A) The Ambler’s brick home was named “Rock Rest.”** It was built on a “stray hillock” overlooking Lake Erie, replete with natural water springs, amongst scattered odd boulders, and surrounded by what looked like the remains of a crumbling ancient fortification.

**B) A carriage road originally known as part of the “Van Vleck and Cady quarry road,” and later called Vinecliff.** This road was later widened by the City of Cleveland into what we



“Rock Rest,” peeping up like a doll house on land the Amblers purchased in 1863. Remnants of the stone stairs can still be spied today, in bare winter months, just east of Baldwin Road, on the Baldwin Reservoir property as you round the bend going eastward on Fairhill Road.





A penny postcard featuring the “old round tower” at the Ambler estate. I. T. Frary, a Doans Corners boy, wrote about seeing Dr. Ambler and his cronies playing cards inside the tower to keep cool on hot summer days (WRHS). This “Ambler’s Hill,” had one of the best panoramic views of the countryside and Lake Erie. The tower was unfortunately blasted away when Fairhill Road was rerouted through the spot, for construction of the new Baldwin water reservoir.



Detail of an early 1900s penny postcard showing a natural water spring with Rock Rest in the background upper left.



A photograph across Doan Brook of the Ambler’s brick “Rock Rest” on “old Fort Hill” (*Western Reserve Historical Society digital collection*).





IMEX Photo-Eng. Co., Clev'd.

CONSTRUCTING AMBLER PARKWAY.

# OUR NEEDED ACCESS *to the* HEIGHTS

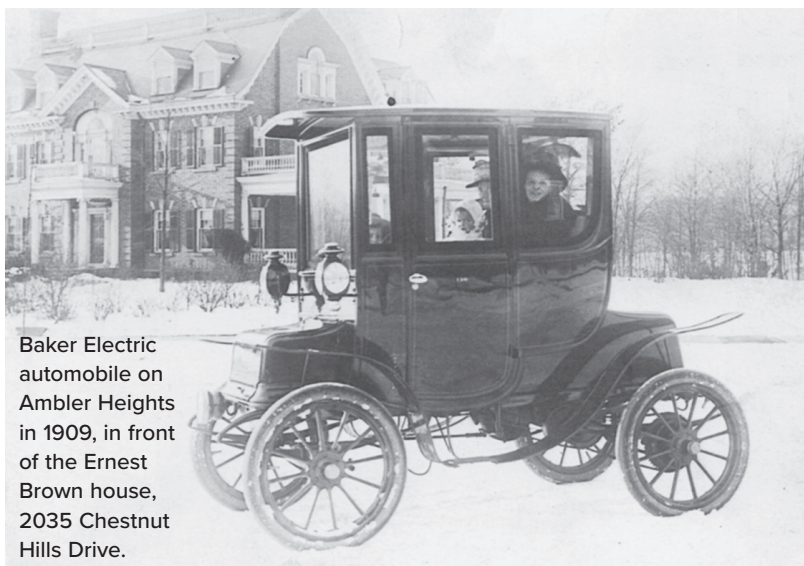
The story of Ambler Heights could not be complete without this most crucial event c.1895 – the building of “Ambler Parkway” (aka “Eastern Parkway”) now part of North Park and Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.).

This monumental public work required the blasting away of the front hill face of Ambler Heights, taking out part of the backyards of a few homes up on the hill, and filling some of the ravine side in below to create the passage. The finished

road was the key to making Ambler Heights a success. The old “up the side of the hill” roads could be abandoned. Martha made the city agree they would build this road in her 11-page deed of parkland to the City [CC deed 599/425]. Today, we hardly notice the climb to the Heights on the easy grades (including that of Cedar Glen which was filled and flattened where needed). We can thank huge crews of hard-working, mostly immigrant laborers for this difficult road building.



Pictured here is the cut made through the Ambler Heights hill above Doan Brook ravine to create the boulevard (North Park, MLK), and give better access to the Heights. A wood-railed fence to keep livestock from wandering can be seen up on the hill. The road used to be two-way. Today it is one-way in the down direction.



