

## XIII

## Euclid Avenue

**E**UCLID AVENUE is Cleveland's main stem and its most famous street. It begins at the southeast corner of Public Square, where the Soldiers and Sailors Monument stands in brooding wonder, and immediately heads southeasterly in a brisk, no-nonsense manner, as if determined to prove that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points.

They didn't name this street Euclid for nothing. It may not have done anything for the straight line theory, but it has had more than its fair share of triangles—including one or two with the most fantastic hypotenuses you'd ever hope to see.

Euclid goes straight until it reaches East 105th Street, a busy uptown intersection called Doan's Corner, where it seems to lose both its resolve and its sense of direction. Some people say it is because when Bob Hope was one of the regular hangers-on at Doan's Corner, he and his cronies used to heckle Euclid Avenue regularly for being so stuffy and so straight until finally the poor old street lost its scientific orientation and was badgered into taking a new tack. From that point on, anyway, Euclid follows a less precise route, but keeps bearing eastward fitfully until it reaches the suburban city of Euclid.

Actually it goes beyond that point. Some people like to say it goes all the way to Buffalo, New York, and because of that contention it was known as the longest street in America. In the earliest pioneer days the route Euclid Avenue follows was called the Buffalo Road.

It will probably surprise a lot of old settlers to hear that the suburb was called Euclid before the famous street got that name. Some of the surveyors who worked in the Moses Cleaveland founding party staged a small mutiny and demanded a more substantial share of the Connecticut Land Company's real estate venture, threatening to walk off the job unless their demands were met. Cleaveland yielded, turning over to them an allotment of land for settlement which they promptly named Euclid, thereby reflecting the honest admiration of the mutinous mathematicians for the great Greek geometrician.

Today's Euclid Avenue is a wide, busy thoroughfare that features

## EUCLID AVENUE

141

the usual traffic uproar, the tall buildings, and the bustling commerce that characterize the main avenues of downtown areas in most American cities. There is hardly anything visible to set Euclid aside as something different or something special in the way of American streets—and yet it is different. And it was special.

If you search, there still are marks to indicate just why it was a street with international fame. They are the few old mansions still standing; some out in the open, still proud and grand; some hidden behind used car lots or the raucous commercial fronts that have been built in front of them, where the greensward once swept down to the sidewalk and the tall trees used to stand.

The famous American traveler, diplomat, and writer of the late nineteenth century, Bayard Taylor, called Euclid Avenue "the most beautiful street in the world," and he was joined in this opinion by people who were in a position to make a comparison. Taylor held that Euclid Avenue's only honest rival for the title of "most beautiful" was the Prospekt Nevksy in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Another strong admirer of Euclid Avenue was a lecturer before the Royal Society of Great Britain, John Fiske, who in 1860 described it in these words:

"... bordered on each side with a double row of arching trees, and with handsome stone houses of sufficient variety and freedom in architectural design, standing at intervals of from one to two hundred feet along the entire length of the street ... the vistas reminding one of the nave and aisles of a huge cathedral."

Artemus Ward, who knew Euclid Avenue better than any of those world travelers, wrote of it after he left Cleveland in his usual colorful prose and called it "a justly celebrated thoroughfare."

"Some folks," he wrote, "go so far as to say it puts it all over the well known Unter der Sauerkraut in Berlin and the equally well known Rue de Boolfrog in Paree, France. Entering by way of the Public square and showing a certificate of high moral character, the visitor, after carefully wiping his feet on the 'welcome' mat, is permitted to roam the sacred highway free of charge.

"The houses are on both sides of the street and seem large as well as commodious. They are covered with tin roofs and paint and mortgages, and present a truly distangy appearance.

"All the owners of Euclid Street homes employ hired girls and are patrons of the arts. A musical was held at one of these palatial homes the other day with singing. The soprano and the contralto were beautiful singers. The tenor has as fine a tenor voice as ever brought a bucket of water from a second-story window, and the basso sang so low that his voice at times sounded like the rumble in the tummy of a colicky whale."

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 153.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=153>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S.

or applicable copyright law.



