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Cleveland Heights: Land of Surf and Sun?

by Korbi Roberts

Yes Virginia, there is another Cleveland Heights. Average January temperature: 74 degrees. Average annual snowfall: 0.00 inches. Nearest saltwater beach: 35 miles. What's more, it's actually called Cleveland Heights (albeit not a city but a neighborhood). Here is its story.

Cleveland Heights: Land of Surf and Sun?

by Korbi Roberts

One day, while shopping on eBay, I spied a postcard for a “Cleveland Heights Golf Club.” I thought I knew Cleveland Heights pretty well, but I had never heard of this place. Further sleuthing pointed me to a map of Lakeland, Florida, where I not only found a resort called The Cleveland Heights Golf Club, but also a town filled with streets named Denton, Derbyshire and Demington, to name only the Ds. Parallel universe? Yeah, kinda.

Shortly thereafter, I uncovered the story of a successful bookkeeper and banker turned real estate developer by the name of Howard Austin Stahl who carved an important niche in Cleveland Heights Ohio’s history. An Ohio native and long-time Cleveland area resident, Stahl was a contemporary of local real estate folks such as MJ and OP Van Sweringen, Barton and Grant

Deming, and Patrick Calhoun. All of these people—Stahl included—helped transform areas on the Cleveland periphery into suburbs for Cleveland’s expanding population. Emulating England’s Garden City movement, they incorporated scenic public spaces, developed curvilinear street patterns, and advocated street car lines to ensure comfortable ingress and egress.

In 1916, the “lower” Cedar-Coventry allotment (south of Cedar Rd.) was purchased from the Harbaugh family and subdivided into 135 sub-lots. Howard Stahl immediately set out to make this a “high



Above top: A 1916 advertisement for the “lower” Cedar-Coventry allotment.

Above: A home on Chatfield Drive, part of Stahl’s Cedar-Coventry allotment.

class subdivision” for the elite. Barton R. Deming’s Euclid Golf allotment was already in place further south, so Stahl connected Deming’s streets with his own subdivision, consisting of North Saint James Parkway, Demington Drive, Middlefield Road, Chatfield Drive, and parts of Coventry Road. Ads similar to that shown above trumpeted mahogany floors and paneling, gas and coal boilers, butlers’ pantries, separate breakfast rooms, servants’ quarters, billiard room in the basement, all-tile bathrooms, ladies’ dressing room, third-floor

ballrooms, and easy access to the newly built Cedar trolley line.

Stahl’s next project, in 1917, was a development directly east of Cedar-Coventry on Kensington Road—part of the Meadowbrook Allotment of the Shaker Allotment Company (see ad and photo, page 5). Originally slated to be named Brockway (after area farmer Alonzo Brockway). Meadowbrook generally follows

continued on page 5.

Cover image (current) and at left (c. 1926): The Cleveland Heights Country Club in Lakeland, FL.



The Cleveland Heights Historical Society



PO Box 18337
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
heightshistory@gmail.com

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The Cleveland Heights Historical Society, founded in 1983, is a state-chartered, 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization.

Our Mission

The Cleveland Heights Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the diverse character and traditions of Cleveland Heights.

As a community-based historic organization, the Society encourages and facilitates greater knowledge, understanding and awareness of the heritage of Cleveland Heights.

CHHS Appoints New President

It is with great pleasure that the Cleveland Heights Historical Society board of trustees announces the appointment of Ken Goldberg as the organization's new president. A trustee since 1996, Ken is on the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission and spent many years on the Cleveland Heights Improvement Awards Committee. He also is a former president of the Western Reserve Architectural Historians and principal editor of AIA/Cleveland's *Guide to Cleveland Architecture, 2nd edition*. Many Heights residents are familiar with his articles, lectures, architectural walking tours, and preservation consulting. Ken holds an M.A. in Art History from Binghamton University and an M.L.S. from Syracuse University.

Working with Michael Rotman, CHHS's new executive director, Ken hopes to strengthen the organization's core programs: producing *View from the Overlook*, our website: www.chhistory.org, and related new blog, our new Facebook page, and local history presentations, as well as fostering community outreach and cooperation with other historical organizations. Congratulations, Ken.

