

75  
YEARS  
AN INFORMAL HISTORY  
OF  
SHAKER  
HEIGHTS



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*Published by Shaker Heights Public Library*

*Edited by David G. Molyneaux and Sue Sackman*

# SHAKER HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY

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# Table of Contents

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Explanatory Notes .....	6
Foreword .....	7
Introduction .....	8
Chapter 1 1796 to 1911 Simple Pleasures .....	10
Chapter 2 1912 to 1930 The Van Sweringen Era .....	18
Chapter 3 1930 through World War II Years of Growth .....	46
Chapter 4 Post World War II to late 1950s The Good Life .....	60
Chapter 5 1950s to 1987 Complex Changes .....	78
Notes .....	97
Bibliography .....	98
Index .....	99
Acknowledgements .....	101

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# Explanatory Notes

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This book is based on interviews of long-term Shaker Heights residents conducted by current residents. Their direct quotes are in italics, unless the comments are part of the text.

Oris Paxton and Mantis James Van Sweringen are often referred to as the Vans.

Rapid refers to the rapid transit system which links Shaker Heights to downtown Cleveland via the Shaker and Van Aken lines.

The names of Moreland Boulevard and the Moreland Rapid line were changed to Van Aken in 1951, to honor the late Mayor William Van Aken.

Prior to 1959, Chagrin Boulevard was known as Kinsman Road.

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# Foreword

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*'Tis the gift to be simple,  
'Tis the gift to be free  
'Tis the gift to come down  
Where we ought to be.*

The opening lines of this Shaker hymn echo the beginnings of our town. The Shakers of North Union Village who lived here were a plain, foursquare, practical people, united by an intense pride of community and a shared religious belief. They created a society that valued learning, hard work, and equality. These values are a part of our legacy as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the city of Shaker Heights, Ohio.

The history of the North Union is well documented, but there is no history of the city. In 1939 and 1940, a history of Shaker Heights was compiled at the library by the division of historic research of the WPA Library Project. By 1947 the unpublished information had spent too many years in the library's basement, and its present location is unknown. In this anniversary year, the library, whose primary business is after all, books, believed we had a unique opportunity. Thus, a group of volunteers convened in the fall of 1986 and proposed writing an informal oral history of Shaker Heights. As you can see, this history was published.

A city of 75 years is not an old city. People live here who were born before the Van Sweringen brothers' grand design was conceived; people who remember how the city was created and how it developed. We have taken advantage of the generosity of over 80 residents who were willing to share their recollections of people and events. From these reminiscences come two recurring themes: a striving for excellence and a willingness to anticipate and facilitate changes needed to maintain that excellence. We share with the North Union Shakers the belief that excellence is a worthy goal. We also did what they could not – channel change to positive, constructive ends. In the early years, Shaker Heights was famous as a successful and exclusive city; Shaker Heights in 1987 is a successful and integrated city.

We have a proud heritage and a proud future. This brief history tells the story of the people and events that make living here a pleasure. It challenges us to keep faith with our past.

Barbara Luton, Director  
Shaker Heights Public Library



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# Introduction

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Utopia – the ideal community – the Shakers believed they established it; the Van Sweringens thought they could create it, and today many Shaker Heights residents still hope to catch at least a glimpse of it.

The place called Shaker Heights is now 75 years old, and while it has changed dramatically over the years, many of its attributes and founding principles have remained. The physical beauty of the area was noted by the early Shaker settlers, who called their home the “Valley of God’s Pleasure.” The Van Sweringen brothers promoted Shaker Village for its location in the hills above the polluted atmosphere of Cleveland, and for its trees, parks, and lakes. Throughout its history, Shaker Heights has been known for its natural and cultivated beauty.

Since the Van Sweringen years, education has been an essential component of life in Shaker Heights. The Vans provided for a fine public school system, and its reputation for excellence developed early. In each era covered by this book, residents consistently have said that they moved to Shaker Heights for the schools.

Shaker Heights was a unified suburb before suburban life became commonplace. City services developed to meet the needs of residents as well as to preserve the physical environs. In the city’s maturity, residents have proved that integration can stabilize and enhance a city. Shaker’s techniques for dealing with racial issues have been studied, copied, and applauded nationally.

Sometimes it takes a major anniversary to foster an appreciation of the past. To capture the history of Shaker Heights in the comments of people who actually experienced it seemed a worthwhile contribution to the celebration. The Shaker Heights Public Library staff had the foresight to launch and fund this project, and they had the grace to give us the freedom to develop it.

In the fall of 1986, a group of volunteers agreed upon the desirability of writing an informal history of Shaker Heights. Long-time residents were asked to send their reminiscences to the library. Other Shaker residents agreed to be interviewed. We know and regret that for every personal history recorded in this book, at least one other exists, which is not included here.

Every person who volunteered for this book has a tie to Shaker Heights. Tremendous community support came from the scores of residents who consented to interviews, the dozens who conducted them, and the volunteers who helped with typing, editing, typesetting, proofreading, photography, research, and graphics. Indeed, we are a city rich in resources.

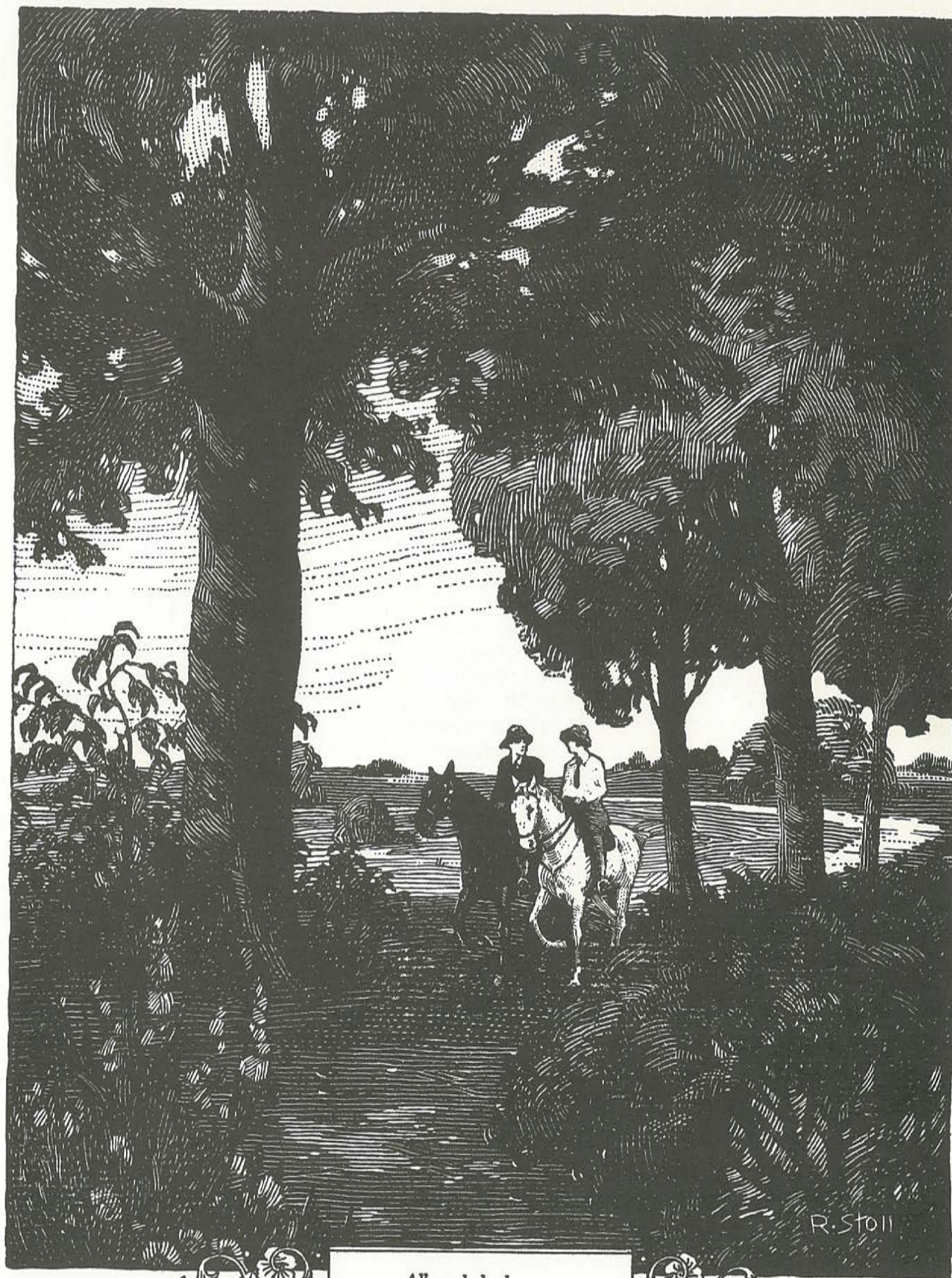
This book is not intended to be the definitive history of Shaker Heights. Rather it is an informal story of a city that has reached its full size, a good measure of maturity, and yet has many years to continue its growth. During the first 75 years, the people of Shaker Heights made concerted attempts to create a unique community, and we can only assume that evolutionary process will continue.

What always has made Shaker Heights special is the people who live here. Their dreams and energy shaped a lifestyle that has been desired – and derided – over the years. Certainly, it has been distinctive.

It has been our pleasure to record what Shaker residents remember, believe, and cherish about their city.

David Molyneaux  
Sue Sackman  
Editors





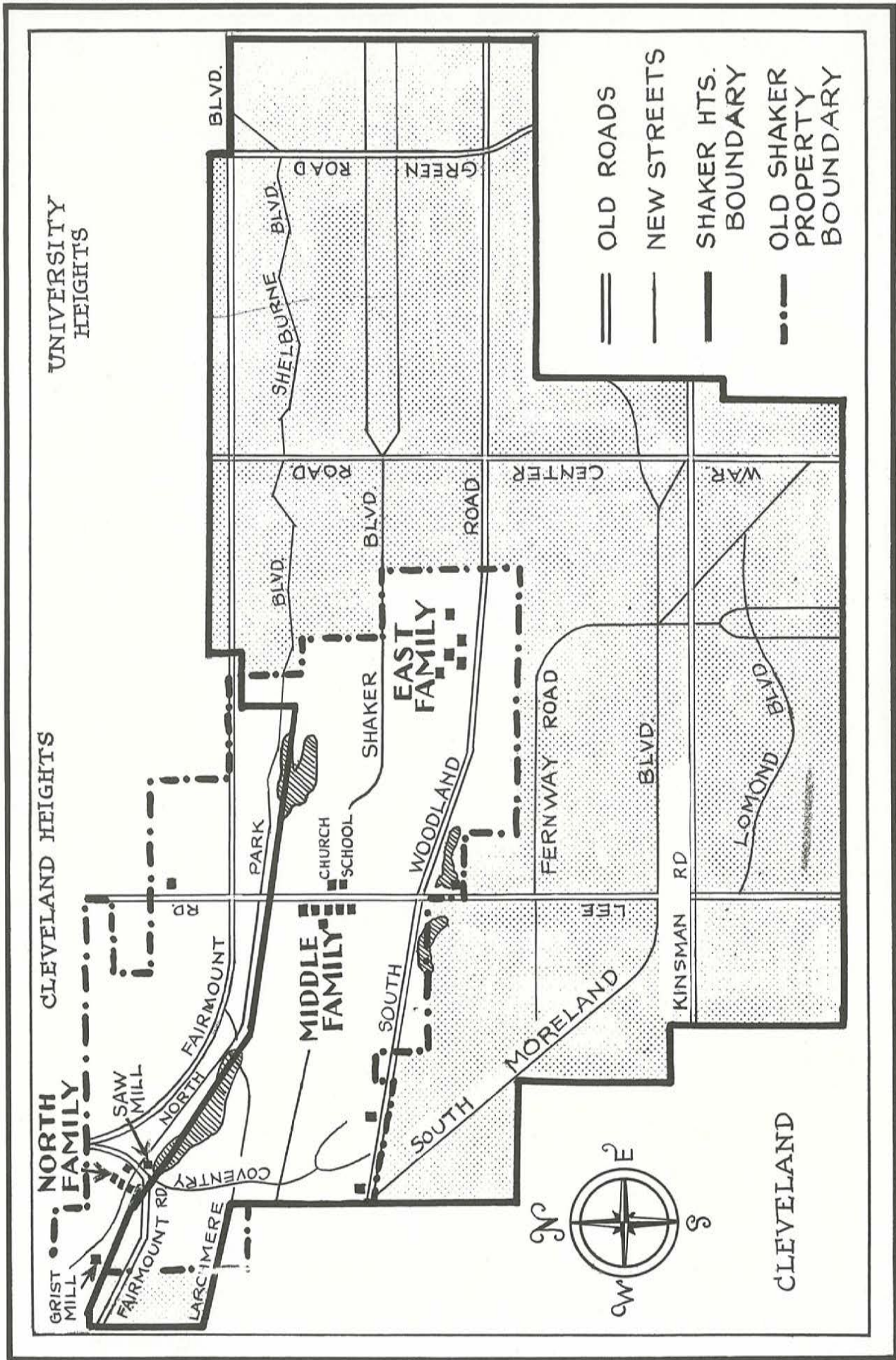
R. Stoll

All roads lead to—  
Shaker Village



1656	1796	1822	1889	1892
<p>December 21, Garret Van Sweringen, a Dutch nobleman, sets sail for North America from Amsterdam, arriving April 16, 1657. He marries Barbarrah deBarrette and has a son, Thomas. His son Van (1692), has a son Thomas (1737), who has a son Samuel (1760), who has a son Thomas (1805), who has a son James Tower (1832), who has six children, including Oris Paxton and Mantis James.</p>	<p>Moses Cleaveland surveys the area that will some day become Shaker Heights. Warrensville Township is typical of the five-mile-square plotting of the Western Reserve.</p>	<p>Ralph Russell brings a colony of Shakers to the Cleveland area. The Center Family settles north of the corner of what is today Lee Road and Shaker Boulevard, the East Family on Fontenay Road north of today's South Woodland Road, the North Family near North Park Boulevard and Doan Creek at the west end of Lower Lake.</p>	<p>The North Union Settlement of Shakers is disbanded. The remaining 27 older Shaker members are transported to other Shaker colonies in the east.</p>	<p>The James Tower Sweringen family moves to Cleveland to a home near East 105th Street and Cedar Avenue. It will be another 10 years before the Sweringen children, led by Oris Paxton and Mantis James, decide to use the original family name, Van Sweringen.</p>

1905	1906	1907	1911
<p>M.J. and O.P. Van Sweringen ask for an option from the Shaker Heights Land Company to sell some plots for homes.</p>	<p>Shaker Village is begun. The Van Sweringens put together a Cleveland business syndicate and buy the remaining 1,200 acres of the village for \$1 million from a Buffalo syndicate.</p>	<p>Shaker Village is annexed to Cleveland Heights for an interim period.</p>	<p>October 27, the Village of Shaker Heights is established. The Van Sweringen's first platted section is an area roughly bounded by these streets of today: North Park, Coventry, South Woodland, and Warrensville Center.</p>



Map of Shaker Colony Settlement and changed boundary lines



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## Chapter 1

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# 1796 – 1911

## Simple Pleasures

In the first decade of the century, before the city was incorporated, **Katherine Burger Dempcy** moved to what is now Shaker Heights.

*I was not that strong or healthy as a child, and my parents thought that the country air would be better. The first house that we moved into was at the corner of Warrensville Center and Kinsman Roads. It had an outdoor toilet. In the house was a room for taking baths, but we had to heat the water and pour it into the bathtub. A lot of times when we were little we were bathed in the washtub in the kitchen. A cistern behind the house stored rain-water. We had a pump that was used for cooking, bathing, and that sort of thing. There was a well on the outside where we drew the drinking water. Life was primitive, and most toilets were out back of the houses, mainly two seaters and some larger depending upon the size of the family.*

*A red barn was at the corner where Wendy's now stands. Our house was next to the barn. Then there was another house, and that was all. The rest was just space. Across the street was a two-story brick building which was called the town hall. A brick two-story school housed the elementary school downstairs and the high school upstairs. The trustees of the township were always interested in education, and I remember a series of one-room brick schoolhouses a mile or two apart.*



Katherine Burger, about four years old, with her mother and grandmother in c. 1907

In 1796, the five-mile-square township that now contains Shaker Heights was surveyed by Moses Cleaveland. Lee and Kinsman were the first roads. In 1809, Daniel and Margaret Warren built a log cabin near the intersection of the two roads, and their name was later given to the township.

Katherine Dempcy explains, "My husband's family was part of the Warren family that came to this country in about 1630. They were Revolutionary soldiers and were given land in New Hampshire, but Moses Warren, Sr., was part of the surveying group that came to Cleveland with Moses Cleaveland. They liked this area because in New Hampshire there was an awful lot of rock, and the soil was not so great. Several of the sons who were bricklayers came out here. When they built a couple of buildings, they were given land instead of being paid for their work. That land was on Kinsman Road east of Lee Road. When my mother-in-law was small, she and her family liked to visit the Shakers as they were so nice to them. Warrensville was named for this Warren family. Because they were the first ones to live in that area, Mrs. Warren was asked to name it."

Moses Warren, Sr., built a farmhouse in 1817 at what is now 3535 Ingleside, but was originally 154 wooded acres extending as far west as Lee Road and costing \$456. His cattle and sheep drank from a stream now enclosed in a large storm sewer under Lomond Boulevard. The house sold to the Palmers in 1865, became a rooming house during World War II, was converted to a two-family in 1947, and today is a single residence again.

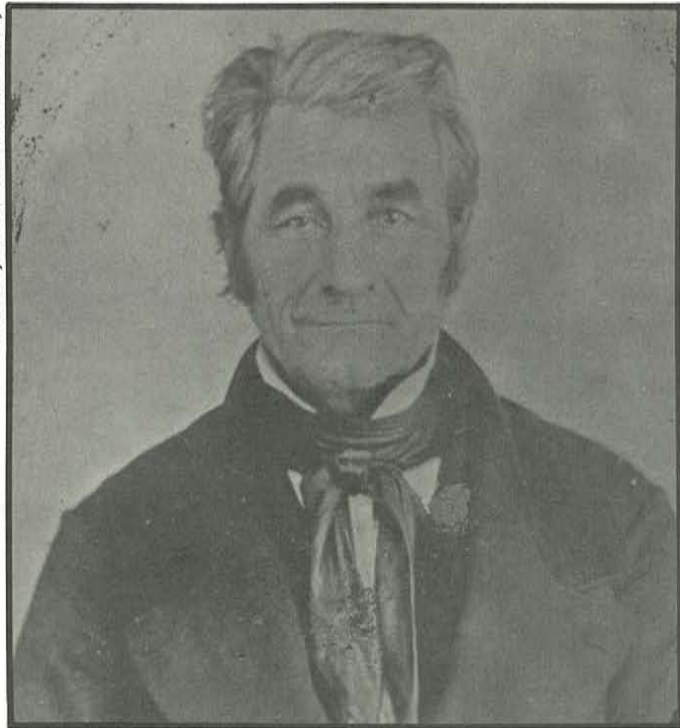
The area near Warrensville and Kinsman was known as Warrensville Center and was the center of township government and trading. Farmers erected a church there in 1868 affiliated with Methodism. A brick vault opposite the site held human remains during the cold weather for burial in May. This was more an accommodation to road than ground conditions.



The Irish Sea's Isle of Man potato crop problems of 1825 resulted in a number of immigrants to the eastern part of what would become Shaker Heights. The Manx settlers began arriving in 1826 and soon established large farms. Ruby Corlett is a member of one of these families. "My father was born in 1871 in the little red house that still stands next to the Jewish Day Nursery on Fairmount. We had an 18 acre farm, one of about a dozen between Belvoir Boulevard and Green Road. Only four remain. We kept chickens and pigs. A family across the street had cows, and we got our milk from there. The nearest grocery was on Mayfield Road, a long buggy ride away."<sup>1</sup>

Fairmount became one of the early thoroughfares in the township because a cider press and blacksmith's shop were at Green Road. A natural salt deposit made it a route for horses and farm animals as well.

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society



Ralph Russell, founder of the North Union Colony of Shakers

Another early settler of the area was Jacob Russell, a Revolutionary War veteran who moved from Connecticut in 1813. His son Ralph heard a Shaker missionary some years later and walked to the Shaker community in Lebanon, Ohio (Shakers first settled there in 1805), where he was converted. He then converted his four brothers and their children, bringing to 32 (nine adults and 23 children) the original members of the North Union Community, which he founded in 1822. The settlement grew to almost 300 members at its peak enrollment and populated nearly 1,400 acres.

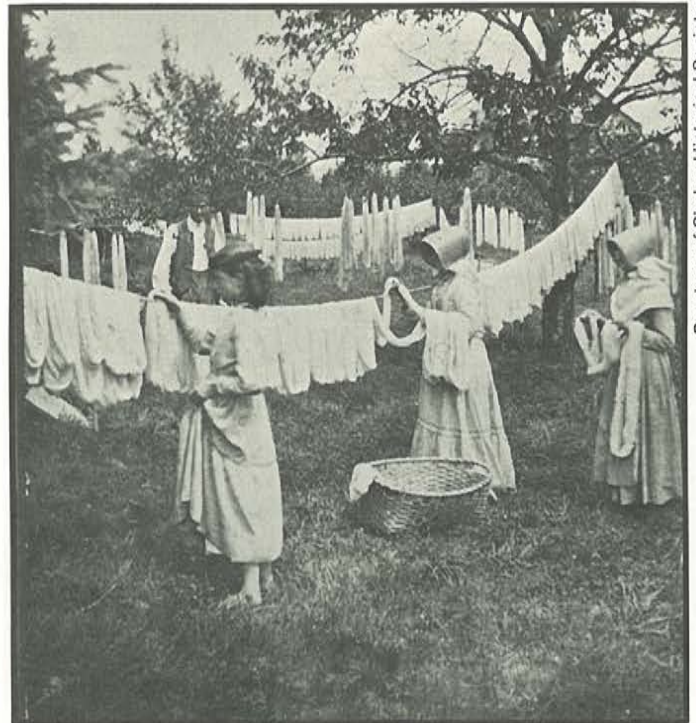
Ralph Russell's decision to return to Warrensville Township was based on a vision. "I saw a strong, clear ray of light proceeding from the northwest in a perfectly straight horizontal line until it reached a spot near my log cabin. Then it rose in a strong erect column and became a beautiful tree."<sup>2</sup>

Mother Ann Lee founded the Shaker religion in England and fled to America in 1774 to avoid religious persecution. "Mother Ann's own experiences may have been a major factor in molding the Shaker doctrines. It is believed she was forced into marriage by her parents. All four of her children died in infancy, and the husband who had joined her on the voyage from England ran off with another woman. 'Sex,' Mother Ann once claimed, 'is the root cause of all the ugliness in human life.'"<sup>3</sup>

The official name of the religion was the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing. Beliefs included the confession of sin, community ownership of land, withdrawal from the world, refusal to bear arms, equality of the sexes, and celibacy. God was seen as a dual personality, with the masculine embodied in Christ and the feminine in the spiritual presence of Mother Ann. Hers was actually a deviate Quaker group distinguished to most by the use of dance movements (from a French religious sect called the Camisards). The purpose of the dance was to shake away sin, and the members were derisively called "Shaking Quakers" and "Shakers."

Shaker communities were organized into families of as many as 100 men and women who lived in separate quarters and worked for communal purposes. In 1823, the Center Family was formed to govern the colony and manage the farming operations. They settled at the southwest corner of Shaker Boulevard and Lee Road.

The East or Gathering Family was established near Fontenay Road in 1828 to rear orphans, the children of parents who joined, and other dependent children. They established a school under Ohio School Law in 1841. Their other purpose was to "gather lost souls from the other world," new converts who had to prove their commitment to the religion.



Shaker women drying yarn

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society







masonry. Cleveland Councilman Charles Reader had leased the property and received permission to destroy the building so he could quarry the stone underneath. "The old Shaker Mill went up in a blaze of glory yesterday. The event, much agitated and eagerly awaited, occurred as advertised and to the entire satisfaction of over 4,000 people. There was an early movement toward the old Shaker settlement and the streets were crowded with vehicles of every description."<sup>7</sup>

A gate and well from the Center Family dwelling are at the northeast corner of Lee Road and Shaker Boulevard, and a millstone from the gristmill and gatepost have been placed on the north and south sides of Shaker Square. A plaque on the Fontenay Road island commemorates the East Family, and a cemetery just north of Lee Road and Chagrin Boulevard is the final home to some 89 Shakers. They had originally been buried in an

area on South Park Boulevard west of Lee Road and were moved in the 1920s. (Shaker cemeteries separated men from women. All graves were marked with the person's initials, date of death, and age.)

During the North Union Colony years, the Shaker spirit "was a leavening force, elevating in a very unobtrusive but effective manner the whole morale of this area."<sup>8</sup> Their belief in Utopia, industriousness, tolerance, and respect for human life are not that different from the spirit of those who followed them in this area. Certainly not all their successors embodied these ideals for the same reasons. Yet from the Van Sweringens' vision of a model city and the pioneering Catholics, Jews, and blacks who moved in after World War II to today's citizens who strive to make Shaker Heights a diverse and unique community, the legacy of the Shakers lives on.

Courtesy of Katherine Dempcy



Shaker Heights High School graduating class of 1921

Katherine Burger is the first person on the left in the middle row. Marshall Dempcy, her future husband, is second from the left in the top row.

**Katherine Burger Dempcy** remembers her early years in Shaker Heights.

*My mother and father built a house on Warrensville Center Road, and we lived near the corner of Almar exactly where the Almar Drive Apartments are now. The city's layout has changed. At that time, the main street was Kinsman, and it was a plank road. The other main streets were Lee Road and Warrensville Center Road. For a long*

*time, Warrensville Center was one brick lane and one dirt lane. At our house near Almar Drive were woods, a cow pasture, and blackberries along the roadway.*

*Quite a gulley went down Lee Road. We used to sled down the hill of the gulley. I remember water down there, and we used to fish. My good friends the Corletts had a pony, and up on Fairmount Boulevard was a blacksmith.*

*On Warrensville Center Road about where Farns-*



leigh Drive crosses was a big dip in the road, and that is where the creek went through. A mill was on the east side of the road with a little pond in the back. On the west side of Warrensville across from the present auto dealership was a bank. Built into the side of the bank was a special holding vault used for housing the dead during the winter months when the ground was frozen.

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society



Blacksmith shop, formerly located near Lee Road and South Park Boulevard

I remember a huge snowstorm in 1913 when members of the workhouse prison were brought out to shovel the roads. This was not the usual method for snow removal.

My first year in school was spent in the little frame building near Warrensville Center Road and Farnsleigh Drive; the rest of my eight grades were at East View School. I went to school with eight grades in one room. I learned to read. We had no piano, but we had a music teacher who came with a pitch pipe, and we learned to read music and sing.

An inter-urban car ran up Kinsman Road. Two frame buildings stood at the southeast corner of Warrensville Center and Kinsman Roads. In one building was a candy store downstairs with the telephone exchange upstairs. The next building had a grocery store that sold everything from meat to shoes; it also housed the post office and the Lodge of the Knights of Pythias on the second floor. Around the corner was a two-story brick building owned by the Grange that was used for many functions such as parties, dancing school, commencement exercises, and lecture series.

To get to East View School, I had to walk up to Kinsman Road and take the inter-urban down to Lee Road. When I went to high school, I walked over to Courtland Boulevard and took the streetcar down. Many times when I walked over to the streetcar, the Van Sweringens came down South Woodland Road. If they saw me, they picked me up. I knew their driver.

The first football banquet was held in the ballroom of the Van Sweringens' South Park Boulevard home, and I was very lucky to have gone. I remember every bedroom was decorated in vivid colors, and we were so impressed with that. I do not recall how many bedrooms there were up there.



Katherine Burger Dempcy at home

I moved to Woodbury for high school in my junior year. Some of the students elected to go to the Cleveland schools so there were not that many of us. A lot of the students went to the Cleveland schools because, at that point, Cleveland schools had an excellent reputation, and Shaker was just a little system.

In school, I think everybody had to take algebra, English, and a foreign language. During the war years, they had cut German out so we had only French and Latin. They did not teach Spanish yet. We were also required to take science and gym.

I think that we sort of lived in our own little corner — our own little life — and we were not that influenced by world events except the war. Except for airplanes and World War I, I do not think that we were much affected by the rest of the world when I was small.

Photo by Herbert Ascherman, Jr.



1912	1913	1915	1916	1917
<p>February 13, Shaker Heights is recognized officially as an incorporated village by the State of Ohio. The village hires its first policeman.</p> <p>March 5, a Shaker Heights tradition is begun. The new Shaker Heights Board of Education decides to ask voters to pass a levy. The first levy is for a bond issue of \$60,000 to build a new school on land donated by the Van Sweringens at Shaker Boulevard and Southington Road. Of 25 residents voting, 20 are in favor of the bond issue.</p> <p>September 9, Shaker Heights opens its first school at the Van Sweringen real estate office at 2889 Lee Road. Twenty-six pupils have four teachers. The school term is 38 weeks, five hours per day. No classes are to have more than 10 pupils.</p>	<p>December 17, first Shaker Rapid car runs along Shaker Boulevard to Fontenay Road.</p>	<p>May 20, Shaker Rapid is extended to Courtland Boulevard to connect to the Shaker Heights Country Club.</p>	<p>July 31, a Van Sweringen adjunct company, Green-Cadwallander-Long, opens the Shaker Heights allotment for public sale. A village board will regulate the architecture of houses, relationship to street lines, appropriateness of color schemes, construction of multi-family dwellings, and placement of businesses. Resale of houses must be approved by the Van Sweringen Company or by a majority of owners of adjoining lots. Deed restrictions are imposed for 99 years to insure against encroachment of undesirable improvements and residents.</p>	<p>Shaker Heights Board of Education takes the extraordinary position that only college graduates will be hired to teach school.</p> <p>October 1, a fire department is established, with eight men and one fire truck located at 2785 Lee Road on the northeast corner of Shaker Boulevard. Men are paid \$38.50 twice a month. Fire Chief John K. Irwin receives \$66.66 and a car purchased new for \$370.88.</p>

1919

The center section of Shaker High School is built on South Woodland Road. Wings will be added in 1927. The building later will become Woodbury Junior High School.

1920

June, J.W. Main becomes clerk-treasurer of the Shaker Heights Board of Education, a position he will hold until 1952, when he becomes the schools' business manager until 1958. Main is credited with keeping the Shaker schools financially solvent during the darkest days of the Great Depression, paying employees in scrip. Main later made good on all scrip.

August, operation begins along the Shaker Heights Rapid Transit line all the way to Shaker Heights from Public Square. The Shaker Boulevard line stops at Courtland Boulevard. The Moreland line, opened in April, ends at Lynnfield Road.

1920

East View Village (Fernway Road was its northern boundary) joins Shaker Heights, and the city boundaries are fixed.

1922

Shaker's first Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is established at Boulevard School. Mrs. H.I. Hadsell is the first president.

1924

Work begins on a new campus for Cleveland's University School, after the Van Sweringens persuade school officials to relocate in Shaker Heights. Hathaway Brown School and Laurel School will follow. A visitor, Lord Rothermere, states, "Shaker Heights is the finest residential district in the world."

1927

Three-quarters of the owners of Shaker Heights property agree to new deeds on their land that will then extend the 99-year deed restrictions until 2026.

1929

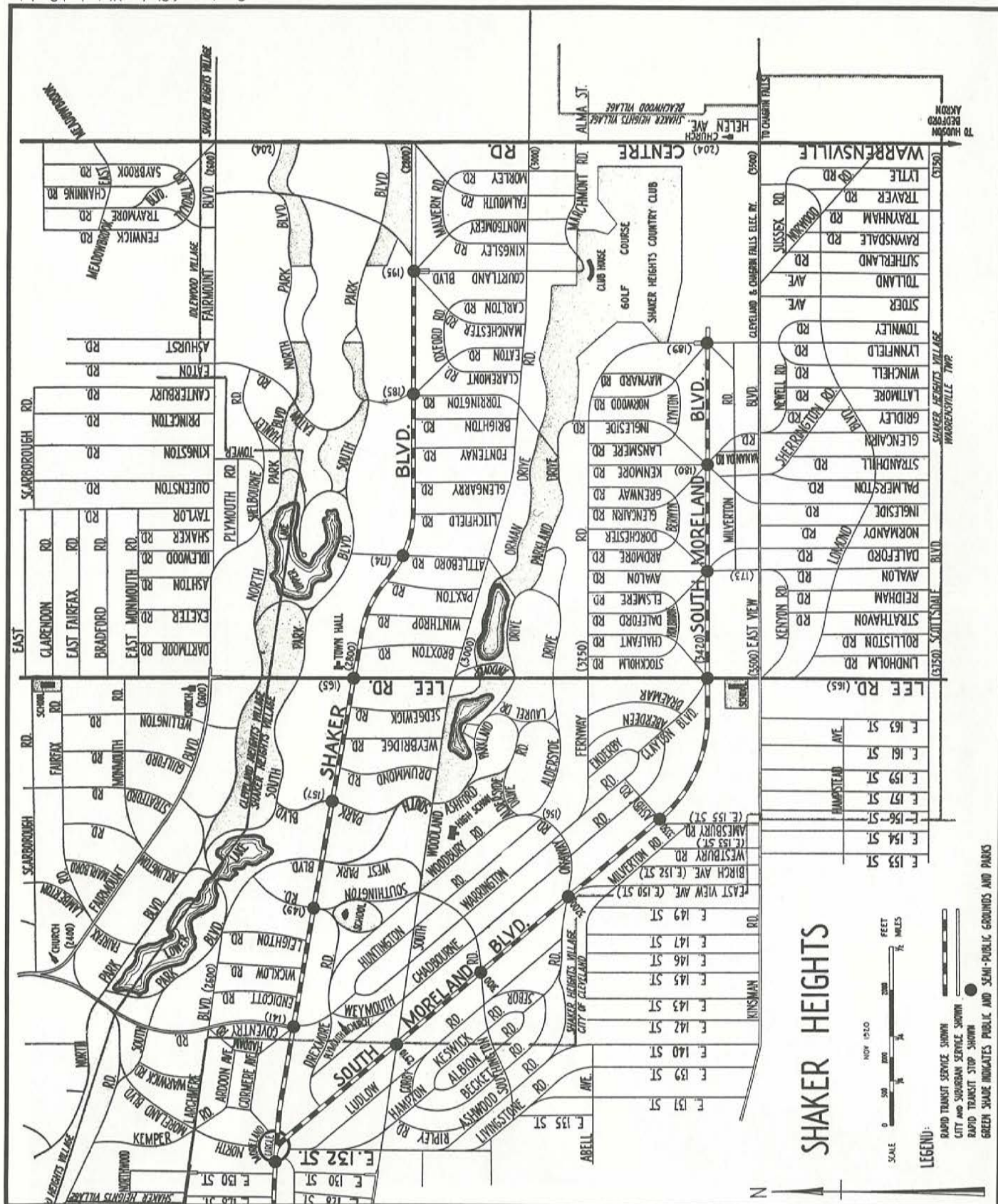
June 28, Terminal Tower is dedicated with a big party. The Van Sweringens stay home.

December 1, the first train enters Cleveland's Union Terminal in the Terminal Tower.

1930

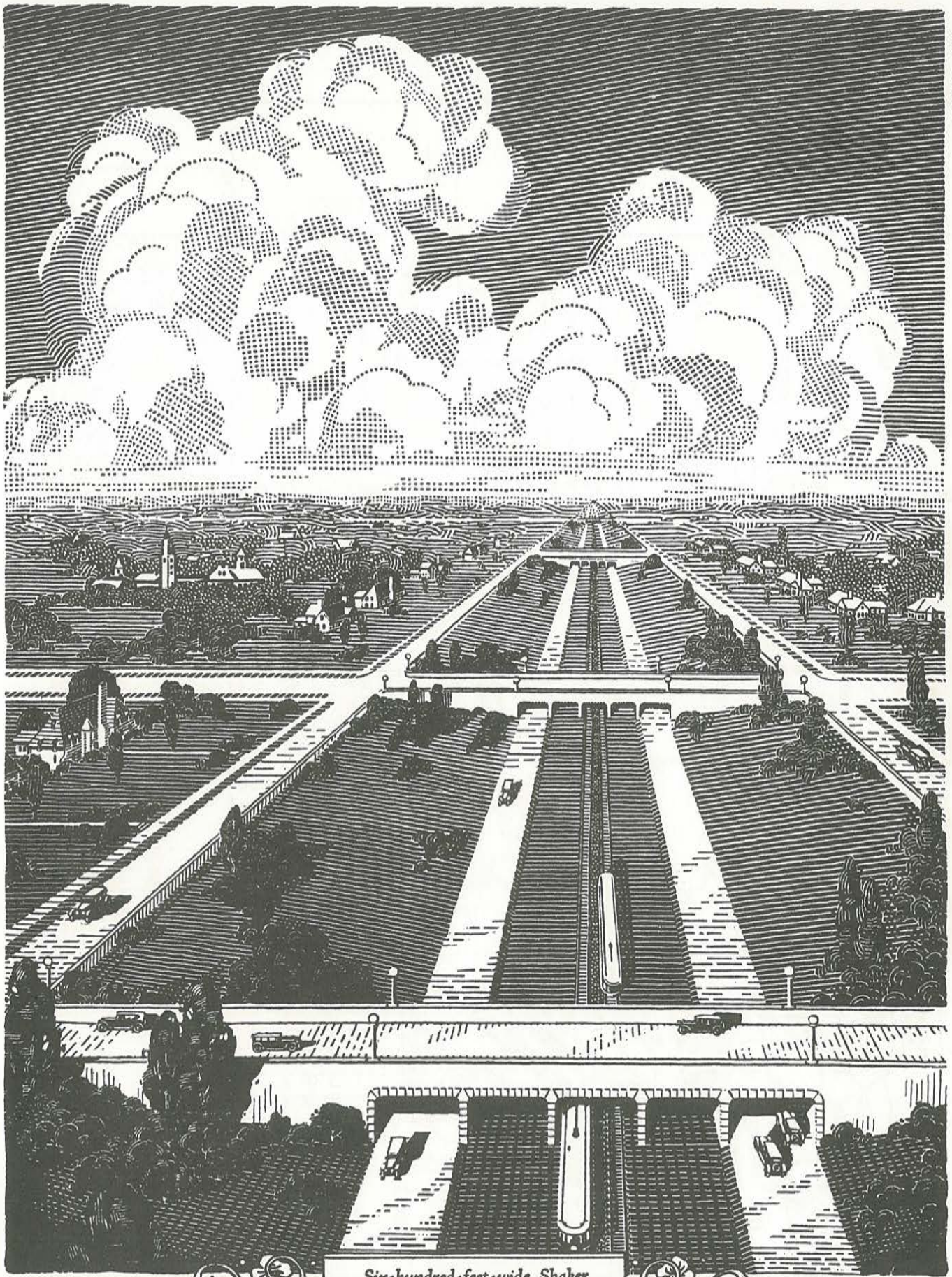
June 28, some 2,500 Greater Cleveland leaders gather in honor of the Terminal Tower and Union Terminal openings. O.P. and M.J. Van Sweringen listen to the festivities – on the radio, at home.