The satirical note running through Artemus Ward's commentary undoubtedly sprang out of his resentment of the snobbery that already was building up on Euclid Avenue in his time in Cleveland. It got a lot worse after he left, even as the street itself became the site of more magnificent mansions. In its heyday, between 1875 and 1900, that stretch of Euclid Avenue extending from Erie Street (East 9th Street) to Willson Avenue (East 55th Street) must have contained the most overpowering concentration of affluence, with all its outward manifestations, in America.

To live in the Millionaire's Row stretch of Euclid Avenue was to be the member of a private club as exclusive as today's Union Club or Tavern Club. The families who lived along the elegant row were formidable members of society and they demanded formidable houses as a mark of their station. All the homes were set back from the sidewalk with a pretty expanse of shady parkland for front lawns and smooth driveways to carry the coaches and carriages to the front steps of the bulking residences. A good many of the homes were in the Victorian tradition, lavished with architectural bric-a-brac, with gables and towers, high-ceilinged rooms, and tall windows to match. There were antebellum-type Greek revival mansions with their imposing high white pillars, and there were Georgian-style gems, colonial masterpieces, and some great manses that defied classification.

It was an eye-pleasing experience to stroll Euclid Avenue in its heyday. The street was so magnificent as to override the ordinary human weaknesses of envy and covetousness. Even Madame Lafarge would have enjoyed the street. There was so much real splendor to Millionaire's Row that even the poorest of Clevelanders took pride in the street and had a vicarious kind of proprietary interest in maintaining it in its full beauty.

Civic concessions toward that end were plentiful, one of the most conspicuous—and controversial—being a rule that the streetcar line could not travel that stretch of Euclid Avenue between East 9th Street and East 40th Street. The streetcars were routed south to Prospect Avenue at Erie Street (East 9th) and had to travel along that thoroughfare until reaching Case Avenue (East 40th), where they swung north to rejoin the Euclid Avenue route. The people of affluence who lived along the stretch of avenue skirted by the streetcars reasoned, and rightly, that the trolley vehicles would be a blight on their picture-postcard scene. Furthermore, streetcars would have interfered with the wonderful sport of winter sleigh races which flourished on Euclid Avenue on a scale of delightful dimensions. Next to New York, Cleveland was the nation's outstanding gathering place for drivers, breeders, and lovers of the best light harness horses in America.

Everybody who lived along the avenue joined in the racing fun, and



## EUCLID AVENUE

143

those who didn't care to race simply jogged along in their sleighs, listening to the singing runners, the clapping of the snow-muffled hoofs, and the song of the bells. It was another era, another world, another universe they lived in, and it would not last long—only until the arrival of the new century, 1900. It must have been enchanting, though, while it lasted.

A recollection of the era by a Clevelander named C. A. Post in a nostalgic volume called *Those Were the Days*, hints at the winter wonderland that prevailed on Euclid Avenue in the twilight of the nineteenth century before the streetcars finally had their way and began to use the Euclid route.

"Every winter afternoon when the snow lay upon the ground (and that was often), and other weather conditions were favorable," wrote Post, "there was a spirited and beautiful sleighing carnival on the avenue, at its height from two to six o'clock. All heavy traffic was, by authority, diverted to parallel streets, and then the many handsome turnouts of one and two-horse sleighs and cutters . . . appeared.

"As I remember very clearly, good carnival form required strict observance of certain rules. One was to drive slowly eastward from Erie Street, then turn at Perry Street [East 22nd], or just beyond there, and drive back to Erie Street at top speed, at least part of the way; perhaps, in the general rush, or . . . by craft or dash, to arrange to have an exciting brush with a friend or foe whom one had singled out as a possible victim to be passed and beaten at the end of the course.

"Above all, we of the common herd, and also the slower drivers of the beautiful turnout with a showy horse or handsome pair of high-steppers without speed, must ever keep an eye open for the real speed kings and give them the right of way.

"Thus, when an Edwards, a Devereaux, a Perkins, an Otis, a Bradley, a Splan, a Dutoon, or any others of the elect, had joined issue with one or more of his class and they were coming like the wind, all of the lesser lights pulled out toward the curb and let the fast ones 'play through' in the center of the roadway, which they did with such speed and dash as to take one's breath away."