From the Executive Director

Happy holidays to all of our members, and thank you for your continued support. As the weather has grown colder outside, we've hunkered down in front of our computers to create some exciting new ways for you to engage with the Cleveland Heights Historical Society online. With our enhanced online presence, we hope to connect with a broader segment of our community and find new avenues of support for the future.

First, we are now on Facebook! You can visit our page at facebook.com/ClevelandHeightsHistorical, where you'll find news, announcements, and daily morsels of Cleveland Heights history. Be sure to "like" our Facebook page to get all the latest updates.

Also new is our blog at chhistory.org/blog which features some of our favorite stories about the history of Cleveland Heights. On the blog, users can take a trip through "Lost Cleveland Heights," take a tour of the "Home of the Week," or learn something new about an old, familiar place in "Drive-By History." New stories are added all the time, so check the blog often.

As the weather begins to warm up, we'll be starting our Spring lecture series at the Lee Road branch of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library. There may be a few other surprises in store later this year, too, so be sure to look for news and announcements.

Have a safe and happy holiday season,

Michael Rotman

Cleveland Heights: Land of Surf and Sun? *continued*

the path of Dugway Brook, which was relegated to pipes under ground. To this day, the area (populated mostly with double homes) is a model of easy access: to the Cedar streetcar line and the Cedar-Lee shopping area, as well as the library, schools and churches.

"Kensington" followed the Garden City movement vogue of using English names for streets. Stahl went on to name one of his Parma developments "Kensington Gardens."

Stahl later built the Coventry Park Allotment in 1919 on the site of the former Dutton and Stillman farms. Comprising Renrock Road, Stillman Road, and parts of Coventry, East Derbyshire and Cedar Roads, this parcel backs up to the house lots on Lamberton



Road (part of Grant Deming's 1909 Forest Hill allotment). Like Kensington, the allotment contains mostly double houses for working families. Typical for the Heights, there also were a variety of restrictions such as minimum cost to build, as well as no barns, stables, outbuildings (especially outhouses) nuisance signs, and "spirituous liquor establishments." In the diagram (c. 1922), shown on page 7, we see how all three of these Stahl projects fit together around the intersection of Coventry and Cedar Roads.

By 1923, Stahl had also spearheaded single- and two-family developments in Madison, Parma and Cleveland OH, as well as Cleveland Heights. And he created several golfing communities in northeast Ohio. But during that year, Stahl's attention "went south," although his heart obviously remained in Cleveland Heights.

continued on page 7.



At top: 3122 and 3126 Kensington Rd. advertised for sale in the Cleveland Plain Dealer of February 17, 1924.