Shaker Heights street map, 1920





Six-hundred-foot-wide Shaker  
Boulevard, as it is planned  
east of Center Road



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## Chapter 2

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# 1912 – 1930 The Van Sweringen Era

Oris Paxton and Mantis James Van Sweringen started humbly with newspaper routes and a one-horse egg and butter wagon. But in 20 years these brothers managed to propose, plan, and create the foundations of one of America's wealthiest and most famous communities, the unique village of Shaker Heights, Ohio.

In the process, the Vans bought a major railroad and built Cleveland's landmark, the Terminal Tower. According to their trusted associate Benjamin Jenks, "They didn't make any mistakes. They were men of long vision, careful planning, and with the rare ability to function effectively in business. Only death and a major depression kept them from seeing the fulfillment of their dreams. And death and depression were things nobody could stop."<sup>1</sup>

In 1905, the brothers sold some lots for the land agent of the Buffalo syndicate which owned the land that was to become Shaker Heights. Later they proposed to sell the land themselves, with two stipulations: if they sold the land within a specified time period, they would be guaranteed a second option to sell twice as much land; and they would sell the land first and pay the syndicate from the proceeds. After success with some 200 acres, they formed a syndicate of Cleveland businessmen, the Sedgewick Land Company, in order to purchase the remaining 1,200 acres.

When the Vans began their real estate venture, the area was essentially impassable lanes and brambles, with dams, mills, and communal buildings in ruins. The area was also far enough above Cleveland and its atmosphere polluted by coal-fired stoves and furnaces to provide "area sufficient for hundreds of homes; altitude which brings a climate and healthfulness of its own; . . . elevation which discourages all thought of industrial possibilities."<sup>2</sup>

Ten years of careful planning preceded the formal opening of Shaker Heights for public sale. The F.A. Pease Engineering Company was responsible for sur-

veying, mapping subplots, and designing and improving streets. The engineers had the courage and expertise to translate the dreams of the Vans into reality. The two large lakes made by the Shakers were preserved, and two smaller lakes, Marshall and Green, were created by damming a secondary branch of Doan Brook. William Van Aken, son of Mayor W.J. Van Aken, recalls, "The Vans tore down all the buildings of the Shakers. They had fallen into disrepair. It was the vision of the Vans to build new, not to look back and restore. They wanted to start fresh."

The first section surveyed, platted, and readied for sale was bounded by North Park Boulevard, Coventry, South Woodland, and Warrensville Center Roads. The next available areas were to the south, extending to Kinsman and between Warrensville Center and Green Roads. The Vans never finished the Shaker Country Estates, 4,000 acres east of Green and between Fairmount and South Moreland, stretching to the Chagrin River. (Maps from the late 1920s indicate that South Moreland extended past Warrensville Center Road on what is now Chagrin Boulevard.)

Most of the original sales were to syndicates of no fewer than 10 people. The land was then subdivided and sold through the Van Sweringen Company or Green-Cadwallander-Long Company. The Van Sweringen Company commissioned 16 model homes, so that prospective buyers would know what to expect in the new village.

The keystone of the development involved the inclusion of houses of different price levels on the same tract of land, without destroying the value of the more expensive homes. Traffic was routed along straight, wide, east-west thoroughfares (Fairmount, Shaker, South Moreland, Kinsman, South Woodland) and north-south thoroughfares (Coventry, Lee, Warrensville Center, Green, Richmond). The inside streets were



curved and accommodated to natural topography when possible.

Several explanations exist for the street names in Shaker Heights. Suggested sources include English literature, an English postal directory, and towns in England and New England, since the area was part of the Western Reserve from Connecticut. Care was taken to insure the names were not already in use, and the wise namers eliminated puns, unusual spellings, and improper connotations. Some streets were named for local people. William Kehres owned a farm at Kinsman and Warrensville Center Roads. When the farm was subdivided he named two streets there after his daughters Helen and Alma. Later, when Alma's husband became a councilman, he added her middle initial to the end of the street's name (Almar), because he knew his wife didn't like her name. Lee Road is named not for Mother Ann Lee but for Elias Lee, who gave the land for the right-of-way. Paxton was a Van Sweringen family name, and Sedgewick was the name of the syndicate the brothers put together to purchase land for their model city.



Oris Paxton and Mantis James Van Sweringen

Shaker Village building standards were strict. Only conservative architectural designs such as Colonial, English, and French were allowed. Even these were subject to rigid specifications and the approval of the Architectural Board. According to *Shaker Village Standards*, "Shaker Village is the largest area for high-class residences under single control. Standards and protective restrictions have been applied there from the outset. Over 2,600 homes have been built there. They cover a construction span of about 12 years. They represent a wide range of architectural treatment. Nevertheless, there is marked harmony."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, only "a graduate architect, or one whose qualifications warrant and whose drawings express a thorough, technical knowledge of the highest and best in architecture, together with the ability to combine materials and prescribe color schemes that will proclaim the result the work of a trained and competent hand,"<sup>4</sup> would be permitted to work in Shaker Village.

#### APPROPRIATE COLOR SCHEMES

##### For Colonial Residences

Walls	Trim and Sash	Shutters or Blinds	Doors	Chimneys	Fly Screens	Roof
1. White	White	Dark-green	White	Brick painted white	White	Dark-green
2. Silver gray	White	Bottle-green	White	Red sand-moulded brick	White	Weathered gray
3. Ivory	Ivory	Olive-green	Ivory	Red sand-moulded brick	Ivory	Dark moss green
4. Shingles stained to weather to natural wood tone.	White	Blue-green	Ivory	Common brick sand face, light range of red, brown and salmon	Ivory	Very dark gray

Shaker Village Standards (1928), p. 21

##### For Colonials of Brick or Stone Walls

Walls	Trim and Sash	Shutters or Blinds	Mortar	Doors	Fly Screens	Roof
1. Sandmould colonial brick	White	Blue-green	Natural	White	White	Mottled rough texture slate
2. Common brick burned in beehive kilns	Ivory	Bottle-green	Natural	Ivory	Ivory	Dark weathered gray shingles
3. Overburned arch brick	White	Dark-green	Natural	White	White	Dark moss green
4. Ledge stone	White	Olive-green	Natural	White	White	Weathered gray

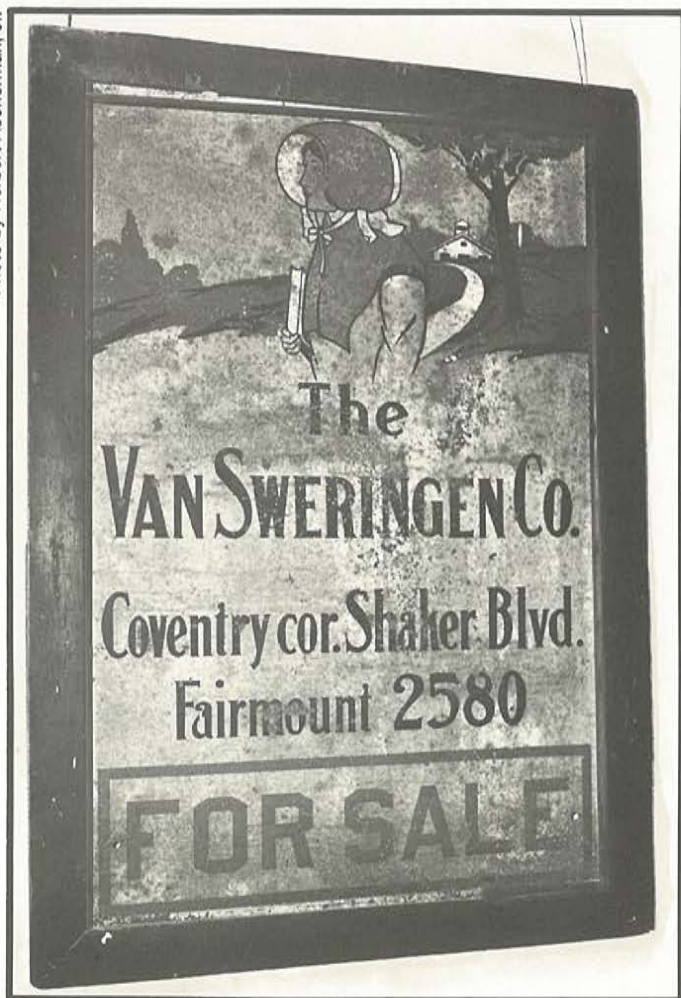
One of several pages in *Shaker Village Standards* which offers guidelines for exterior paint colors

The Vans overlooked no detail. In leaded glass work, lead was to be used instead of zinc; mortar color was to be light in most cases; buff colored brick was forbidden; concrete blocks were not to be used if exposed to view, and two-family dwellings were to appear as one-family homes. "The most pleasing is never conspicuous – never flashy."<sup>5</sup>

The resale of homes by buyers had to be accepted by the Van Sweringen Company or a majority of the owners of adjoining lots. The Vans placed deed restrictions for 99 years to prevent undesirable improvements and residents. Until after World War II, undesirables included Jews, Catholics, and blacks. No apartment houses, no industry, and only a few shopping centers (placed at major intersections) were to mar the model city.

It worked. Land values increased by 7,200% from 1900 to 1923. The population grew from 200 in 1911, to 1,600 in 1920.





Van Sweringen Company's "For Sale" sign, hanging at the Shaker Historical Society

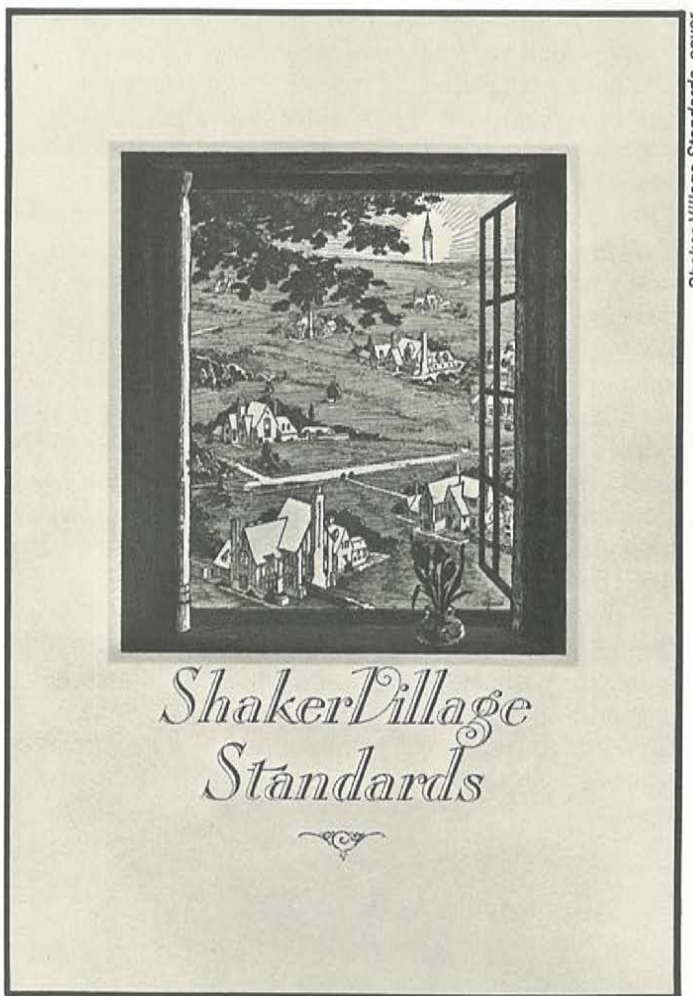
Clay Herrick has distinct memories of Van Sweringen standards. "The Vans tried to make the whole community like a country club. When we moved in on Avalon Road, we were not permitted to buy the house until we got permission from the neighbors across the street and the neighbors on each side. That prevailed in the twenties and thirties, so I guess the neighbors determined who their neighbors would be. You were expected to use an architect approved by the Van Sweringens or a builder; even the real estate people had to be approved by the Van Sweringens in order to operate in Shaker Heights. They had rules of paint colors that you were allowed to use on the exterior of your home. You couldn't use any bright colors; they all had to be warm earth colors. The roof specifications were strictly enforced. The Van Sweringen Company had its own inspector but the city did not."

Shaker Village also benefitted from the coincidence that its peak years of development paralleled the careers of the historic revivalist school of architecture. Charles Schneider was a master of Jacobean Tudor forms, and Clarence Mack created Georgian Revival homes. In fact, Mack built a number of such homes for himself in Shaker. He furnished and lived in them for a time, and then he sold them complete with furniture. Philip Small designed the Van Sweringen home on South Park Boule-

vard as well as Shaker Square (thought to be one of the earliest planned shopping centers in this country). Other equally expert architects included Bloodgood Tuttle, Reynold Hinsdale, Charles Rowley, Charles Greco, and the firms of Howell and Thomas and Meade and Hamilton.

The Vans, according to Mary Harrell and Helen Seyler who grew up in Shaker Heights, planned for their sisters to live at 2812 Lee Road, but instead moved them to the South Park Boulevard home. Van Sweringen attorney Benjamin Jenks and his wife Daisy lived for a time at 2812 Lee and then moved to Moreland Courts. Over a seven-year period Philip Small and Charles Rowley remodelled a farm to create Daisy Hill as a fabulous Hunting Valley retreat for the Vans. It included a main house with 54 rooms, stables, nursery, lake, greenhouse, and 22 garages. Oris Paxton and Mantis James shared one bedroom there.

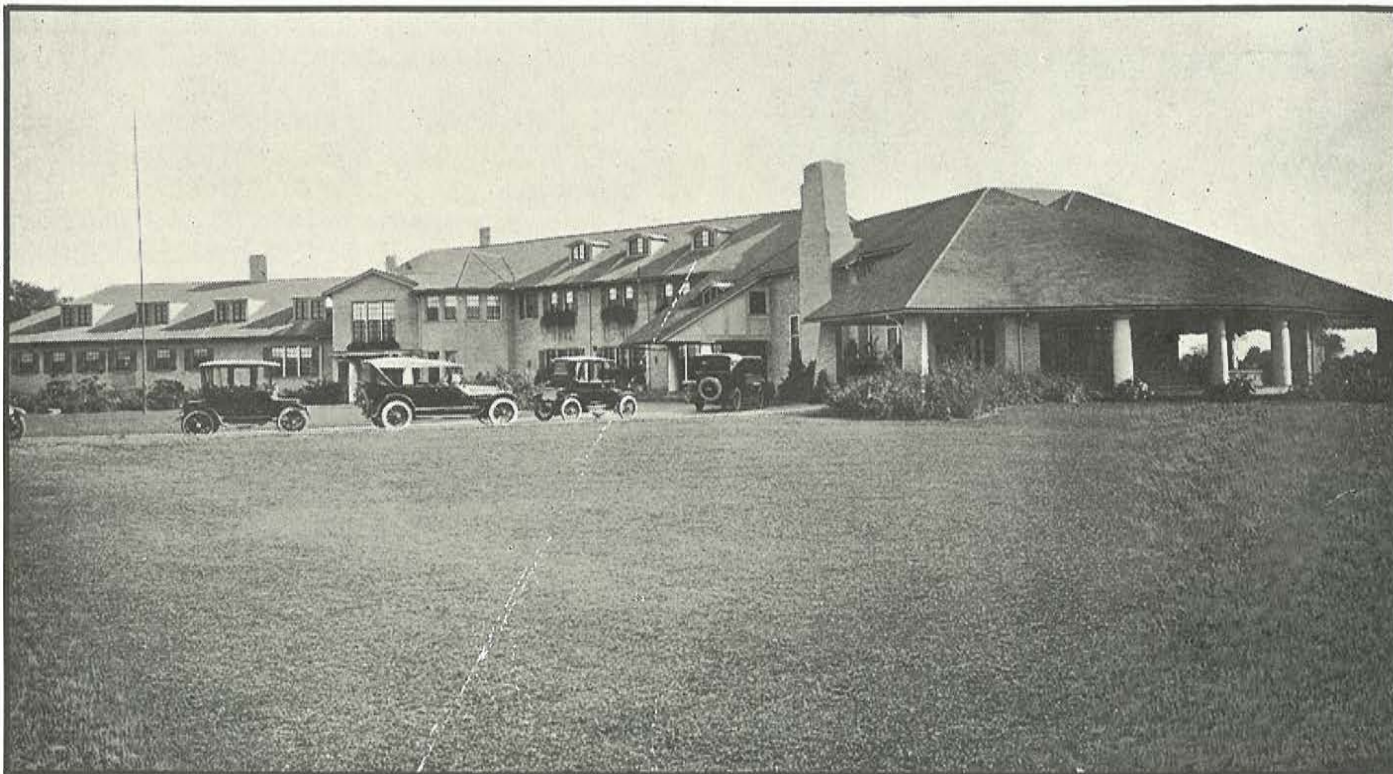
Until 1905, governmental control of the Shaker settlement was divided between Warrensville, East Cleveland, and Newburgh Townships. In 1905, it was unified as part of the Village of Cleveland Heights. In August, 1911, the area was detached from Cleveland Heights to form the Township of Shaker Heights. On October 27, 1911, the Village of Shaker Heights was established, although boundaries were not agreed upon until later.



Shaker Village Standards, cover

The evocative cover of Shaker Village Standards





Shaker Heights Country Club in the 1920s

The Vans were committed to offering a superior education for their residents. On September 9, 1912, 26 pupils and four teachers met at the Van Sweringen real estate office at Shaker Boulevard and Lee Road. The brothers later helped the school board acquire land for eight public schools. They also provided land for private country day schools and hoped that a "greater university of Cleveland" would be formed by the merger of Case School of Applied Science and Western Reserve University. The site they saved for that venture eventually was sold to Hathaway Brown School, but the Vans did persuade St. Ignatius College (now John Carroll University) to move from downtown Cleveland to the area.

The brothers also knew the importance of recreation. They preserved the Shaker Lakes, provided for parks, and deeded territory to Shaker, Canterbury, and Pepper Pike Country Clubs. They also encouraged the formation of a riding club, the Cleveland Tennis Club, and the Canoe Club.

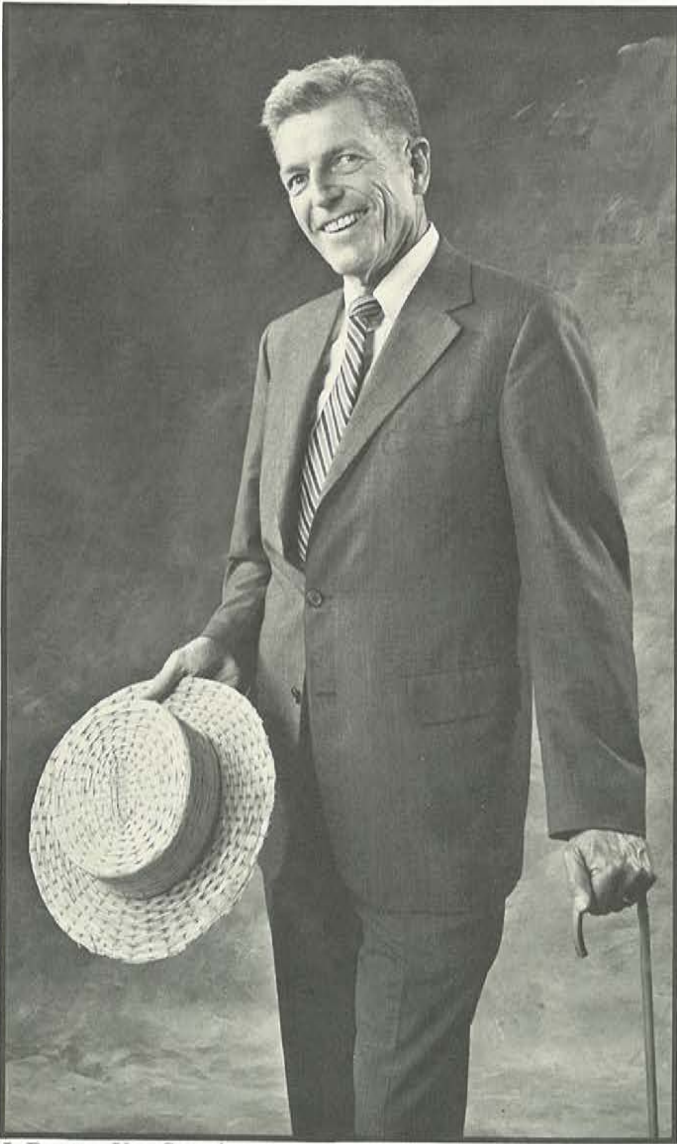
To bring wealthy Clevelanders to their model city, the Vans provided one more enticement. With public transportation, residents could live in the country and commute downtown quickly. The Van Sweringens' final gift to their ideal community was a rapid transit system.

## POPULATION

1911	200
1920	1,600
1930	17,783
1940	23,393
1950	28,222
1960	36,460
1970	36,606
1980	32,487

Note: The source for these figures is the U.S. Federal Census of Population.





J. Paxton Van Sweringen

## J. Paxton Van Sweringen

*My father was the only direct descendant of the Van Sweringen family, which consisted of O.P. and M.J. Van Sweringen, two sisters named Edith and Carrie, and an older brother called Herbert. Most people know O.P. and M.J. were bachelors. Edith and Carrie were spinsters, but their older brother Herbert married. He had one son who was my father. I guess that makes O.P. and M.J. my great uncles.*

*I have one recollection of early days that directly involved O.P. and M.J. I was about seven years old and lived in Buffalo. Because much of our family was in Cleveland, during the summer we drove up for vacation.*

*Edith and Carrie lived in a large stone house on South Park Boulevard across from Horseshoe Lake. Since they had no family of their own, they asked if they could keep the children in my parents' family for a week or so during the summertime. They liked children very much, and I recall a couple of summers I spent in the house on South Park Boulevard as their guest.*

*One thing I recall very vividly. The reason that I recall it, even though I was very young, is that it happened over*

*and over again. Every day Edith and Carrie expected O.P. and M.J. to come to their house to pick up their mail. I don't quite know why they picked up their mail there, but I have a suspicion that they did it as an excuse to be able to come in to check on Edith and Carrie. In the afternoon when they finished working downtown, the two brothers came into that very large home in somewhat of a set routine. They first greeted Edith and Carrie. I recall them coming up the steps of the large hallway, and they always looked like they were dressed in black to me, but I am sure it was because they were in dark, conservative business suits.*

*After greeting Edith and Carrie, they both leaned over, extending their hands to shake my hand. I wasn't very tall at that time, being only seven years old. One said, "How do you do, Master Paxton?" He said perhaps one or two sentences, and then the other brother did the same. Then they gathered their mail, looked at it, and sat briefly to chat with their sisters. As they left, they said goodbye to their sisters. Each said goodbye to me very politely. It was interesting that they did this every day.*

*As I reflect on those visits, several things stand out. They were very, very polite and formal, always well-dressed and very punctual, all of which was somewhat characteristic of their business style. I think that is one of the reasons they were so successful in the business world. Additionally, they seemed to feel a high level of responsibility for their sisters, and they watched over them very attentively to be sure that everything was right with them. They always took time to acknowledge that I was there.*

*I had an unusual opportunity to experience the luxurious type of help my great aunts had. The help was provided by their two brothers with just about every service imaginable. I particularly recall dinnertimes. I was actually led into the dining room, a tremendous dining room. I sat down, and there were always maids and butlers who waited on us. They unfolded the napkin on the table, putting it on my lap. I was not allowed to raise my hands above the table until the two sisters began to eat. It was very, very formal. The butlers carried the food and plates back and forth from the kitchen. The kitchen had a full staff of professional cooks. The house was cared for by servants who did absolutely everything. The sisters never raised a hand in the house. They were very active as volunteers, but once they entered the house, everything was done for them and for any guest.*

*In 1932 their property on South Park Boulevard consisted of many acres. (I know that there now are four homes on the property surrounding that large house. A house to the west of it and a house to the east of it were not there when I was a youngster. In fact, those areas were rather dense woods and were a delight in which to play.) The property ran all the way back to Shaker Boulevard. No houses were there at the time. Those areas were cultivated into beautiful gardens. A full complement of outside gardeners kept them immaculate.*

*They also had a vintage car that was taken care of by a chauffeur. I remember him well; his name was Randall, and he was friendly to the children. I helped Randall wash the car. He washed it every day.*



There were firm restrictions on home construction right from the beginning. A person building a house could not use the same material for his roof as his next door neighbor's! When my twin sister Roz and I were about six, we filled our little wagon with cold drinks and sold them to all the workers. In the summer I attended daily vacation Bible school. My home was across the road from the boat-house called the Canoe Club on the Shaker Lake where regattas were held each summer.

THE SHAKER VILLAGE NEWS BUG.			
Vol. 1, No. 7.	March 15th, 1915.	Page 2.	
THE SHAKER VILLAGE NEWS (Published Weekly.)		Mr. Palmer, of Broxton Road, has purchased a 1914 model Cadillac touring car.	
EDITORIAL STAFF.			
Wm. H. Watkins, Jr., Editor in Chief		Miss Chapman, principal of the Village School, has recovered from her illness and is again actively engaged in her duties. The students are all glad to see her back again.	
Sexton Wesser, Assistant Editor.			
Tom Grasselli, Business Mgr.		Frank Meyer's birthday was last Wednesday. He is now fourteen years old.	
T. Grasselli, Treasurer.			
Myron Watkins, Secretary.		Miss Marian Rogers, of South Park Boulevard, entertained for Miss Ricker of Covington, Ky., with a musical party week ago last evening.	
Beatrice Wall, Editor Women's Dept.			
Josephine Jenks, Assistant Women's Editor.		Mr. N. G. Green, Sales Agent for the Van Everingham Company, expects to move into his beautiful new home overlooking the lake at the corner of Lee Road and Duckhoe Road, soon.	
REPORTERS.		David Evans, Jr., of Lee Road, found a pocket book on a Fairmont Blvd. car last Thursday. It contained about \$10.00. He turned it over to the Railway company.	
Kenneth Davis      B. Patrequin			
G. Pudolph        D. Evans		Fact, reading sells more goods than listening. Ever think of that? Ever think that right printed matter based on correct advertising, demonstrates where no salesman is allowed? Advertise in the News Bug.	
H. Fickey.			
Give news items to any of the above or phone the Editor, Garfield 3425-W.			
SUBSCRIPTIONS TO NEWS BUG.			
Subscriptions are being received for regular delivery of the News Bug. The rate is 20¢ per month. Enter your subscription with any one of the editorial staff or reporters and make sure that you will not miss a single issue of this paper.			
ADVERTISING RATES (For one insertion.)			
1 inch (6 lines).....	\$ .10		
2 inches (1/8 page).....	.15		
3 pages.....	.25		
4 pages.....	.50		
1 page.....	1.00		
Want ads, Lost and Found, Real Estate, etc., per line..... \$ .01			

*The Dallas Room at the Village Drugstore across from Moreland School had marble tables, ice cream parlor chairs, and the best chocolate mint ice cream soda in town.*





Lincoln and Dorothy Dickey on their wedding day in 1935



Lincoln and Dorothy before marriage, in 1933



Dr. and Mrs. Dickey in the 1940s

## Fritz Harrell

*I remember family get-togethers on Thanksgiving. All the adults, children, and teens had Thanksgiving dinner together in the early afternoon. Later in the day, we were allowed to walk from Chadbourne Road at South Woodland to Marshall's Drugstore for special nickel sodas. We went to the Colony Theater to see a movie and then to the drugstore for a soda — all this entertainment for 15¢!*

## Dorothy Dickey

*My family moved here before the rapid was built. At that time, the street cars came up Cedar Hill, up Fairmount Boulevard, and at Coventry Road and Fairmount Boulevard they branched. One branch went on out Fairmount. The other came across Coventry and out Shaker Boulevard. They had what they called the dinkey which went back and forth on Coventry between Shaker and Fairmount.*

*I can also remember that they didn't plow the streets the way they do now. Families kept a snow shovel in the car and drove by following the ruts. If you got out of the ruts, you got stuck. Later on, Shaker had streetplows pulled by horses. They plowed the sidewalks using horses, too, so that even then, they tried to keep the kids from walking in the streets in bad weather. Of course, the kids still walked in the streets the way they do now.*

*The milkman, iceman, and Star Bakery man came in horse-drawn vehicles, too. We had signs to put in the win-*

*dow. We put out a sign saying whether we wanted 15, 25, 75, or 100 pounds of ice. For the bakery, we put out a sign when we needed bread. I remember the ladylocks he'd bring. Years later, I ate a ladylock and wondered, "Oh, why did I like these?"*

*I remember the wonderful Fourth of July celebrations they used to have at Horseshoe Lake. That was in the twenties, I guess.*

## Lincoln Dickey

*There was a lake down by Woodbury School. We used to coast down there and also over across from what became the Nature Center. We ice skated at a lily pond by the Nature Center. A culvert connected the pond to the big lake, and we skated through there, but not too far because the ice never froze on the big lake.*

## Dorothy Dickey

*The reason we looked in Shaker when we came back from the service was the schools. We also wanted to be close to the rapid because we only had one car.*



## Doris Whitslar Alburn

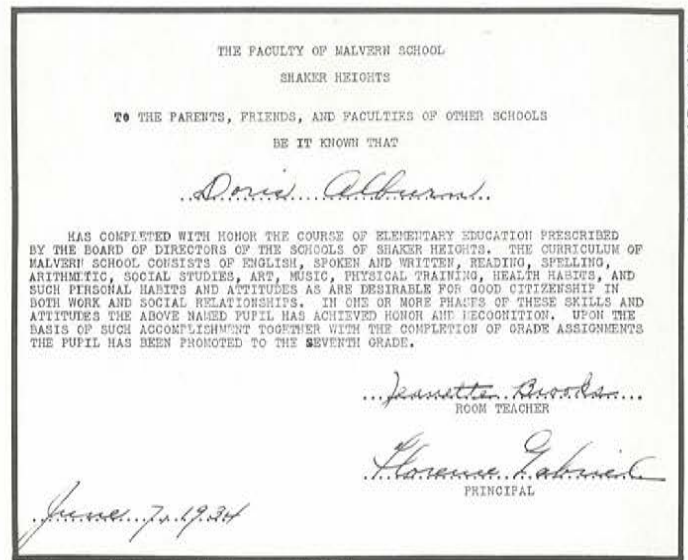
I moved to Oxford Road in 1923 or 1924. We had lived on 87th Street in Cleveland, and everybody thought my parents were crazy to move so far out into the country. When we moved here, we could look out the upstairs window and count only 19 houses around us. We watched my dad get off the rapid in the evening as there were no trees to block the view. I remember that the Van Sweringen brothers had built large impressive homes on the corners at the rapid stops in order to attract people to Shaker Heights. These houses were the speculation homes of yesterday.

My mother cooked with oil, and we used coal for the furnace for about one year before the gas lines were run out here. Malvern School was built when there were 11 children in the neighborhood. The original building had just one story.

I remember skating in the winter. The city excavated the vacant lots and froze water for skating ponds.

Then there was the Star Bakery. We put a star in the window when we wanted baked goods. The mailman took the rapid out to our area from the post office on Warrensville Center Road. He came twice a day and on Sundays before Christmas. We invited our mailman Mr. Lyons in for hot chocolate on cold days in winter. The milkman came in a horse and carriage, and the horse knew all the stops. The lots for the house next door to me and the one on the corner of Oxford and Eaton Roads were excavated by a horse-drawn plow.

I remember that the rapid stop at Courtland Boulevard had a little store which was run by the Shuttes. We bought penny candy there. Ice cream cones cost five cents, and dog food cost 25¢ for three cans.



Malvern School diploma, 1934

## Julia Emrich

I remember the Shaker Rapid as a little single car with its unique "toot-toot," its straw seats, and its well-groomed conductor and motorman with polished shoes. It started at Lynnfield Road where there was a turn-around for the journey downtown. The fare was 10¢ with no transfer as Shaker Transit was an independent operation.



Anna Hanks behind the counter of A & H Hanks Drygoods, 1924



## Ruth Browneller Myers

*My husband Frank was born near University Circle. In 1910, when Frank was nine, his father Louis built the house at 16740 South Park Boulevard. It was a model home showcase for the early Van Sweringen development, and Louis Myers was sales manager for them.*

*Young Frank Myers raised chickens, and the big chicken coops he had back of the garage were not torn down until quite recently. Frank also did a lot of fishing in Horseshoe Lake across the street from his home. Ducks often followed him home.*

## Marjorie Beck Twichell

*We saw many changes after 1923. I attended the sixth grade at Sussex School to which I was transported by school bus in the morning, back home at noon since there was no school cafeteria, and then back to school for the afternoon session. The bus traveled over Lynnfield Road from Moreland Boulevard to Kinsman Road on a very bumpy dirt road. I can remember one student being picked up by a chauffeured car and other pupils calling, "Home, James."*

*There were only three houses to the east of Norwood Road and no streets south of the intersection of Lynnfield Road and Moreland Boulevard, except Kinsman Road. We could see as far east as the Cleveland Workhouse and Tuberculosis Sanitarium buildings. These were identifiable because of their smokestacks.*

*Shaker residents were lucky to have their sidewalks cleared of the deep snow by a horse-drawn, wooden V-shaped plow with a driver walking behind or riding on the plow. The streets were well-cared for in snowy weather.*

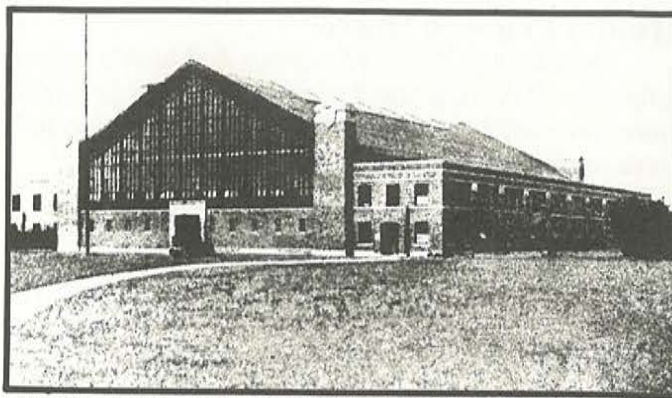
*There were no stores at that time in the village unless it would have been a very small general store at Kinsman and Warrensville Center Roads. We drove to the Cedar-Lee shopping area for food and other essentials.*

**Frank and Martha Joseph** can count five generations of their family as Shaker residents. Martha Joseph moved with her parents and younger sister Mary from Cleveland to Shaker Heights around 1925 when she was a young girl. They moved to Shaker Heights for the public schools and because it felt like country.

Martha married Frank Joseph in 1938, and in 1940 they built the house on West Park Boulevard where they live now. The property was purchased at the end of the Depression from parcels of Van Sweringen land being liquidated.

*Martha remembers: When I was eight or nine, mother put me on the Shaker Rapid with my younger sister to go downtown to meet father. There was no terminal at that time so a note was pinned to my clothing to "leave these girls off at 9th Street."*

*I also recall a skating party in the late twenties in the basement of the home of Salmon Halle on Park Drive. It was an impressive sight following a line of marble pillars down the stairs.*



The Heritage of the Shakers, p. 44

The Van Sweringens established a riding club for Shaker Heights residents, and the property is now used by the Cleveland Skating Club.

## Blanche Solomon Diener

*We built our home at 14215 Larchmere Road in 1925, and it took two years to finish on account of a long builders' strike. In the years from 1912-30, South Park Boulevard was a dirt street that got treated with oil to keep down the dust. I rode my horse from Troop A which is now the site of the Cleveland Skating Club. The bridle path was along South Park to West Park Boulevards, across Shaker Boulevard to South Woodland Road, and then back down on North Park Boulevard to Coventry Road to reach the stables. All the trolley cars stopped to let us cross the main streets.*

*The city always tested the lakes for skating. If a red flag was up, no skating was allowed. The most unusual store I recall was a dry goods store on Woodland Avenue run by two sisters. (The Van Aken half-sisters Anna and Helen operated A. and H. Hank Dry Goods.) It was packed from the floor to the ceiling with goods, and they carried everything we ever wanted or needed.*

## Leola Seidel

*We moved to Ludgate Road in Shaker Heights in 1927. My two youngest were born upstairs in the bedroom. When my oldest daughter and her sister were in junior high, they had to wear woolen skirts from the middle of October until the first of May. I made all their skirts and all their coats on my grandmother's sewing machine in the basement.*

## James Harkins

*I remember that the road from here to Chagrin Falls was a one-lane road. When you drove out that way and met a car coming in the other direction, you'd have to hit the dirt.*

*I worked as a dentist until about five years ago. I got my license in 1924. I had an office of sorts over Nichols' in and up the stairs. Dr. Gibans was on one side, and my office was on the other side. I ran into a lot of brats around here so I left. They were what I call brats. If I told them not to do something like snoop around, they told me their father would sue me. So I moved.*



## Judith Emerson Musser

*I was born in 1929. My parents had built a home on Fernway Road in 1925. The foundation was laid, and a week later my parents couldn't find their house because it was so country to them.*

*We all had live-in maids until World War II. After that, things changed.*

*During the war years, there was only one car per family. If someone could get a car in high school, we'd all get in the car and go to the Lomond School parking lot to neck with six to eight people in the car. We also went to park on Lynton Road which wasn't lighted. But we could usually find our friends at Lomond.*

*My father was instrumental in having the storm sewers hooked up. Shaker basements often flooded, and my father went to City Hall and asked them to hook up the storm sewers.*

*Our son, who graduated from Shaker Heights High School, now lives in Fernway and is expecting another generation of Emerson-Musser to be raised here. My husband and I continue to live here because of the convenience of everything.*

## Marie Boehringer

*We moved here in 1929. We were constantly watching homes being built and wondering who would move in and if their kids would be going to school. The traffic was sparse enough that we played tennis in the street in the evenings.*

*I have lived in Fernway except for about four years after I was married when we lived on Edgewater Drive. But I was homesick for the area, and now my husband is a convert. We built our house on Elsmere Road.*

*It's a good retirement area. We walk to the bank, stores, library, post office. We do a lot of walking. And of course we're only five minutes from the rapid. We can get downtown so easily. I run into so many people with whom I went to high school. We also like the number of young people on this street. It's a good mixture.*

*The block party is fairly recent. I can't recall block parties from when I was young. For entertainment, our big thing was to go downtown on the rapid with a coupon for the Hippodrome or the big movies. Euclid and 105th was very popular on Saturday night, featuring wonderful movies and vaudeville.*



Courtesy of Shaker Heights Police Department

The first Shaker Heights police officer was hired in 1912. In the 1920s, officers were required to take bicycle duty, and it has been reported that the heaviest man was assigned in order to ruin the bike. By the 1940s, Shaker Heights was known as the "Traffic Signal City," because stop signs were so plentiful. As this photo from the early 1950s attests, the force became more sophisticated as the years passed.