The competition in the sleigh racing arranged itself naturally among the wealthy sports according to which side of Euclid Avenue they lived on. It was the north side against the south side, those living on the north side of the avenue calling themselves the Nabobs while their competitors on the south side of the street were known as the Bobs. Prominent among the Bobs were John D. Rockefeller, Charles Harkness, J. M. Hoyt, Fayette Brown, the Chisholms, J. H. Devereaux, and other names familiar to Cleveland society. The most dashing sportsmen of them all apparently, Colonel William ("Billy") Edwards, a prosperous merchant, lived on Prospect Street, just south of Euclid Avenue.

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 155.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=155>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S.

or applicable copyright law.



Sometimes the scene took on a dreamy, unworldly beauty; especially when the sleighs raced up and down the avenue at night in a heavy snowfall. The old gas mantle street lamps cast a yellow light that was hardly needed because the night was made so bright by the snow, but they added their own touch of color as the heavy flakes fell on the lawns and the street, adding another white layer to the hard-packed cover that already covered the ground and the cobblestones. The black picket fences that ran along the sidewalks, shielding the big estates from the street, seemed to rise out of the snowbanks as if they were floating high off the ground, and the whitened boughs of the large evergreens sagged with the new weight of the storm.

The sleighs dashed up and down the avenue with singing cutters and jingling bells, the snow whirling in their wake, while the passengers burrowed deep in their seats and pulled the heavy fur robes up above their faces to ward off the stinging wind that drew moisture to their eyes. Just to look at the aristocratic, high-stepping horses and the ornate carriages sliding past was to know beauty. The horses were among the best in the world and sometimes the carriage, like that of Jephtha Wade's, was fancy enough for royalty. His was a two-horse sleigh with a high dashboard topped with red plumes. High above the passengers was the seat of the coachman with his livery of scarlet jacket, shiny top hat, and glistening black leather boots.

The people of substance loved horses, of that there could be no doubt. Racing early became a part of their way of life; a fixture in the Cleveland tradition from such a faraway day that the city has been called "the fountain head of American racing." That claim was made by an associate editor of the *Plain Dealer*, Edwin T. Randall, who wrote: "The history of racing in America is a Cleveland story. But it is a story of trotting horses . . ."

There was a track for the trotters and pacers as early as 1846. It was on Woodland Avenue, between Brownell (East 14th) and Perry (East 22nd). But the most famous track in the nineteenth century, as well as the most fashionable, was the Glenville Track at East 88th Street and St. Clair Avenue. It was built in 1870 by the Cleveland Driving Park Company to be part of the newly organized Northern Ohio Fair, whose grounds were across the street, on the other side of St. Clair. A bridge over the avenue connected the two.

The annual fair proved unsuccessful and was abandoned in 1881, but the track thrived as a fun spot for the town's sporting bloods and racing fans from all elements of the city's population. Some of Cleveland's most famous families kept stables at the track, which was just about as respectable as any place could be. Among the original stockholders of the Cleveland Driving Park Company were, indeed, the three Rocke-

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 156.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=156>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S. or applicable copyright law.



feller brothers, John, William, and Frank; Howard M. Hanna, Charles A. Brayton, Warren G. Corning, Sylvester T. Everett, and J. V. Painter.

It was at the Glenville Track that the famous Grand Circuit, the major league of harness racing, was born in 1873. It grew out of the Quadrilateral Circuit, composed of Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, and Utica, whose meeting was held at Glenville in 1872.

Racing devotees do not find it difficult to recall that the old Cleveland Driving Park track was the scene, on July 27, 1876, of one of the most memorable events in American racing history. It was the free-for-all trot in which Smuggler defeated the great Goldsmith Maid. The trotters, pulling high-wheeled sulkies, ran five sensational heats, with the fifth heat being run almost as fast as the first—2:17¼ and 2:15½.

The race was immortalized in poetry by Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was inspired to write *When Smuggler Beat the Maid*. Both horses enjoyed national prominence, with Goldsmith acknowledged to be the most famous horse of the trotting age. She had been bred by James Roosevelt, father of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and was foaled in 1857. The amazing thing is that she did not begin her racing career until she was ten years old, but she made up for lost time with a series of epochal performances. At age seventeen, in 1874, she set the world record time of 2:14; at twenty, in 1877, she beat Rarus with a time of 2:14½. Altogether, Goldsmith Maid won ninety-two races and a total of three hundred thousand dollars in her illustrious career. Little wonder that her race against Smuggler drew such attention, especially as Smuggler himself was an unusually interesting trotter. He was known to be a badly balanced horse, given to frequent breaks. He wore sixteen-ounce toe weights in front so his feet would not get out of control!