Baker Electric automobile on Ambler Heights in 1909, in front of the Ernest Brown house, 2035 Chestnut Hills Drive.



Detail of a penny postcard (early 1900's) showing an old timey car travelling down the newly blast-ed-out North Park/MLK parkway around the foot of Ambler Heights leading down to University Circle. Doan Brook is to the right.

# EARLY HOMES & SERVANTS

## *of Ambler Heights*

**THE EARLY GRAND HOMES ON AMBLER PARK/AMBLER HEIGHTS** were built by Cleveland's elite society with quality materials such as leaded glasswork, brass ornamentation, copper window screens, marble, extensive woodwork and fine craftsmanship. They had built-in pantries, library nooks, billiard rooms, and some had ballrooms. During this era, it took a lot of human power to keep an expansive house in order and repair, especially without modern appliances.

Homes included servants' sections with living quarters, built-in dumb-waiters, narrow hidden staircases, "call systems" to summon the "help," and sleeping porches (no residential air conditioning in those days).

There were constant linens to wash and iron, coal to shovel into furnaces, fireplaces to attend, silver to polish, and lots of guests to feed in style. The "serving" profession became a way for many emigrants and immigrants to find respectable employment, and most were also provided uniforms (a mark of prestige) and elegant live-in accommodations.



A demographic "snapshot" of Ambler Heights from the U.S. Federal Census of 1910 shows that out of the 15 homes present at the time, almost all of them employed servants (four servants per one household being the highest number), and both male and female.

They included (from the Census): Male Servants: two English, and one Hungarian (one being a chauffeur); Female Servants: two English, five Irish, three German, one Hungary-Slovak, and one Finland/Russian,

three native born to Ohio, one African American born in Maryland. Two homes had no servants, and one home had a mother-in-law who likely assisted in domestic duties, in place of a servant.

Unfortunately, exclusionary practices were used in hiring, which are thankfully illegal today. "Help wanted" advertisements in the past stipulated certain religions, races, nationalities, gender and even ages of applicants. (*Above photo from book — "Simple Directions for the Waitress or Parlor Maid," by Caroline Reed Wadhams, published by Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1917.*)



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## *Interesting homes of Ambler Heights and a bit of their stories*



**T**here are many fascinating homes in Ambler Heights, whose stories could fill up a book. Many notable homes had to be left out this time around. Please see our “View from The Overlook” no. 47 Summer 2021 issue for the story of Ambler Heights’ incredible Bicknell mansion. Several more homes are featured here, including three still standing from when Ambler Heights was its original Ambler Park configuration, which are 2001-3, 2231, and 2247 Chestnut Hills Drive.

**THE ALICE AND CHARLES CRAMER HOUSE** (now owned by the Margolis family) at 2247 Chestnut Hills Dr. This Ambler Park lot was purchased from Martha B. Ambler in 1891 [CC deed 509/134], and the house was finished before 1893 (per the deed requirement). The large Berea sandstone block foundation can best be seen on the north side of the house.

This house is likely the oldest house still standing today in the Ambler Heights historic district. It was owned early on by the Cheney and McCormick families as well. It was built before sewer lines were connected up to the city, and when there was a bridle path along the hill brow in front of the houses (deed protected 1911 CC deed 1362/187).

This house lot originally extended down the hill slope before the boulevard was cut through and included Doan Brook. The valley portion of the property was later relinquished to the City of Cleveland for the creation of North Park/MLK. *(photo by Ken Goldberg)*

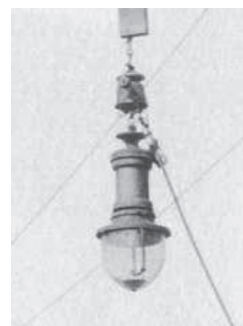




The Elizabeth Keyes-Churchill House (now owned by the Bambakidis family) at 2001-3 Chestnut Hills Dr., was one of the early homes in the original Ambler Park (before the streets were reconfigured into Ambler Heights). This is likely the second oldest standing house in the Historic District. Sometimes this house is referred to as the Upson house for a later owner. This home was built by “Lizzie” Elizabeth Keys-Churchill (1836-1910), born Lizzie Little. Her first husband was Eli N. Keyes, a prominent Cleveland merchant. Her second husband was “Sela” Solomon Churchill, an iron merchant of Columbus, Ohio.