Courtesy of Shaker Heights Public Library

The dapper firefighters of January, 1931, had moved their station to the new city hall at Lee Road and South Moreland Boulevard the previous year. The Fire Department was organized October 1, 1917, with eight men and one piece of equipment. In 1936, the department first provided ambulance service, and in 1977, paramedic service. The second fire station, at Warrensville Center Road and Shaker Boulevard, opened June 6, 1952.



# Rediscovering the Garden City

While most Shaker Heights residents are familiar with the story of the Van Sweringen brothers, they may know less about four elements in the Shaker story to which the city's unique beauty and ambience can be traced: the influence of the late 19th Century Garden City Movement on urban design in England and the United States, the adherence of the Van Sweringen Company to strict standards of architectural style and integrity, the historical moment in the architectural development of Shaker Heights, and the planned diversity of the city as a whole.

The philosophy of the city's planners in the second decade of the 20th Century derived much of its inspiration from the ideas of the English social reformer, Ebenezer Howard. In 1898, he wrote *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, arguing for the carefully controlled development of new cities in agricultural districts as an alternative to the haphazard evolution of sprawling suburbs. Howard proposed a city limited in population and density, organized to carry on the essential functions of an urban community – business, industry, administration, education – and situated in a setting of spacious public parks and private gardens.

This ideal community was envisioned to be 6,000 acres, of which the city would occupy only 1,000. The population would be no more than 30,000. Each house would occupy an average building plot of 20 by 130 feet. The basic unit in the neighborhood would be the family living in its own home surrounded by a garden, and the most important neighborhood institution would be the school.

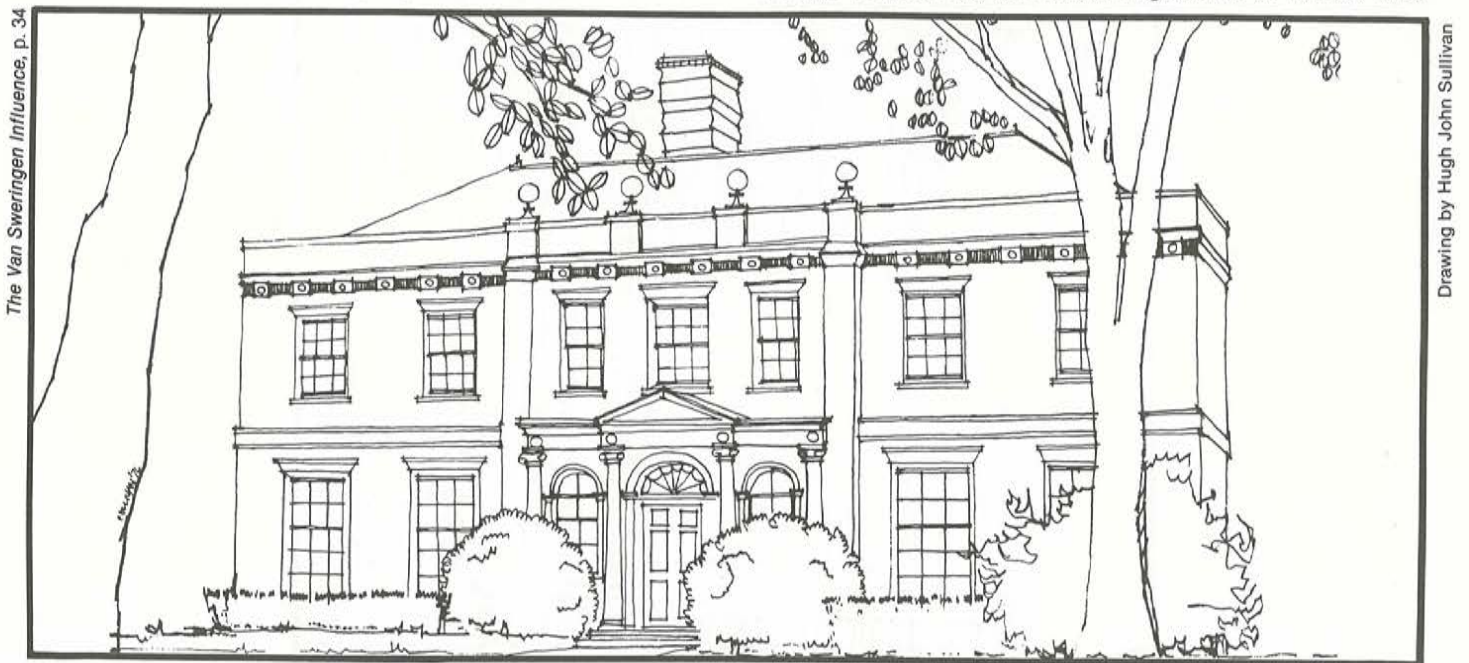
The Van Sweringens and their planners, the F.A. Pease Engineering Company, borrowed from the

ideas of Ebenezer Howard: Witness the topographically sensible, aesthetically pleasing curvilinear boulevards, elliptical street patterns, and broad green meridians. At 32,000, the population of Shaker Heights in 1987 is just a little larger than the limit Howard placed on his Garden City. Lot sizes average 45 by 120 feet in the neighborhoods of Lomond, Sussex, Moreland, and Fernway and 60 by 150 feet in the Onaway and Boulevard neighborhoods.

At 6.3 square miles, Shaker Heights is more densely populated than it appears. Creating an illusion of openness and space are the flowing green spaces of school properties, strictly enforced building setbacks, broad tree lawns, streets arched by canopies of maples, elms, and sycamores, and, perhaps most precious of all, our heritage from the old North Union Shaker settlement, the Shaker Lakes. Significantly, Shaker Heights has its own emerald necklace, the wooded park land bordering Doan Brook and its tributaries, which affords the community an area of incomparable natural beauty and outdoor recreation in the heart of the city.

Howard called for strict control of the Garden City's development by a board of management. Unlike the company of the Garden City, the Van Sweringens did not continue to own all the land, but the Shaker company did exercise rigid control over building standards and architectural designs throughout the peak building years of the 1920s and well into the Depression decade of the 1930s.

Prospective buyers were given a set of building guidelines and regulations in a booklet entitled *Shaker Village Standards*, the most important of which was



The Van Sweringen Influence, p. 34

Drawing by Hugh John Sullivan

Clarence Mack was the master builder and first owner of the Georgian home at 3119 Courtland Boulevard.



the requirement that a competent architect be engaged in the design of each Shaker home: "The architect selected should be a graduate architect, or one whose qualifications warrant and whose drawings express a thorough, technical knowledge of the highest and best in architecture..."

The peak years of housing construction coincided with the period in American architecture known as "Eclectic Revival." It was characterized by the adaptation of European styles from the English Medieval, Jacobean, Tudor, Georgian, Colonial, and Country French periods. At the same time that young architect Frank Lloyd Wright was designing bold, futuristic homes for his affluent Chicago clients, Cleveland businessmen and professionals who purchased lots from the Van Sweringen Company looked to the traditions of European architecture, perhaps aspiring to the solid baronial lifestyles those designs seemed to recall.

To execute those designs they turned to some of the most distinguished architects and builders in American history – among them Charles Schneider, who was a master of Jacobean/Tudor forms; Philip Small, designer of Shaker Square and Plymouth Church; Bloodgood Tuttle, designer of several of the Van Sweringen model homes; master builder Clarence Mack, whose harmonizing of Georgian designs to natural settings was unequalled in beauty; and Frank Meade, who with James Hamilton designed some of the finest private residences in the area.

The city is composed of separate and distinct districts or neighborhoods, but within those

neighborhoods architectural and aesthetic harmony and integrity are insured by uniformity of lot sizes, setbacks, scale and proportion, and building standards. The concept became known as planned diversity.

These standards dictate that the same attention to design and detail has been exercised for the home on a 45 by 120 foot lot in the Sussex neighborhood as for the larger home on North Park Boulevard or Shelburne Road. Compare, for example, the exquisite floor-to-ceiling leaded glass windows of a two-family home on Winslow Road with those of a magnificent Tudor home overlooking Green Lake on Parkland Boulevard. A lovely Georgian home in the Sussex neighborhood, perfectly scaled to its smaller lot, features a dignified portico entrance and Palladian window, architectural details implemented on a grander scale in the Clarence Mack mansions along South Park and Courtland Boulevards.

The Fernway neighborhood boasts examples on a modest scale of the Country French style characterized by stone or stucco construction, mansard roofs, graceful dormers, and delicate wrought-iron ornamentation, and rivaling in integrity of style, detail, and proportion larger examples on Van Aken and South Park Boulevards and Parkland Drive. Along the maple-lined streets of the Lomond neighborhood, two mail slots next to the front door are often the only clue that these lovely Georgian, Tudor, and Colonial houses are two-family residences, such has been the faithfulness to the authenticity of overall design.

*Excerpts from "Rediscovering The Garden City" by Claudia Boatright, Shaker Magazine, January, 1987, 11-15.*



*The Van Sweringen Influence, p. 39*

*Drawing by Mark N. Gilles*

Portico entrance, 2721 Chesterton Road



# Shaker's Rapid Transit System

"The Van Sweringens' original plan was to provide commuter rail service from downtown Cleveland to Youngstown with the tracks running through Shaker Heights and Chagrin Falls," says Blaine S. Hays of the Regional Transit Authority. "It never got any farther than Green Road in Shaker Heights."

In 1912, the Vans received permission from the city of Cleveland to proceed with their plan, which included construction of the Union Terminal downtown. It was to be a turn-around point and business center to serve riders of the Van Sweringen high-speed railroad.

The Vans believed that a rapid transit railway was needed to bring residents downtown quickly. In those days of unpaved streets, almost everyone traveled by street car. The pioneer trolley route came east on Euclid Avenue, climbed Cedar Hill, ran out on a private right-of-way on what is now Fairmount Boulevard, and turned south on Coventry Road to Shaker Boulevard. Coventry and Shaker were just trails through weeds.

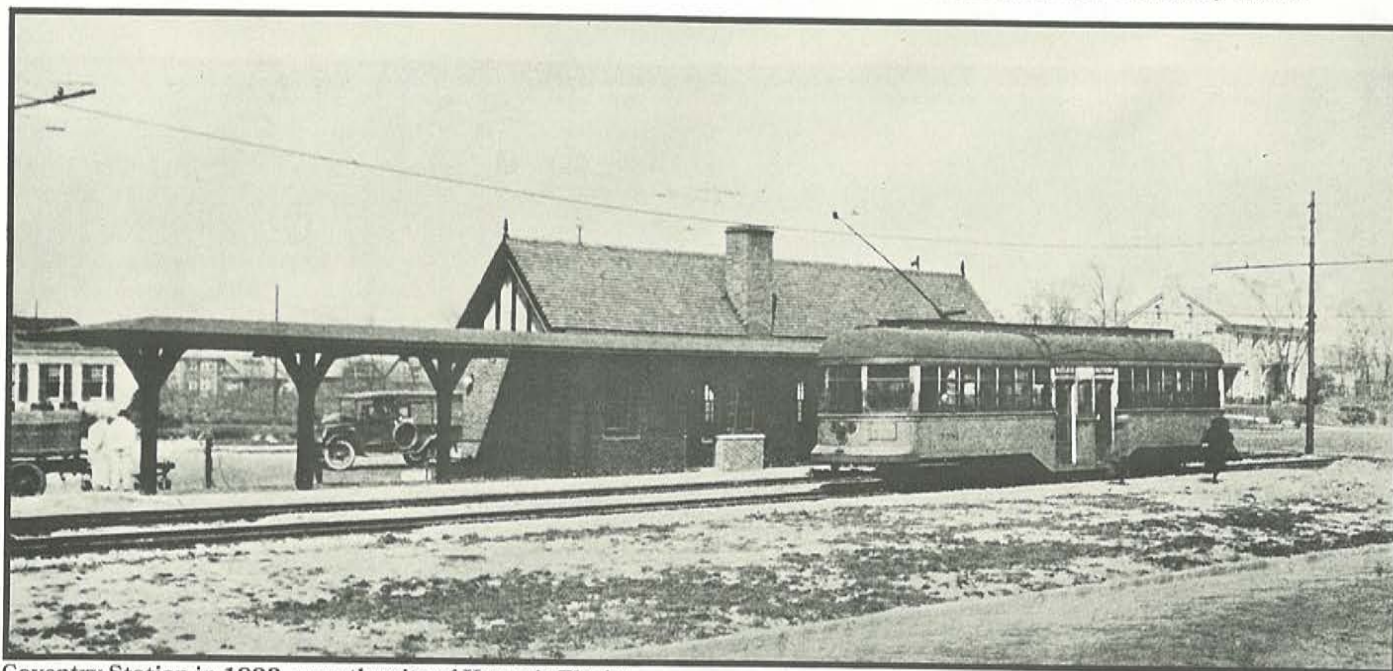
On December 17, 1913, the Vans opened the Shaker Boulevard Rapid starting at Coventry Road and running east to Fontenay Road where the cars were turned around. On May 20, 1915, the line was extended to Courtland Boulevard and south to Shaker Heights Country Club. Cars backed up Courtland from Shaker Boulevard to the future golf course site. Years later, as automobile ownership mushroomed and members no longer rode the rapid to Club functions, that short north-south part of the railway was removed and covered up.

Meanwhile, the Vans were dissatisfied with the slow trolley line from downtown Cleveland to their rapid at the corner of Coventry Road and Shaker Boulevard. They began looking for a private right-of-way from Coventry and Shaker to downtown. They surveyed U.S. Government topographic maps and found a natural ravine through Kingsbury Run.

To gain the five miles of trolley right-of-way, the Van Sweringen brothers purchased in 1916 the entire Nickel Plate Railroad, 513 miles long from Buffalo to Chicago and St. Louis. The Vans bought the right-of-way to Chagrin Falls for the future. That is why there is a wide area on the south side of Chagrin Boulevard east of Warrensville Center Road.

In 1918, construction began on the Moreland and Shaker Boulevard lines. The Van Sweringens restructured Moreland Circle and renamed it Shaker Square. They rented four cars from Cleveland Railway and painted them dark green with a yellow sunburst design on the front to indicate the dawning of a new day in the lush, rural, and inviting area where the Van Sweringens were selling real estate. Signs on the outsides of the cars invited city dwellers to see the development, only a few minutes away by rail. The Moreland and Shaker lines opened in 1920. The fare was 10¢.

In 1920, the route downtown over Euclid Avenue was discontinued for the faster, more direct route, and a shuttle car, known as the Coventry dinkey, plied Coventry Road between Fairmount Boulevard and Shaker Boulevard and is the reason for the brick station at Shaker Boulevard and Coventry Road.



Coventry Station in 1923, now the site of Kenny's Florist



The Coventry station and two others were built in the 1920s to serve rapid transit customers. The others were at Shaker and Courtland, and Lynnfield and Moreland.

"A fourth station was planned," says Robert J. Landgraf, RTA secretary-treasurer. "It was built, but it never actually served as a station." It is the small white building at the intersection of Van Aken and Chagrin Boulevards, which now houses R.A. Hamed Oriental Rugs.

"From the beginning, practically until the RTA takeover, both the Lynnfield and Coventry stations had soda fountain/drugstore/coffee shop types of operations in them," says Blaine Hays. "As I recall, though, the Courtland station, which was smaller, was mostly used just for waiting. It wasn't heavily used in later years and was torn down in the late 1960s."

Rapids left Shaker on the hour and half-hour, and Moreland at 15 minutes and 45 minutes after the hour. The schedules were designed by the Vans so that residents could memorize the arrival and departure times.

Plans for the complete, high-speed service between Shaker Heights and downtown could not be realized until the Union Terminal building was completed and the rails upgraded. With its opening on July 20, 1930, direct high-speed service between Shaker Heights and the Terminal was complete.

The line operated under the authority of the Van Sweringens for a number of years, using center-entrance cars ordered locally from the G.C. Kuhlman Car Company. Cars were not updated until the line was sold to the city of Shaker Heights. Before the Van Sweringen brothers died in 1935 and 1936, their empire already had begun to collapse. Shaker Heights did

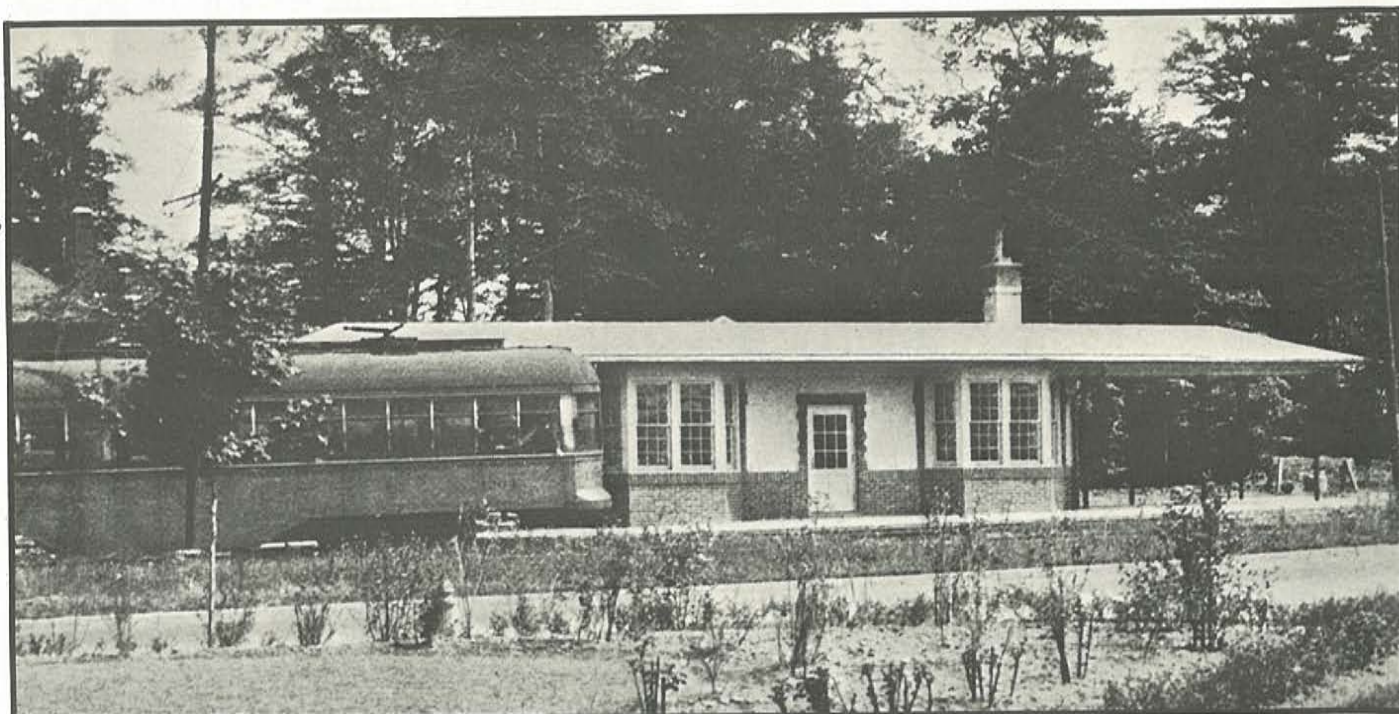


Lynnfield Station in 1923

not purchase the rail line until 1944, when it made a deal to buy it from the bankrupt Van Sweringen holdings. "They got a terrific buy, paying only \$1,250,000 for it when it had cost more than \$5,000,000 to build," says Hays.

From 1944 to about 1972 the Shaker Rapid operated entirely from the fare box proceeds, but it began losing money and was in need of repair. On September 5, 1975, the new Regional Transit Authority accepted as a gift the Shaker cars, lines, and stations. There was no purchase price, only the stipulation that the system be brought up to top operating condition within a period of 10 years. Rails were replaced, crossings upgraded, stations refurbished, new cars bought, and additional safety and cosmetic touches made.

*Excerpts from Harry Christiansen, Sun Press, October 26, 1961, and Michael N. Samsol, Shaker Magazine, January, 1987, 19-23.*



Courtland Station in 1923, no longer in existence



# The Other Van

William J. Van Aken, the man for whom a shopping center, a boulevard, and a rapid transit line were named, led Shaker's municipal government for 35 years; he was the moving force that carried forward the vision of the Van Sweringens, transforming a small village into a world-famous suburban community.

Van Aken's long association with the Van Sweringens goes back to 1896, when all three Vans were schoolboy newspaper carriers together. The Vans carried the old *Cleveland Leader* out to the border of Van Aken's farm at what is now 128th Street and Woodland Avenue. Oris Paxton and his younger brother, Mantis James, came up Woodland Hill Pike from town twice a day in their horse-drawn wagon carrying the morning and evening editions of the newspaper.

In an interview, William Van Aken told the *Sun* newspaper: "I was about 12 years old then, and the Vans were slightly older, 17 and 15. We were good pals. They moved shortly after that however, and our friendship languished because of the distance. I stayed out there on my mother's farm and sort of ran things for her."

When the Van Sweringens offered him his first commission, to acquire a piece of property with access to a right-of-way, Van Aken took it on, and thus began

his love affair with Shaker Heights. The land was overgrown with weeds and brambles; the Shakers' barns, mills, dams, and communal buildings had been abandoned to the elements. Roads put in by speculators in 1892 had deteriorated. "It was a rugged job," Van Aken told the *Sun*, "but I loved it. Carving a city out of wilderness is the most satisfying of experiences."

When the Township of Shaker Heights had its first election on August 8, 1911, William J. Van Aken, O.P. Van Sweringen, and John L. Cannon took office as trustees. The population was 200.

Van Aken's son Bill tells a favorite family story: "One night in 1915, the clerk of the village went over to Mayor Clapp's house with a large sheaf of papers needing his signature. When the Mayor saw the pile, he asked, 'Do I have to sign all those?' The clerk explained it was necessary so the city would have bonds to build the roads. 'Well, then, I resign,' said Clapp." Thirty-one-year-old Vice Mayor Van Aken stepped in. His new position paid \$10 a year.

The Van Aken family lived on family property on 128th Street off Woodland Avenue. His real estate business, Van Aken and Strock, was started by subdividing the family farm.



Courtesy of Ruth Williams

The Van Aken children: Flo, Margaret, Maureen, Bill, Ruth, and Jean



At this early date, the boundaries of Shaker Heights were continually changing as land was acquired and annexed. As originally laid out, Shaker Village extended east to Warrensville Center Road and west to East Boulevard; but because some of the streets at the western border already were built and did not fit in the Van Sweringen plans, the boundary line was moved east. "Wait a minute!" Van Aken protested. "If you do that, I'm not in the village." So the Vans agreed to change the line, moving it to the rear lot behind East 128th Street to include the Van Aken property.

No apartments were to be built in Shaker Heights; however, the Vans designated Coventry Road as the boundary, allowing Moreland Courts and other apartment buildings to be built to the west, toward Shaker Square. The Vans arranged for residents of apartments near Shaker Square to send their children to Shaker schools.

From 1912 to 1930, when the present City Hall was dedicated, Shaker Village conducted its business from the Van Sweringen Company offices at the northeast corner of Lee Road and Shaker Boulevard (once the site of the North Union Shakers' meeting hall). Police and fire departments were located on the premises.

In 1920, East View Village, in dire financial straits, was annexed by Shaker Village. It included land bounded by Fernway Road, Scottsdale Boulevard, 140th Street, and Warrensville Center Road.

Although the area had only 600 people, it became a pocket of protest and staged rallies against Van Aken in several elections. In 1927 and 1935, East View put up a candidate to challenge the Mayor, but each was badly beaten.

Throughout the 1920s Shaker was in a period of spectacular growth. The population grew from 1,800 in 1920, to 18,000 in 1930. Van Aken was the first mayor in the country to found an architectural board to approve styles of new homes to be built.

He established a service department with one of the highest budgets in the nation and maintained one of the largest police and fire departments for a community its size in the United States. Land values increased 7,200%.

Scott Mueller, who was a member of Shaker Heights City Council from 1948 to 1960, feels Van Aken deserves a great deal of credit for keeping control of the Van Sweringen property. Mueller says, "He just ran things very well, and chose fine, capable, honest people for city jobs. It was my suggestion that South Moreland be renamed Van Aken Boulevard in his honor, and I'm proud of it!"

William J. Van Aken died in office December 28, 1950. The renaming of the street (and rapid line) became official April 23, 1951.

*Excerpts from "The Other Van" by Dottie McNulty, Shaker Magazine, January 1987, 24-29.*

## MAYORS OF SHAKER HEIGHTS

John Mitchell	1912 – 1913
Ford M. Clapp	1914 – 1915
William J. Van Aken	1916 – 1950
John W. Barkley	1950 – 1955
Wilson G. Stapleton	1956 – 1962
Paul K. Jones	1962 – 1973
Walter C. Kelley	1973 – 1983
Stephen J. Alfred	1984 –

Shaker Heights city government is run by a mayor who serves a four-year term and a city council of seven members who serve four-year terms. Council elections are staggered so that three members run for election, and two years later four run for election, thus allowing for consistency in government.



# Schools

*1914 Shaker Boulevard*

*1919 Woodbury*

*1923 Malvern*

*1923 Onaway*

*1923 Sussex*

*1926 Moreland*

*1927 Ludlow*

*1927 Fernway*

*1929 Lomond*

*1931 Senior High*

*1952 Mercer*

*1957 Byron*

Education long has been an important feature of life in Shaker Heights. The first school in Warrensville Township was a log cabin on Kinsman Road east of Lee Road; it opened in 1815. The North Union Shakers established a school under Ohio School Law in 1841. Another school, built in 1859 at 3486 Lee Road, was a one-room brick structure called the "Hornet's Nest." It remained in operation until 1910, when East View School replaced it. At Warrensville Center Road and Fairmount Boulevard was Idlewood School or the Manx School, named for the Isle of Man families whose children attended it.

Predictably enough, the Van Sweringen brothers organized a new system of education for Shaker Village children. On September 9, 1912, 26 pupils and four teachers met at the Van Sweringen real estate office at Shaker Boulevard and Lee Road. The brothers

later helped the school board acquire land for eight public schools. In the meantime, Idlewood School was annexed in 1913 and operated until Shaker Boulevard School was completed. East View School was annexed in 1920, and replaced by Moreland in 1926. (The old East View building was next used as an administration building, then as a warehouse, and was subsequently destroyed by fire in the 1930s.)

Shaker Boulevard School was the first school built in the Van Sweringen model city. It opened in 1914 with grades kindergarten to 10 and added grades 11 and 12 by the next school year. Mayor William Van Aken's daughter Ruth remembers being one of four or five girls in the school at that time. "The 'private school supported by public funds,' as it was frequently called, consisted of the original Shaker Boulevard School without the extensions, which were added later."<sup>6</sup> It



The fourth grade class of East View School, October, 1920

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society





Student Council at Moreland School, October, 1954

has been reported that the growth of the school was so rapid that it became necessary to clean out the coal room so that it, too, could be used as a classroom.

The Board of Education decided to close Idlewood School when the area (now University Heights) was annexed to Shaker Heights in 1915. The school board invested \$185 to purchase a wagon to transport the students to Shaker Boulevard School. Shaker resident Ruby Corlett remembers, "About 15 of us made the long ride every day."<sup>7</sup> The wagon was replaced by a motor bus in 1921, and by 1938, there were three buses to take students to and from school. Today, a fleet of 31 buses criss-crosses Shaker Heights to accommodate the 5,032 students currently enrolled.

The school year was 38 weeks, five hours per day, with 10 children per class. The first Board of Education met on May 22, 1912, in the Van Sweringen real estate office. In 1917, the forward-thinking Board of Education voted to hire only college graduates as teachers. In 1920, J. W. Main was hired as clerk-treasurer, and he has been credited with keeping the schools financially sound, even during the Depression.

In 1917, the Van Sweringens made six acres available to the Community Club of Shaker Heights for war gardens. This land was later used for Woodbury, the new high school which opened in 1919 to house about 450 students in grades seven through 12. The Vans bestowed the tower clock to the school system, and it was an important feature of community life, both for its practical and symbolic values. At about that time Shaker Boulevard School became known as Boulevard School. Within four years

Onaway Junior High opened to accommodate the growing population. It was not until 1931, with the completion of the Senior High, that Onaway became a kindergarten through sixth grade building (and the configuration of kindergarten through six; seven through nine, and 10 through 12 was adopted).

At the end of the 1930-31 school year, the Depression hit the school system. One-fourth of the teachers were not rehired, and the salaries of the remaining faculty members were reduced by 25%. They were paid in scrip, and J. W. Main later made good on all the scrip that had been issued.

Dress codes for junior and senior high school students were strict. Girls wore white middle blouses (with some variation in color during the week), blue skirts, and saddle shoes. Boys wore dark pants and white shirts. Women teachers were expected to keep a pair of white gloves in their desks at all times so they would be prepared for invitations to a student's home for lunch. Wearing sleeveless dresses was forbidden. In the 1940s girls lobbied for permission to wear jackets, sweaters with or without blouses, colored skirts, and dresses. After 1942, new seventh graders, called "flats," no longer could be thrown in the pond east of Woodbury School; it was filled in.

During the World War II years, paper drives, tin can and tax stamp collections, and first aid classes were organized. Girls knitted blue and khaki sweaters for the Red Cross. Air raid drills were commonplace. The theory was that people were safe until about 25 minutes after the siren sounded. Students who lived a 20-minute walk away went home to the safety of their





The 1915-16 high school graduating class of Boulevard School

cellars. Those who lived farther generally went home with friends.

As the population grew, second floors were added to Malvern and Sussex Schools, and additions were built onto other schools in the district. By the 1950s junior high students met on split shifts at Woodbury School, and the need for another junior high was apparent. Controversy surrounded the appearance of the new Byron Junior High, which contrasted with the other schools and the Unitarian Church (built in 1955) down the street. Byron was called a chicken coop, a country club, and a greenhouse. To the latter J.W. Main responded, "No finer place than a greenhouse for raising flowers or children."<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the years Shaker schools and students achieved and maintained high standards. Innovative changes in curriculum, outstanding teachers, high standardized test scores, and a high percentage of college-bound graduates have been hallmarks of the school system. The schools' excellent reputation has been the foremost reason given for moving to Shaker Heights. Russell Rupp was principal of the Senior High from 1946-62, years that saw student enrollment almost double. He believed that there were three reasons for the outstanding scholarship and all-around accomplishment of Shaker graduates. They were the willingness of the students to apply themselves to school work, the cooperation of parents concerned with their children's education and welfare, and the dedication of the staff of teachers and administrators.

Over the years the school system has been required to respond to population and demographic changes. First came increasing enrollment. Then, integration in the late 1950s and 1960s resulted in racial imbalance at

some of the elementary schools. In May of 1970, the Board of Education adopted the Shaker Schools Plan, a voluntary busing program to promote integration. It remained in place, with modifications and expansion until 1987, when the Board of Education reorganized the elementary schools to balance them racially. The school system's response to integration has served as a model for other communities.

The other critical issue of the 1970s and 1980s was declining enrollment. The student population peaked at 8,086 in 1966-67, began to decrease in the 1970s, and is projected to level off under 5,000 in the 1990s. Just as schools were opened during years of population expansion, they have been closed during times of decline. In 1985, Woodbury was closed, Byron was converted to a middle school for grades seven and eight, and the high school housed grades nine to 12. The 1987 elementary reorganization plan closed Ludlow, Malvern, Moreland, and Sussex at the end of the 1986-87 school year. The remaining five buildings house kindergarten through fourth grades. Woodbury reopened for all fifth and sixth grades. As so often occurred in the past, neighborhood school districts were changed. Alternate uses for the closed buildings were to be compatible with school board and community needs.

The history of Shaker schools in many ways reflects that of the community. The high standards set by the Van Sweringen brothers, although redefined, have been maintained. Dress codes, curriculum, after-school activities, facilities, and the like may have changed, but the commitment to excellence is a constant in the Shaker school system.



# Rose Garden

**Shaker Heights**

A Report  
To the People

Number 11

**School Review**

Shaker Heights, Ohio

Know  
Your Schools

June, 1955



Closely associated with the Rose Garden since its beginning and to whom much of the credit is due is J. W. Main (right), business manager of the Shaker Schools; Mrs. E. W. Hubach, whose father was responsible for the garden; and W. F. Simpson, principal of the Junior High where the garden is located.

***Campus Rose Garden Is Project  
Begun by Residents 30 Years Ago***

Shaker Heights School Review, June, 1955

The rose garden in 1955, with W.F. Simpson, Woodbury principal; Mrs. E.W. Hubach, daughter of Frederick Bruce; and J.W. Main

In 1925, Frederick H. Bruce decided that a public rose garden should be planted in Shaker Heights. He was a member of the Cleveland Rose Society. Shaker residents had been asked for yearly contributions for fireworks, but Bruce persuaded them to donate funds for roses. So effective was he that 2,000 bushes were purchased. The school system provided the space between Woodbury and Onaway Schools, as well as maintenance. Architect Charles Schneider designed the garden according to blossoming periods and colors.

From 1926 to 1947, William Duffy (and his dog Jiggs) was caretaker of the Woodbury flower beds,

shrubs, and especially the rose garden. He frequently took cut flowers to classrooms and offices.

The garden languished in recent years. However, in April of 1986, Shaker Heights Girl Scouts took the garden on as a community service project in exchange for a free room at Woodbury School. They were advised by the Cleveland Garden Center that the rose-bushes were in good shape. In the course of the year they cared for the rose garden, the Girl Scouts learned much and had a positive effect. With the reopening of Woodbury as an elementary school, the future of the rose garden is again in question.



# Private Schools

*University School: Established 1890, bought Shaker Heights property 1923*

*Hathaway Brown School: Established 1876, bought Shaker Heights property 1923*

*Laurel School: Established 1899, bought Shaker Heights property 1927*



Courtesy of Cleveland Public Library

Hathaway Brown School, October 1, 1927, just after it opened

After World War I, the trend among Cleveland parents was to send their children to country day schools. While Shaker Heights already had a thriving public school system in the 1920s, the Van Sweringens sought the additional prestige of private country day schools. Each of the private schools moved up from Cleveland because Shaker Heights offered the remoteness of the country as well as the accessibility of the rapid transit.

The deeds state that the Van Sweringens sold the property to each private school for one dollar an acre. However, the schools were assessed for the many improvements made to their properties. That each school remained and that their graduates' records are impressive indicate the investments were sound.

In 1923, University School bought land near the Shaker Rapid line. Work started in March of 1924, and Walker and Weeks were the architects. The building was occupied in January of 1926. Because of the mud, boardwalks were placed from the Courtland Rapid stop to the school, but the Van Sweringens had Shelburne Road from Claythorne to Ashley Roads seeded and planted in an effort to improve the area's appearance.

In 1923, the Vans approached the trustees of Hathaway Brown School with an offer of land if they would build in Shaker Heights. Walker and Weeks again served as the architects, and buildings were first used in the fall of 1927.

Sarah Lyman, headmistress of Laurel School, also wanted the best for her students. "University School and Hathaway Brown were already building in Shaker Heights. Mrs. Lyman's pride was touched; Laurel School should not be left behind in a building that she said 'looked like a pickle factory.'"<sup>9</sup> The move to the country was first suggested in 1925, and an 11-acre tract was purchased in early 1927. "The place where we landed was certainly back of beyond, up a lane from Fairmount Boulevard and with no other roads approaching from any side. We stood in a swamp near an old apple orchard, and blessed our galoshes. What we saw was uninhabited country with nothing in sight but an abandoned barn."<sup>10</sup> The architect was John Graham, and the students walked over planks to avoid the mud as they entered their new school in the fall of 1928.



# Churches

*1916 Plymouth Church*  
*1924 East View United Church of Christ*  
*1926 Christ Episcopal Church*  
*1928 First Baptist Church*  
*1929 Heights Christian Church*  
*1938 St. Peter's Lutheran Church*  
*1945 St. Dominic Parish*  
*1952 Temple Beth El*  
*1955 First Unitarian Church*  
*1972 Shaker Heights Community United Church of Christ*

As early as 1912, the Van Sweringen brothers planned to make a site available for use by three to five churches, one of which would be a Congregational church. At the same time the Plymouth Society, established in 1862 as a Congregational affiliate with anti-slavery sentiments, was floundering in its Cleveland location. In 1915, Society trustees decided that a "Plymouth Church" should be situated in Shaker Heights. The congregation's first services were held December 27, 1916, in the High School (now Woodbury). Work was begun November, 1919, based on plans of architect Charles Schneider. The sanctuary was first used February 11, 1923.

Although Plymouth was the first church built in the Van Sweringen model city, the present site of Christ Episcopal Church was occupied by a Methodist congregation established in 1868 by Warrensville farmers. By the late 1920s the building was in disrepair, with broken windows, a leaking roof, and hobos for tenants. Christ Episcopal Church, which held services from 1926-1932 at University School, used the land and building for 12 years rent-free, on the condition that the building be repaired. The congregation purchased it in 1934, and built further additions in subsequent years.

Katherine Dempcy remembers, "At the corner of Farnsleigh Drive and Warrensville Center Road where Christ Episcopal is, there was a small wooden church which, when I was young, was a Methodist church. It had stalls where people could keep their horses protected from the weather. I recall so well that there was a clock on the wall, and that the inter-urban cars ran once an hour. At certain times, whether the minister was through with his preaching or not, people got up and walked out because they had to catch the inter-urban going east or they would have to wait for another whole hour."

In November of 1956, a fire destroyed much of the church. Even as the flames raged, a local merchant gave the rector donations from other merchants who

wanted the congregation to rebuild in the same place rather than move to a residential area, as some members had suggested. While the repairs were made the congregation met at Mercer School. The first service in the new church was June 14, 1959.