Again, on July 30, 1885, Glenville Track made an important contribution to racing lore by serving as the setting of a race in which William H. Vanderbilt's famous Maud S. set the world's record for trotting to high wheel sulky—2:08¾. A replica of the mare's head, encircled by a horseshoe, once surmounted the main entrance gate of the track.

It was among the amateur gentlemen drivers, however, that Glenville served its most popular function. The young gentry from Euclid and Prospect avenues in Cleveland had private barns with their names over the door. They had a custom of Saturday matinees at the track, driving across town to St. Clair behind spirited teams hitched to gleaming, costly Brewster road wagons. And after the fun and games, everybody would retire to an establishment known as "The Roadside Club" at the entrance to the park to settle down to some serious drinking and talk about such fascinating subjects as horses and women; presumably in that order.

Officials of the Driving Park Club decided to organize the matinee

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 157.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=157>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S. or applicable copyright law.



racing on Saturdays early in 1895. Colonel William ("Billy") Edwards, General D. W. Caldwell, C. A. Brayton, Harry K. Devereaux, O. G. Kent, and W. G. Pollock were the moving forces behind the men's races. The first matinee was held June 1, 1895, with Dan R. Hanna, son of the famous senator, winning the inaugural with Lady Hester. Ordinary high-wheeled road wagons with steel tires were used at first, but club members quickly saw the advantage of buying speed wagons with pneumatic tires, built to order by a famous Cleveland carriage-maker, Frank G. Phillips. Drivers had their own shanties at the track and there they kept their turf trophies on display. Even the losers won at Glenville, though, because it was the custom then that after important cup races, the winners would spring for dinners at the Roadside Club.

"It was expensive to win a cup race," one writer noted, "because at these dinners the cups had to be filled and refilled with champagne and the food was not to be excelled. At the close of every season members had banquets at the club and these were feasts not to be regarded lightly."

The acknowledged champion of the amateur drivers was Harry K. Devereaux, scion of a famous old family and famous himself as the model for the drummer boy in Archibald Willard's "Spirit of '76" painting. The highlight of his racing career was his victory in the Boston Gold Cup Race at Glenville on September 5, 1902. Some twenty-five thousand fans cheered Devereaux to victory in that classic. There were other famous amateur drivers, including Charles A. Otis, whose horse, Dutch Mowrey, was called "the tailless wonder," for the obvious reason that it lacked what horses usually take for granted, a tail. Otis once had an artificial tail made for his racer, but it is said that the horse bridled; just moped about sulkily and absolutely refused to wear the equine mop. The band had to play *Ach du Lieber Augustine* to cheer the horse's spirit after that. Dutch Mowrey was a very sensitive animal.

Another regular among the Glenville amateurs was Frank Rockefeller. This youngest member of Cleveland's most famous family narrowly escaped injury in one race when another driver swerved into his wagon, bending one of the axles. The Rockefeller wagon tilted precariously and careened down the track. Other drivers shouted to him to let loose of the reins holding Nelly Cloud and to jump. Rockefeller hesitated, but finally took their advice, tumbling onto the track, head over shoulders.

The days of fun and glory at the old Glenville track ended in 1908 when the track called it quits. The matinee racing by the amateurs shifted to the elegant new North Randall Track, called The Golden Oval, and continued there until 1916. The sport never was revived after World War I.

If the life led by Cleveland's bluebloods sounds ostentatious, it was meant to be just that. In that heady time of newfound wealth, when the



## EUCLID AVENUE

147

dynasties that would rule Cleveland society and business in the generations to come were still aborning, ostentation was one of the rules of the game. The competition among the elite was not confined merely to racing their cutters down the avenue or their wagons at Glenville; it extended into every phase of living, and was most clearly apparent in the attempts of the city's aristocracy to outdo one another in the size and the rococo trim of the houses that lined the avenue.