This neat house was built on the edge of the overlook, oriented with the small access road up the ravine from Cedar Glen once called Shadyside. Built along the hill brow, the house has two “fronts” one facing the ravine road, and one facing the allotment. Elizabeth Keyes Churchill bought the land in 1892 from Martha B. Ambler [CC deed 517/372] when the property was 4.5 acres (since subdivided), and the boundary streets were Cedar, Westwood, Beacon Hill, and Shadyside (old roads of Ambler Park).

The house was built by architect Alfred Granger, in the Tudor Revival style, with narrow wooden clapboards on the first floor and half timbering on the second floor. A horse stable for the house has been converted into a garage. This house became a Cleveland Heights Landmark in 2007 thanks to the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission. [“Elizabeth Keyes Churchill House,” by Ken Goldberg, Heights Observer Vol. 10, Issue 10, 2017, posted 9-29-2017]. If you ever spot a tranquil apparition floating about its halls who is slight of stature, with lovely eyes of dark blue, a prominent chin, and a slightly roman nose – that would be Lizzie. (Taken from her U.S. Passport application description from Ancestry.com) *(photo by Ken Goldberg)*



Streetlight in front of the Keyes-Churchill house in 1917



**F** H. MORRIS HOUSE at 2231 Chestnut Hills Drive, was built 1893 and is an original Ambler Park home. It is now owned by John and Karen Nestor. One main entrance faces the bluff edge where the old carriage path once was, and the other entrance to the north faces the side where a companion house once sat (2225 Chestnut Hills). Frank Hubbard Morris (1851-1900) was born in Michigan, and came to Cleveland in 1880. He married Emily (Emma) Bulkeley.

The Morris' bought the property from Martha Ambler, August 5, 1892 [CC deed 532/66] the deed stipulated that the home had to be constructed by 1893. Emily's brother, William F. Bulkeley, built the house that once sat next door 2225 Chestnut Hills (now demolished). The two homes shared a common driveway.

The Bulkeley home was an original Ambler Park home as well, its large chiseled foundation sandstones were salvaged to use for a garden created on the site (the formal garden was designed by

Virginia Burt). Mr. Morris worked as the Western manager of the American Wringer Co. before stepping up to a more prestigious job as an auditor for the War Department (Navy). Some considered him fair, others considered him a harsh taskmaster. Disgruntled employee and Civil War veteran, Samuel MacDonald, entered Mr. Morris' office one day with an assassin's gleam in his eye.

MacDonald felt he had been unfairly blamed for a big shortage in the disbursing accounts. In addition to a demotion, he was required to cover the loss himself. He entered Mr. Morris' office with a loaded Smith and Wesson, and after a tussle landed a fatal shot into Mr. Morris' heart. MacDonald then tried to slit his own throat, and was taken to the hospital, presumably to die.

The newspapers reported that when Mrs. Morris heard the news of her husband's death, she fainted straight away, and had to be taken by carriage to her son's home. (*photo by Ken Goldberg*)



**T**HE BENJAMIN BOURNE BARN (Stables) redesigned into a trendy residence owned by the Biggar family, located at 2265 Harcourt Drive. The barn ventilator structures were preserved and can still be seen on the roof. Benjamin Franklin Bourne (1861-1934) and wife Caroline Warmington Bourne (1866-1930), purchased two early house lots on Ambler Heights when Harcourt Drive was still only a “proposed” road. Their main house parcel fronted Ambler Parkway (now called North Park Boulevard) and was purchased in 1902 [CC deed 856/382].

Their adjacent barn lot, fronting Harcourt Dr., was purchased in 1904 [CC deed 951/378]. The June 1903 “Ohio Architect and Builder,” informs the reader that architect J. Milton Dyer was hired to erect the barn for Benjamin Bourne on Ambler Heights (and for a sum far greater than most homes of the time would cost). Martha Ambler’s deed stipulated that the structure had to be at least 100 feet back from the road. When these lovely stables were built, the property behind was still the wide-open golf links fields of the Euclid Club, rather than the neighborhoods and streets we see there today.