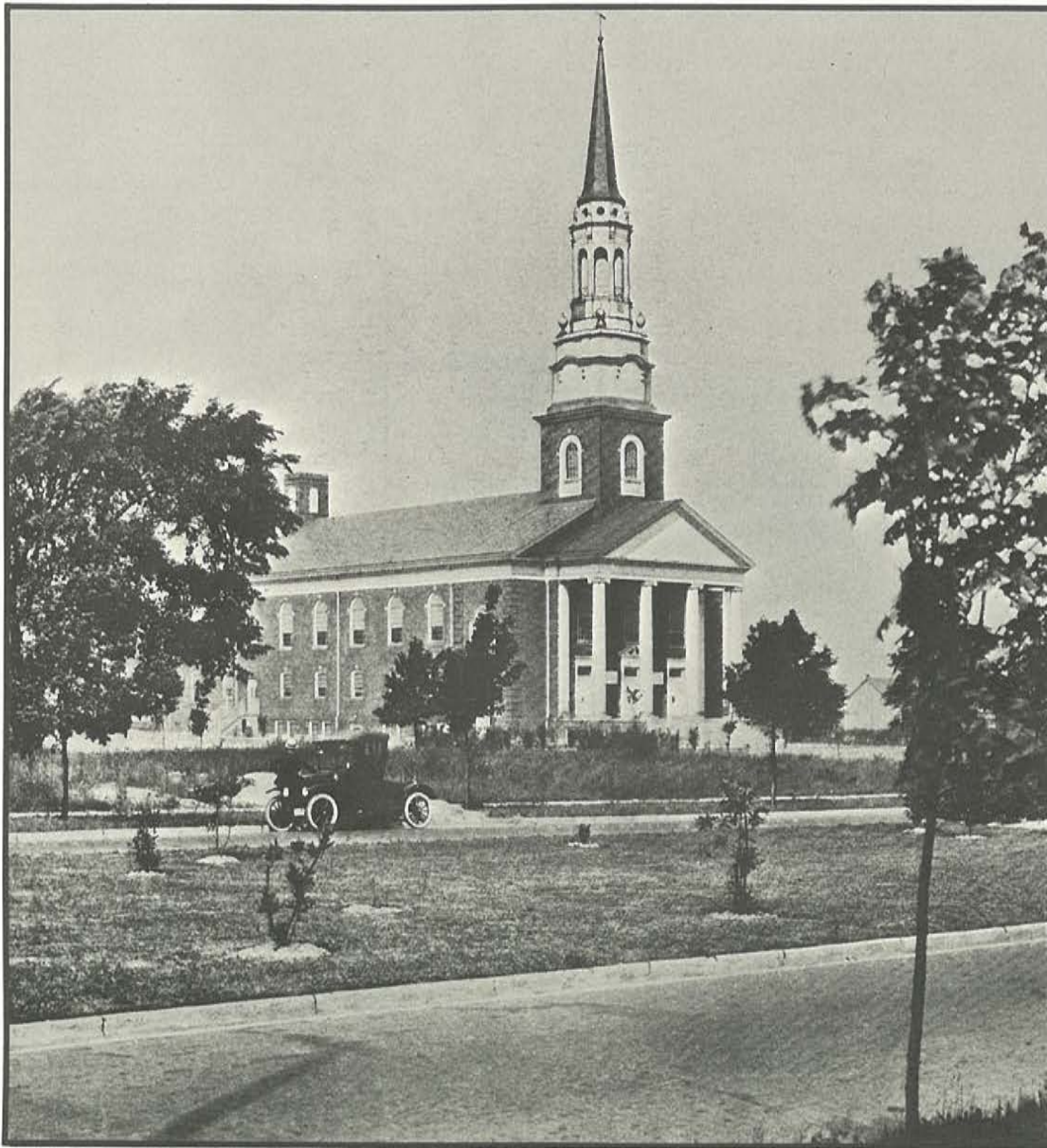
As their members moved further east, a number of Cleveland denominations faced the need to relocate. The First Baptist Church's building committee selected land at the Cleveland Heights-Shaker Heights boundary. However, the Vans wanted more for the land than the church could afford. Finally, the brothers reduced the price by \$55,000 and ultimately cancelled the final payment and interest. Walker and Weeks were the architects of the Gothic structure.

Ground was broken April 15, 1928, and the building was dedicated the week of June 2, 1929. The church is made of Indiana limestone. Its tower, named for Dr. Ambrose Swasey who paid for it, rises 130 feet.

Sixty-five members of the Euclid Avenue Christian Church volunteered to establish a new Heights congregation on October 13, 1929. The following week they held services at Woodbury School and stayed there until they moved into a temporary frame building in April of 1934. In the meantime the Calvary Presbyterian Church, which held Sunday school at Fernway School, requested Heights Christian Church to take it over in June of 1931. Ground was broken for the present sanctuary in 1940, and the building was completed, with all of its additions, in the summer of 1960.

Members of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Cleveland decided to relocate the congregation to an area with a more assured future. In the process, the congregation lost one-half its members (who were later replaced by neighborhood people). Members met at Moreland School during Lent of 1938, and the church was dedicated with seven services on November 24, 1938.





Plymouth Church in the first year of its existence

One of the sources of pride for J.W. Main, clerk of the Board of Education, was that every church in Shaker Heights had at some time in its existence used the facilities of the Shaker Heights school system for services, either when the church or synagogue was being formed or during some disaster.<sup>11</sup>

After World War II, the restrictions imposed by the Van Sweringens were relaxed so that both Catholic and Jewish congregations made permanent homes in Shaker Heights. The formation of the new St. Dominic's Parish was announced in the mother parish of St. Cecilia on October 11, 1945. The first Masses were said at Lomond School November 18, 1945, ground was broken in June of 1947, and the church was dedicated August 8, 1948. The parish opened a private school in 1950.

The 1952 High Holy Day services of the newly formed Temple Beth El were held at Moreland School. They marked the first time in Cleveland that a modern Orthodox congregation held services where men and

women sat side by side and worshipped together. On September 15, 1957, the temple officially was opened. It is worth noting that a century before, the Shakers worshipped in virtually the same location, and women and men did not sit next to each other.

In 1955, the First Unitarian Church was established in Shaker Heights. Philip Small was the architect for the Shaker Boulevard church.

Shaker Heights Community United Church of Christ and East View United Church of Christ have established strong black congregations in Shaker Heights. East View has been located at Menlo and Kinsman Roads since 1924. The members first met in a house, and the church was dedicated February 19, 1928. The late 1950s and early 1960s brought many changes to the Moreland and lower Kinsman area, and the congregation reflected those shifts in population. In 1972, the Shaker Heights United Church of Christ moved into its building on Lytle Road, which had been occupied by a German Evangelical church.



1930

1931

1934

1935

Construction of City Hall is finished.

July, Shaker Heights becomes a city as voters adopt a charter. William J. Van Aken is mayor.

The Moreland Rapid line is extended to Warrensville Center Road.

November 19, Merle Hand is chosen as the city's second fire chief, replacing John K. Irwin who has served since 1917. Hand will remain as chief until 1964.

December 12, M.J. Van Sweringen dies at 54 of high blood pressure.



1936

1937

1944

February, the Van Sweringen Company files for bankruptcy.

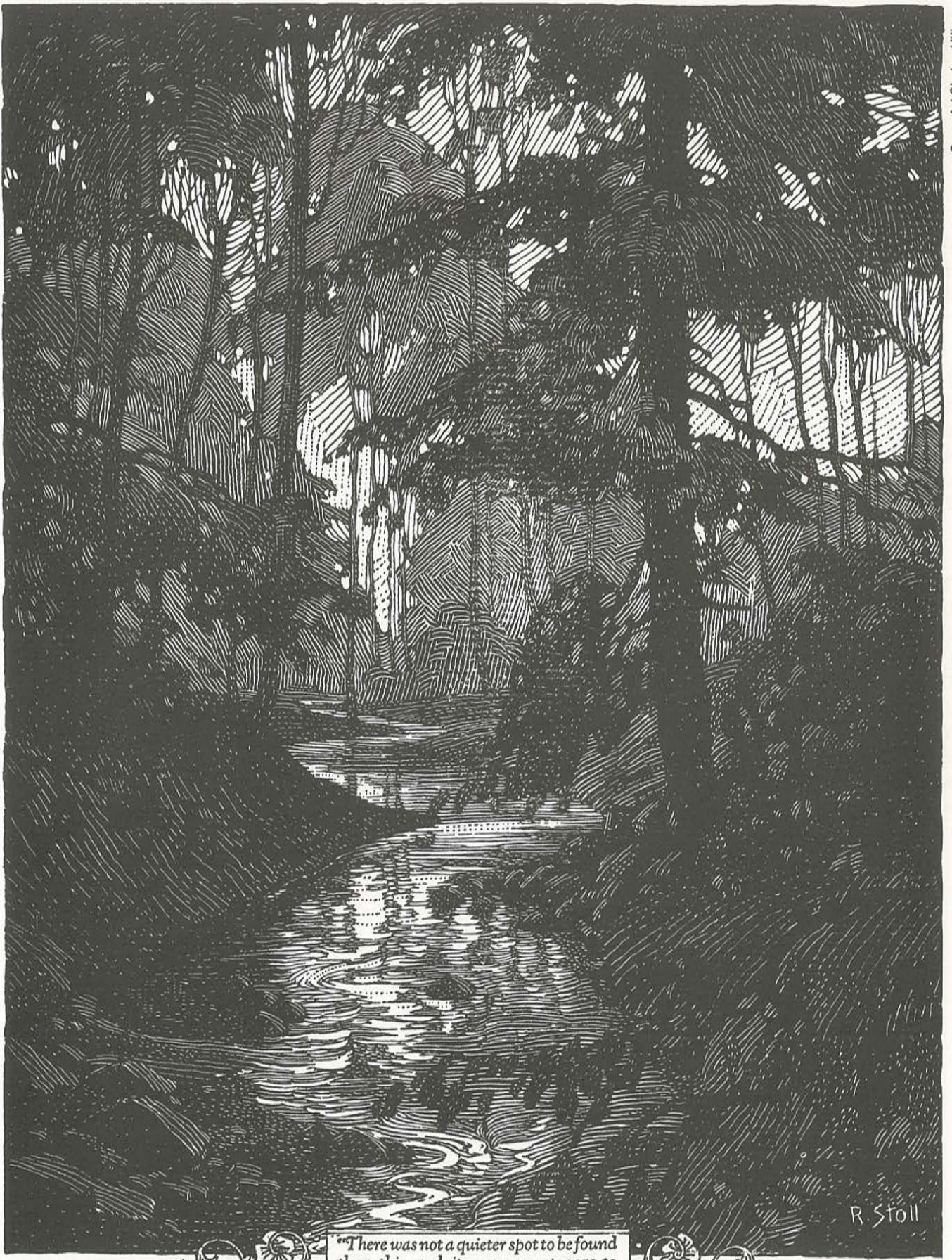
November 23, O.P. Van Sweringen dies at 57 of a heart attack while on a train in Hoboken, New Jersey.

The Shaker Rapid line is extended to Green Road, and the Shaker Fire Department purchases a new Nash ambulance to provide Shaker citizens with ambulance service.

December 28, the Colony Theater opens on Shaker Square in Cleveland.

Shaker Heights assumes ownership of the Shaker Rapid Transit at a book value of \$5,861,630. The purchase price – salvage value – is \$1,300,000.





R. Stoll

"There was not a quieter spot to be found than this, and it was very strange to have drifted into it so suddenly out of the bustle and rumble of the city."



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## Chapter 3

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# 1930 Through World War II Years of Growth

The 1930s brought maturity to Shaker Heights and financial ruin and death to its founders, the Van Sweringen brothers. Mantis died at the age of 54 on December 12, 1935, and Oris Paxton at the age of 57 on November 23, 1936.

Along with every city in the United States, Shaker Heights was changed by the Depression, but perhaps not to the extent elsewhere. There is a story, perhaps apocryphal, of a Shaker lawyer who rode the rapid daily to his office downtown, always engrossed in his work. He told his neighbors he did not believe there was a Depression, that he had never seen it.

In the 1930s Shaker Heights was growing. According to housing permits, in 1935 Shaker was first among Cleveland's suburbs in the value of new homes. That year, 152 homes were built in Shaker Heights at an average cost of about \$10,500. In the same year twice as many homes were built in Cleveland Heights at an average price of \$2,500.

Shaker Heights was becoming widely known for its city services, and residents began to expect a level

of personal service beyond the ordinary. Police had a house watch list and kept the house keys of wealthy residents when they were out of town. And Rudolph (Rudy) Rife, Service Department foreman, was on his way to legendary status.

One of the best Rudy Rife stories appeared in the *Heights Press* on January 25, 1936. It seems that one Sunday afternoon in January, shortly after 2 p.m., Shaker police responded to a call from a Shaker Heights resident who, while trying to revive his stalled auto, had lost a \$1,000 diamond ring in a snowdrift at Shaker Boulevard and Lee Road. Police called Rife. When Rife arrived, he looked at mounds of snow 125 feet long and the receding sun, and he called for a big garbage truck. His men spent most of the rest of the light of day loading every flake of snow into the garbage truck, and they hauled it to a city garage. Inside, Rife turned a steam hose on the truckload of snow. Before it was half melted, a worker spotted the diamond ring in the mixture of snow and steam — all in a Sunday afternoon's work in Shaker Heights.

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According to the 1939 *Gristmill*, Shaker High School Yearbook...

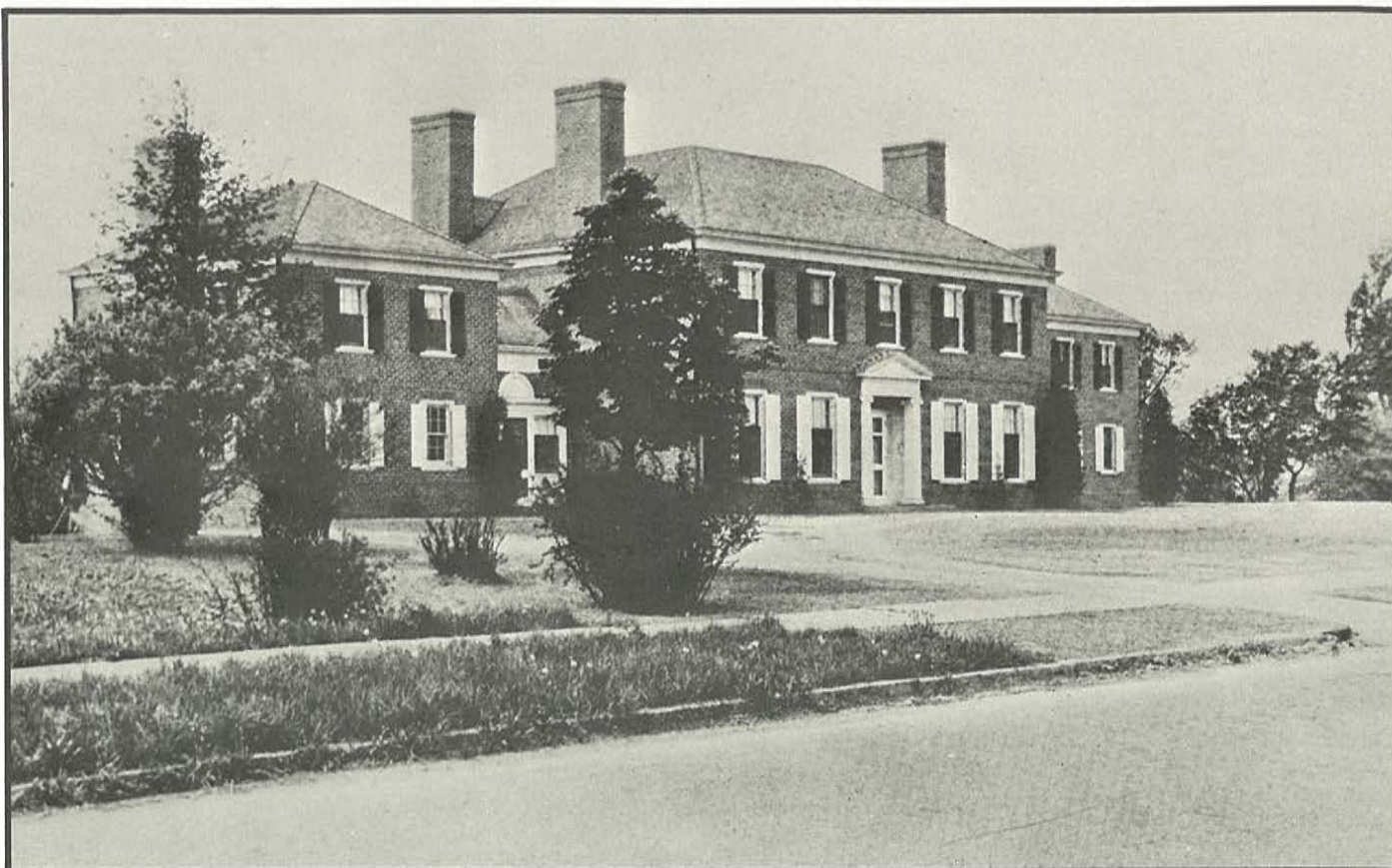
Among the activities of Shaker High School is the Student Court, a body of three senior judges and two junior advisors elected by the Student Council to handle the cases of students who have gotten off on the wrong foot in their attitudes toward the school. This body offers the opportunity to learn what other students think of their actions; thus it is able to give a kind of advice that the deans cannot.

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Rudy Rife rides the V plow in 1966, half a century after he rode a horse-pulled V plow.





Courtland Road home of Newton D. Baker from 1923 until his death in 1937. Baker was Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of War and Law Director of the city of Cleveland from 1902 to 1911.

## Doris Whitslar Alburn

*The Depression really changed the style of things in Shaker Heights. We had a program called "A man a block." The idea was to give work to those neighbors out of work. The neighbors got together, and one man who was out of work did odd jobs around the neighbors' homes for money.*

*I remember Christmas pageants at school, but there was never anything about Hanukkah. I recall Christmas caroling in the neighborhood. We went to the house of Newton D. Baker (19200 Courtland). He was quite ill, but I remember the door being opened so that he could hear us sing. He died shortly afterward, in 1937.*

*We invited our teachers home for lunch every year. When I went through the schools, we only learned manuscript writing. There was no cursive. I had to figure out how to write when I had to sign a check.*

*I sold Girl Scout cookies with Troop #54. We put 12 cookies in a paper bag and sold them for 25¢. There were no traffic signals, only stop signs embossed with a Shaker Maid.*

*In junior high school, we wore middie blouses. On Tuesday and Thursday the blouses were colored and on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday they were white. And, dear heavens no, we were not allowed to wear pants to school. It was rare to have a mother who was working. I only had one friend whose mother worked. Her father had died, and her mother worked as a nurse.*

*I remember that we had sororities and fraternities in high school. The girls went to their sorority meetings on Saturday nights and the boys to their fraternity meetings. Afterward, we got together and socialized. Nobody got into trouble; nobody thought of drinking. Oh, there were some wild ones, but nobody I knew. Our parents never worried about us because it was not customary for us to get into trouble. I can only remember one girl in high school who got pregnant, and she was spirited away quickly and quietly.*

**Carol Haas Grossman's** parents built their house at 14422 Shaker Boulevard and moved into it in 1929. Carol was entering tenth grade and transferred from Park School, a private, progressive school that held classes in what is now the Cleveland Skating Club. Carol recalls that her grandmother's chauffeur drove them to school each day.

*My sophomore English teacher Kathryn Mansell was one of the best teachers I had. Ms. Mansell was a far-sighted teacher, very progressive. She even smoked, which was unheard of at the time. Ms. Mansell invited the poet Langston Hughes to talk to our sophomore English class, and later he went to our home for tea, a memorable afternoon.*



Everything we could need was located at Shaker Square. McNally Doyle was where Stouffer's is now. Everyone had them do their catering!

Among the women, nobody worked; it would have been a stigma. A woman only worked if her husband couldn't support her.

**Barbara Haas Rawson** was enrolled in Boulevard School at the age of 10. She attended Shaker Junior and Senior High Schools.

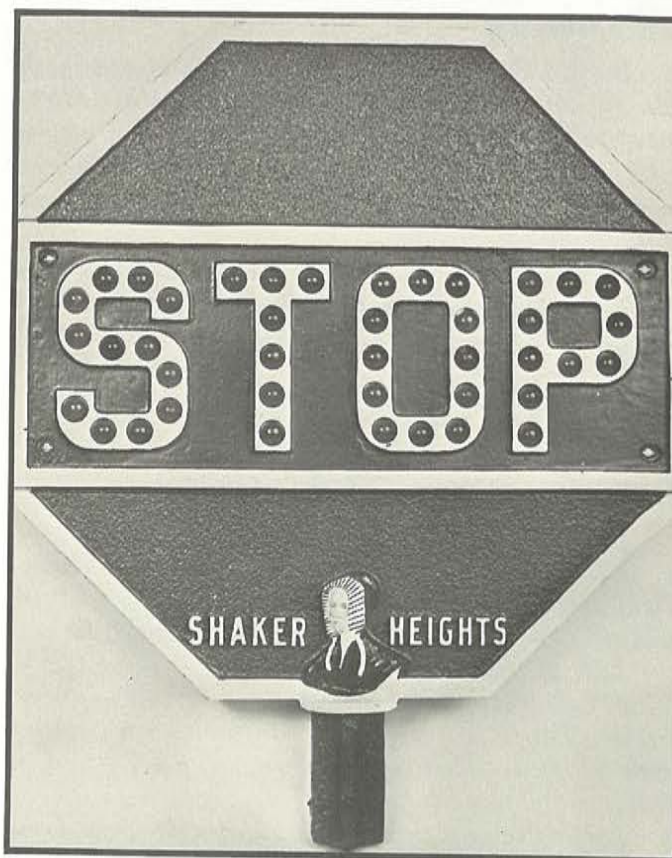
I loved high school. The girls were heavily involved in sports, field hockey and baseball. The school was the center of all activities. Shaker was a much more intimate community. There was still diversity in the population, and there were different religions in Shaker. The Moreland neighborhood was a lower income area. My best friend was the daughter of a Cleveland fireman.

I also remember that Jews could not buy a home east of Warrensville Center Road in those years. I was invited to join a high school sorority and then uninvited when it was learned that my family was Jewish.

### Marion Kirsch

I began teaching in 1929 as an art teacher in the elementary department. Within three years, the Great Depression hit Shaker with a profound thump, and the school system fired 32 teachers all at once three days before school was out. This of course was before tenure. I was out of teaching for one year and came back as a regular teacher at Lomond School.

In the thirties, my contract read that I could teach as long as I remained single, but if I married, my contract became null and void. After I married I had to apply to the school board for a special dispensation. I wrote my letter in the form of the Declaration of Independence, and I was granted permission to continue teaching, even as a married lady.



Stop sign embossed with the Shaker Maid

Photo by Herbert Ascherman, Jr.

### Wayne French

When I taught at Shaker High School, students used roller skates, bicycles, and once in a while, a car to get to school. There weren't many stop signs. I had one student with a car, and he was quite a fast driver. I used to kid him that he was the one who forced Shaker Heights to put up so many stop signs.

**THE BYSTANDER - TOWN HOMES**

GENERAL Washington's Headquarters, overlooking the Hudson? No, but just as charming. Here is what someone is going to do with a certain hillside we know of in the Shaker Country Estates. There will be a roomy, hospitable house and eight rolling acres. The city out of sight and mind but conveniently near by rapid transit. A view to the end of the world. And a feeling of security because of protective restrictions and of property value increases yet to come, as they have in older Shaker Village. And all this is going to cost less than \$50,000. Where else can you equal such an investment, in such worth-while returns?

**VAN SWERINGEN COMPANY**  
32nd Year Continued Service  
The Van Sweringen Co., Inc.

The Bystander, December 14, 1929, p. 39

Photo by Herbert Ascherman, Jr.

Van Sweringen Company advertisement



## Clay Herrick

In the 1930s we used to go for a lot of walks along the Shaker Lakes where the Nature Center is now and catch a lot of polliwogs and things. The Shaker Canoe Club was still standing at that time, and occasionally we went canoeing. That was an exclusive club, and only by invitation did we go canoeing.

Special games I enjoyed as a child were "Tap the Icebox," "Hide-n-go-Seek," and "Rover Rover Come Over." We played street hockey, roller skated, and bicycled. In the winter, we'd cross country ski rather than downhill ski, although there were some hills over toward the lake.

## Laura Jean Chesney Gockel

In the 1930s four vacant lots on the southwest corner of Oxford and Manchester Roads made a large baseball field where we neighborhood children gathered frequently, usually after dinner, for our baseball games.

Late afternoons, I rode my bicycle to the corner of Shaker Boulevard and Eaton Road to watch for my father. Traffic was so sparse that when a car appeared over the crest of the road near Fontenay Road, I could be fairly sure it was my father.

I found several fields that yielded wild strawberries and wild violets in abundance. One field was at the point formed by Eaton and Torrington Roads at Shaker Boulevard, and the other was across Shaker Boulevard near the brook. The wild strawberries were a gourmet's delight. The violets I made into corsages for my mother, wrapping the stems in pieces of tin foil from the inner wrappers of candy bars.

There was a most attractive building at the Courtland Rapid stop similar to the ones at Coventry Road on the Shaker line and Lynnfield Road on the Van Aken line. It functioned as a waiting room primarily. On the north wall was a long bench, and in the west end of the building was a small store where soft drinks, bread, milk, tobacco products, chewing gum, candy bars, and newspapers were sold. The newspapers were brought out from downtown on the rapid, and the rapid motorman threw them out on the ground when the car stopped. If a child picked up the bundle of newspapers and brought it into the gentleman or his wife who ran the store, he was rewarded with a candy bar.

My parents taught me to drive. I passed the test at age 12. Finding a place in Shaker Heights to learn to drive was a simple matter in the 1930s. We selected the area where Mercer School is today. There were only two houses in the entire area.

I remember the farmhouse at the southeast corner of Shaker Boulevard and Warrensville Center Road where Bertram Woods Library is today. The farmland covered from Warrensville Center Road to Belvoir Oval, and a stand there had fresh fruits and vegetables for sale.

In winter the Shaker Fire Department flooded lots for skating rinks. One was between Bertram Woods Library and Warrensville Center Road; another was at the corner

of Fernway Road and Warrington Road, and a third was on Van Aken Boulevard.

In the mid 1930s Joe Heinen opened his first grocery store. It was on the south side of Chagrin Boulevard. I recall an automatic peanut butter-making machine and, I believe, an automatic doughnut-making machine.



Kinsman Road Heinen's in 1938

During World War II everyone was encouraged to plant a victory garden to raise his own fruits and vegetables to help with the war effort. We each had our own garden. It was the first time I realized vegetables weren't as horrible as I thought. Students went to the school kitchen during mid-morning break for milk. We also received a small chocolate, which was an iodine tablet.

**Paul Newman** was born in Cleveland Heights on January 26, 1925. When Paul was two years old, the family moved to Shaker Heights and took up residence at 2983 Brighton Road. He graduated from Shaker Heights High School in 1942.

## Laura Jean Chesney Gockel

Paul Newman and I attended Malvern, Woodbury, and Shaker Heights High Schools together. He was two years ahead of me. I had several photographs of Paul and me at Malvern School in the mid-thirties. My daughter gave these pictures to Paul when she was talking with him at the Cleveland 500 several years ago.

Actually, I hardly remember him in classes at school. Most of us who attended school with him will reply similarly. I remember him well because he and Jim, the boy next door to us on Oxford Road, were inseparable friends. Jim had a 1936 Ford coupe, and he and Paul seemed to spend all of their time tinkering with it. I began to think Paul had taken up permanent residence next door to us.

After graduation from Shaker High School, Paul seemed to fade away until one night about 10 years later, my husband and I were at Jim's house and the movie *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was on television. In reply to my question, "Who is he? He looks familiar," Jim's mother said, "That is Jim's old friend, Paul Newman." And thus, the 1936 Ford tinkerer resurfaced as a superstar.

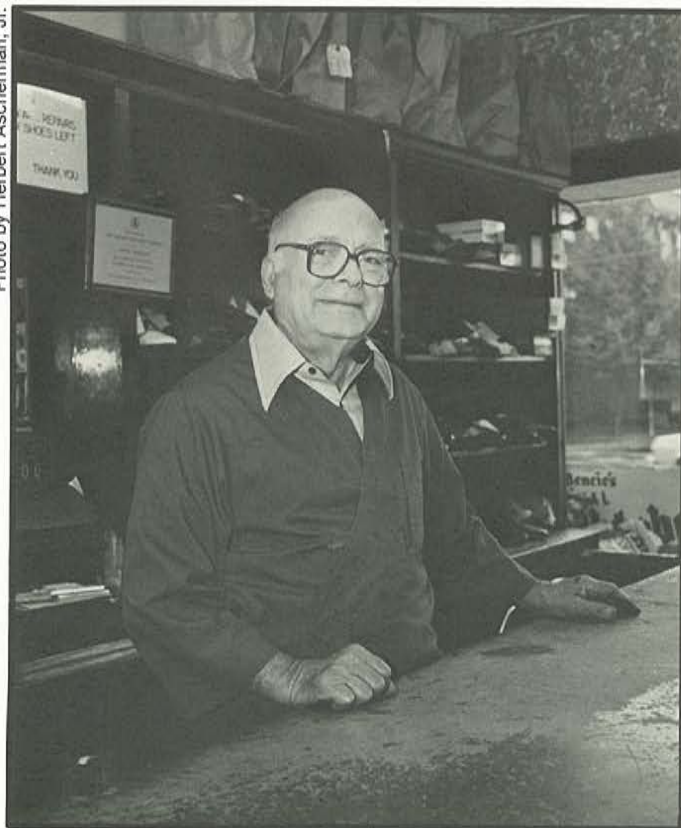


## Paul Donaldson

*I was born in Shaker Heights in a house on Riedham Road on a cold February morning in 1926. My mother could not make it to the hospital so the doctor came to the house.*

*My parents moved to Shaker in 1921 from Garfield Road in Cleveland. My father liked the open country. He built a house in Shaker and fought East Ohio Gas for a number of years. He originally owned six lots, three on Riedham Road and three on Strathavon Road so that nobody could build around him. He had to sell them when the Depression came along, but he fought gas coming up the street because he felt that once the gas came in, then the builders would come in, and everybody would be building houses. When he built, Lomond Boulevard was paved but Riedham was still a dirt street, so he'd park his car at Lomond and Riedham and walk up the hill to our house. He was chief editorial writer and political editor for the Plain Dealer.*

Photo by Herbert Ascherman, Jr.



Victor Carlucci

**Victor Carlucci** came from Italy to Woodland Avenue in Shaker Heights at the age of 17 in the year 1927. Since that time he has moved only once, across the street in 1948, when he bought his present house from DeMarco's Flower Shop. He has lived on the same block and provided the same service for 60 years. Mr. Carlucci repairs shoes.

*In 1927 the Woodland Avenue area was one of the biggest shopping centers. This was before Shaker Square was built. There were two A&P's, a Kroger's, a Fisher's, two butcher shops, and three barber shops.*

*I had learned to make shoes in Europe. We serviced all Shaker residents. People came to shop in their chauffeur-driven limousines. The Van Sweringens used to stop by for a shoe shine. In the 1930s and 1940s apartments started to be built on Van Aken. They tore down some of the mansions. Then the people changed, and the clientele changed. People have moved to other places, but some people who came here for years now mail their shoes to me.*

*Some weeks I had more than 100 pairs of shoes, but I never forgot who they belonged to. (Mr. Carlucci had the reputation for remembering the owners of shoes brought into him for repair. Frequent customers didn't need a ticket. He still remembers which shoes belong to some of his customers now, especially those fourth generation customers. But he does admit to giving some of the newer customers tickets.) My memory is not as good as it was.*

*In the old days, Mayor Van Aken came in the shop. The Van Aken sisters had a clothing store, and then Sedlak's moved in and took over. Some of the other stores closed down. Sedlak's came into the area close to 40 years ago. Bordonaro's was where DeVita's is, and Hough Bakery was where the pizza parlor now stands. I remember years ago when there was a hardware store where they made horseshoes in the back.*

*The Van Aken's were good customers. I've known a lot of fine people here. Shoe repair is a dying trade. The equipment is too expensive to purchase, and the hours are too long. (Mr. Carlucci said that in the 1930s there were more than 1,800 shoe repair businesses in the city. Now, about 85 remain.) But I have no plans to retire.*

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Helen Milner's beauty salon is the only original shop still in business at Shaker Square. According to long-time employee **Sylvia DeFranco**, Milner's catered to Cleveland's society ladies. At opera time in the 1930s, Miss Milner rented extra hair dryers and set them up in the alley behind her shop to accommodate all the business she had. Thursdays, which were orchestra days, were also extremely busy. The shop was closed on Saturdays because the ladies were then engaged in their social activities.

## Jack Heinen

*I was born in 1928 and grew up in Shaker Heights on Warrensville Center Road near Farnsleigh Drive. There were a couple of houses there, and we rented one.*

*My father started a meat market at Kinsman and Lee Roads in 1929. In 1933 he opened one of the first supermarkets in the state, maybe the country, across the street. I remember helping him carry the equipment across the street to the new store: knives and trays and pans and that sort of thing.*

*I got involved in the supermarket business when I was in the fifth grade. Shopping carts had just come out. They*





Heinen's window display in late 1930s

did not nest like today's do; they were just individual carts. My job was to put the carts back in the little squares, where they stayed uncluttered for the next customer's use. This was at our Taylor Road store which was our first self-service store. When I was in the seventh grade, I started working behind what we then called the cold-cut counter (which has come back in the form of a deli counter today). They decided that I was not tall enough to read the scale properly. I was losing a couple of cents on every sale because I was looking at it from below an angle. They put a wooden pop case underneath the scale so I could look at it straight. Then I worked in the meat department all the way through high school and college vacations, and the time between finishing school and going into the service.

The fifties and sixties were primarily devoted to work and family. My twins, who are not in the business with me, were born in 1954.

The biggest change I have noticed in Shaker is the lack of vacant land. Everything is built up now. The population has decreased about 25% since the fifties.

I remember the school parades. The city used to have a parade every July 4th or Decoration Day. Kids decorated

their bikes with crepe paper and the school band was there, along with some antique cars. I remember going to Shaker Lakes regularly. We also skated on Shaker Lakes, and I remember falling in once. We had ridden over on our bikes to play hockey, and after I fell in, I had to ride home in those icy clothes.

Older kids used to hang out at places like Budin's on Chagrin Boulevard and Avalon Road. It was a deli, famous for corned beef sandwiches. They also served beer, so only older kids out of high school could spend time there in the evenings. In the fifties and sixties, practically the only restaurant was Gruber's at Van Aken and Chagrin Boulevards. It was the only good restaurant on the east side at one point.

I think Shaker Heights has done a good job controlling growth. In general, the biggest change has been the maturing of the city, from a developing city to what we know today.

## John Anderson

My high school years were spent at a private school in Shaker. I graduated from University School in 1929, a few months before the Wall Street stock market crash. The Shaker campus (then housing the high school, now used as University School's Lower School) on its 33 symmetrical acres is an ideal spot. From its tower, now lighted at night, you can see all the way to the Terminal Tower.

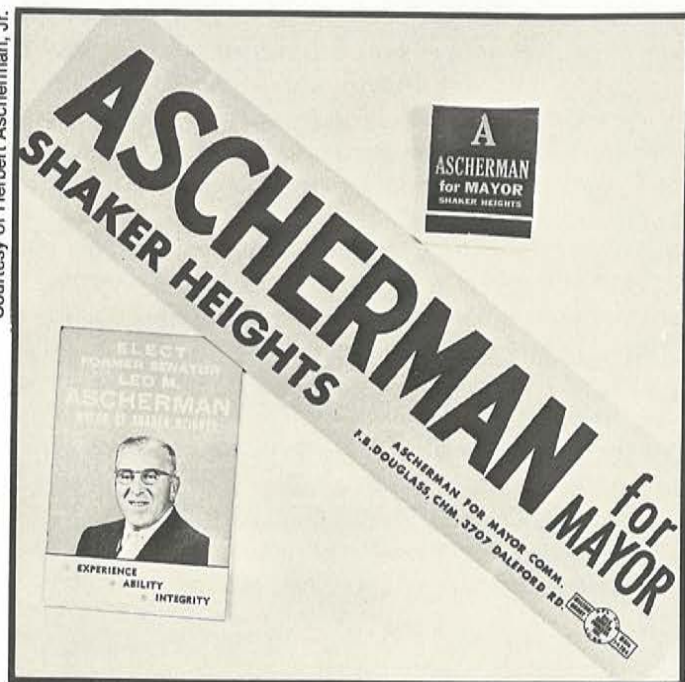
In the mid-thirties on the Shaker campus, our class held a June reunion along with alumni of other classes. We picnicked and played baseball on one of the school's several large athletic fields at the corner of Ashley and Brantley Roads. Suddenly, a small single-seater plane swooped down, buzzed us, and then took off into the wild blue yonder. Soon, it reappeared just to repeat the process. We wondered if the Russians were coming. It came a third time, flying within a few feet of the ground, and we ran for cover. When everyone was off the field, it landed. Out stepped an alumnus of my class. It was his way of celebrating the reunion. We forgave him and handed him a bat and glove. I understand that our Shaker Heights neighbors were scared and almost called out the National Guard before realizing it was simply another prank by one of those raucous US boys.

I have sold real estate in Shaker Heights for almost half a century. It's always been a lot of fun to sell real estate in Shaker Heights. I believe most Shaker residents will agree that our Service Department is efficient and dependable. They respond quickly to emergency pickups and repairs, and, thank goodness, they have the equipment and willingness to come into our back yards to carry away our rubbish. All you need do is drive down a few streets in other suburbs on trash collection days to see what I mean. Those ugly piles of junk, I say with gratitude, are not on our tree lawns to make our streets resemble alleys!



Heinen's dramatic presentation of cans in late 1930s





Memorabilia from the Mayoral Campaign of Ascherman vs Jones

## Leo M. Ascherman

We moved to Shaker in 1930. I was 30 years old, and we lived in an upstairs suite on Milverton Road (now Winslow Road). Then we moved to a side-by-side at Milverton and Ashby Roads, and then we built one of the first houses on South Moreland Boulevard.

Our son Herbert attended Moreland School and then Shaker High School where he graduated co-valedictorian. Our daughter graduated from Ludlow and was an honor student at Shaker. Six of our nine grandchildren went through the Shaker school system.

During World War II, I joined a "Block Home Front" group that was on South Moreland Boulevard and Ludlow Road. Our function was to be prepared to alert our areas in case of danger. We bought khaki uniforms and trained at the old Grays Armory. It was an unofficial, volunteer group. I guess those of us who had sons in the service felt a special loyalty to participate somehow, somewhere.

About 30 years ago I ran against Paul Jones for mayor of Shaker Heights. He won, but I did well. Prior to that election, I won a seat in the Ohio Senate in 1938 and served until 1942. After the Shaker race my wife told me that if I ever ran again she would leave me!

Those of us who were fortunate enough to spend so many of our years in Shaker and see our children and grandchildren grow up in Shaker must attest to the fact that it helped us to become good and better citizens.

## Eleanor McIlhenny

A four-week strike over wages and working conditions began April 17, 1934, and before it ended, every retail gasoline outlet in the county was shut down.

The Shaker station, open from 8 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., was at City Hall. Our third child was due at any moment.

Cabs were off the streets because of labor troubles, and it was a long walk from Braemar Road to University Hospitals. So a day or so after Shaker opened its emergency pumps, I joined the line at City Hall. Recognizing that I probably did not fit into any of the allowable categories, a harassed city worker asked, "Well, lady, what's your emergency?"