Just as one should have guessed, the home of the richest man in the world was not at all the fanciest or most expensive. The Rockefellers lived in a large brick house with wooden porches and narrow arched windows; a spacious house with the high ceilings typical of the day; nice but not showy. It was on a site just west of Case Avenue (East 40th Street), on the south side of Euclid Avenue, and it had a frontage on the avenue of 116 feet. The property was purchased in 1868 from Francis C. Keith for more than forty thousand dollars—a pretty hefty figure for that day.

Eleven years later, in 1879, Rockefeller acquired the Levi Burgert estate immediately to the east of his house, thus extending his property all the way to the corner of Case Avenue and giving him a Euclid frontage of 231 feet. Both of his lots were deep, extending south all the way to Prospect Street. The Burgert house, a large brick residence, was moved at Rockefeller's direction to a vacant lot at the corner of Case and Prospect, where it began a new career of usefulness, serving as a school for young ladies under the direction of a Miss Mittleberger.

Rockefeller's Euclid Avenue home, the birthplace of his children, fell into gradual disuse as the family found life at the Forest Hill "summer" home to be a lot more fun. The house on Euclid was torn down in the 1930s to make way for a parking lot and, appropriately enough, a gasoline station. The large stone stable and coach house were left standing, and old John D. would have been horrified by their use, briefly, as a night club.

The best illustration of just how modestly the Rockefellers lived on this swank street is to be found in the story of one of the other houses on the avenue—this one built, indeed, by a man that John D.'s genius and Standard Oil's generosity to its stockholders had made wealthy. He was Samuel Andrews, one of Rockefeller's early partners.

When Andrews decided to build his new home at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Sterling Street (East 30th Street), it is said he had in mind the hope that he would one day play host to Queen Victoria herself. Nobody today is able to say precisely why he should have harbored this peculiar ambition—though, to be sure, having Queen Victoria as a house guest would be a large feather in the cap of anybody on the avenue—except that Andrews was English by birth and hoped, possibly, to wow the folks back home.

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 159.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=159>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S.

or applicable copyright law.



Andrews, at any rate, aspired high and demanded that his new home be fit for royalty. Even Queen Victoria would have flinched though at some of the details that went into the house. It would be hard not to say that Sam went overboard. There are people who claim that his was the most elegant house ever built in Cleveland. Other judges say it was an overwhelming monstrosity. Its cost was said to be around a million dollars, which seems like a fair bundle of the green for a home that came to be known to everybody in Cleveland as "Andrews' Folly."

The controversial mansion was of Victorian architecture (what else?) and contained thirty-three rooms which were cleverly scattered about in a casual pattern that confounded everybody, especially the servants. There were among these rooms five separate and lavishly furnished suites for each of the millionaire's five daughters. Each suite had different color schemes and decorations for each room.

The first floor had six mammoth rooms, with a skylighted court in the center entranceway. A circular staircase with intricately carved railings wound up from two sides of the court, which also featured stained-glass windows especially executed by foreign artisans.

The woodwork in each room was different, and most of it was hand-carved with panels of exquisite workmanship. The wood-carvers and cabinetmakers were brought to Cleveland from abroad by Andrews to ply their genius for his benefit. The floors in each of the large rooms were covered by carpeting made specifically to order for Andrews' house by English weavers. The second floor had the suites for the daughters and the master suite for the parents, while on the third floor was a ballroom and servants' quarters.

It's too bad that Queen Victoria never made it to the Andrews house, even for a quick crumpets-and-tea, because she would have been pleased by the baronial splendor of the house and she probably would have done a royal flip over the butler.

Andrews' butler was English all the way; the real McCoy. He not only acted like a butler, he *looked* like a butler. He wore English knee breeches, ruffled white shirt, velvet jacket, white stockings, and shoes with silver buckles. He was, in brief, all that a butler should be.

Ironically, it was the servant problem that was one of the main factors leading to the undoing of the Andrews' mansion. The big house needed a hundred servants to stay in business, including cooks, chefs, maids, hostlers, carriagesmen, housekeepers, and handymen. The architect had craftily designed the house so that the servant quarters were on the third floor while the kitchen, pantries, storerooms, linen rooms, etc. were in the basement. The working day was one long uproar, presumably, with servants running up and down three flights of stairs, lugging pillows, bedclothes, chopped ice, feather dusters, and other such essentials. Andrews found out that even domestics had their physical limita-

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 160.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=160>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S. or applicable copyright law.



tions. The people he hired simply were not up to the demands made on them by his crazy castle, and the consequent turnover in help was dismaying.