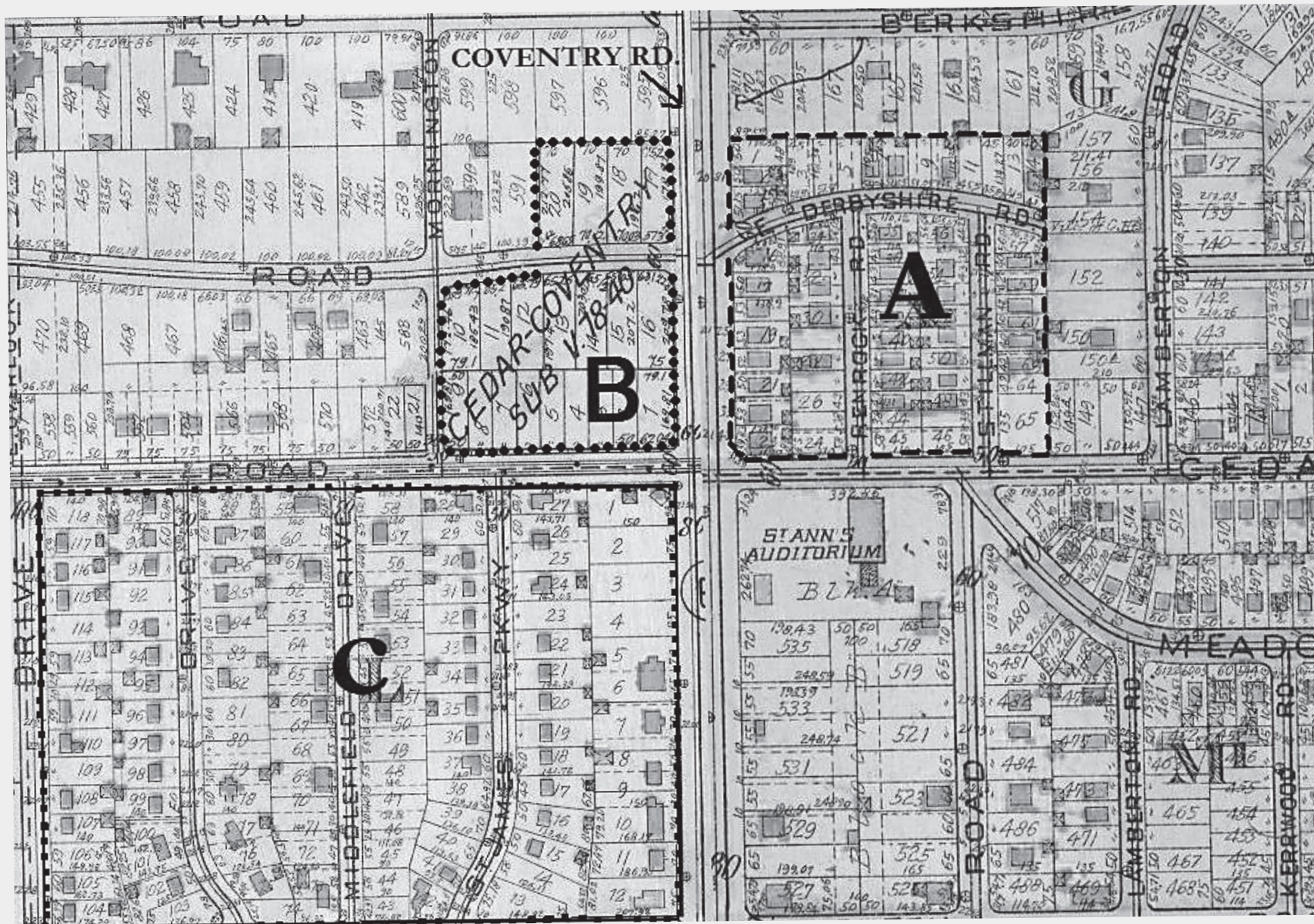
Above: 3122 and 3126 Kensington Rd. today.

Cleveland Heights: Land of Surf and Sun? *continued*

During a visit to Lakeland, Florida, in 1923, (where the Cleveland Indians were having spring training), Stahl was asked by the local Chamber of Commerce to consider building a new development there. Along with three partners, he subsequently paid \$935,000 for 560 acres south of Lake Hollingsworth. He dubbed the area Cleveland Heights and laid out a tract which he filled with Cleveland Heights street names: Coventry, Denton, Derbyshire, Berkeley, Chatfield, Demington, Edgewood, Oxford, Redwood and Woodward. And the main thoroughfare? Cleveland Heights Boulevard, of course. There also are a host of near matches—Fairmont (Fairmount), Morningside (Morningson) and Kenwith (Kenilworth)—as well as street names associated with areas near Cleveland Heights: Mirimar, Carlton, Warrington, and Eddy. Stahl also constructed a Spanish-style golf course and club house with landscaping by AD Taylor, the architect of Forest Hill Park. The name of the course? The Cleveland Heights Country Club (see photos, cover and page 2). Both the course and structure remain in operation. The course is owned by the City of Lakeland's Department of Parks and Recreation, and the club house has been privately owned since 1924 by the Lakeland Yacht and Country Club.

continued next page.

Left: Stahl's three major Cleveland Heights projects. A) The Coventry Park Land Company allotment, B) PJ O'Donnell's "upper" Cedar-Coventry allotment (taken off the southeast corner of the Euclid Heights allotment) of which Stahl was sales agent, manager, and treasurer, C) Howard Stahl's "lower" Cedar-Coventry allotment (which connects up to the streets of the Euclid Golf allotment). On this map, East Derbyshire has not yet been connected through to Lamberton Road.