I heaved my by then ponderous self out of the car. The man took one look and said (hurriedly, I thought), "Okay, you can have five gallons." The strike ended May 14. Our son arrived June 3.<sup>1</sup>

Isabel Main is the widow of J.W. Main, clerk-treasurer of Shaker schools for many years.

I came to Shaker Heights in 1937, but my husband (J.W. Main, clerk-treasurer of the Shaker Heights Schools) came here in 1920, so I was indoctrinated. Both J.W. and I were interested in the Shakers and their history for a long time. Fred Bair, school superintendent, laid the foundation for teaching Shaker history to third grade students in the Shaker Heights school system.

We lived on Huntington Road, until 1986, when I moved to Judson Park. I kept the house a long time after J.W.'s death. I wanted a place for the grandchildren to come.

Shaker Heights is a wonderful community. J.W. loved it, and he was very proud of the schools. There was a camaraderie among teachers. There weren't the number of teachers, but what teachers there were had a commitment to each other and to the community. Back then, all the teachers lived in Shaker Heights. They had a sense of loyalty, and the feeling of comradeship was evident.



The November 26, 1942 Cleveland News featured the war efforts of the Ludlow neighborhood.



*Our social life revolved around the schools and their programs. There were always interesting speakers. Every year the junior high school and the PTA took over the Play House and had a program there. It was always well attended. I sometimes substitute taught during the war years but mostly, I stayed home to raise a daughter, and I tried to back up my husband in his job.*

*During the Depression, my husband paid people in scrip. I remember that one man accepted scrip for coal back then. During the Depression, many of the houses between Shaker Boulevard and South Woodland Roads were lost. After the war those houses were picked up as bargains by people with children, and more schools were needed. When J.W. came to Shaker Heights, Boulevard and Woodbury Schools were the only school buildings; he supervised the construction of all of the remaining schools in Shaker Heights. Someone once asked me why all of the schools were named for the roads they are on or faced, except for Mercer School. Well, when Mercer was built there was a road that ran parallel to Green Road called Mercer Road. To build the school, they had to block out the road. So they really did name the school Mercer in memory of the road.*

*We belonged to Plymouth Church and looked forward to their current events lectures. Our minister, Miles Krumbine, was a wonderful minister and excellent speaker. The women's association held dinners, and I remember that many of the women with maids came down to the church and cooked the food, served the food, and cleaned up.*

*When Shaker was laid out by the Vans, it was with the intention of keeping industry out. I remember that property lines around Shaker Square went back and forth a number of times. Moreland Circle was where Shaker Square is now. It was definitely in Shaker Heights, but now it's in Cleveland. The Shaker school district lines are sometimes in the city of Cleveland, too. I seem to recall that in the forties the Cleveland Schools took the Shaker Schools to court over the property around Shaker Square. Those stores pay school taxes, so we needed them, and Cleveland wanted them. I don't recall the details, just that they went to court. It seems now that people back then were short-sighted about industry in our town.*

*I recall a major skirmish about the CEI substation being built at Lee Road and Shaker Boulevard. You don't even know it's there, and it generates taxes which help pay for the schools. I remember that Beachwood, at one time, wanted to be part of Shaker Heights. We took some of their students for a while, but the city did not want to buy the area. Now I look at Beachwood and see what they have done to raise money for their schools. They have industry, but also residential areas and the industry isn't heavy and polluting. I remember one of the mayors, I think it was Mayor Van Aken, who told people that "you want your place to look like a park, but you don't want to pay for it."*

*I remember meeting the Van Sweringen sisters at Plymouth Church. They were part of the church's candy circle. They were very lovely, very genteel, unassuming,*

*and pleasant women. I often think of the gossip which goes around about the Van Sweringen brothers, and I have to remind people that if it weren't for the Van Sweringens and their vision of a planned community, we wouldn't have the lovely streets and houses we have today.*

*When we shopped we often went down to the old Bordonaro's. He had a store on 105th and Euclid and then moved up to North Woodland Avenue and Kemper Road. It was a wonderful store for fruits and vegetables. Another store I remember is Mr. Carlucci's Shoe Repair. I could go in today, and he would know me. The A. & H. Hanks Dry Goods also was quite a store. I recall the farm where Byron Junior High is now. Two brothers lived there and farmed the land. They lived upstairs and had their store in the basement. It was filled with wonderful sweet corn and vegetables. We also shopped at Heinen's.*

*When the library was built (now Frandon Printing on Lee Road) it was billed as a "shoppers' library," because that area was "the" shopping area. There was no Van Aken Center back then. I remember a wonderful women's clothing store called Lota Kelly, that was the beginning of Kelly Kitt. Where Van Aken Center is today there was nothing. Christ Episcopal Church was there, and I vaguely remember an automobile place along there, but none of the apartments were there.*

*I enjoyed life in Shaker Heights. I always enjoyed accompanying J.W. to school events and meeting the parents and teachers.*

### **Theresa Malek**

*I moved here 46 years ago with my husband, and we bought our house at 3617 Lynnfield. In 1940, the street had many two-family houses. After the war, a neighbor contacted everyone in the neighborhood and collected \$25 from each of us to hire a lawyer so that no more two-family homes would be built.*

*We used to go over to Van Aken Boulevard and pick blackberries. That was before they put up the apartments.*

*I remember during the war we went to Moreland School to get our rationing coupons. We got food coupons, gas coupons, and sugar coupons. If we were going out of town, we could get extra gas rationing and extra sugar rationing. Heinen's sometimes gave us some extra things under the counter. During the war, bananas, cigarettes, and coffee were hard to get but sometimes when we got home from the store, we found those things in our bag. Heinen's charged us for them, but they did this just for their good customers.*

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*"Deer Park" is the name given to that portion of the Cleveland park system lying between North and South Park Boulevards, east of Upper Shaker Lake. It was named because Kenyon J. Painter, a big game hunter and member of one of Cleveland's oldest and wealthiest families, brought live deer back from several of his hunting trips and turned them loose in the wooded park area.*

*Shaker Historical Society Journal, Vol. IX, No. 6*





Eight-year-old Sally Schaffer at Onaway School on June 2, 1942, about one month before she purchased the war bond

## Marcia Stone

*These older homes certainly hold quite a few surprises. Tucked under an old carpet we discovered a \$50 War Bond issued in 1942 in the name of the eight-year-old daughter of our home's original owners. My husband and I were thrilled and felt as if this bond formed a bond between us and the family that built our house in 1936.*

*We found the brother of the girl and forwarded the bond. A month or so later, we received a reply from the girl, now a woman in her 50s:*

Dear Marcia and Morton,

Imagine my surprise! When I look at the date on it, July, 1942, I think back to the days when we were freshly into World War II. Dad was an air raid warden with hard hat and flashlight, and mom and her friends were rolling bandages three afternoons a week at Onaway School. She also knitted socks and sweaters of all sizes and shapes out of that ugly khaki yarn.

We kids packed the rolled bandages into boxes and saved 10¢ a week to buy a war stamp that went into a book, and when the book was filled, off to the bank we proudly went to buy a war bond. This one was probably my first one.

Anyway, knowing me as I do, someone probably said to me, "Go home and put it in a

safe place." Living with two badgering older brothers, nothing was too safe anywhere, even in my room. The safest place (in the eyes of an eight-year-old) was under the rug. And then I forgot all about it.

I *did* take it to the bank to see how much it is worth, and it's worth about \$96. I did *not* cash it in. I have already gotten \$96 worth of storytelling and conversation out of it. I am framing it and hanging it to save for conversation, reminiscing, and for a rainy day, if necessary.

My best kept secret was that when my older brothers were in the library with their friends, and I was excluded, I could go to my room and put my ear to the register and hear what they were saying, silly kid stuff, I still remember. I love that house and always will.

And the stairway, where I descended on my wedding day. I had always dreamed of it, and it came true.

Sally Schaffer Gottfried

## Connie Brown

*My family moved to Shaker Heights from the South in June of 1944. By the time we moved to Shaker Heights, a much more likely target for enemy action than Louisville, Kentucky, the possibility of war in our own country was no longer in anyone's mind, but I did not realize that. The first thing I noticed was how free everything seemed. By that I mean that there were no black-out curtains, no wardens wearing special hats, and no one seemed afraid.*

*We were awed by the elegance of Shaker Square, the huge homes of Shaker Boulevard, and the groomed and flowering yards everywhere. There were all kinds of wonderful places just to peek in, and no one seemed to mind two kids wandering about aimlessly.*

*In school, we found the adjustment very difficult. My brother was a sophomore, and the fraternities were not welcoming. The eighth grade girls had formed their groups the year before, and they were not especially interested in the new girl. We learned patience, and after a while each of us found a friend. By the following year, we were really part of a group that had chosen us and that we felt comfortable in. Our love for the beauty of Shaker Heights and the pride of the community for its schools became as much a part of us as it was for the adults. We had a clear feeling that our schools were special, our homes were special, and, therefore, we were special.*



## Anne Beavan

*I've lived here since 1945. My house is half in Shaker Heights and half in Cleveland. My front yard is in Cleveland, and my back yard is in Shaker Heights. My son went to Woodbury School and then to the high school. We paid \$125 every quarter so he could go to school in Shaker. He went into the Army and died overseas in Germany in an accident. His name is on the memorial marker in front of City Hall. He was 21 when he died.*

*I guess I stay here because I like it here. It's familiar and seems like home to me. I'm used to it here, and I've lived here so long, I guess I'll stay. My husband died two years ago, so I am alone.*

*I worked at Taylor's Department Store downtown at 6th Street and Euclid Avenue for a while. I worked in the dress department. Shaker people shopped there and at Halle's. Aristocrats used to come in and shop.*

*Shaker is different now. There is a different class of people here now, not the aristocrats we used to see.*

## Other Heights In Shaker

Shaker Heights does not boast an impressive skyline because Van Sweringen standards limited buildings to two stories. But the brothers could not stop churches and schools from reaching toward the skies.

The tower at University School is actually a water reservoir. The spire on Christ Episcopal Church was placed twice. The second time was three years after the 1956 church fire. The Swasey Tower at First Baptist Church (Eaton Road and Fairmount Boulevard) was so named because Dr. Ambrose Swasey paid for it. He chaired the architecture committee and was not pleased with tower designs submitted by architects Walker and Weeks. The design Swasey finally approved was \$50,000 over budget, so he responded by pledging that amount. The tower rises 130 feet.

The clock tower at Woodbury School has significance for many Shaker Heights residents. The clock itself was donated by the Van Sweringen brothers. The school opened in 1919, and the clock never failed to chime the correct time when school was in session.

The city relaxed its restrictions for Tower East, which is 12 stories and rises 232 feet high over the Chagrin, Northfield, Warrensville Center intersection. The office building, designed by Walter Gropius, was completed in 1967.

## Bert and Warren Tucker

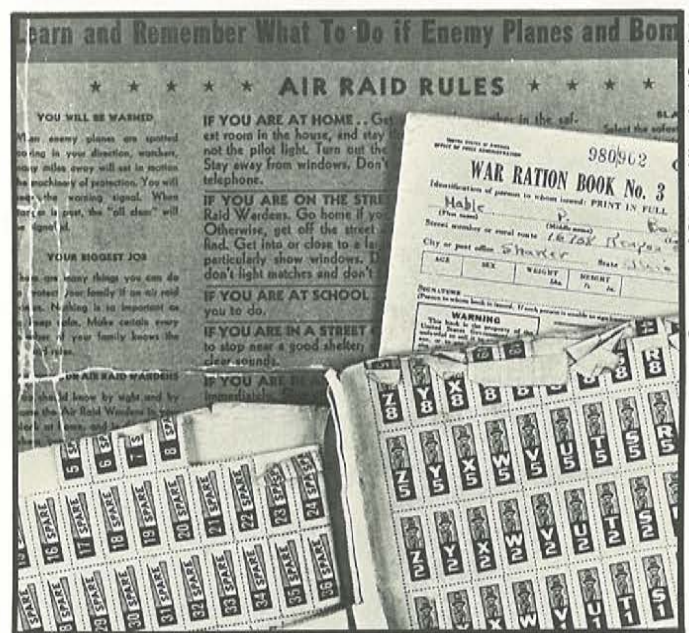
During World War II, the city needed air raid wardens. Bert Tucker wasn't working so she volunteered for the daytime while Warren served in the evening. It was 1942, and the newlyweds had just settled into their new Lomond home (in which they're still living).

They were taught wartime precautionary and emergency procedures by Shaker Police Chief Bert Tilson, learning among other things how to turn off gas meters. They also took Red Cross first aid classes from James Harkins, a local dentist with an office in the Kingsbury building. Every time a new family moved in, Bert and Warren stopped by to get their vital statistics. They also showed them how to turn off the gas and told them what to do if a bomb fell into the attic.

When the sirens went on for a test alert, Shaker's air raid wardens patrolled the streets, checking to see that no lights were showing through the curtains. They also were authorized to stop traffic.

The Tuckers remember that they "were a closely-knit group who all knew each other. We all had victory gardens, and we organized bridge parties to raise money for the Red Cross. When there was a door-to-door bond drive, we would have almost 100% participation. It was a real cooperative effort."<sup>2</sup>

During World War II, **Ruth Williams**, Mayor Van Aken's daughter, remembers taking pictures of everyone on her block to send to the boys in the service. Each street was organized to help the cause.



Air raid rules from the Cuyahoga County Council for Civilian Defense and ration books

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society



# High Jinks on Lower Lake

The Shaker Lakes Canoe Club, headquartered in a two-story boathouse on Lower Shaker Lake, provided entertainment for both its members and for the people who came from all over Cleveland's east side on weekends. On a Saturday or Sunday afternoon in the 1920s and 1930s, many families picnicked on the banks of Lower Lake, enjoying the sights of the canoes, many with colorful sails, skimming over the water. "It was a great place for a weekend outing," recalls Bernard Rife, former Shaker Heights Service Director, who as a youngster spent many afternoons at the lake.

In those early years, the Shaker Lakes were under the control of the City of Cleveland's Park Department, which operated a refreshment stand and boathouse on the North Park Boulevard side. There, visitors could rent rowboats and join the canoeists on the lake.

On the opposite shore (near the intersection of South Park and Larchmere Boulevards) stood the club's boathouse. The brown wooden structure was built by the city of Cleveland in 1914 and was leased to the club for \$1 a year. It housed about 20 canoes on its lower level and a clubhouse and porch upstairs. Canoeing was the common interest of the young, mostly single men who started the club in 1908.

The club's best known events were its regattas and moonlight carnivals. People lined the banks of the lake to watch such events as the submarine race in which paddlers had to tip over their canoes, right them filled with water, and then paddle across the lake.

On weekend evenings, club members took their girlfriends out for moonlight cruises, often to the accompaniment of music from radios they brought on board. One summer in the 1930s, a dozen or so club members decided to spend a month at the boathouse,

"almost like a summer camp," recalls Kenneth Baskill, who joined the club in 1937. The men went to work on weekdays, then slept on cots at the boathouse at night.

Although membership in the canoe club was limited because of the number of berths available, the club was by no means a country club. Annual dues in the early years were \$15, rising to only \$25 in later years. As the members married and had families, the club changed from a social club for young men to a more family-oriented organization. Most of the early members were blue-collar workers from Cleveland, but in later years, more business and professional men from the area around the lakes joined.

There were fewer regattas in the post-war years, but members continued to socialize at the boathouse and to take their canoes out on the lake. Membership in the canoe club dwindled in the 1960s and 1970s as many of the early members died or moved from the area. "People lost interest in that kind of quiet entertainment," observes former Shaker Heights Fire Chief Bill Pickford, whose father and uncle were members of the club.

The boathouse was vandalized a number of times. "Eventually, we had to abandon the building," said Bill Pekoc, owner of Pekoc Hardware and a former vice commodore of the club, "because it was impossible to connect with city sewers."

Shaker Heights City Council studied the feasibility of renovating the building, but found the cost to be prohibitive. The boathouse was razed in 1976. All that remains of the Shaker Lakes Canoe Club today is part of the boathouse's cement foundation and a boat ramp.

*Excerpts from "High Jinks on Lower Lake" by Vivian Pospisil, Shaker Magazine, January, 1987, 37-41.*



Canoeists on Lower Lake

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society



1948

The U.S. Supreme Court decides that deeds with restrictions based on race are illegal. The court decision deals with restrictive covenants in Mississippi and Michigan, but it makes such covenants illegal anywhere in the United States. Because the deeds on many properties from the old Van Sweringen land still carry the covenants, the Van Sweringen Company (mayors of Shaker Heights, Beachwood, and Pepper Pike) continues to exist to "waive" the restrictions when necessary, saving property buyers a trip to court.

1948

Shaker Heights recreation program is now under the Recreation Advisory Committee following passage of a levy of .3 mill for three years. Horseshoe Lake Park is developed by the city. The Shaker League of Women Voters is the primary force behind the development of organized recreation in Shaker Heights.

November 11, the city dedicates the Shaker Heights War Memorial at Lee Road and South Moreland Boulevard for the 91 Shaker residents who died during WWI and WWII.

1951

January 3, the new Shaker Heights Public Library building opens at 3450 Lee Road. The building costs \$325,000.

1952

Gruber's Restaurant opens on Van Aken Boulevard near Warrensville Center Road. It is a popular nightspot for folks about town and visiting celebrities.

1956

Charles Thornton becomes the first full-time recreation director.

1959

Following a spate of crimes in Cleveland on Kinsman Road, Shaker Heights decides to change the name of Kinsman Road to Chagrin Boulevard. In May, City Council resolves to change the name only on the part of the street east of Avalon Road because of opposition west of Avalon Road. But following a petition from residents on Kinsman Road, Council in September changes the name of the street throughout Shaker Heights. The cities of Beachwood, Orange, and Pepper Pike also make the name change.



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## Chapter 4

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# Post World War II to Late 1950s The Good Life

After World War II urban and suburban life across the country was transformed. People were relieved that the war had ended. They were generally optimistic and ready to enjoy the good life. Families grew, the economy perked up, and the demand for housing – especially new homes – increased. Shaker Heights residents attempted to hold onto their traditional lifestyle, but the city was not immune to change. New groups of people moved in, building restrictions began to lose their significance, and life in Shaker Heights was about to be redefined.

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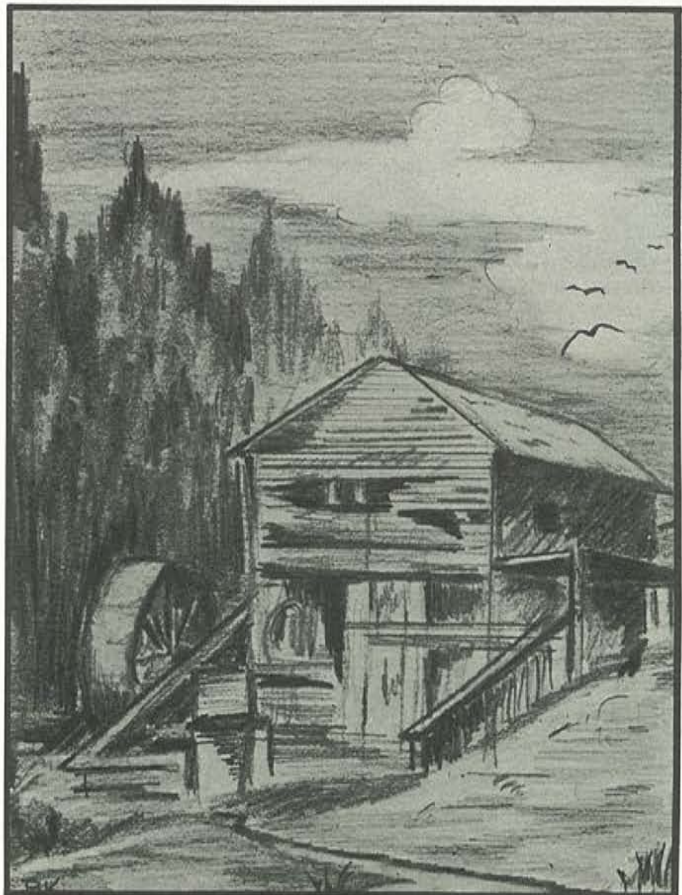
“Today the greatest of all wars is at an end. During the war, our school annual, the *Gristmill*, was designed primarily as a memory book. Now, certain war-time restrictions have been lifted.

“We have met with many difficulties due to a national economy changing from war-time to peace-time. We have had to change to a new printer, to accept a lighter grade of paper, to use zinc engravings instead of copper and to be constantly fearful of labor disputes at the printing, engraving or binding establishments.”

Shaker Senior High's new sport is baseball.

– The *Gristmill*, 1946

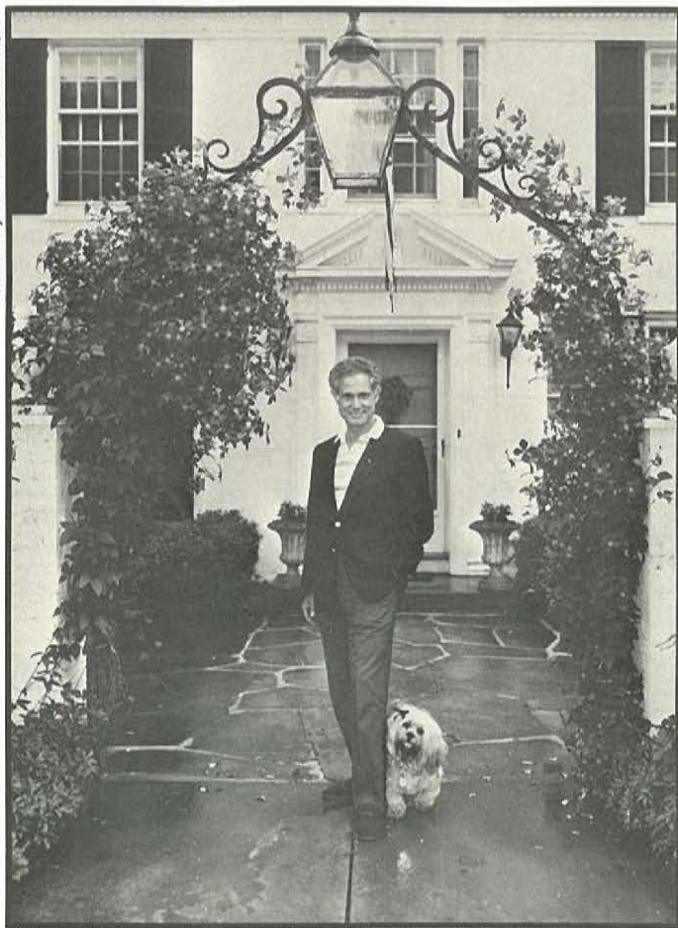
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Courtesy of Shaker Heights High School

In 1927, the name of the Shaker High School yearbook changed from the *Greenback* to the *Gristmill*. The yearbook staff wrote that the new name, “with its symbolic representation of the grist of the year's grind and with its reference to the early history of this community, more truly represents the function of an Annual. We, here at Shaker, have a great wealth of historical and traditional background which has not, up to the present, been utilized. With this in mind, and with the thought of giving the book a more uniform and artistic appearance, the Art Staff has developed in all the principal drawings the theme of the life of the early Shaker colonists.” The “Greenback” was a frog, not a dollar.





Robert Gries outside his South Woodland Road home

## Robert Gries

After World War II there were significant changes in Shaker Heights. Restrictive zoning east of Warrensville Center Road was eased, new suburbs were developed, the big old houses from the 1920s were out of style. In the late 1950s, no one wanted these old houses, partly because they didn't have the conveniences that were being built in new houses, like air conditioning, and partly because housekeepers were no longer easily available.

I bought my present house in 1960. It cost only \$70,000 even though it had been built in 1926 as a "spec" house for \$110,000 (and that was before the two additional wings were built). I've lived here for 27 years, longer than any other owner, but people still refer to it as the Sampson house or the Kilroy house. I guess only after you sell or die, it becomes your house. This just points out the true sense of community that we have in Shaker.

I was born in Shaker Heights in 1929, and have lived here my entire life, in fact, on the same block. In 1927, my parents built a house on the corner of South Woodland and Attleboro Roads and lived there for 41 years. The house, similar to many built in Shaker Heights in those early days, had a full attic, full basement, and servants' quarters. The 1920s followed the period of the largest immigration in our country's history; labor was inexpensive, and houses were often abundantly staffed with cooks, laundresses, maids, and chauffeurs.

People today erroneously think that suburban communities were safe and secure in the past, but actually they weren't that different from now. I remember that one of my parents' housekeepers was hit on the head and robbed leaving the house, and I know that during the 1930s the neighbors on South Woodland Road and Parkland Drive from Attleboro to Torrington Roads employed a night-watchman. He was a friendly Irishman named Riley, and if he spent as much time at the other houses stopping for a drink as he did at ours, I'm not sure how many rounds he actually covered.

Some things have changed very little over the years. The other day I walked down to the duck pond, and people were strolling, napping, picnicking the same as when I was growing up in the 1930s. One difference though is that we used to canoe on the lake, but ice skating was forbidden because if you fell through, the current could pull you under the ice.

Cleveland is tradition for me. I'm the fifth generation of my family here. My great-great grandfather Simpson Thorman was the first Jewish settler in Cleveland in 1837. He was a fur trader. My great-grandfather Kaufman Hays was a manufacturer, banker, and at one time, treasurer of the city of Cleveland. My grandfathers were Moses J. Gries, Rabbi of The Temple from 1892-1918, and Nathan Dauby, who built the May Company chain here. Dauby's father also lived in Cleveland and fought in the Civil War.

I travel extensively but am convinced that Cleveland is one of the great cities, partly because of communities like Shaker Heights, with magnificent, affordable housing and top-rate services. What other city has \$40 to \$50 per square foot housing costs available, a 20 minute drive to a downtown office, a myriad of clubs within 10 minutes, University Circle and all of its cultural institutions 10 minutes away, plus a thriving arts and cultural environment?

**Budd Forward** grew up in Cleveland Heights, moving to Shaker Heights in 1946. His wife Maxine has lived in Shaker Heights since she was five years old. In 1951, Forward bought the Brown Forward Funeral Home, 17022 Chagrin Boulevard, the oldest continuing family-owned funeral home in the state. Started in downtown Cleveland in 1825, it moved to Shaker Heights in 1945 at the request of Mayor William Van Aken.

I remember when there was so much open field in Shaker Heights. It was open all around the funeral home, which once was the home of a Dr. Newton. It's still the same house except for an addition. The flagpole that stands in front of Brown Forward Funeral Home once stood outside a Standard Oil station on Chagrin that was demolished.

My wife and I have seen many changes in Shaker Heights. When I was a kid the Shaker Heights police had



a horse patrol around the Shaker Lakes. My friends and I went down to the lake and skinny dipped. The police tried to catch us, but they had to go on horseback from one end of the lake to the other; we kids just swam across the point, so they never caught us.

### Richard Klyver

In the fall of 1948, I had my first teaching assignment at Shaker Senior High School. I remember how trusting the students were; no one ever put a lock on his locker!

When I started teaching in Shaker Heights, William Slade was the superintendent. I was one of only three new teachers to be hired that year. Although Mr. and Mrs. Slade were out of town the day we arrived, they left word that we should stay at their home and secure the key to the house from Bess Rider, his secretary.

When he returned home the next day, he took time to give us a tour of the school buildings and have us meet some of the teachers and administrators.

In the fall of 1949, the halls of the high school were crackling with excitement. That was the year the football team won the Lake Erie football championship.

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New to Shaker this year is the German Club. The chief order of business is to translate thank-you letters from Austrian recipients of Junior Red Cross packages. It seems that some of these Austrians actually cannot speak English.

— The Gristmill, 1949

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### Lucille Anderson

My husband and I moved to Rolliston Road in 1950. We came here for the schools primarily, but also for the community.

In 1954, with children six and nine years old, and convinced I would not have any more children, I decided to teach school. Obtaining a teaching position was so easy in those days. I just walked over to the administration building, which was a room in Onaway School, and I said I wanted a job. Within days I was substitute teaching. The following fall I taught full-time at Fernway School.

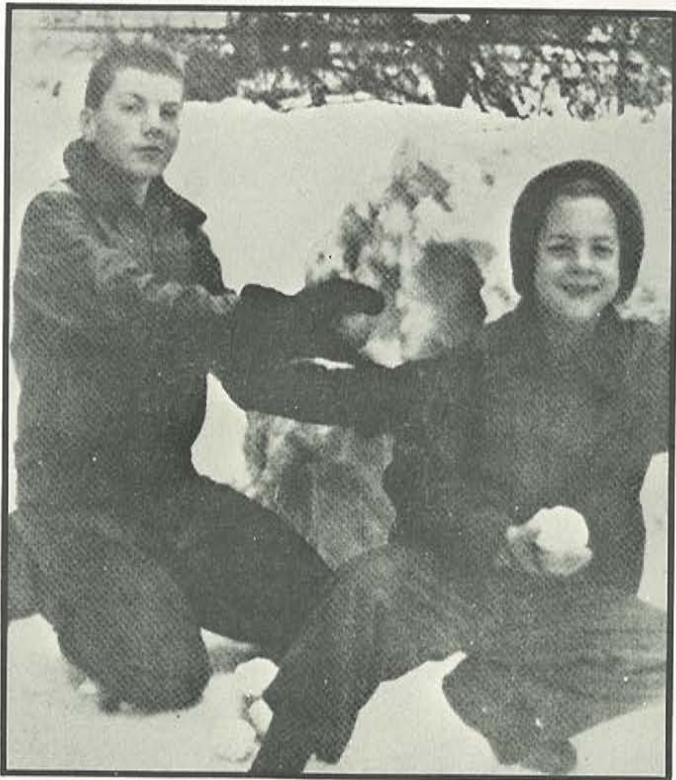
I taught at Fernway and Sussex Schools until 1959 when I quit because I was pregnant. I continued to teach up to my sixth month of pregnancy, wearing maternity clothes. No one had previously taught this far along in her pregnancy, and the school board subsequently formulated a policy about the proper time for taking a pregnancy leave.

No place in the United States is like Shaker Heights. No city is as beautiful or as well maintained. My three children received outstanding educations in the Shaker schools.

### Laura Jean Chesney Gockel

Thanksgiving of 1950 it began to snow. They were beautiful, large soft flakes, and before it was done, so much snow had fallen that the Cleveland area was brought to a complete standstill which lasted several days. The first thing in the city to run was the Shaker Rapid. They used the rapid cars purchased from the old Cleveland Railway Company, cars which had run on Clifton Boulevard and hence were referred to as the Clifton cars. The rapid delivered milk, bread, and other foods. We waited at the stop and were able to make purchases when the rapid arrived.

In 1959 Shaker was deluged by a severe rainstorm. Because the storm system became stationary directly over us and the rain fell in one relatively small area, flooding was a serious problem. The water at the intersection of Avalon Road and Chagrin Boulevard was so deep that it poured in through the Avalon windows of Danny Budin's Delicatessen (now Herman's).



Courtesy of Clay Herrick

The Herrick children in the 1950 snowdrifts

### Clay Herrick

In the big storm of 1950, I think we had a total of 36 inches of snow. It was the heaviest that had ever hit here. My kids were young and in school at that time, and they built tunnels to the next door neighbors! They wouldn't surface but went through these tunnels which were below the surface of the snow, and they went from one neighbor's house to another's.





North view of Green Road at Shaker Boulevard in October, 1953



North view of Green Road at Shaker Boulevard in July, 1987

### Deborah Baron

*In the mid-fifties, my grandparents lived at 15815 Chadbourne Road in Shaker Heights. I especially loved the tree-shaded walks up to the library on Lee Road in the summer, followed by a side trip to my favorite place, a little mom and pop grocery store in the former Hillside Dairy store at the corner of Nicholas and Lee Roads. I do not think I ever realized that the store carried any other groceries than the frozen delights that lured us there.*

*It is no accident that my husband and I landed in Shaker Heights when we were ready to buy our first home. My happy memories and the beauty of the neighborhoods brought me back. My children's memories of Shaker Heights will be much different from mine, of course. But the warmth of those memories, I'm sure, will be much the same.*



## Fredrick David

*I became clerk-treasurer for the Shaker Schools in 1952, replacing J. W. Main who continued on as business manager. It was a time of growth for both Shaker Heights and the schools. We built both Mercer Elementary and Byron Junior High during the time I was clerk-treasurer.*

*Byron was built because the need was there, although there was some opposition to the idea. In fact, the last year before Byron was completed, we held split shifts of classes at Woodbury Junior High. The Byron faculty and students met in the afternoon, and the Woodbury staff and students met from 7:30 a.m. to early afternoon. Byron was built on the only land available big enough to accommodate a large building and parking. That section of land was owned by the two Malasek brothers who ran a truck farm and never did sell their land to the Van Sweringens. Part of the controversy about Byron was over the fact that the architect was from out of town, from the Chicago area, and the building was the new style of architecture. Not everyone accepted the new style.*

**William Jarvie** is assistant principal at Shaker Middle School.

*Shaker Middle School (formerly Byron Junior High School) runs east to west so that the sun will never shine directly into the classrooms. All the windows face north, and therefore no direct sun rays can enter. The south side of the building is always a hallway. The east and west ends of the building are brick walled.*

*In 1957-58, Shaker Junior High School at Woodbury had so many students that they had split sessions. Each group had extracurricular activities either before classes or after classes.*

*In the spring of 1959, we had a flash flood. So much water built up against the east windows in the Byron cafeteria that we had to open the doors to allow the water to come into the main part of the building. The students were contained in their classrooms until about 5 p.m.*

*My wife and I live in Chesterland because I could not afford to buy in Shaker. I have been here for 29 years. Now even with the buy-out and 31 years in teaching, I cannot decide if I should retire yet.*

Courtesy of Bernie Rife



J.W. Main (right) at the Byron Junior High School construction site in 1957



Second floor corridor of the classroom wing of Byron Junior High School in February, 1957, with J.W. Main second from the left

Courtesy of Shaker Heights Public Library

## John E. Kusik

*I was born in Russia. I came to America to be an American, and I never went back. When I came here I thought I could speak English, but no one in New York could understand me so I had to work in a shipyard. Subsequently I went to the University of Virginia and got my undergraduate and graduate degrees in economics in 1925, along with a Phi Beta Kappa key.*

*I decided that because of my foreign accent and background, the thing to do was to join an international organization, which turned out to be General Electric. They sent me all over the world. While en route to China, I met a young woman from Mississippi who was traveling as a designer to the Philippines. We were married on Christmas Day in China in the Trinity Cathedral.*

*I have lived in Shaker Heights since 1957, when I was hired by Chesapeake, Potomac, and Ohio Railroads as vice president. They told me that Shaker Heights was the best place to live, and they wanted me and my family to be happy. I had an unlimited expense account and a chauffeur to drive me to the airport since I traveled often. Sometimes the chauffeur took my children to school, but this was not often as they usually walked. I had a membership to Shaker Heights Country Club because I was supposed to become a golfer. The president was a golf nut, and he pushed me to join, hoping to make a golfer out of me. It did not work.*

*I got to know Cyrus Eaton when I worked at Chesapeake, Potomac, and Ohio. I did not actually retire until I was 70 years old. Mr. Eaton also found special reasons to keep me. I could speak Russian, and he never met with Russian dignitaries without me. I was present when Nikita Khrushchev came to visit Eaton and gave him some horses.*



## Paul Donaldson

*As I look back over my years in Shaker Heights, the one place I miss most is Gruber's Restaurant (located between Van Aken and Chagrin Boulevards near Warrensville Center Road). I remember when Gruber's was the Number One restaurant in all of Ohio. Cleveland Indians' owner Bill Veeck used to come in there all of the time. He was the only one who never had to wear a tie. He'd come in with eight or 10 beautiful women. They had these big circular booths, and he'd sit in the center surrounded by really beautiful women, and no one ever asked him to put on a tie. That was THE restaurant.*



Roman Gruber

## Gruber's Restaurant

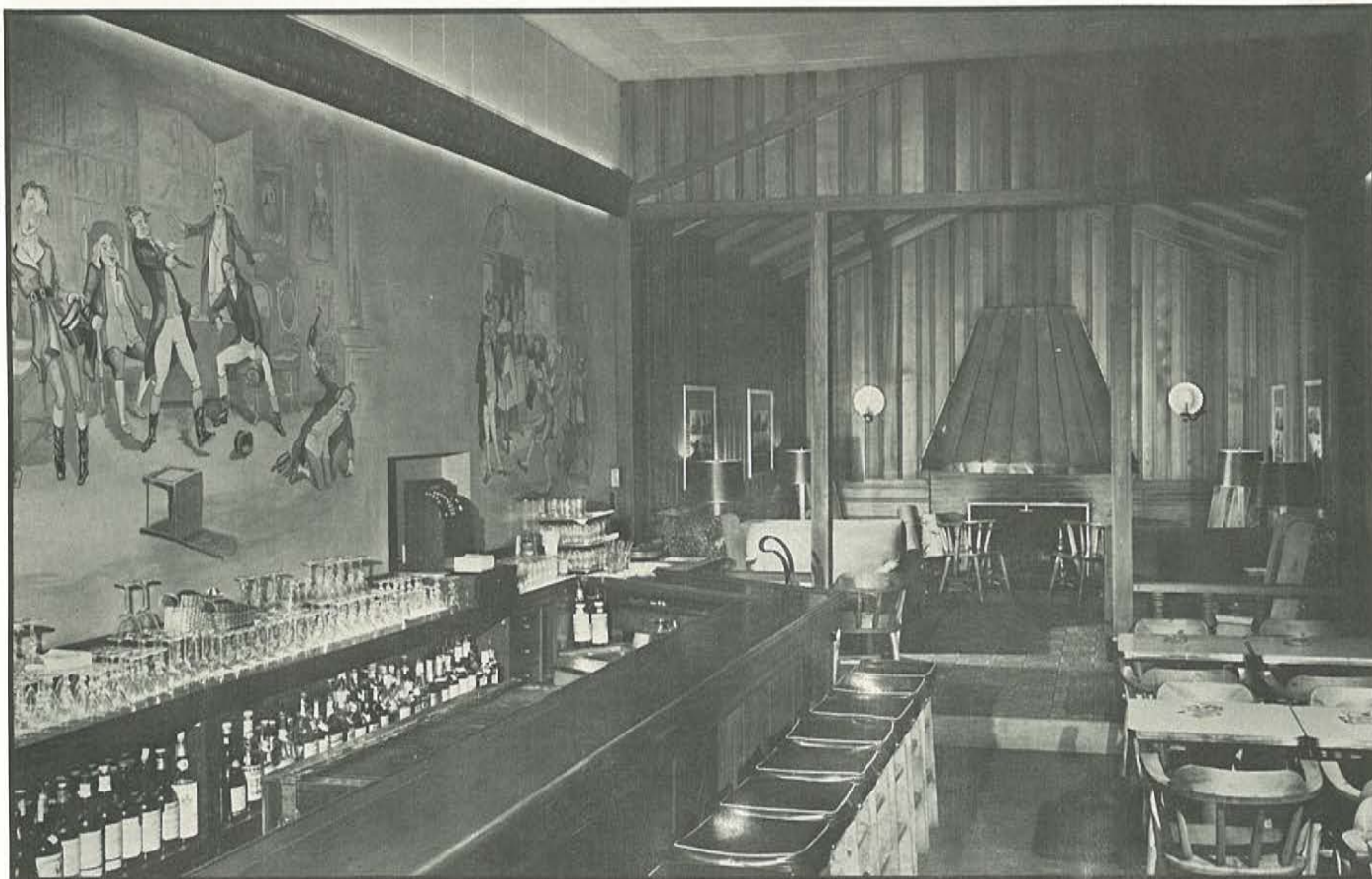
It's not at all surprising that Max Gruber ranks as one of the most genial hosts, or that his plush dining room became a must for Clevelanders almost from the moment the doors first opened in 1952. As the son of a popular and successful restaurateur, he grew up in an atmosphere of sizzling steaks and simmering soup kettles. But like many another son, he rebelled at the lack of adventure in surroundings which grew commonplace.