The Bourne family was situated in their home by 1910 as shown by the federal census records. Benjamin F. Bourne’s obituary in the Cleveland Plain Dealer mentions that he started out in business as a poor boy, and without a college education, and yet rose to become the head of the world’s largest bolt manufacturer.

He became the President of the Bourne-Fuller Company and helped develop the iron and steel industries of Cleveland. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and golfing, and was a member of several prestigious country clubs. They had a daughter Eleanor Bourne Floyd. The original Bourne house was demolished after a fire (*see photo*). The Bourne barn is reminiscent of another converted stable standing at 4500 Warrensville Center Road — owned by the Warrensville Heights School District and was used as a school for a long time. During her life Mrs. Bourne hosted many luncheons, musicales, and soirees at her home — the rooms all adorned with copious vases of fragrant garden flowers. At her passing, she bequeathed huge sums of money to her family servants, which made several newspaper articles. (*photo by Ken Goldberg*)



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**T**HE GILL-HERGET HOUSE (“HARCOURT MANOR”) is owned by the Rudd family, and is located at 2178 Harcourt Drive. There’s hardly room here to do justice to this magnificent and expansive house. The property for the home was purchased in 1906 by Kermode Frederick Gill (1866-1951) and his wife Dorothea Ambos Gill (1871-1954) [CC deed 995/601].

The family was well situated in the house by the 1910 federal census. Kermode Gill followed professionally in the footsteps of his father, John Gill, who had been a successful Cleveland contractor and builder. K. F. Gill’s building achievements include the Terminal Tower, the Federal Reserve Bank and Wade Park Manor. Dorothea Gill saw to her children’s education, worked for women’s rights (Suffrage), and professed the Christian Science faith.

The Gill home was situated on the picturesque precipice of Cedar Glen and designed by well-known architect Frank B. Meade in the Elizabethan Revival

style. It can be considered one of the earliest Ambler Heights homes with an attractive formal garden and pool in what was once the old Bowles/Eddy quarry area.

The current owners, John and Anya Rudd, have graciously opened their showcase home for many community fundraisers and tours. It was restored with the help of talented architects, contractors, and landscape designers, with the artistic interiors done by Anya Rudd herself (owner of “Anya Designs”). It received an AIA Craftsmanship Award and was the main feature of the 2018 Heights Heritage Tour.

Many of us locals, Anya Rudd included, share a similar childhood story of admiring the fairytale house up on the hill while travelling through the glen below. Its castle-like eminence is made even more lovely by the quaint backyard gazebo complete with french doors and a lodge-like fireplace. This house is also known as the Gill-Herget House, as it was owned by Dorothy and Louis Herget for many decades starting in 1954. *(photo by Ken Goldberg)*







#### AT THE GLADIOLUS SHOW

Sipping lemonade on the terrace at the home of Mrs. Kermod F. Gill, 2173 Harcourt Drive, Cleveland Heights, were

Mrs. Charles O. Benton, Mrs. G. F. Burrows, Mrs. A. T. Hubbard, Mrs. William Harding Goodfellow, Mrs. D'Arcy Porter and Mrs.

Gill. The picture was taken during the gladiolus show of the Town and Country Gardens Club Monday.



RESIDENCE OF J. O. EATON, ESQ., AMBLER HEIGHTS, CLEVELAND, OHIO.  
Frank B. Meade and James M. Hamilton, Architects.

**Top Left:** The Town and Country Garden Club sipping lemonade on the terrace of the Kermit F. Gill and Dorothea Ambler Gill House in 1928 (now Harcourt Manor) (PD 8-28-28)

**Bottom Left:** Another fascinating home of Ambler Heights — original residence of J. O. Eaton, built by Frank B. Meade and James M. Hamilton, Architects, located at Devonshire Dr. and Chestnut Hills Dr.