Cleveland Heights: Land of Surf and Sun? *continued*

Like many business elite, Stahl suffered large financial losses during the Depression, which may have accelerated his end. He died of heart failure at 55, in 1930. During his life, he lived in Cleveland, Cleveland Heights and Lakeland, Florida. Stahl lived out his last days with his wife in a home in Shaker Heights on the southwest corner of South Woodland and Attleboro Road (photo at right). The home's elegant layout features an octagonal entryway and specially designed rooms to take in as much of the surrounding views as possible. Howard purposely chose this site so he could observe both the Shaker Heights Country Club fairway and the Van Sweringen brothers' Green Lake (a.k.a., the Duck Pond).

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Stahl was not laid to rest in Lake View Cemetery, but with his family in a cemetery in Mogadore, Ohio. Mogadore (now a suburb of Akron) was originally called Bradley, Ohio, and was renamed Mogadore in the early 1800s during the building of a prominent house in town (an actual relative of Howard Stahl's). One of the workers (a former sailor), climbed to the almost finished rooftop with whiskey poised and christened it "Mogadore." Legend has it that the name came from a popular adventure book of the time about an American sea captain captured off the African coast and sold into slavery by Arabian nomads. In the book, "Mogadore," is cited as a town in Africa meaning "beautiful." During my research on Howard Stahl, I looked up "Kensington Gardens" and the old classic story "Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens" popped up. What was odd is that both a fantasy map of "Kensington Gardens" (named after the London England Kensington Gardens) and a drawing of fairies celebrating the building of a house with whiskey (their own version of Mogadore?) were contained within. Weird coincidence or another example of parallel universes? You decide.



Right: Howard Stahl's home, at 17200 South Woodland Road in Shaker Heights.

Howard Stahl in Depth

Howard Austin Stahl was born in Tallmadge, Ohio May 23, 1875, to Henry H. Stahl (b. 1847) and Laura Hale (b.1848).

Laura's parents were Austin M. Hale (1814-1889) and Samantha Bellows (daughter of Ephraim Bellows of Groton, Connecticut). Howard Austin Stahl is descended from the early-American Hale family of Welch descent which first came to America in 1637 (same ancestors as Jonathan Hale of Hale Farm). Howard Stahl's maternal great great grandfather, Samuel Hale, had been a member of the Connecticut Land Company and owned 5,000 acres of the Western Reserve (northeast Ohio). He settled in Springfield Township, Summit County, Ohio. Howard Stahl attended the public schools of Cleveland and then the Spencerian Business College. He married Agnes Emma Whitmore of Akron, Ohio, in September of 1907. Agnes was the daughter of George T. Whitmore and May Peckham, a prominent



clay industry family of Akron, Ohio. The couple had no children.

Howard Stahl was described by others as having foresight and business acumen. He started out in his father's mercantile business and went on to fulfill several roles in the banking and building & loan industries. He became interested in real estate in the early 1900s. This period coincided with a broad exodus of Cleveland residents to the open areas east and west of the city. Stahl first formed his own real estate companies and later entered partnerships with others on projects such as Woodland Heights, Penobscot, Coventry Park, Cedar-Coventry, Kensington Subdivision, Wooster Park, Kensington Gardens, Ridgewood, Madison, Vermilion, and Lakeland,

Florida. Stahl was affiliated with many business, civic and recreational organizations, such as the Cleveland Real Estate Board, the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, the Cleveland Athletic Club, the Shaker Heights Country Club, the Portage Country Club of Akron, the Cleveland Grays Military, the Woodward Lodge, and the Free and Accepted Masons. He loved golfing and "motoring."

Errata

After publication of our most-recent newsletter on the life of Viktor Schreckengost, several updates/corrections were requested:

- Photos on pages 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were used with permission of the Cowan Pottery Museum (www.cowanpottery.org), located at the Rocky River Public Library, in Rocky River, Ohio.
- Viktor and Nadine Schreckengost lived in a variety of places in the University Circle area and Cleveland Heights, before moving into their home on Stillman Road in 1952. Mr. Schreckengost's note cards were produced by American Artists Group.



Above: A map of the Cleveland Heights development in Lakeland, Florida.