Once the war ended, he ducked back into the relative seclusion of his law practice and might still be devoting full time to it today if his mother had not talked him into going into the restaurant business. The result was the Shaker Heights showcase at the end of the Van Aken Rapid. Max won himself an enviable reputation as a gracious host. The secret of how one man can shake hands with three others, keep his arms around two lovely ladies, and balance a scotch and soda at the same time is one he keeps to himself.

*Excerpts from Cleveland in Full Face by Marsh Samuel, Cleveland, 1954, 129-131.*

To Gruber's Restaurant, nightly except Sundays, flock cafe society, judges, lawyers, politicians, and the leading sports figures to be seen, to see, and to feed well.

The original plan was to run it along the same lines as the famous Cub Room in the Stork Club. In other



Unescorted women were asked politely to leave the bar at Gruber's. The fireplace still exists at the back of Plantscaping.





Interior of Gruber's

words, make it more difficult to get through the doors than to pass through the Iron Curtain. And whether the patrons know it or like it, a determined effort is constantly made to run the restaurant as a semi-private club. Names of people who call for reservations are checked with the Gruber list, which grew to more than 25,000 in 10 years.

The restaurant has become a tradition, with tables at a premium the six nights it is open. As to the fantastic Monday night continental buffets, do not even dream of trying to crash one without a reservation.

Patrons who telephone for reservations find on arriving a little card on their tables with a coin inserted in it to repay them for the call. Over the years this adds up to a considerable sum, and so it was decided to ask the customers to toss the coins into a large fishbowl by the door. The money was turned over to a charity.

*Excerpts from "Gruber's" by Winsor French, Gruber's, Cleveland, 1956.*

## Max Gruber

*I have been in Shaker off and on since 1936. My brother and I were lawyers. We worked for the same law firm before the war. After the war (I had been in the Navy and my brother in the Coast Guard) we worked for different firms. I worked for Zellmar & Gruber, my brother for Gruber & Moriarty.*

*My brother and I opened Gruber's Restaurant in 1952. We had a lot of fun. The restaurant was, more or less, like a club. There was a group of people, theatrical people and sports followers, who frequented our restaurant. I called these people the "Jolly Set." They were a fun-loving group of people who would do things like rent a train and travel to Boston to see a game. Many people who came to the restaurant were great followers of Bill Veeck and Paul Brown — two great "hail fellows well met." Paul Brown was the football coach for Ohio State. He, along with Mickey McBride, started the Cleveland Browns. When Art Modell and his group bought the Browns, Paul went to Cincinnati and started the Bengals. His son runs the team now. Bill Veeck owned the Indians. There weren't that many restaurants in Shaker Heights, and ours was high-priced so, I guess, people thought it was good. It was a high-priced restaurant that attracted a number of fun-loving people as well as politicians and judges.*

*In 1960, the restaurant had reached the point of growth that we had to decide whether we wanted to be restaurateurs or lawyers. We decided to stay with our professions, and Gruber's was closed in November of 1960. It was a lot of fun. Shaker Heights was good to me. My wife and I have many fond memories of Shaker. All my nieces and nephews are in Shaker still.*



**Herbert Ascherman, Jr.**, and his teenage son represent the third and fourth generations of his family to live in Shaker Heights. In 1949 he moved to Stockholm Road as a two-year-old.

*There was almost a surreal sense of peace and passivity in Shaker Heights in the 1950s. We knew everyone, and everyone was nice. The neighbors sometimes yelled at us when we played ball, and our balls got caught in their window wells. They threatened never to return them, but they always did. I used to ring all the neighbors' doorbells and ask for cookies, and they always obliged!*

*We had a local gang of kids from Stockholm, Chalfant, Daleford, and Fernway Roads. We bicycled after school and on weekends all the way past Woodbury School to what became the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center. We were sometimes gone five or six hours, but our parents never worried.*

*Every Saturday we went to the Shaker Theater for the matinee. I had a pass for myself and four friends. Our seats were in the center section of the last row, and no one else dared sit there. There were cartoons, a movie, and a serial, and when we got home, we played out the serial. I especially remember "Batman."*

*The Shaker Lakes had a great deal of impact on us as children. I never related to the lake downtown. There was no reason to go anywhere else, accustomed as we were to Shaker Heights. My earliest recollections involve feeding the white ducks at the lakes. As I grew up my friends and I found the other end of the lake where the water flowed into the creeks. We often fished after rains; I recall catching six-to-eight inch goldfish, which of course we never kept.*

*I went to Sam Umina's Barber Shop near Lee Road and Lomond Boulevard for \$1 haircuts. I charged everything I could at Nicholls Sports, until my mother discovered what was going on. To this day there is a note on the account that says, "Herbert can't charge." We bought our clothes at Howards (now Thriftique) and bowled on the weekends at Rini's when I was in the seventh and eighth grades. We got three games and a chocolate phosphate for \$1. In a brownstone at Lee Road and Chagrin Boulevard similar to the Kingsbury Building, were a hobby shop, shoe store, and grocery store that delivered.*

*For birthday celebrations we could go to Clark's at Shaker Square or take the rapid to the Silver Grill at downtown Higbee's. The best way to celebrate was to go to Caminati's at Shaker Square for lobster. On truly special occasions, my Grandfather Simon took us to Gruber's. It was as close to a club as anything the Heights area had seen, and my grandfather seemed to know everyone there. I actually learned to eat lobster properly at Gruber's. I really got dressed up to go there, and sitting next to my grandfather meant not spoiling my good clothes.*

*The short road Andover was a special place for the high school students. During the day kids left their cars there and walked to school if they didn't have permits to drive to school. Because it was so overgrown the view from Lee Road was blocked, it was a perfect place to park at night.*

*Directly behind our house on Stockholm Road was a field, and in the middle was a huge basalt rock. Not a week went by when that rock didn't participate in some sort of war game, capture the flag, or hide and seek. My friends and I knew that buried beneath was a treasure; in fact we thought that if we dug deep enough, we'd find secret tunnels and rooms with vast riches. At times we actually dug around the rock, but that's as far as we got. When I returned to Shaker Heights with my wife in 1983, we drove past that field to go to work each day. One day in 1986 I made a U-turn and went to the Service Department. After several phone calls and my telling then Director Ugrinic "It's my rock, and I hereby lay claim to that rock," I was charged \$75, and the rock was moved to my front yard. I'll probably take it with me if I ever leave Shaker Heights.*

*Growing up well-to-do and Jewish in Shaker Heights meant that we were the best. We were part of the exclusivity everyone associated with the city. Both my grandfathers moved to Shaker in the 1930s; my mother went to Laurel; my father went to Shaker schools. I grew up knowing that I would go to college and continue the pattern of success, the pattern of being different and being better.*



Herb Ascherman outside the Stockholm Road house in 1954

Courtesy of Herbert Ascherman, Jr.





Bernie Rife, prior to his retirement in 1984

## Bernie Rife

*I was born in a house on Colwyn Road in Shaker Heights in 1917, the year my father Rudy went to work for an excavator. Excavating was done with a team of horses, so my dad hired out as a teamster. There wasn't much excavating work in the winter, so my dad worked for the village. One of his jobs was clearing the snow from the sidewalks with a homemade V-plow hitched to a horse.*

*In 1922, my dad went to work full time for the village. Later he was superintendent of streets and became head of the Service Department in 1943 or 1944. I kind of grew up with it also. Like any other boy, I'd go along with my dad when he had to check something. I was with the Service Department from 1948 until I retired in 1984. I became service head when my dad retired in 1971. My father was a good teacher, but he was probably harder on me than on anyone else.*

*When I started, there were just a few traffic signals. But traffic was too much for the stop signs. I was responsible for laying out an intersection, timing it, and interconnecting the system. We were one of the first suburbs to connect the signals.*

*We got involved in beekeeping. There used to be a lot of woods, and people called my dad and complained about swarms of bees in their yards. He didn't know much about bees, but he wanted to help the residents. So he started keeping bees, going into people's yards to get the hive. One day we got a call about a woman at the Van Aken Shopping Center. Swarms of bees had landed on her convertible with the top down. I finally caught the queen bee and clipped her wings and put her in a box and got most of the swarm to follow. The bees were around three other cars. I got into each car and drove it away from the swarm.*

*Over the years, refuse pick-up has changed. Years ago we had four separate collections: newspapers, garbage, leaves, and tin cans. Four crews went out. Residents placed their refuse in separate containers. In the 1960s we went to one collection and bought the little scooters we have now. We used to go into people's garages, but somewhere along the line, with all the retrieval problems, we stopped. Sometimes, with the sick and the older long-time residents, we still go into the garages because it's easier to make an exception than to try to change. Over the years we've gotten calls about lost objects, such as a piece of sterling silver. We went through all the bales by hand and often found the object. Sometimes we were not successful, as when residents left their briefcases on top of the rubbish, and we didn't get the call in time.*

*Our equipment has changed. What we used to do by hand, now we do by machine. We used to have a snow melter. We'd put the snow into the machine so it melted. We used this machine in the business districts and around the parking meters. We went to work at 11 p.m. and worked through the night. Depending on the storm, it might take us three or four nights to clear the snow.*

*I remember Prohibition. Our neighbor had a bootleg operation and made moonshine in his house. My dad was involved when the house was raided and closed down. Whenever anything requires equipment or manual labor, the Service Department gets involved.*

*Shaker Heights is my life. I've lived and worked here practically all my life. My wife Margaret and I went to school together. It's just a coincidence that I'm living on the same street I lived on as a kid. I kind of had my eye on the Fernway area, but this place came along, and it just happened to be Stoer Road.*



# Shaker Has It Made in the Shade

Former Service Director Bernard Rife has an intimate knowledge of Shaker's trees. His father Rudy, who preceded him as service director, initiated a tree planting program in the 1920s when Shaker Heights was still known as Shaker Village. Trees selected for tree lawns in the early days were elms, Norway maples, oaks, and sycamores. The latter, which are located primarily in the western portion of the city, were planted before that area was part of Shaker Heights.



While Shaker Heights is known now as a city of trees, it was once quite open and rather barren, as this view of Sedgewick Road shows.

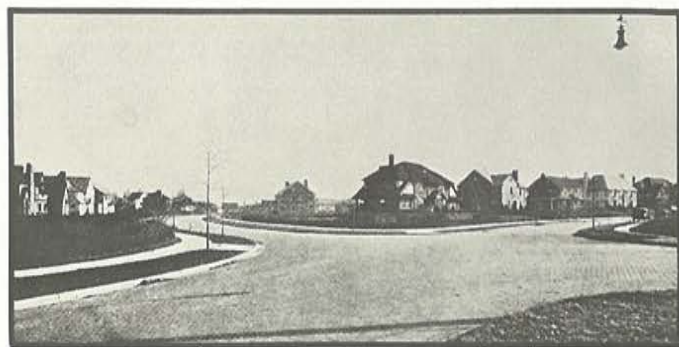
Originally the city charged homeowners a small fee for the trees planted on tree lawns. These were grown at the city's own nursery at 173rd Street and Harvard and were called whips because of their small size.

In 1947 the first case of Dutch elm disease was reported in Shaker Heights. During the fifties, DDT was the spray of choice, followed by the more expensive methoxychlor after DDT was outlawed.

Today, caring for an estimated 20,000 trees on tree lawns and at least twice that many in parks and center strips comes under the jurisdiction of Pete Leone, Superintendent of Parks and Trees. Leone estimates that during the last 10 years about 900 elms have been lost.

From May to September, Leone scouts for signs of diseased trees on both public and private property. He tries to check each elm once every seven working days. Diseased trees are removed promptly, and the trunk is buried at a landfill. Trees are sprayed with methoxychlor each spring before they leaf. During 1984, city crews used 5,700 gallons of the pesticide. Another ploy against the elm bark beetle is to attach cards saturated by virgin elm bark beetle scent (pheromone) to utility poles. When beetles congregate on the pole, they are caught in flypaper traps.

Until 1984, diseased elms were replaced by locust trees, a species resistant to exhaust fumes. But with



Oxford and Eaton Roads had a subdivision look in the 1920s.

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society

encouragement from the United States Department of Agriculture, the city decided to plant elms again, and they are being used on major boulevards while maples are chosen for side streets.

During the 1970s, residents of Shaker Boulevard between Torrington and Attleboro Roads asked permission to plant trees along the rapid as a screen. "We tried to discourage it because of the upkeep," Rife recalls. "Mowing the grass is difficult. But we said if they would finance it, we would plant it." And block by block the Washington hawthornes, whose red berries brighten the winter landscape, were planted, except for one section where residents chose flowering crab instead.

In 1986, Shaker won the designation "Tree City USA" from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Excerpts from "Shaker Has It Made in the Shade," by Linda Tuthill, Shaker Magazine, July, 1986, 8-10.



Courtesy of Shaker Heights City Hall

Drawing by Martha Newberry

Official logo of the 75th Anniversary of the City of Shaker Heights

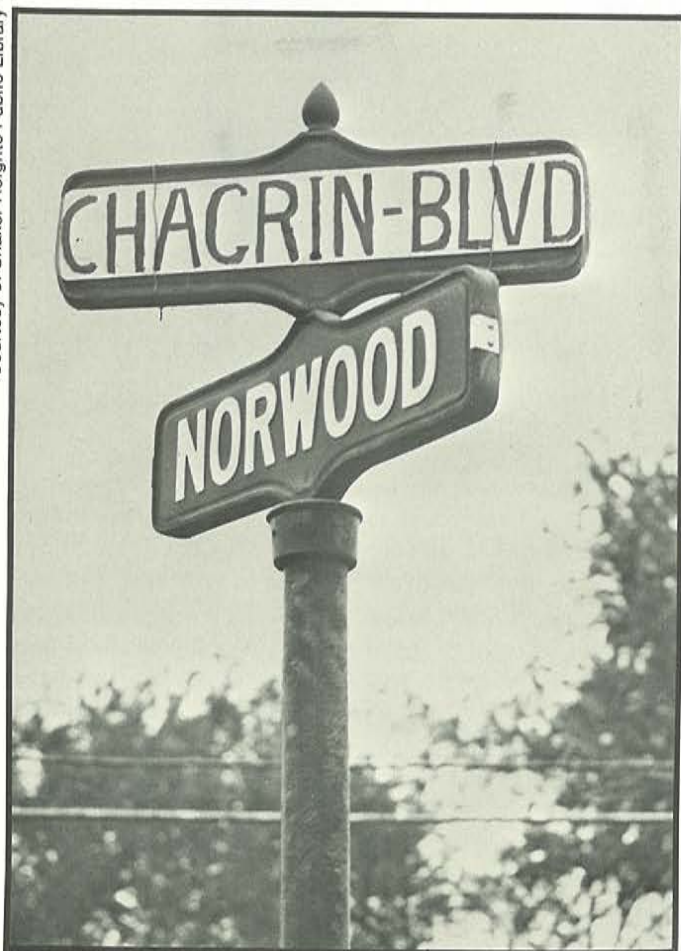


# Street Names

When the Van Sweringen brothers were planning their city, they hired the Pease Engineering Company to help lay out the streets. According to legend, Harry Gallimore, a Pease employee and English fiction aficionado, used an old English postal directory as his source for street names. Shaker Heights streets were given names that conjured visions of idyllic countrysides and peaceful living.

At the city's western boundary were a few numbered streets. During the World War II years, these streets were named. According to the Building Department, high school students who lived on numbered streets were made to feel inferior. Thus 150th became Sutton; 152nd, Colwyn; 153rd, Westbury; 154th, Ashby; 156th, Menlo; 157th, Pennington; 159th, Ludgate; 161st, Hildana; 163rd, Chelton; and 164th, Sudbury.

Courtesy of Shaker Heights Public Library



Temporary sign, October, 1959

Only three numbered streets remain in Shaker Heights. They are East 128th, East 130th, and East 140th, which has one house and a vacant lot.

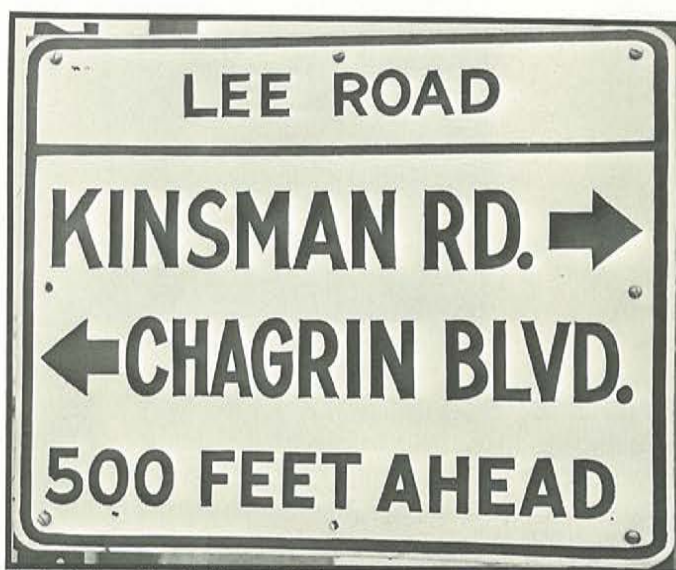
East Moreland Road was a spur road which ran off of South Moreland Boulevard. When the Van Aken Shopping Center was built in 1953, that road was eliminated. Another road which was named but never actually paved was Orman Drive. This road was to run

between South Woodland Road and Parkland Drive between Attleboro and Torrington Roads. Because the Shaker Heights Country Club was developed, this road was never paved.

In 1959, Kinsman Road was renamed Chagrin Boulevard in Shaker Heights. Kinsman Road had been the road to Kinsman, a small town in eastern Ohio. In the 1950s the name developed a negative connotation because shootings and other untoward events frequently occurred on Kinsman Road in Cleveland. The new name was borrowed from the charming town of Chagrin Falls, several suburbs east of Shaker Heights. The Van Sweringens would have been pleased.

On April 23, 1951, South Moreland Boulevard was renamed Van Aken Boulevard to honor Mayor William J. Van Aken, who died in office in 1950. The Moreland Rapid line was also changed to the Van Aken line.

Laurel School inspired names for three streets. Laureldale, Lyman Circle, and Lyman Boulevard are nearby, the latter two honoring Sarah Lyman, headmistress for many years.



Courtesy of Shaker Heights Public Library

Sign at Lee Road, May, 1961

## Lovers' Lanes

1940s -Lynton Road and Lomond School parking lot

1950s -Coventry Road near the Canoe Club

1960s -Andover between Parkland Drive and Woodland Road

1970s -Lower Lake east of Coventry Road between North Park and South Park Boulevards

1980s -Adults are found more often than teenagers in the secluded spots of Shaker Heights, and no area seems to be preferred by these romantics.



# Shaker Heights Historical Society

Photo by Herbert Ascherman, Jr.



Clay Herrick, William Van Aken, Jr., and Isabel Main at the front entrance to the Shaker Historical Society

Retired Shaker teacher Richard Klyver remembers, "On a warm summer evening in 1945, a small neighborhood party was held at the home of Leighton and Catherine Carter at the corner of Shaker Boulevard and Paxton Road. After a supper around the grill, we all repaired to the front of the house and sat about the lawn talking. The conversation led to a discussion of the North Union Shakers. Everyone had some opinion concerning the mode of life and the religious practices of the Shakers, but to another guest, Caroline Piercy, most of them showed shocking ignorance of the subject. This experience so impressed her that the next day she went to the Western Reserve Historical Society and began her study of the subject. This quickly became a consuming and absorbing interest which she pursued with unflagging and unfailing enthusiasm leading to the well-known book entitled *The Valley of God's Pleasure*.

Isabel Main, who was also active in the organization, recalls that the Shaker Historical Society had its beginnings with the Shaker Heights Public Library. "We had a room in the new building built for the library (which is now Frandon Printing) and also a

room upstairs in the Lee Road Library. The library gave us a chest of drawers that is now in the dining room of the Shaker Historical Society Museum. When we were located in the library, a woman on the board named Mrs. Church got the idea that we should buy some authentic Shaker furniture. She went east and bought the chest of drawers.

"I remember that after J.W. (Main) retired from the school system, he had a room at the library, and he often drove a Historical Society member, Mrs. Nord, from her apartment at Shaker Square to Moreland School where our first historical exhibit was located. He did this about three times a week. He also was very helpful in duplicating items for Mrs. Nord. Since the Society had a skeleton crew and no facilities for duplicating, Mrs. Nord was very appreciative of all that J.W. did."

The Shaker Historical Society was founded in the fall of 1947 through the efforts of Reverend John Schott, Caroline Piercy, Norma Thrower, and William Slade. Attorney Cary Alburn wrote the by-laws and constitution.





Line drawing of the museum by Farouk Hassein

The purposes are:

- to preserve and mark by metal tablets various sites where Shakers lived (1822-1889);
- to study and publish the history of the North Union Shakers;
- to discover and record the development of Warrensville Heights and Shaker Heights;
- to publish books and pamphlets;
- to maintain a museum which displays artifacts of Shaker origin and objects related to the history of Warrensville Heights and Shaker Heights;
- to maintain a library which contains books and maps, historical records, and manuscripts;
- to hold active membership in organizations at state and local historical societies.

Shaker Heights resident Clay Herrick remembers, "I think the high point of my years in Shaker Heights was when the Historical Society acquired a permanent home. I was president in 1971, when Frank Myers donated his father's house at 16740 South Park as a museum. We had a place at last for our library and all our collections and exhibits. And the location is so appropriate. The house is built on the land where the North Union Shakers had their apple orchard.

"Frank Myers' father Louis was one of the original real estate salesmen for the Van Sweringens and built that house, one of the earliest, in 1910. After all our temporary quarters in Boulevard and Moreland Schools and a storefront on Lee Road, it was wonderful to have our own place. This is the only community in the country that was once a Shaker settlement and still carries the name. It's important that we have the museum to commemorate it."<sup>1</sup>



# Recreation Department

On winter days in the late 1920s, Moreland Elementary School principal Charles Thornton requested the Fire Department to dispatch some of its members to flood a vacant lot so the children could ice skate. In the summers he oversaw activities on local school playgrounds. Thornton became the city's first recreation director, a part-time position he combined with his responsibilities as principal. He established an adult education program with the support of the Board of Education in 1937.

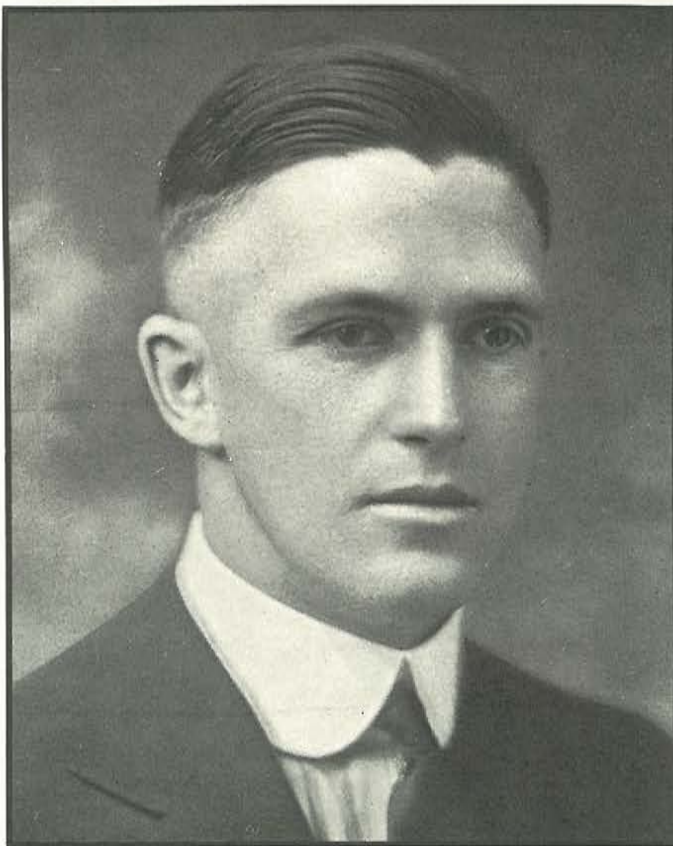
In 1948, city residents responded to a recommendation from the League of Women Voters calling for a joint recreation program sponsored by the city and Board of Education and funded by a levy. When the levy expired in 1950, City Council included recreation costs as part of its operating budget. Thornton became the first full-time recreation director in 1956, but retired a year later. A Recreation Advisory Commission, the forerunner of the Recreation Board, formed in 1958.

Barbara Haas Rawson chaired the Recreation Board in the 1960s. "The big issue during my involvement was Thornton Park. Ham Finney and I walked every inch of Shaker Heights to get support for Thornton Park. The City Council in the 1950s felt public recreation was not necessary because everyone was a member of a private club or had his own pool. The League of Women Voters sponsored a professional survey to support the plan for a public pool and skating rink. We all know the end of this story!"

Thornton Park pool opened in 1962, and the following year tennis courts were built. The ice rink and two additional courts were built in 1969.

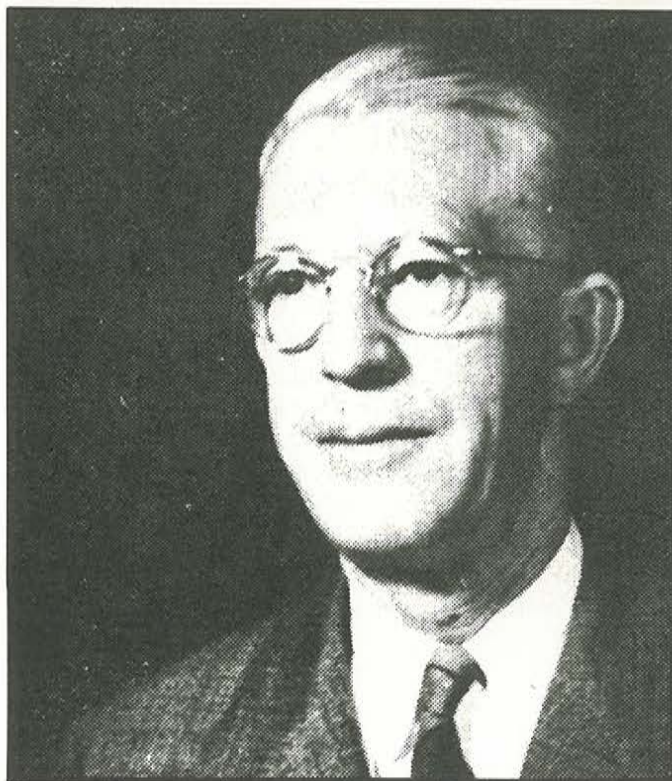
Over the years the Recreation Department has become more sophisticated in its efforts to respond to the needs of its market. It sponsors educational and athletic programs as well as community events and is responsible for all city playgrounds and a fitness trail, a teen center, and Shaker Day School.

Recently the city and Board of Education agreed that the city would assume management of the community's recreation program. A governing board was formed, based on recommendations from the Mayor and Council.



Charles Thornton, in 1923, was a senior homeroom teacher and science teacher at the high school.

Courtesy of Shaker Heights High School, *The Greenback*, p. 15



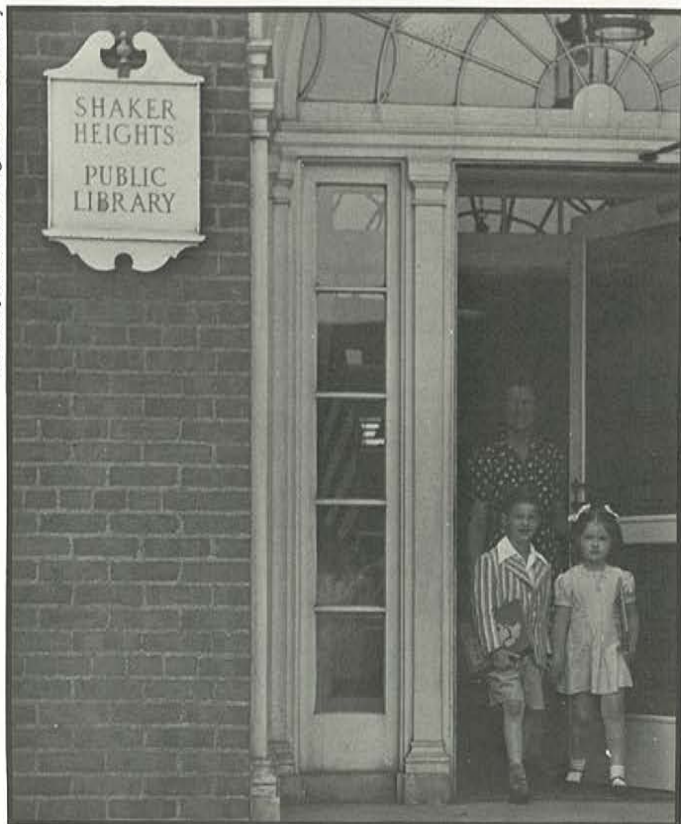
Charles Thornton, for whom Thornton Park was named September 14, 1955

Shaker Heights School Review, October, 1958



# Shaker Heights Public Library

Courtesy of Shaker Heights Public Library



Miss Ewing holds the door at the library site now occupied by Frandon Printing.

In 1922, the Shaker Heights Public Library began its institutional life in a Boulevard School room. It was a branch of the fledgling Cuyahoga County Public Library, created that year to serve the then sparsely populated and rural areas of the county. The small collection was primarily for children, but books were available to adults. By 1937, the demand for more extensive service and evening and weekend hours prompted the Board of Education to create a school district library, entitled to receive a share of intangible tax for operating expenses. The first library board met on April 27, 1937, with David Green serving as its first president.

Its first order of business was to negotiate a five-year lease of the newly constructed building immediately south of the present library on Lee Road. On opening day, June 25, 1938, the library stocked 4,000 books transferred from Moreland School (the Boulevard collection had been previously transferred there), 2,000 newly purchased titles, and several hundred donated by the public. Service was for adults only until August, when 500 children's books were added. The library flourished in this location for 10 years under the leadership of Ellen Ewing, who died tragically in a fire aboard the Great Lakes cruiser, *Noronic*, on September 17, 1949.

The 10-year occupancy of rented quarters was not anticipated, because in October, 1944, the library

bought the adjoining Board of Education warehouse (formerly East View School) for \$15,000. The warehouse was to be relocated to its present site, the building demolished, and the library built on the existing foundation. World War II stopped all new construction. After the war there was a continuing controversy about the Shaker Heights Library's legal status in relation to the county library, which wanted to absorb it. This was not resolved until a court of appeals decision mandated that any school district library founded before September 4, 1947, could remain independent. The voters approved two bonds for the new building: one for \$150,000 in 1945, and another for \$200,000 in 1948. On January 3, 1951, 11 years later than anticipated, the present library was completed.



The main library

Courtesy of Shaker Heights Public Library

**Mary Lee Sperry Scriven** was hired as a Shaker Heights Public Library desk assistant in April of 1938 for \$85 a month.

*Our first library building on Lee Road was designed to have an inviting atmosphere. At the rear of the room were a fireplace flanked by couches, tables with lamps, a rug, draperies at the long windows, and easy chairs. The whole effect was one of a private living room rather than an institution. We had many visitors who came to see this new concept of furnishing a public building.*

*When we first put out the books, all brand new with their dust jackets, there was so much empty space on the shelves that we displayed extra jackets to keep the place from looking too bare. The original plan was always to have all new books. In time, this had to change, and worn books were rebound, not replaced.*

*At first Shaker Heights Public Library was strictly an adult library because students had access to their school libraries. A section of preschool books and children's gift*



editions was added, not for use by children, but as suggestions to parents for gift purchases.

At the beginning, almost all of the books were purchased through the old Shaker Book Shop. Owners Mr. and Mrs. Haber came regularly with new acquisitions and suggestions. The board did not want borrowers to have to wait unduly for new books, but wanted them to have what they wanted when they wanted it. I remember that we had over 25 copies of *Grapes of Wrath* circulating and many, many copies of *Mein Kampf*.

Courtesy of Shaker Heights Public Library



Virginia Robinson

In December, 1949, **Virginia Robinson** was hired as head librarian of the Shaker Heights Public Library, following the death in September of Miss Ellen Ewing.

During the next two decades, changes throughout the world occurred so rapidly that printed materials could scarcely keep up. In 1955, the space age came to stay when Sputnik entered our everyday vocabulary. There was DNA, new math, consciousness raising, Zen, and so on. Lolita and the civil rights movement were followed by the women's movement in the sixties. All these unprecedented political, social, and economic changes had to be represented in the library's book collection.

In the 1950s, Shaker Heights began moving away from its predominantly WASP character to becoming an integrated urban society. As the character of the population changed, new areas were expanded in the library's book collection. This required space and then again more space. The basement became tentatively adapted as a study hall. It became so popular that the space was enlarged and refurnished with new audio equipment, a superior book collection, and a staff experienced in work with young people.

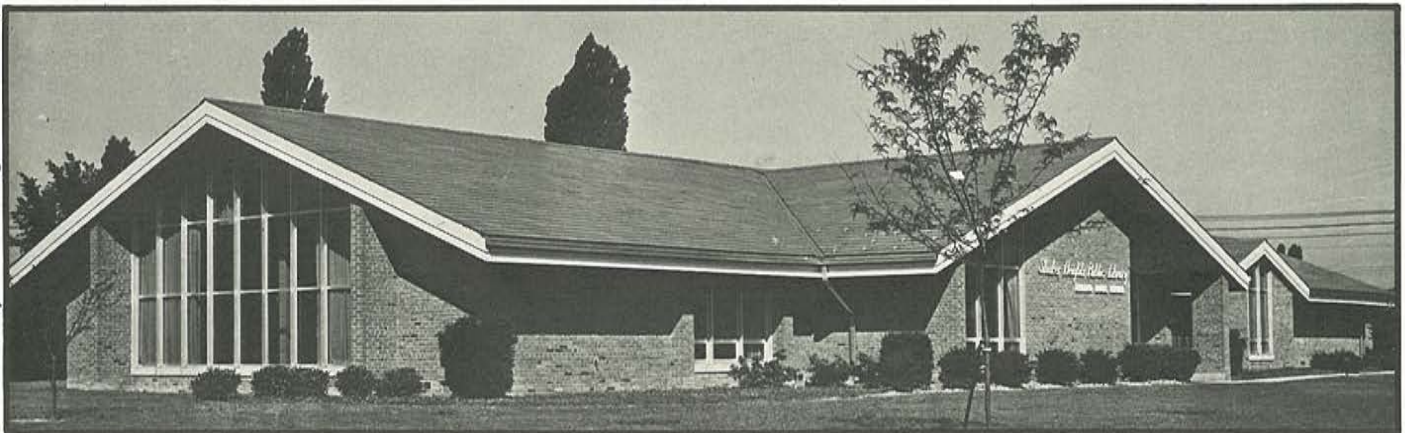
The book collection grew from 30,082 in 1951 to a net figure of 121,925 in 1968-69. (Today the collection is 200,000.)

The emphasis shifted from the best seller-oriented collection to one of some depth, reflecting the community's needs. We offered much recreational reading and also research material for high school term papers. The advent of the paperback book brought many more copies than the library could have in hardback.

In 1960, the Bertram Woods branch was opened on Fayette Road. It was financed not by bond issue, as the earlier building had been, but by surplus tax proceeds. The location, facing east of Warrensville Center Road, was chosen to alleviate traffic hazards at the entrance and exit, and to emphasize a more peaceful, parklike setting.

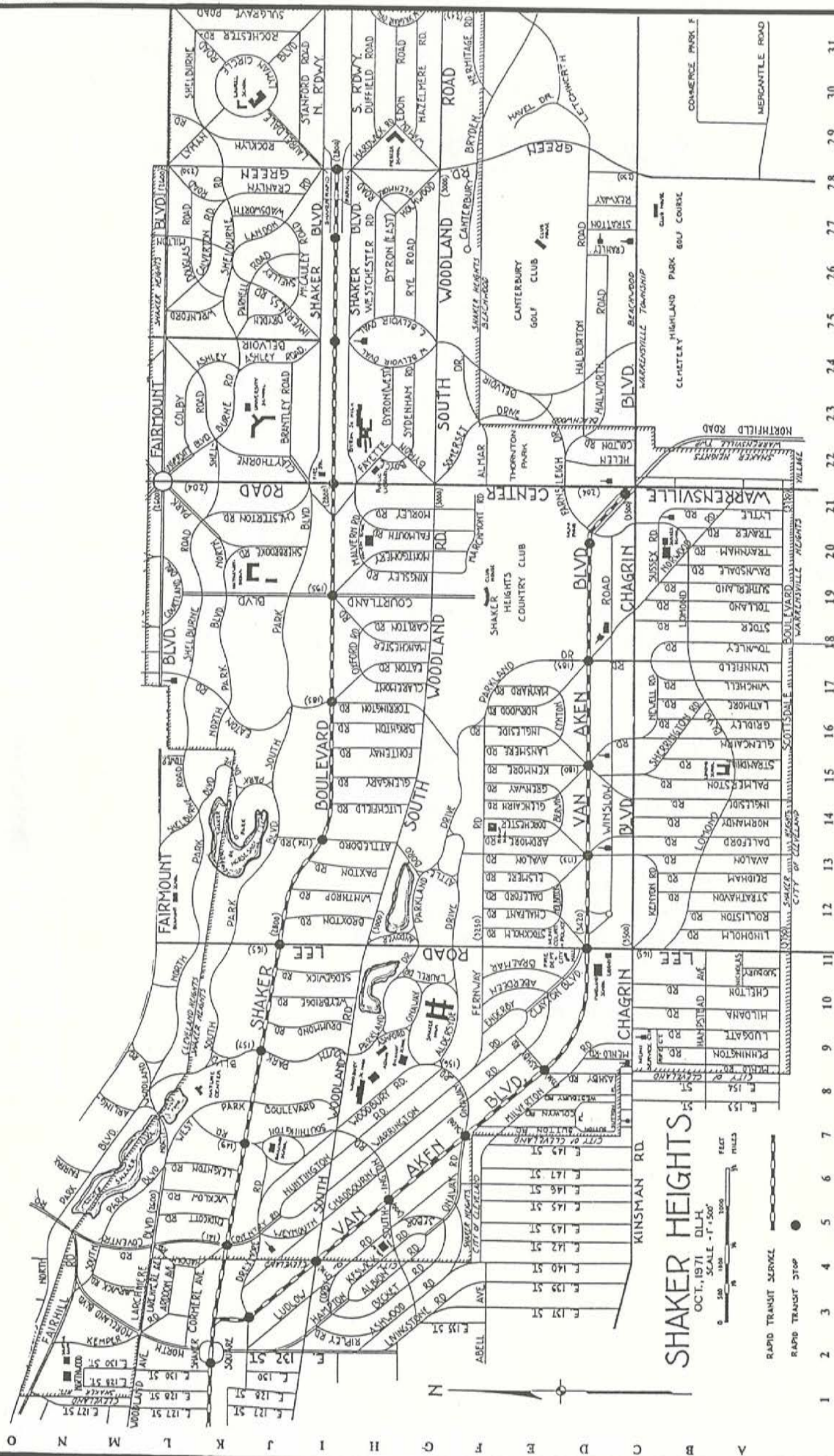
In researching Shaker records, Caroline Piercy, a resident of Shaker Heights and an authority on the North Union Colony, came upon the will of Bertram Woods, an elderly railroad engineer who had died in Florida. His will directed that his estate should go "to the library that served his home farm." His farm was near the intersection of Warrensville Center Road and Fairmount Boulevard. The legacy was worth about \$20,000.