## *The Women's Board of the Boys' Bureau presents* **AN ENGLISH GARDEN PARTY** *today*

. . . at the home of Mrs. Kermod F. Gill, 2173 Harcourt Drive. A gala event for the benefit of the Cleveland Boys' Bureau. Included in the entertainment list is an exhibition by the Popeloff dancers, swimming events, cards, singing by the Sadlier Studio Club . . . and dancing to music by Meade's Hermit Club Orchestra.

**Admission 50c**

We are glad to make this announcement on behalf of this organization.

**The Halle Bros. Co.**



**SHOWN HERE IS THE ELEGANT GARAGE** and caretakers' house for the Warren Moses Bicknell estate (1801 Chestnut Hills Drive) as it originally looked. The Bicknell estate (Judson Park) of Ambler Heights is featured in our "View from The Overlook," no. 47, Summer 2021 issue. (Photo source: Olmsted Photograph Collection, photo by Thomas Ellison, Boston, MA. Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site).



**THE B. F. BOURNE HOUSE** (now demolished) once faced North Park. The original brick barn was designed to match the house and can be seen in the background. The barn is now remodeled into a residence at 2265 Harcourt Drive. (Source: "Beautiful Homes of Cleveland" published 1917).

Scene on Euclid Heights Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio.



### POSTCARD MYSTERY HOUSE C. 1911

This house, once perched on the hill brow of Ambler Heights overlooking North Park/MLK — previously Ambler Park Boulevard — was the subject of many popular penny postcards. It was the home of Godfrey Fugman, and later owned by Lewis Kittredge. It has since been demolished. It once sat at 2257 Chestnut Hills Drive, and was one of early houses in "Ambler Park" [1894 CC deed 584/351 Cramer to Fugman]. The Plain Dealer of January 12, 1899 ran a story that Mr. Fugman (a well-known architect) and wife encountered a masked burglar in their bedroom in the middle of night, and were saved by flipping on the newfangled electric lighting switch to stun the intruder. Mr. Fugman then chased the would-be thief (and two accomplices) with his trusty revolver in hand. The gun, it turned out, failed to shoot as it contained a rusted bullet that had been in there about 15 years. Much later, when Mr. Lewis H. Kittredge lived in the house, Kittredges' revolver sadly worked fine when he took his own life in 1932 in the basement. He had retired from his main career as the President of Peerless Motor Car Company and had settled into a home in Ambler Heights. While his wife Blanche was in the city shopping, he left a simple, matter-of-fact note to her, as though he was thanking her for a nice visit. It explained that his depression has gotten the best of his nerves. He added that she had been sweet, kind, and considerate, and he signed it "lots and lots of love, Lewis".





## CAN YOU MATCH THESE AMBLER HEIGHTS-INVOLVED FACES TO THEIR STORIES?

**A – Godfrey Fugman B – Dr. Martha A. Canfield C- Dorothea Gill D -Caroline Bourne  
E - Lewis Kittredge F – Frank H. Morris.** (Hints: \_\_\_\_ An architect who chased off burglars with a  
revolver that didn't fire \_\_\_\_ Killed by an assassin's bullet \_\_\_\_ Built an expensive stable to match the  
house and left lots of her money to servants \_\_\_\_ Car company head who left a mannerly note before  
committing suicide \_\_\_\_ Busy socialite and Suffragette who hosted benefits for charity in her elegant  
garden \_\_\_\_ Ran the Ambler's Blue Rock Springs Sanitarium and Water-cure)

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**Digital Sources:** Hathitrust.org, Cuyahoga County Recorder's office, Cleveland Public Library,  
Cuyahoga County Library (Cleveland Plain Dealer Historical), Cleveland Historic Maps (Arcgis.com),  
Cuyahoga County Archives, Western Reserve Historical Society, Clevelandmemory.org (CSU), Kelvin  
Smith Library CWRU (digital.case.edu), Cleveland Restoration Society, Ancestry.com. Also, thanks to  
all the librarians, historians, and collectors of the past, who preserved, recorded and made accessible  
Cleveland's fascinating stories. Also thanks to Doan Corner's historians — Charles Asa Post (1848-1943)  
and Ihna Thayer Frary (1873-1965).

*[Significant Cuyahoga County recorder deed references are given here using Volume/Page and then the  
actual date of signing.]*

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