Courtesy of Shaker Heights Public Library



Bertram Woods branch, 20600 Fayette Road





Current street map



1957

1962 and 1963 1964

1968 and 1969 1970

Ludlow Community Association is formed to counter-act real estate practices and encourages whites to buy homes in the area. Four years later, the Association incorporates and begins making short-term loans to prospective white buyers.

Thornton Pool opens and tennis courts follow. Moreland and Lomond Associations are formed to prevent white flight from the neighborhoods.

*Cosmopolitan Magazine* stirs up Shaker Heights residents with an article, "The Good Life in Shaker Heights," describing Shaker as the wealthiest city in the United States, where nearly everyone belongs to a country club and the typical family has three cars, including "most likely a Jaguar, a Porsche, or a Ferrari."

The Cuyahoga County Engineer announces plans for two eight-lane freeways to intersect at the Shaker Lakes on land owned by the city of Cleveland and leased by Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights. Shaker residents are outraged. The battle lasts until 1968, when a new federal law prohibits such freeways from being built in public parks. The controversy leads to establishment of the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center in 1968.

Shaker Heights prohibits "For Sale" signs.

Thornton Ice Rink and two additional tennis courts are opened. The Shaker Housing Office, formed in 1967, begins a local and national advertising program and starts providing services to blacks seeking homes in predominantly white areas of Shaker Heights.

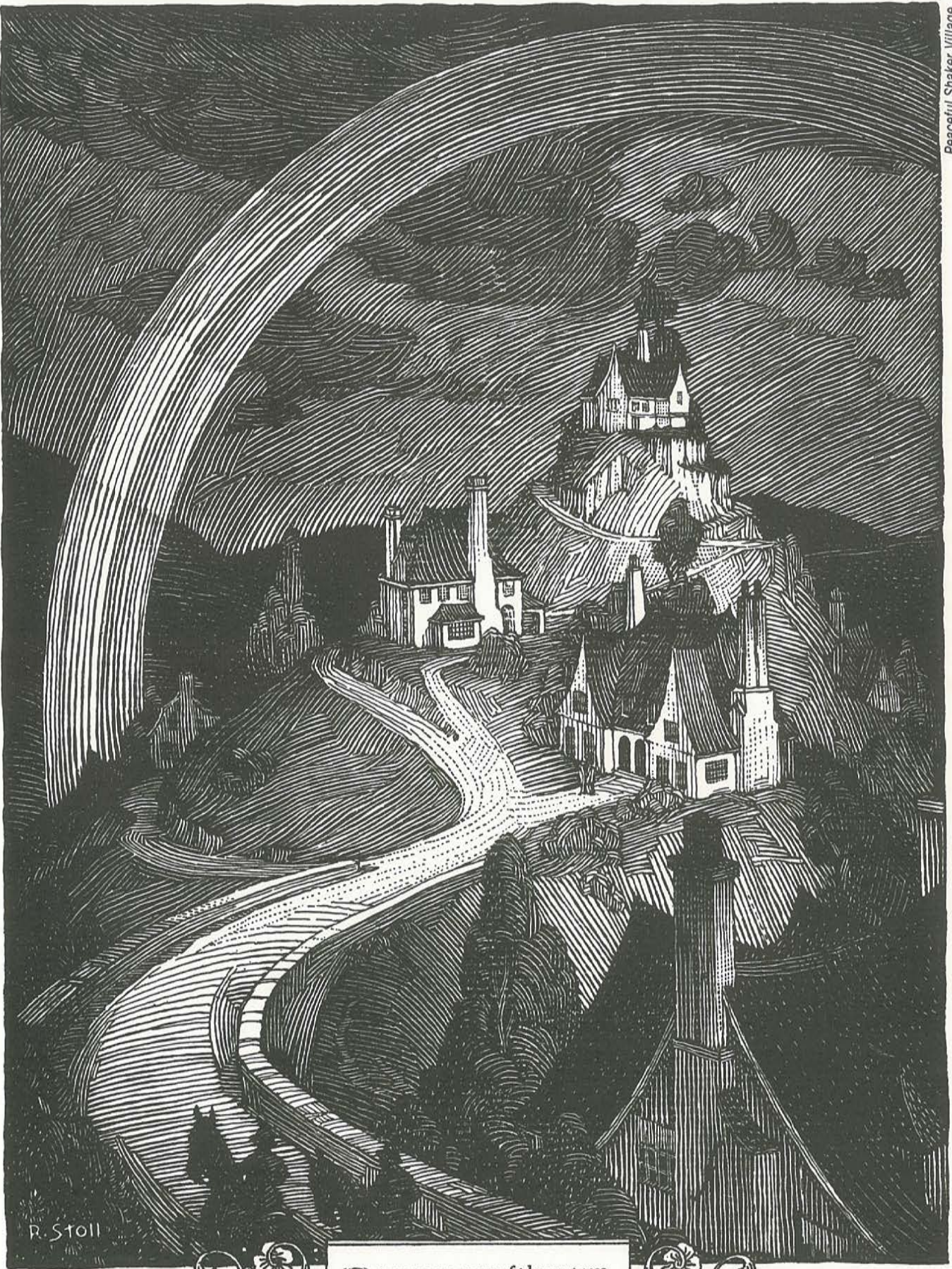
February 2, Martin Berns, a psychiatrically troubled young man, blows up the Shaker Heights police station. Berns is the only person to die in the explosion accidentally triggered by a policeman when he turns on the police short wave radio. In the youth's car are bombs and plans of schools, the fire department, and other city buildings.

The Board of Education adopts the Shaker Schools Plan that allows any pupil to transfer to any other school if the transfer will improve the racial balance of the school.



1974	1975	1981 and 1982	1986	1987
<p>June 25, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the right of Shaker Heights to prohibit political advertising on the Shaker Rapid line. The court votes 5-4 on this First Amendment issue. The decision is written by Supreme Court Justice Blackmun.</p>	<p>May 21, the city of Shaker Heights, in a Memorandum of Understanding, transfers ownership of the Shaker and Van Aken Rapid lines to the Regional Transit Authority.</p>	<p>The Board of Education introduces magnet school programs at Moreland, Ludlow, and Lomond Schools. These programs remain until 1987.</p>	<p>May 9, the city officially establishes the Fund for the Future to provide loans for prospective home buyers who make pro-integrative choices.</p>	<p>The Board of Education votes to close Ludlow, Sussex, Moreland, and Malvern Schools and redistrict the city to promote integration. Woodbury School, closed as a junior high school in 1985, reopens as an elementary school for grades five and six. Byron Junior High School, known as the Middle School since 1985, educates children in grades seven and eight.</p>





*"Their ways are ways of pleasantness,  
And all their paths are peace."*



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## Chapter 5

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# 1950s—1987 Complex Changes

While the appearance of Shaker Heights survived the housing boom and population increase, the mood changed drastically from the mid-fifties to the late sixties. After a time of pain and upheaval, the city's reaction to integration became creative and practical. In fact, after years of hard work, the population stabilized, and many fears abated. So successful was Shaker's response to integration that cities throughout the country used aspects of it as their models.

As it adapted to new residents, the city of Shaker Heights became more cosmopolitan. A new vision of ideal society took shape: people of diverse religions, races, and ethnic backgrounds working and living together harmoniously. That chapter in Shaker life is not yet complete, but those who are living it place their trust in the legacy of the North Union Shakers as well as the commitment of fellow residents.

### Bernard Isaacs

*From the beginning, Shaker Heights was conceived, built, and governed in the image of a separate community housing well-to-do people who belonged to the establishment. For a quarter of a century or more of growth, Shaker Heights was protected by a covenant as absolute and as restrictive as any in the nation. The so-called Van Sweringen compact was considered a model instrument by the many residents who wanted to enjoy a club-like privacy. Under the compact, the Van Sweringen Company reserved the right to approve or veto the purchase of property in Shaker Heights. It could even require the would-be buyer to obtain signatures of approval from the owner on each side of the property and the three owners directly opposite the property. The covenant was used to deter Jewish families from settling in certain parts of Shaker Heights.*

*Eventually the Van Sweringen compact ran out of gas, nullified by the tides of social change and the Supreme Court. Nonetheless, it still exerted some intimi-*

*dating force until well after World War II. Certainly it could not have survived long after the demographic earthquake of the late 1940s and 1950s began to empty Cleveland and to fill up rapidly the suburban and exurban spaces surrounding the central core. Many of these families on the move were black families who, for the first time in history, had acquired the means to seek better housing.*

*We had always seen black people, especially women, riding the Shaker Rapid and occasionally in private automobiles. But we automatically checked them off as servants. They did not own or rent homes, and their children were seldom seen a block east of Shaker Square.*

*In the early 1950s, black families settled in the Ludlow School area of Shaker. Ludlow also served families on some streets that were inside Cleveland's boundaries. The children who lived in that Cleveland enclave were white.*

*Shaker residents knew that black families had bought houses here, but public attention was not riveted on this change until one night in 1954, when a bomb exploded at the site of a home being built on Corby Road, just around the corner from Ludlow School. The new home buyer was John Pegg, a prominent attorney. John and Dorothy Pegg were black. Newspaper headlines blazed.*

*The bomb jolted Shaker Heights into a new era that resulted in a policy providing for peaceful racial integration of Shaker Heights, its people, and its schools. It began with conversations (known in the 1960s as a dialogue) between John Pegg and sympathetic white neighbors who had volunteered to help clean up after the blast. Soon they were joined by other white residents and other new black families. From this sharing of concern came the Ludlow Community Association: blacks and whites united behind a desire to maintain the Ludlow School neighborhood as a quality place in which to live and raise a family.*

*When the bomb went off at Peggs, I had been a mildly interested owner living near the other end of the Ludlow area. But as parents of youngsters in the Ludlow School, my wife Mimi and I soon joined the Ludlow effort. In*





John and Dorothy Pegg

1960, I became the third president of the Ludlow Association.

We were bluntly advised by experts that Ludlow was trying to make water run uphill. White and black families living side by side, becoming close friends, their kids playing together and going to school together — it just wouldn't work! The white residents would all sell to blacks, and blacks would overrun the area.

The response of the Ludlow Community Association was to establish a program with the frank objective of attracting new white home buyers to Ludlow while encouraging prospective new black buyers to settle in other parts of Shaker Heights or in other eastern suburbs. Private funds would be sought to assist white home prospects if they needed such assistance.

The result was the Ludlow Corporation, a new wrinkle in the real estate market, and it turned out to be a real groundbreaker for accommodating blacks and whites in an integrating neighborhood. Gradually the program took hold, and a pattern of successes began to show. The balance of numbers approached a point of stability. Residents of two other integrating school districts, Moreland and Lomond, were encouraged to form similar community associations and set up similar programs to secure racial stability for their areas. In Shaker Heights at least, water was indeed flowing uphill.

It's worth underlining here that what we did was not based on sweetness and light. We did not mouth any high-sounding moral principles. We exercised our own self-interest: blacks and whites decided together that quality integration was possible if it included a racially balanced neighborhood.

Enlightened self-interest also proved to be decisive in the role played by the real estate industry. Prominent real estate investor David Lincoln provided critical support to the fledgling Ludlow Corporation. Lincoln was the principal owner of the Shaker Square Shopping Center bordering Ludlow and of Moreland Courts Apartments nearby. He perceived that a stable and solvent Ludlow was important to his interests at the Square. He was supportive in much more than a financial way; he was tireless in personal involvement with both blacks and whites and in all aspects of the Ludlow project.

As racial conflict and integration loomed larger and larger on the national stage, increasing attention was drawn to the innovative developments in Shaker Heights. State, federal, and even United Nations officials came, saw, and were impressed. Major news media reported on the encouraging story of neighborhoods that were integrating with success in terms of economic, social, and educational values.

By 1964, Mayor Paul Jones and City Council agreed the city should take an official position. With the outspoken encouragement of the Board of Education, a Citizens Advisory Commission of five members was appointed to consider ways to make integration an orderly and constructive process for the entire city. I was one of the members chosen to serve on the commission. In the fall of 1965, we recommended a central housing office to coordinate the efforts of neighborhoods and to maintain a balance of white and black home ownership in integrating areas. There would be a paid housing director and a budget sufficient for the work. The cost would be shared by the city and by the school system.

I became chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, which remains active to this day. In 1968, we moved to establish the Shaker Communities Development Foundation to undertake housing rehabilitation work by the city. In 1986, the financial side of city housing efforts was consolidated into the Fund for the Future of Shaker Heights, while the work of the Housing Department and staff became a major function of the Community Services Department.

**Donald DeMarco** is Community Services Director.

For an assortment of reasons, most of us are somewhat uncomfortable talking about the subject of race. This is especially so if we were brought up in a liberal environment and were taught to try to ignore race. Many of us revelled in the telling of stories about youngsters describing their new friends at school in vivid terms but with no reference to the friend being of another race.

We fervently want to have integration happen and be maintained naturally. Shaker leaders, however, have known better than to give in to wishful thinking. Shaker's idealism has been based on realism. Before James Farmer said it, before Martin Luther King, Jr., said it, before Supreme Court Justice Blackmun said it, Shaker's leader-



ship knew it — that to get beyond racism, race must be taken into account. If integration is good, then it's worth deliberating over and working for, even if much of that work is uncomfortable and only semi-satisfying because it requires affirmative effort and does not sustain itself without sacrifice.

Most public policy decisions as well as private investment decisions, however race-neutral on their face, have racial impacts. Unfortunately, most often those impacts foster segregation and resegregation. It is necessary to analyze virtually everything that is happening and oppose or support it based first upon its segregative or integrative impact. If integration is not valued above other interests, it will almost certainly be sacrificed in the name of other more popular or common interests.

### Beverly Mason

When we moved to the Ludlow area in the city of Cleveland in November, 1955, we were the first blacks to move onto a named rather than a numbered street. Other blacks began to move in street by street in an uncontrolled way. White realtors were not selling houses to whites, and blockbusting was taking place. The mid-1950s bombing of John and Dorothy Pegg's house served to unite the community. That incident was the turning point.

The Ludlow Association met for several years to discuss ways to encourage whites to move into the community. Realtors were approached and questioned about not showing this area. In the early 1960s, it was not on their agenda. It took a young medical student who had grown up in Shaker Heights and who had been unable through her realtors to see homes in Ludlow to move the Association forward. Joanne Finley and her husband, a labor lawyer, eventually did buy a home on Ludlow Road. The Ludlow Association hired employees and began to market Ludlow thereafter.

Members of the Association held parties. They wrote letters all over the country and to various universities. On Sunday afternoons they had house-hunting parties. Many homes were for sale by owners, and the Association aided in bringing buyers and sellers together at a time when realtors would not show white buyers houses in the Ludlow area. They received a great deal of press, locally and nationally. These efforts continued well into the late sixties. The Ludlow Association was the model for all other associations. It was not an easy time. There were not fair housing laws then.

In 1965, we moved from Cleveland to Shaker Heights, and we built on a lot at 3182 Ludlow Road. It was one of the few lots in Shaker Heights that had no Van Sweringen restrictions on it.

I always felt that the white people in Ludlow did not want to acknowledge that we were black. I never felt they were unkind. In fact, they were quite the opposite. But I always felt like I wasn't there. They accepted me as another person, but never looked at me as black.

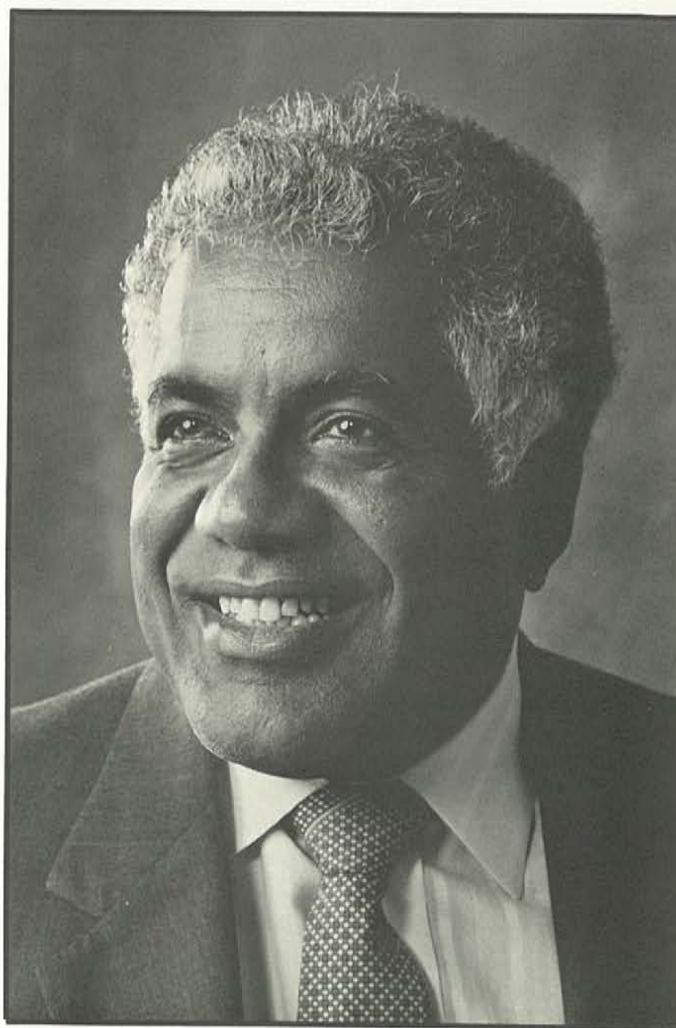


Photo by Herbert Ascherman, Jr.

Winston Richie, director of the East Suburban Council for Open Communities, a proponent of integrated housing

### Winston Richie

I grew up in the Mt. Pleasant area of Cleveland, around 130th Street and Kinsman Road. In 1956, when I was 31 years old and married and had a one and one-half year old son, I moved my family into Shaker Heights.

When we first moved here, Shaker Heights was not very well integrated. In the Ludlow district, we were the second black family; later, at Mercer, we were the first. I wanted to live in Shaker because of the excellent schools and because I strongly believed in an integrated experience for my children. I wanted them to be able to compete in the world, to become part of the mainstream, and when they grew up, to have self-confidence and pride in their ability to make it as blacks. I wanted them to know that there are some good whites and some bad ones, just as there are good and bad blacks.

At the time we moved into Shaker Heights, there was a certain amount of awkwardness about integration. Fire bombings both in Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights were not uncommon. Real estate companies used scare tactics to promote the exodus of whites from neighborhoods where blacks moved in. One set of neighbors moved out when we moved in, but our early experiences in an integrated neighborhood were primarily positive. Our



neighbors were accepting. I think the one neighbor who moved did so out of the feeling of panic that was often promoted then. I think they regretted moving as time went on. The teachers were supportive of our kids. For the most part, whites wanted the experience of getting to know blacks. Our neighbors were very hospitable, inviting us for coffee and bringing us food.

Shaker Heights was a more exclusive, monied suburb then. People went to their country clubs for activities or to Rio or some place if they wanted a festival. Schools provided most activities for the rest of us. I do not recall having block parties or other holiday festivities like today's ShakerFest.

There have been a lot of changes in Shaker Heights since we moved here. Shaker used to be a very WASPish community, but a different mentality exists here now. There was a time when one of the great attractions of living in Shaker was that blacks were not living here. That appealed to a certain kind of person. Whites either changed their attitudes or left Shaker and were replaced by whites with different attitudes. People in Shaker now have lived with integration for so long that it seems like a natural situation. This was brought home to me recently when my daughter came to Shaker to speak to an Honor Society group. I was struck by the integrative nature of the audience.

In 1971, I decided to run for Shaker City Council. Historically all Council members were re-elected. In 1971, one councilman decided not to run. There were three main contenders: Steve Alfred, John Smeltz, and me. Everybody was wondering which of us would get it, but all three of us got elected. People were just amazed, but I think that by that time people were of the mindset that there ought to be some black representation on Council.

I had not been so lucky in running for the school board in 1970. The endorsement of the Citizens' Committee meant assurance of a seat. The Citizens' Committee though, some of whom did not want a black on the school board, asked me to serve on the nominating committee so that I could not come out as the committee's nominee. One of the whites from the old school board declared I was too militant and was not the kind of person they wanted on the school board. He single-handedly shot me down. At that time, Drue King was nominated and elected and served an eight-year term.

When I wanted to buy a lot on Green Road in 1966, I applied for the Van Sweringen consent to buy this lot, and they would not give it to me. They said I needed the consent of five people on either side and 10 people across the street. I decided to go door to door. The person next door, a banker, said he needed to think about it. The lady across the street would not sign it either. She was Jewish, and her attitude was that if the Jews let the blacks in, then the Jews would not be admitted to the next neighborhood to which they might want to move. Once we moved in, we did not have any problems.

What does being a resident of Shaker Heights mean to me? For one thing, high taxes. Today blacks recognize

that Shaker is the greatest community in the world. I am not sure that whites always feel that way any more. Whites have more options of communities in which to live, but blacks looking for good schools and neighborhoods have limited options. Shaker is making a tremendous effort to keep the community integrated. The snobbish, country club set with plantation owner/slave mentality is gone. These people have been replaced by people who think that everyone is good, or that good and bad are in all races.

Our children have done well competing with whites in banking and other positions, just as we hoped. We have continued to live in Shaker Heights because I still believe strongly in integration. Our roots are here. Sometimes, I feel like I should be living in Parma or some other suburb that needs integrating, but we are too comfortable in Shaker to seriously consider moving elsewhere.

## Drue King

In 1957, we were among the first blacks who moved to Becket Road in the Cleveland portion of the Ludlow School area. We decided to buy a house in the Shaker Heights area because of the schools. (The area outside of Shaker Heights that is within the Shaker Heights school district has been home for many Clevelanders who wanted to take advantage of Shaker schools but live in Cleveland, often for political reasons.)

In the 1950s, John Pegg built a house on Corby Road that was bombed while under construction. Some said it was because he was using non-union labor and others because he was black. The home of white activist Bob Gemmer was badly burned, and he and his family had to move out for several weeks.

We became active in the Ludlow Association. In addition to meetings, neighbors gathered informally. In the 1960s, while Fran and the children spent summers at Nantucket Island, Dr. Robert Seymour and I started the Becket Road Breakfasts. I could cook waffles, and he could cook coffee, so we had breakfast. Then the neighbors started coming. They'd come at 11 a.m. for breakfast and stay the afternoon. We listened to the symphony at 4 p.m. on the radio if they were still there. It was a pleasant cooking and eating experience.

Someone at a PTA meeting commented that Ludlow wasn't ready for blacks in the PTA. Yet Fran became involved right away. She was named Ludlow PTA president in 1963, and PTA council president in 1969. I was a member of the library board, leaving to join the school board from 1970-77. I served as school board president in 1975 and 1976.

There was a knock-down, drag-out fight about Thornton (recreation membership). Shaker Heights people didn't want Clevelanders who were in the Shaker school district to join. The irony was that many Cleveland residents who would not have been allowed to join were white people who attended Boulevard School, while black



# Report of Committee Shaker Heights Protective Association

October 19, 1925

To change the plans would be practically impossible as it would require the redividing of all lots recently covered by the new restriction.

## Ever Present Menace

There is an ever present menace to every resident of Shaker Village, and throughout Cleveland. So far, it has been met as we think, in an unwise way by purchasing property at exorbitant prices to rid neighborhoods of undesirable residents. This way of making easy money has become generally known and the trouble only increased. Now it may occur on any street in the village on any day—next door to any of you. No one is now secure.

## Not a Cure All

It may be urged that unless a street is 100% signed up for restrictions, that the danger of an undesirable neighbor, is an ever present one. Conceding that possibility to be true, we still urge that the adoption of restrictions by a substantial portion of residents of each street, will give more protection than any other plan that has been proposed—certainly more than taking no action at all.

Let us suppose that one, two or three lots on a street are unrestricted. Concede there is some chance of one of them falling into the hands of an undesirable neighbor. Still there is also the chance that it will be sold to a desirable neighbor—possibly an acquaintance of other residents of the street. It will thus be seen that if 75% or 80% or 90% have signed, then there is only a remote possibility of one of the few remaining lots falling into the hands of an undesirable and the neighborhood has placed a substantial barrier against the encroachment of an undesirable.

Is it not better to have substantial protection—though not theoretically absolute protection—than no protection at all?

## The Immediate Work

The committee has organized by the selection of an executive secretary, and twelve district captains. At a meeting of district captains with the committee held later, the entire situation was discussed. It was suggested by some of the workers that many of the citi-

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society

Typical wording of the restrictions and protective covenants

Shaker residents who attended Moreland School could have joined anyway. The solution resulted in charging a higher fee for people outside of Shaker Heights.

Fran became active in the Malvern Association during the early 1980s school closing controversy. She said it was like *deja vu*. It was very stressful. Things we talked about 15 years ago were still happening (talk of panic selling, lowered housing values, being threatened). It doesn't bother us if people's attitudes don't change as long as their behavior does.

the Shaker integration I'd known might be disintegrating. That awareness stayed with me as I moved on to college and career in other cities. After many years, we both returned to Shaker Heights, settled into married and family life, when we ran into each other in our children's classroom.

The angry years have faded. We've talked easily on many subjects, including racial issues. And I now realize the ideals instilled in us as youngsters in Shaker Heights have so strengthened our beliefs that nothing can shake them.

## Ludlow: A Lesson in Integration

The convulsion in Ludlow was equally painful to new Negro residents. Frances King, wife of a Negro physician, said, "A few months after we came, a white boy who played with my daughter Carol told me, 'We're moving away. But Carol and I are such good friends — can she move with us?' How could I tell him that his parents were moving because of us?"

Excerpts from Joseph P. Blank, "Ludlow," Readers Digest, September, 1968.

## Jean Sycle Martin

I remember sitting in Mrs. Parasility's human relations class at Shaker High School with a popular classmate, one of those who fit in anywhere and whose blackness made no difference.

But it was 1968, and Martin Luther King, Jr., had recently been killed. Suddenly, I heard a different attitude — angry words of black power, which shook me to think

## Lucille Anderson

From 1970 until 1982, I was director of the Shaker Heights Housing Office. My responsibilities changed over the years, but they always had the objective of furthering and maintaining an integrated community.

Good public relations was always necessary to deal with the varied beliefs, for and against the Housing Office. The black community recognizes the advantages of an integrated city and school system. They do not want any area to be all black or all white, but at the same time they become upset if homes are not being shown to their friends and family.

Some ultra-liberals in the white community had difficulty with the Housing Office because they felt blacks were being discriminated against, and some of the ultra-conservative whites became upset if the blacks were brought into their neighborhoods. Middle-of-the-road liberals, both black and white, were the only ones who seemed comfortable with the program.



## Joe Szwaja

*I was one of the first ethnics hired by the Shaker Heights schools. I was hired in 1957 by Principal Russell Rupp, who could never pronounce my name. I was offered the job with a starting salary of \$5,000. I was making \$2,800 or \$2,900 at Oberlin High School at the time.*

*I remember my first drive through Shaker Heights. My family had struggled, and we were basically poor. Oh, but to see the houses in Shaker Heights was really something. I grew up in a Polish Catholic ghetto in industrial New Jersey. I was one of five kids, and my dad made \$7 a week. When I was hired I thought I could tell the Shaker students what it was like to be poor, and they could tell me what it was like to be rich.*

*I will never forget my first day at Shaker Heights High School. I walked down the halls with another teacher and was introduced to one of the students. The student put out his hand and said, "How are you, Sir? Glad to have you aboard, Sir." No one ever called me "Sir" at Oberlin. The students were well-dressed, and there was a hair code. Students and teachers were asked to check the length of their sideburns. I remember the vice principal telling me to get a haircut. Sometimes my students gave me a gift certificate to the barber shop. It was also important to be well-dressed. If a teacher wore a jacket that clashed with his pants, he was told about it. We always wore jackets; we did not teach in shirtsleeves then.*

*I taught history at the high school from 1957 until 1971. I was quite well known for my re-enactment of the Battle of Bunker Hill. I would charge into the classroom with a bayonette or jump onto a student's desk. I cannot remember ever having a discipline problem. Many bright kids even went to summer school; now it is mostly remedial with some enrichment. Students could go to summer school if they wanted to raise their grades. If they did better in summer school, their new grades would go on their transcripts.*

*Students used to be generous around Christmastime. They gave teachers big, expensive gifts. It started to get out of hand so the Board of Education formulated a policy against gift-giving. The kids went a little overboard. One*

*homeroom tried to outdo another. I still wear a Bulova watch that was given to me in 1960 by Homeroom 111.*

*I remember the Kent State killings (May, 1970), the student reactions to the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. (April, 1968) and John F. Kennedy (November, 1963), and the protesting of the war in Viet Nam. Those were hard years. I remember having to guard the flag pole when we heard that some radical students were planning to tear it down. I remember students disrupting a school assembly when they came dressed in khakis carrying a Viet Cong flag and announcing "Long live the Viet Cong." Terry Pollack (a fellow teacher) chased those kids all the way to University Circle. Those were trying years for students, teachers, and parents.*

*Today, Shaker Heights High is not the same school that it once was. Alumni come back and say that it is not the school they attended. In some ways, the school is not as good as it was, and in some ways it is better than it ever was. It is just different. We have different types of students. We have a wonderfully full selection of course offerings.*

*My children went through the Shaker schools. They have been well prepared for life. They learned how to handle themselves, and they learned, unlike me, to discriminate by individual, not by group. I have had to unlearn many prejudices throughout the years.*

## Shaker Square

Shaker Square was known originally as Moreland Circle. Moreland Circle was a junction for the Shaker and Moreland Rapid lines, which converged in the middle of a large island that formed the center of a circle. All traffic east and west and north and south had to go around the circle. A model for development of the circle was rejected because of the traffic delays it would pose. The Van Sweringens had the circle squared, and it became Shaker Square. Beginning in 1928, and based on plans by architect Philip Small, it was developed as one of the country's first shopping centers.



Courtesy of Cleveland Public Library

A fire damaged much of Shaker Square on February 21, 1949





The construction of Moreland Courts, February, 1929, with a view from Shaker Boulevard to the west



**Mildred Delia** has been at the Moreland Courts central reception switchboard since 1955. She worked the switchboard and the plug-in phone lines at a time before today's push-button console unit. Her job included heralding the beginning of heat each fall when the temperature fell below 40 degrees. Many residents move to the south upon retirement, and the report is that among their first queries about Cleveland is one regarding Mildred. Once she saved a life. But the lifesaving story and other tales about the residents of Moreland Courts will remain untold. "These are private," she said.

*Until about twenty years ago, the central heating plant was on 130th Street. This meant that whenever the steam was started up or closed off, I called each merchant, professional, or resident of Shaker Square to tell them to turn their valves properly for the occasion. I guess I knew everybody.*

*I remember the students who were doormen and the maids' rooms that have become today's family rooms and home offices. You can tell how times have changed by the telephone board. I liked the old one better. I could tell 10 people at one time that the cold water was to be turned off. They could all hear me and hear one another—a private coffee kitchen all our own. Then I'd plug in another 10 and have another discussion about the water being turned off. I miss that. My up-to-date console is austere, not nearly as much fun as the octopus PBX boards of times past.*

*The job of operators is to be a friend. We've even been in the position of saving people's lives. Someone not heard from too long, someone needing to be checked on, someone who needed someone to talk to. I have talked to the restless or lonely when they could not sleep. All of this is involved in being a real friend.*

The intersection of Lee Road and Chagrin Boulevard once was called "Gillette's Corners." This name came from the Gillette Tavern, which stood at the northeast corner of the intersection. It was built in 1877 and remained there until about 1922.

*Shaker Historical Society Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 2

**Larry Albert** bought Shaker Square in 1978. It was about 50 years old at the time, one of the oldest shopping centers in the United States.

*Shaker Square originally was created to serve the carriage trade. It was never meant to be a general shopping center. It catered to the wealthy. Style and quality were its trademarks. Shaker Square really belongs to the people. I'm taking care of it, developing it, and trying to make it the kind of place people will support. But I'm the guardian of a landmark on the National Register of Historic Places. In some sense, it doesn't really belong to me at all.*

## Shaker Heights Housing Office

Formed in the fall of 1965, the Shaker Heights Housing Office is emphatically not a realty office. As part of the Department of Community Services, the Housing Office has a singular mission: selling the city of Shaker Heights in a way that will enhance integration. In explaining his department's role, Community Services Director Donald DeMarco repeatedly emphasizes, "Shaker Heights is our client, not the housing prospect. Shaker and its residents profit from integration. Of course we do provide a service to prospects as a means to advance our objectives." According to DeMarco, the term integration is often misunderstood and sometimes evokes an image of importing minority groups into a neighborhood or conversely, keeping them out.

"But sitting by and hoping that stable integration will just happen is wishful thinking. It requires intensive effort and is the Housing Office's reason for being." Funding for the Office comes partly from the city (75%) and partly from the school district (25%). Most people feel discomfort over the necessity for this sort of programming. DeMarco meets misgivings by explaining, "To get beyond racism, racism must be taken into account."

*Excerpts from "Pursuing an Ideal" by Linda Tuthill, Shaker Magazine, May, 1985.*



**Walter C. Kelley** moved to Shaker Heights to become law director in 1957, a post he held until 1973 when he was appointed to complete the term of Mayor Paul Jones. The late *Cleveland Press* described Kelley's appointment process as the Shaker Shuffle. Kelley resigned as law director, and David Blaushild resigned as councilman, allowing Kelley to be appointed by Council to Blaushild's position. Then, Councilwoman Eleanor Adams stepped down from her position as vice mayor, and Kelley was appointed to that spot. Next, Paul Jones resigned as mayor, and Kelley was appointed to fill his vacancy. Councilwoman Adams then returned to her post as vice mayor. The charter has since been changed, and the Shaker Shuffle is no longer possible. Kelley was mayor until 1983.

*In 1957, we moved across town to Shaker Heights from Independence and found a wonderful Tudor style home on Ashford Road near Shaker Heights High School. We were the youngest family in the neighborhood. When we left the neighborhood in 1984 to move to an apartment in South Park Manor, we were the oldest couple in the area.*

*We love the homes and all the trees and greenery, but when we first came here Pat and I used to chuckle to each other about the way Shaker residents seemed somewhat snobbish, if you will, about their community. There was such an air of boosterism that we thought was a bit much. Now we're as boosterish as anyone else.*

*During my 26 years with the city, the major issue was the effort to maintain stable, integrated neighborhoods. The city established a housing office, the first such office in the country that sought to maintain an integrated city. The Housing Office later expanded beyond Shaker's borders and joined forces with Cleveland Heights and with the school districts of these two cities to promote a program that helps black families find housing in all the eastern suburbs.*

*While I was mayor, we transferred ownership of the rapid to the Regional Transit Authority in 1975. Some people criticized me for giving away the rapid, but we got millions of dollars in improvements, and the city had been losing money operating the rapid.<sup>1</sup>*

*Shaker Heights had an amazing number of community-minded residents. Citizen involvement was pivotal in preventing the state from putting a freeway right through the heart of the city in the mid-sixties. Residents persuaded Governor Jim Rhodes to back off. They also got the federal government to withhold money it had designated for the Shaker freeway project by citing a recently adopted federal law designed to protect parks. An important offshoot of the stop-the-freeway movement was the establishment of the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center, a beautiful preserve, which now serves some 30,000 to 40,000 kids a year.*

*I have always been impressed with the number of Greater Cleveland's civic leaders who choose to live in Shaker. The Van Sweringen brothers had such a good plan, and the city's many big houses attracted wealthy peo-*

*ple. Although Shaker Heights got a reputation as an affluent community, there really is a mixture of people and a broad range of economic and social neighborhoods.*

*To me, the best things about Shaker Heights are still the same: the schools that attract intellectually sophisticated people, the supply of architecturally unique homes of all sizes, and the trees and parks. We are repeatedly struck by the amount of greenery in Shaker when we return after being away for any length of time.*



Martha and Frank Joseph in front of family photographs

Photo by Herbert Ascherman, Jr.

In 1940, **Frank Joseph** and his wife Martha built on West Park Boulevard, next door to Harry Sims, who was John D. Rockefeller's secretary. Frank Joseph has been a staunch defender of Shaker's parks. These parks have a long history. To make Shaker Heights more accessible, developers gave land to the Cleveland Parks Department, including Lower Shaker Lake and Horseshoe Lake, in a gentlemen's agreement that Cleveland would build roads through the parks. John D. Rockefeller gave much of the money for the park development. Now Shaker Heights has a lease to take care of its side of the lakes, and Cleveland Heights takes care of its side.

*After World War II, there were several proposals to build in the park across South Woodland from Woodbury School. One was a war monument and the other a public swimming pool. We thought both projects were inappropriate and opposed them. (The Veterans Memorial was subsequently located at Van Aken Boulevard and Lee Road, and the swimming pool was built at Thornton Park.)*

*It was Harry Sims' idea to start the Shaker Heights Citizens' Committee after it was discovered that a company was selling inferior materials to the school system at exorbitant prices. People were upset, and a group of us decided to run our own slate of candidates for school board, and we won. We searched the community to find the best qualified people to nominate. We never endorse candidates for other offices, and we drop out of the picture as soon as the election is over.<sup>2</sup>*



### Al Nola, Nola Shoe Repair

*I started here in 1958, after I got laid off from Glen Ridge Machine Company. I was married with two kids and no car, living in the Collinwood neighborhood in Cleveland on Ivanhoe. I came up here looking for work because I did not want to collect unemployment. I went in to the shop and was better than anyone else, so Saul Firestone hired me right on the spot. Heck, three days later, I remember he gave me the keys and said, "You open up in the morning. You open up every morning." In 1965, Mr. Firestone was getting up in age and moved to California. I didn't know if I was going to have a job, so I ended up buying the place.*

*I liked it up here as soon as I started in 1958. Shaker had the best schools, the best of everything, and I kind of liked that. The big thing around here was that everybody knew everybody. I knew all my customers. They're loyal. You do a good job, and they keep coming back.*

*I think I am the oldest or longest time merchant here except for Budd Forward (of Brown Forward Funeral Home). I knew Mayor Stapleton. He was the best mayor because he used to come in here all the time. He used to go up and down the streets at Christmastime and greet everybody, and everybody gave him a little something.*

*The area is still good. People still come back. We do sell a lot of briefcases now. Now my sons do all the work, and I do all the taking of salesmen to lunch.*

### Fran and David Namkoong

In fall 1961, Fran and David Namkoong found a house in Bay Village, but before the closing they were informed by their realtor that the neighbors had taken a poll and decided they would not be welcome there. (Fran is Chinese; David is Korean. His father was the first counsel general in the newly formed Republic of Korea.)

*When an article about this situation appeared in the Plain Dealer, a representative of the Ludlow community contacted us, inviting us to visit Shaker Heights. At the time, we were about 35 years old with two small children and one on the way. David was invited to a party at which the whole community turned out and welcomed him. They offered a tour of the city, a house-hunting tour, and described the school system. It was more than a gesture. They made us feel welcome.*

*These past years in Shaker Heights have been highlighted by our involvement in the community, especially in the fair housing movement, and the educational experience of our children. Each of us looks back on our experiences here very positively. Our children, having now lived outside Ludlow and Shaker Heights, appreciate more what they have taken for granted.*

*We continue to live here because we still enjoy the neighborhood and the convenience of location. We are proud that the people of Shaker Heights are concerned and thoughtful with each other and hope the community will remain forward-looking.*

**Robert Rawson** was a member of the Shaker Heights Board of Education from 1963 to 1971, and was president of the Board from 1968 to 1971.

*Integration was an emotion-packed issue, and there was an uproar when the school board discussed mandatory busing. The administration presented a plan to the board, then we held a series of community meetings. I recall a meeting at Byron that was attended by close to 1,000 residents.*

*It seemed to me that the plan for voluntary busing grew out of these community meetings. If the voluntary plan had not come up, the board would have adopted the mandatory plan. We had been watching Moreland School for several years. Moreland was around 98% black. Ludlow was substantially black, and Lomond was following. We first tried the magnet school approach; we beefed up the teaching in math and science to get people to elect to go to Moreland School. Since this did not resolve the situation, the school board knew more had to be done. The voluntary busing plan adopted by the Shaker school board became the Shaker Schools Plan.*

*I remember the school board as a strong body. The turnout for board elections was very good, and generally levies were placed on the ballot every two years and seemed to be accepted. I would like to see Shaker Heights maintain its reputation as a great community. It faces problems because of the lack of a strong commercial or industrial tax base. But its strength has been its schools.*



Six-year-olds Winston Richie, Jr. and Stephen Namkoong were involved in a patriotic program at Ludlow School in February, 1962.



# Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center

What could have been a major disaster for the city had a very positive result, thanks to the efforts of responsive citizens. In 1964, the Cuyahoga County Engineer's office announced plans to build two eight-lane freeways, which would intersect in the vicinity of Lee Road and North Park Boulevard. The highways never were built, but the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center was.

Members of 40 area garden clubs had planted in the Shaker Lakes area for years, and they were outraged. Betty Miller, club member and PTA council president, proceeded to lobby for an alternate use of the land. Ultimately the National Audubon Society studied the area and published a report in June, 1966, recommending the land be used as a nature center.

The land is owned by the city of Cleveland and leased to Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights. A number of Shaker Colony artifacts have been found there, including clay pipe fragments, bits of glassware, pottery, buttons, and coins.

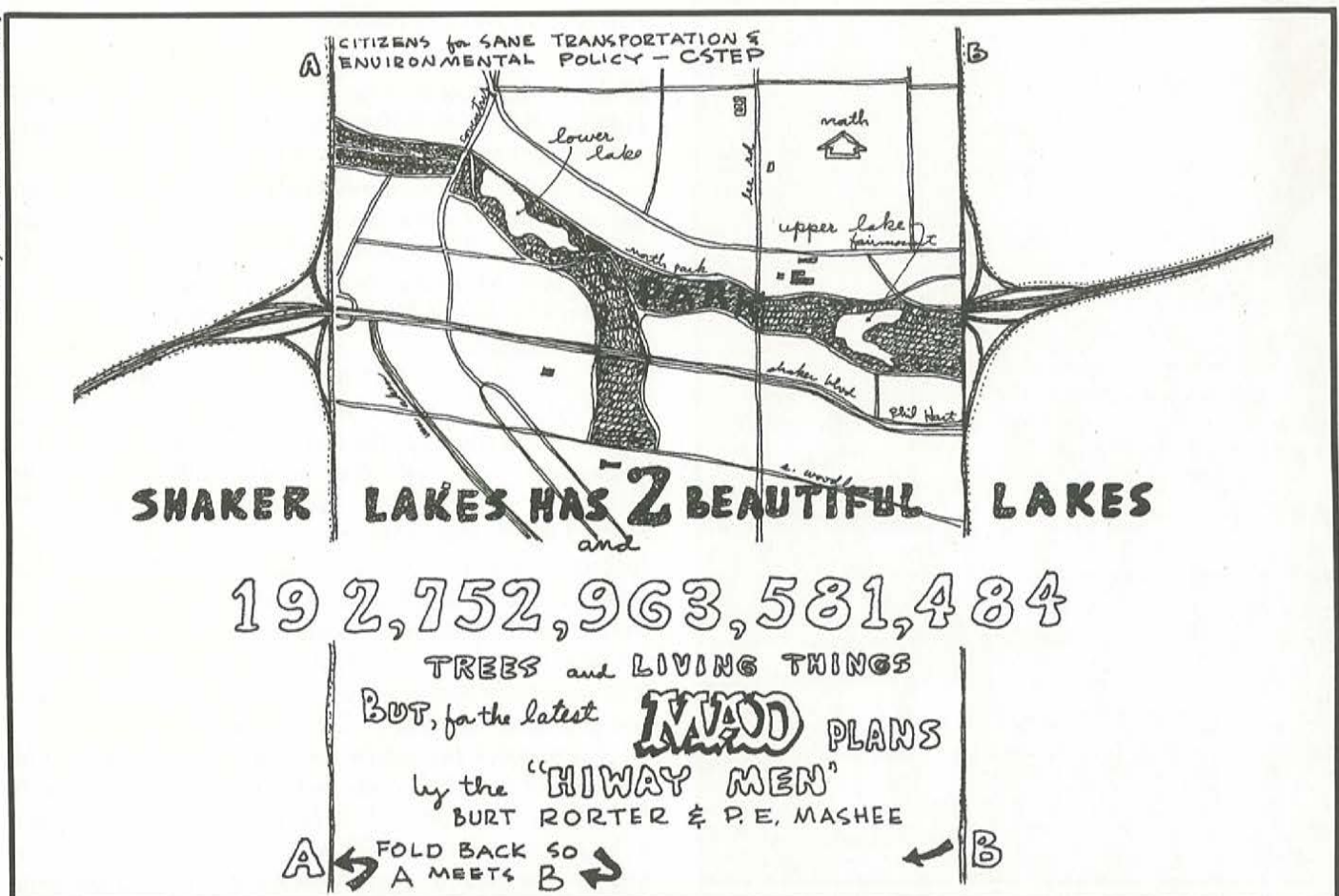
In September, 1966, the Shaker Lakes Regional

Nature Center was incorporated, and Betty Miller was elected president of its board of trustees. In December, 1968, new regulations enacted under the Federal Highway Act generally prohibited a freeway from going through a public park. The Nature Center's headquarters was dedicated November 9, 1969. (Materials were transferred from exhibits housed at Boulevard School in the 1960s.)

In 1971, Shaker Lakes parklands were designated a national environmental education landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior. In 1974, the Department of the Interior declared 146 acres encompassing the lakes an historic site. This status prohibits rezoning, highway construction, or the addition of any buildings not related to the historic nature of the area. No changes may be made other than restoration or excavation.

The Nature Center has public trails and offers classes to adults and children alike, as well as hosts many visitors from area schools.

Courtesy of Shaker Historical Society



An example of one of the 37,000 flyers distributed by hand to each house in Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights and Cleveland west of Shaker Square in an effort to oppose the freeways



**Barbara Haas Rawson** was a leader in the League of Women Voters during the late 1940s and the 1950s.

*The League was huge then because women were not working. Much of its focus was on education. We were concerned about teachers' salaries. We felt they were too low for the community. We studied teachers' salaries in comparative areas and then looked at differential salaries between men and women teachers. Oh, definitely, men were earning more than women. There were additional ways of earning money, and these were made more available to men, such as coaching and other after-school activities.*

**Richard Peterjohn** is principal of Shaker Middle School.

*I was born in St. Luke's Hospital. Years later when a job came open at Woodbury Junior High School, I applied. I guess in the back of my mind I worried that I wouldn't be good enough for Shaker and that I didn't have enough money to live in Shaker Heights. I started my first year teaching at Woodbury in 1960. I have been a principal since 1972.*

*I think that every era and every generation has something different about it, but basically the kids are still the same. I don't remember individual students, good or bad. Mostly I remember a lot of bright kids.*

### **Herbert and Gloria Greenwald**

*Early, happy memories of Shaker Heights include riding the rapid with friends or taking advantage of the free bus passes on a Sunday afternoon. We traveled for hours on the many different winding roads. I got such a kick out of all the enjoyable things the Heights area had to offer. Unlike today, there was always an empty corner where one could play ball and have fun in the open fields.*

*In 1967, we started the Herb Greenwald Advertising Agency. Chagrin-Lee-Avalon is one of our clients. At one time, Chagrin-Lee-Avalon was a sea of concrete, but with the support of many people, we initiated a concept of planting trees along the boulevard. Flower boxes were erected around the trees. Many of us fought for and eventually won having the parking meters removed from the rear of the stores.*

*People of Shaker Heights have always been innovative. If there is something to be done, the Heights people will do it. They have not always done everything right, but on the whole they have achieved a great deal. They always seek out a higher standard of living, wanting better homes, schools, businesses, and community. We have been fortunate to live here, participate in, and see the community grow.*

## **Shaker Heights and the Supreme Court**

On July 3, 1970, Harry J. Lehman, a candidate for the office of State Representative to the Ohio General Assembly, attempted to buy advertising space on the Shaker Heights Rapid Transit System to promote his candidacy. His advertisement included his picture and the slogan:

"Harry J. Lehman Is Old Fashioned!  
About Honesty, Integrity And Good  
Government State Representative-  
District 56."

When Lehman was denied space because the city did not allow any political advertising on its vehicles, he sought relief through the courts. The state courts and the Supreme Court of Ohio ruled for the city. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case to consider the First and Fourteenth Amendment questions.

On June 25, 1974, in a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that there was no violation of the right of free speech or of equal protection. It is interesting to note that in this case, some conservative Supreme Court justices voted as liberals, and some liberals voted as conservatives.

Lehman lost his court battle, but won the election by almost 1,000 votes.

**Manny Rocker**, Shaker Heights Municipal Court Judge for 14 years, grew up in Cleveland. He moved to Shaker Heights with his family in 1942, when he was in his mid-thirties, living first on Daleford Road and then on Braemar Road.

*As a young person, I never thought I would be able to live in Shaker Heights because of the covenants attached to virtually all of the residential property. The Van Sweringens had set things up so that Shaker Heights would be a socially homogeneous community, a community of Protestant whites, really. It was the closest thing to*



Courtesy of Cleveland Public Library

February 2, 1970





Police station after the 1970 bombing

down south. In these years anyone seeking to purchase a house had to get the written permission of all five adjacent neighbors before taking possession of the deed.

My family and I had never experienced prejudice or discrimination before. But when I tried to buy a house on Lomond Boulevard in the Sussex area, the realtor told me that the lot had a restriction against Jews. He told me, "That's okay. We'll do it this way; I'll buy the property, and then you can buy it from me. That way we can by-pass the restrictions." I said, "Sir, they can keep it for 100 years!" I considered the whole business a slap in the face.

So we moved to Braemar Road, just a short walk from where I later worked as a police prosecutor and judge at the Shaker Heights Police Station. I had no trouble buying the house on Braemar Road. It was a fine neighborhood. We put our three children through Shaker public schools, and all three benefitted greatly from the quality of education.

On February 1, 1970, the Shaker Heights Police Station was demolished along with Judge Rocker's office from right under his feet when a disturbed man blew up the structure with a homemade bomb. The old police station was on Lee Road across the street from the current police station.

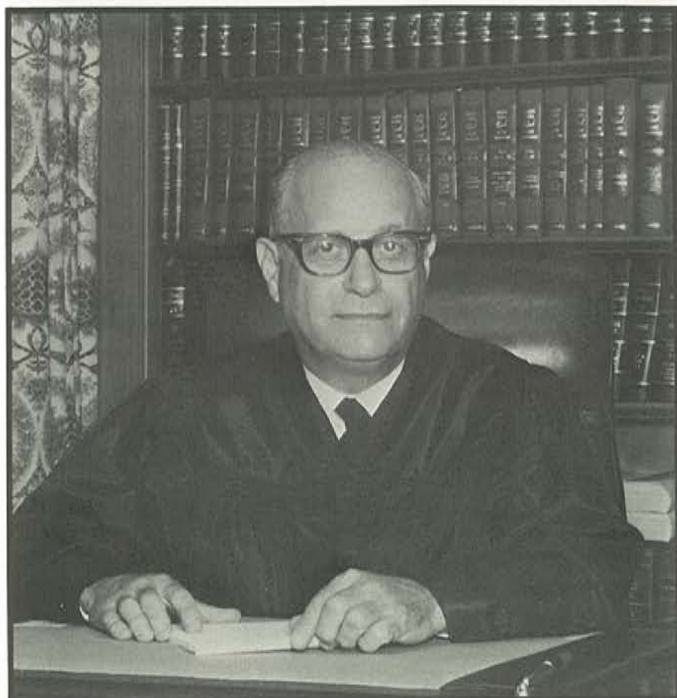
*I was sitting in my upstairs office when the place blew. It tossed me right out the window and into the parking lot. A pile of bricks completely buried me. A policeman, turning his patrol car into the lot at that very moment, saw me flying from the second story as the brick building collapsed in an instant. The policeman's sharp observations and quick action saved my life. I was pulled from the brick pile with wounds from the fall but no grave injuries.*

The seventies were not times of change for the better. I think there are things the community could have done differently, better. I'd like to have higher-density apartment houses along Warrensville Center Road, more commercial and office development, and a better quality of development along Chagrin Boulevard. Beachwood has built a more substantial tax base by encouraging office development of its southern portions.

My biggest disappointment about development in Shaker Heights has been the decline of the commercial

area around Chagrin Boulevard, especially near Lee Road. The whole Chagrin strip changed in the late 1960s and 70s.

My comments about negative changes have nothing to do with race. For years Shaker Heights has been open to blacks moving in and was a model community in terms of integration, both residentially and in the schools. Changes were the inevitable result of an aging housing stock and the movement of greater Cleveland's affluent population farther and farther east. Shaker has always been filled with people who, while not necessarily wealthy, were solid, supported the arts, cared about the schools, and were cultured people. It still is, to some extent. The problems today are not black-white issues, but Shaker Heights has become a sort of corridor to other communities in the suburbs.



Manny Rocker

**Paul Donaldson** joined the Shaker Heights Police Department while he was in college and law school. After law school he became an assistant law director and chief prosecutor for the city, and assistant legal counselor for the school board, library board, and recreation board. In 1981 he was elected judge to replace Manny Rocker, who retired.

*I think one of the best deals I ever put together for the city, with the help of a lot of other people, was the substation at Shaker Boulevard and Lee Road, for which a building permit was issued September 25, 1979. Instead of ending up with a lawsuit over an electric substation right on one of the wealthiest streets in the state and abutting another very wealthy street, South Park Boulevard, we managed to get the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company to put in a showpiece with everything underground and beautifully landscaped. We used three lots as a buffer and got all of the neighbors together who were*



*ready to spend their fortunes to fight this thing. We now have at the corner of Shaker and Lee what is probably the most beautiful substation in the world.*

*I'll never forget that February day in 1970 at 5:12 p.m., when a young man decided to blow up the police station. He was a mental case. His doctor, Irving Rosen, had placed him in Fairhill Psychiatric Hospital when he was 15 years old, six years before the bombing. Probate Court issued a warrant to the Shaker police to pick him up and take him to the psychiatric hospital. That is the only contact he had had with the Shaker police in his entire life. But he remembered that, and he was mad at his doctor and mad at the Shaker police. When he was 21, he went out and bought shaved TNT and dynamite caps and fuses. He made bombs and hand grenades. He eventually walked into the police station with his package and set it down on the counter. We know part of what happened was that a very pretty secretary came over to ask if she could help him. Just at that moment, a phone rang and she said, "Excuse me sir," to answer the call. He picked up the package and started to leave the building when it blew up in an area between two solid walls.*

*There are stories of many miracles associated with this bombing. The bomber was the only one killed. It blew him into little pieces, and yet there were 18 or 19 people in the building who survived. The secretary was saved because she answered the telephone call. The call was from Dr. Rosen's wife. Dr. Rosen had just been shot by this young man over on Fernway Road. The secretary was in a glass booth when the bomb went off. She ended up with hundreds of stitches in her back but not a mark on her face. The dispatcher, former Deputy Chief Joseph Deoma, had his jugular vein cut and his throat cut from ear to ear, but he is still alive today.*

**Irving Rosen** is the doctor who once treated the young man who blew up the Shaker Heights Police Station.

*When I was shot, I was on Fernway Road and had just gotten out of my car. I had returned from my job and was then going to my private office. The assassin was apparently waiting for me around the corner. He drove up, stopped, and I thought he wanted directions. When he stuck the gun out the window, I started to run and zig-zagged my way up to my front door while he sprayed bullets. My car had a bullet hole as did walls and books in my house. I dove into my door and a bullet passed inches over me and went through an inner door and wall.*

*My wife Ruth was upstairs. I yelled I had been shot and lay in the kitchen. She could not get the police ambulance. When she called back, a fireman answered, "Lady, the police station just disappeared." Within 15 minutes sirens were screaming from all directions, scaring everyone.*

*I had not been in touch with the boy's family or the patient for four or five years and not since.*

**Stephen J. Alfred** is mayor of Shaker Heights.

*Shaker Heights is so special. I grew up here and came back after college. When I look down through the window of my City Hall office, I see the Lee and Van Aken Rapid stop where as a boy I met my father as he returned home from work at the May Company downtown. As an adult, I have been involved in some of the most dramatic and exciting issues the community has faced. The city has been good to me.*

*I have lived in Shaker Heights more than 50 years. My family moved here to Chalfant Road from New York City in 1935 when I was nine months old. Later we lived on Norwood, Kemper, and Dorchester Roads. My mother still has her home on Dorchester. When I returned to Cleveland after law school, I lived briefly near Shaker Square, then at Rolliston and Scottsdale Roads, followed by Lyman Circle, Warrensville Center Road, and South Woodland Road in the Mercer area.*

*When I was a boy, we shopped in the Chagrin-Lee-Avalon area at the Village Market for groceries and at the Village Drugstore in the Kingsbury Building. Fruit and vegetable carts and trucks selling blocks of ice came down the streets in the 1930s. I had my haircuts at Umina Brothers' Barber Shop. I had plenty of fields to play in; there were many vacant lots. My bicycle was stolen at Parkland Drive and Norwood Road by a couple of older kids.*

*After law school, I returned to Cleveland, and in 1962, my wife and I bought our first house on Scottsdale Boulevard. Following a blockbusting episode in Cleveland just south of Scottsdale, I became involved with forming the Lomond Association. A number of us wanted integration to be peaceful. Later I served on City Council and was elected mayor in 1983.*

*Shaker Heights has long been thought of as a leader among suburbs. This city has accomplished many things. However, Shaker's competition is keener now. There are other options for people looking for a place to live, many more top-notch communities than when I was younger. We must maintain our ability to compete.*

*Shaker's natural assets place us in a position to be competitive. We have a planned community. We have our parks, our open spaces, our trees, our lakes, our schools, our well-maintained homes. For decades, Shaker Heights has attracted achievement-oriented people. It does not make any difference what their race is, they come here for the same reasons, and they want those features maintained.*

*If we continue to bring in people who care about where they live, who care about well-maintained homes and what their schools are like and what their public facilities and services are like, we will continue to be a first-rate suburban community.*



**Peter Horoschak** moved to Shaker Heights in 1982, when he was hired as superintendent of schools.

*I was born in Pennsylvania, but grew up in Denver. My father wanted more from life than work in a coal mine. My generation was the first in my family to go to college.*

*Shaker Heights was a wonderful professional opportunity for me. Because my family is racially mixed, we have always been careful of the communities we have chosen. Shaker Heights is unique. There is an intense interest by residents to maintain the community as a high quality place to live. People are willing to extend themselves. They are successful professionally, and they are willing to share their talents. People here are always ready to comment on the schools, but they are also ready to help. Our children can only thrive in such an atmosphere, as they sense the importance we place on education.*

*Shaker Heights is an exceptional place to live. Here, to be a good citizen you must participate. Parental involvement in the schools is always viewed as positive. Even seemingly antagonistic comments are good in that they help to keep the district honest. Every child has an advocate in our system.*

## **Willie Belle**

*I was hired by the Shaker Heights school system on Monday, June 28, 1970. I was a custodian at Onaway School for 15 years; for 10 years I was head custodian. I've seen a lot of kids come and go. I made it a habit to know all the children in the school by name. They knew mine too, of course. I've had to resist becoming a parent to the children. I didn't want to give them an answer if it was different from something their family taught them at home.*

*I retired from Shaker schools in 1985. I was 65, and I could see that it was time. But I didn't stop working. I have two jobs now, and I'm up at 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. six days a week. I work as a crossing guard at Courtland and Shaker Boulevards three times a day, in the morning, at lunchtime, and after school. Two nights a week and Saturday mornings I work at the Bertram Woods Library. I guess I'll work as long as I can.*

*I've been in service jobs all of my life. I grew up in Alabama in a steel mill town, but I was afraid of working in a factory. At the age of 12 I went to live with my mother's friend while I went to high school. Then I went to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad waiting tables. For the next 30 years, I worked for the railroads in the dining cars or sometimes as a sleeping car porter. I have had a lot of different jobs, but always in service.*

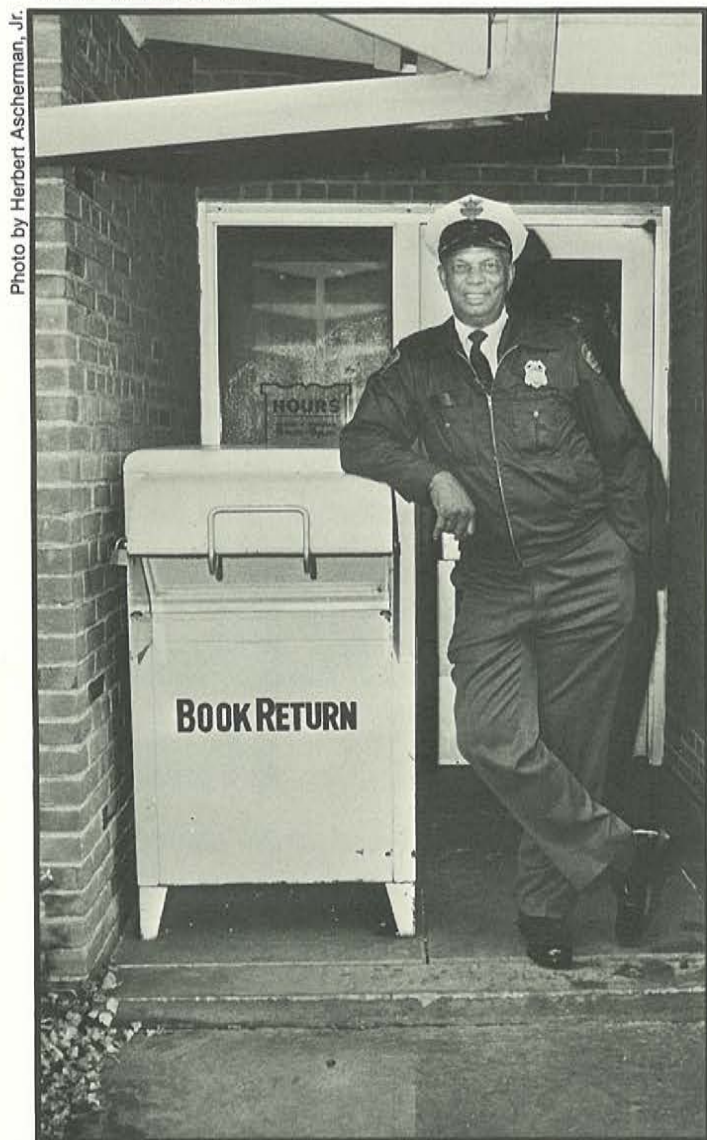
*Being in service means getting to know people. I like that. I've learned a lot about people, not all good either. Lots of times in service jobs people don't even notice that you are around. I've heard a lot of talk in Shaker Heights. I've seen a lot of time go by, a lot of changes. I don't live in Shaker Heights, but I'd like to.*

**Robert White** is an internationally known neurosurgeon.

*Twenty-five years ago we bought our Lee Road home, a large brick hotel, which has served our "cheaper by the dozen" family well. I was about 34 at the time. Shaker Heights had all the conveniences necessary to operate our family. We were close to all the schools we used: Boulevard, Woodbury, and Shaker High School. I believe we hold the world's record for school open houses, and some of the teachers have had all 10 of our children.*

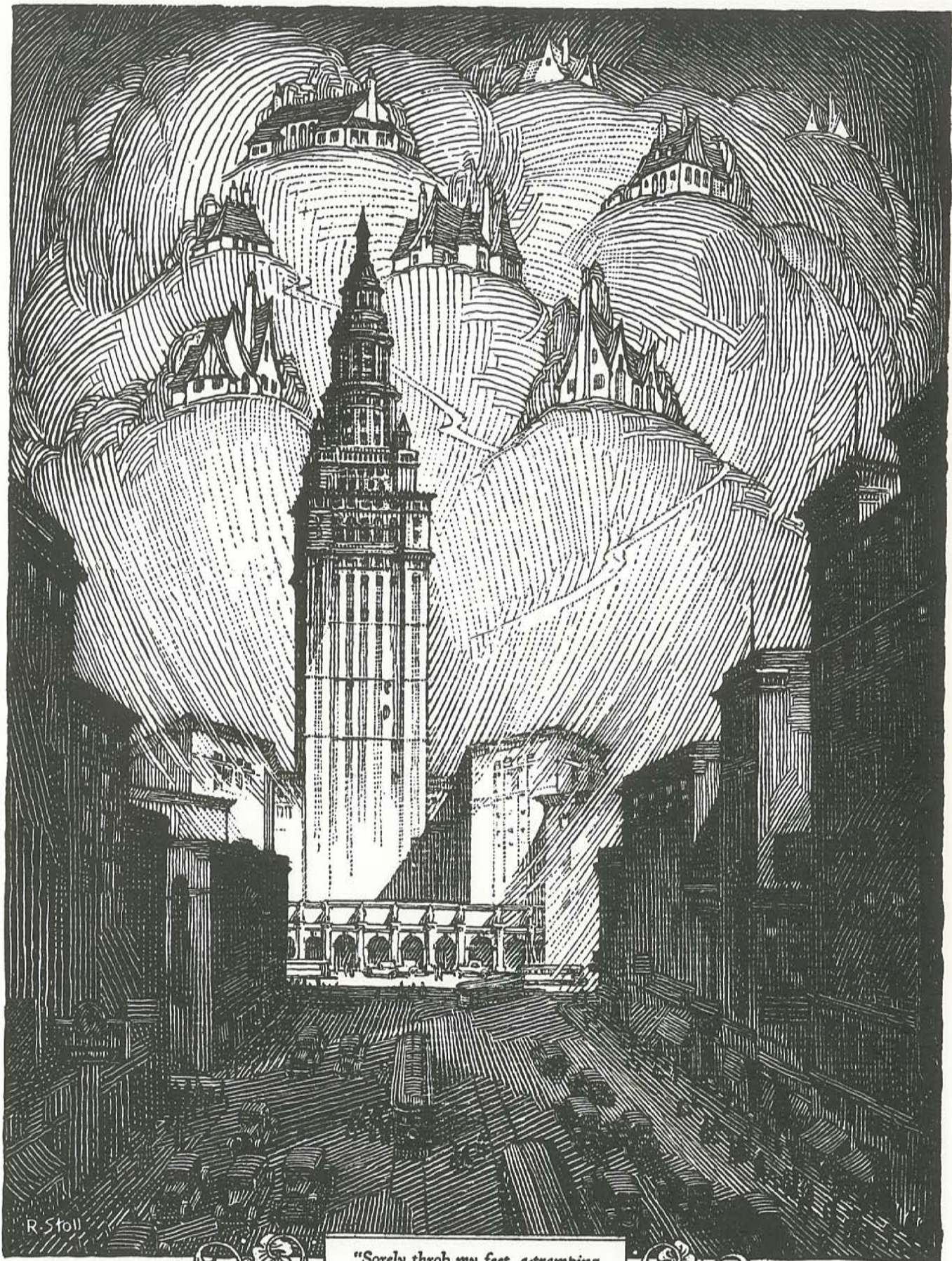
*We have remained in Shaker Heights, and we have the same house because nothing has changed to give us the desire to move. An avid walker, I have a route to Shaker Square and Sandors'. The Square is a very important part of my life: Sandors', Arabica, the Bookstore, and the RTA Coffee Shop where I begin and end each day.*

*We've had a good family life here. Shaker Heights represents a good place to come home to, a safe place for those I love when I am away. I can come home, rest, and feel safe while I'm in close proximity to resources for my writing and research. I have rejected professional opportunities in order to stay here. For me Shaker Heights has been ideal. We never considered moving from Cleveland given the complications of moving 10 children and not being able to find such an ideal suburb elsewhere.*



Willie Belle at Bertram Woods Public Library





*"Sorely throb my feet, a-tramping  
city pavements (Ah, the springy  
sod upon an upland moor!)"*

"At the end of a long, hard day downtown, I slip into something more comfortable — Shaker Heights," said Richard Pogue in 1987. Pogue is Managing Partner at Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue, the second largest law firm in the United States.







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# Notes

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## Chapter 1

- 1 Eleanor McIlhenny, "Fond Memories of Fairmount," *Shaker Magazine* (January, 1987), 46-47.
- 2 Mary Lou Conlin, *The North Union Story A Shaker Society 1822-1889* (Cleveland, 1961), 2.
- 3 Arnie Rosenberg, *The Sun* (October 3, 1974).
- 4 Conlin, 4.
- 5 Shaker Heights Historical Society, *The Shakers 1821-1889* (Cleveland).
- 6 Ian S. Haberman, *The Van Sweringens of Cleveland The Biography of an Empire* (Cleveland, 1979), 9.  
While other sources indicate that the Shaker Colony land was purchased directly by the Buffalo syndicate, Haberman states that by 1892, a group of Clevelanders (the Shaker Heights Land Company) bought the property.
- 7 *Cleveland Leader and Herald* (July 6, 1886).
- 8 Shaker Heights Historical Society, *The Shakers 1821-1889* (Cleveland).

## Chapter 2

- 1 *Sun Press* (October 26, 1961).
- 2 The Van Sweringen Company, *The Heritage of the Shakers* (Cleveland, 1923), 9.
- 3 The Van Sweringen Company, *Shaker Village Standards, Second Edition* (Cleveland, 1928), 5.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 6 Publication Committee Shaker Heights Board of Education, *Shaker Heights Then and Now* (Cleveland, 1938), 34.
- 7 Eleanor McIlhenny, "Fond Memories of Fairmount," *Shaker Magazine* (January, 1987), 47.
- 8 Harry Volk, *Sun Press* (June 10, 1965).
- 9 Ethel Andrews, *Roots and Branches 1896-1971* (Cleveland, 1958), 31.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 33.
- 11 Wallace J. Baker, 1869-1969 *A Centennial History of the Parish* (Cleveland, 1969), 11-12.

## Chapter 3

- 1 *Shaker Magazine* (November, 1986), 15.
- 2 *Shaker Magazine* (January, 1987), 54.

## Chapter 4

- 1 Dorothy McNulty, "Looking Back on 'Our Town'," *Shaker Magazine* (March, 1986), 9.

## Chapter 5

- 1 Although this was a controversial transaction, the city had been losing money running the rapid. As a consequence of the transfer of ownership, many improvements were made to the rapid and roadbed. The RTA agreed to a 10-year reporting period to the city of Shaker Heights and not to increase the fares during that time.
- 2 Dorothy McNulty, "Looking Back on 'Our Town'," *Shaker Magazine* (March, 1986), 8-9.



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# Index

- Albert, Larry ..... 87  
 Alburn, Doris Whitslar ..... 30,50  
 Alfred, Stephen J. .... 93  
 Anderson, John ..... 54  
 Anderson, Lucille ..... 63,85  
 Ascherman, Herbert Jr. .... 68  
 Ascherman, Leo ..... 55  
 Baker, Newton D. .... 50  
 Baron, Deborah ..... 64  
 Beavan, Anne ..... 58  
 Belle, Willie ..... 94  
 Boatright, Claudia ..... 33-34  
 Boehringer, Marie ..... 32  
 Brown, Connie ..... 57  
 Canoe Club ..... 59  
 Carlucci, Victor ..... 53  
 Christiansen, Harry ..... 35-36  
 churches ..... 44-45  
 David, Frederick ..... 65  
 "Deer Park" ..... 56  
 DeFranco, Sylvia ..... 53  
 Delia, Mildred ..... 87  
 DeMarco, Donald ..... 82-83  
 Dempcy, Katherine Burger . 13,16-17  
 Dickey, Dorothy ..... 29  
 Dickey, Lincoln ..... 29  
 Diener, Blanche Solomon ..... 31  
 Donaldson, Paul ..... 53,66,92  
 Emrich, Julia ..... 30  
 Fire Department ..... 32  
 Forward, Budd ..... 62-63  
 French, Wayne ..... 51  
 Gockel, Laura Jean Chesney . . 52,63  
 Gottfried, Sally Schaffer ..... 57  
 Greenwald, Gloria ..... 91  
 Greenwald, Herbert ..... 91  
 Gries, Robert ..... 62  
 Gristmill ..... 49,61,63  
 Grossman, Carol Haas ..... 50-51  
 Gruber, Max ..... 67  
 Gruber, Roman ..... 66  
 Gruber's Restaurant ..... 66-67  
 Hanks, Anna ..... 30  
 Harkins, James ..... 31  
 Harrell, Fritz ..... 29  
 Harrell, Mary ..... 28  
 Heinen, Jack ..... 53-54  
 Heinen's ..... 52,53-54  
 Herrick, Clay ..... 52,63,72  
 "High Jinks on Lower Lake" ..... 59  
 Hollander, Mildred Fried ..... 28  
 Horoschak, Peter ..... 94  
 Isaacs, Bernard ..... 81-82  
 Jarvie, William ..... 65  
 Joseph, Frank ..... 31,88  
 Joseph, Martha ..... 31,88  
 Kelley, Walter C. .... 88  
 King, Drue ..... 84-85  
 Kirsch, Marion ..... 51  
 Klyver, Richard ..... 63  
 Kusik, John E. .... 65  
 Main, Isabel ..... 55-56,72  
 Main, J.W. .... 40,42,55-56,65,72  
 Malek, Theresa ..... 56  
 maps  
     1920 ..... 21  
     1970 ..... 77  
     Shaker Center Family ..... 15  
     Shaker Colony ..... 12  
 Martin, Jean Sycle ..... 85  
 Mason, Beverly ..... 83  
 mayors ..... 38  
 McIlhenny, Eleanor ..... 55  
 McNulty, Dorothy ..... 37-38  
 Milner's Salon ..... 53  
 Moreland Courts ..... 87  
 Musser, Judith Emerson ..... 32  
 Myers, Ruth Browneller ..... 31  
 Namkoong, David ..... 89  
 Namkoong, Fran ..... 89  
 Newman, Paul ..... 52  
 Nola, Al ..... 89  
 Pegg, Dorothy ..... 82  
 Pegg, John ..... 82  
 Peterjohn, Richard ..... 91  
 Pogue, Richard ..... 95  
 Police Department ..... 32,91-93  
 population ..... 26



---

# Index

---

- Pospisil, Vivian ..... 59  
 rapid transit system ..... 35-36  
 Rawson, Barbara Haas ..... 51, 91  
 Rawson, Robert ..... 89  
 Recreation Department ..... 74  
 "Rediscovering the Garden  
     City ..... 33-34  
 Richie, Winston ..... 83-84  
 Rife, Bernie ..... 69  
 Rife, Rudy ..... 49, 69  
 Robinson, Virginia ..... 76  
 Rocker, Manny ..... 91-92  
 Rosen, Irving ..... 93  
 rose garden ..... 42  
 Russell, Ralph ..... 14  
 Samsot, Michael N. .... 35-36  
 schools  
     private ..... 43  
     public ..... 39-41  
 Scriven, Mary Lee Sperry ..... 75  
 Seidel, Leola ..... 31  
 Seyler, Helen ..... 28  
 Shaker Colony ..... 14-16  
 "Shaker Has It Made in  
     the Shade" ..... 70  
 Shaker Heights Historical  
     Society ..... 72-73  
 Shaker Heights Housing Office .... 87  
 Shaker Heights Public Library . 75-76  
 Shaker Lakes Regional  
     Nature Center ..... 90  
 Shaker Square ..... 86-97  
 Stone, Marcia ..... 57  
 street names ..... 71  
 Supreme Court ..... 91  
 Szwaja, Joe ..... 86  
 Thornton, Charles ..... 74  
 trees ..... 70  
 Tucker, Bert ..... 58  
 Tucker, Warren ..... 58  
 Tuthill, Linda ..... 70  
 Twichell, Marjorie Beck ..... 31  
 Van Aken, William ..... 37-38  
 Van Aken, William Jr. .... 72  
 Van Sweringen, J. Paxton ..... 27  
 Van Sweringen, Mantis James . 23-26  
 Van Sweringen, Oris Paxton ... 23-26  
 Warren, Moses ..... 13  
 White, Robert ..... 94  
 Williams, Ruth ..... 37, 58



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