If this was not the principal cause of Andrews' quick disenchantment with the grand manor, perhaps it was Queen Victoria's persistent refusal to pop in for a spot of tea. That certainly is a reasonable conjecture, if not as romantic as some of the popular explanations for the family's withdrawal from the house in 1885 after a residency of only two or three years. One story had it that he had built the mansion with the intention of becoming a social lion, but, being one of the *nouveau riche*, society had not given him the immediate and full acceptance which he had anticipated. When his house was finished (so the legend goes), he invited all the leading members of society to a housewarming, but hardly anybody showed up, thereby embarrassing and embittering Mr. Andrews to the point of rejecting both the house and Cleveland itself.

Another interesting, if unconfirmed, story has it that the millionaire had invited society to a grand wedding reception for one of his children, but that the wedding was called off at the last minute. The party went on as scheduled, however, and the guests had a jolly time, filling the large house with sounds of laughter and the clinking of glasses. As the party ended, with the echoes of merriment still traveling through the inner hallways and rooms of the magnificent maze, Andrews locked the doors, had the windows boarded up, and walked away from his towering folly.

The great house stood empty until after the millionaire's death in 1904 in Atlantic City. His son, Horace, head of the Cleveland Electric Railway Company, took occupancy of the house at that time, but only for a short stay. The house simply wasn't much of a home and Horace moved out, taking some of the most exquisite furniture with him. The rest of the expensive furnishings were left to molder and rot in the abandoned old house which gradually became, in the decay of the years, a splendid refuge for bums and sleepy winos. It was finally torn down in 1937 and today the sleek, functional quarters of a television station, WEWS (named in honor of Edward W. Scripps), occupies part of the site.

The grandest survivor, by far, of the heyday of Euclid Avenue is the old Mather mansion which still stands at 2605 Euclid, on the eastern fringe of the downtown section. It has been the headquarters of the Cleveland Automobile Club since 1940, and while its interior has been altered to meet the needs of the club, it is still outwardly unchanged and is a magnificent vestigial specimen of the grandeur that used to be. The home, built by Samuel Mather, was the last of the great homes to be built on Millionaire's Row. It was constructed between 1906

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 161.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=161>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S. or applicable copyright law.



and 1910, after the avenue had passed its peak and streetcars already were rumbling past the mansions that lined the strip. Downtown Cleveland already was pressing eastward into the famous residential section, and the signs of deterioration spelling the end of Euclid Avenue as the paradise of the wealthy were there to be read in 1906. But Mather pressed on with his new three-story brick mansion in spite of those signs. It is estimated that the house cost more than a half-million dollars. It was, when finished, one of the most outstanding residences on a street filled with outstanding residences. Its first floor had a drawing room, library, dining room, kitchen, pantries, billiard room, den, an office for Mrs. Mather, and servants' hall. On the second floor were seven suites of rooms, and on the third floor were eight bedrooms and a large formal ballroom, sixty-five by twenty-seven feet with a sixteen-foot arched ceiling, which would accommodate three hundred persons. There also is a fourth floor, used by the servants and for storage.

The house was built of a reddish-brown brick trimmed in Indiana limestone, and it's worth noting that the bricks were especially hand-made, water-struck bricks fired at Conic, New Hampshire; a duplicate of the type of bricks used by Harvard University in its buildings and gates. Each brick was molded and burned in the method used by early brickmakers. Main entrance to the home, on the west side of the building, led into a large foyer (forty by twenty-four feet) paneled in dark oak, with a beamed ceiling, a marble floor, and a ten-foot-wide stairway, with artistically carved newel posts and railings, rising to the third floor.

The dining room, now the auto club's license bureau, once had as covering for its walls embossed leather, beautifully tooled. It was removed because of the deteriorating effect of the years, but the room still features a ten-foot Elizabethan fireplace and a classic marble figure sculptured by Antonio Rossi of Rome in 1870 that stands as part of a fountain at the eastern end of the room, an area called the "breakfast nook." The statue was purchased by Mrs. Flora Stone Mather's father, industrialist-financier Amasa Stone. Mrs. Mather died before the home was completed.

Hand-carved wood paneling, mostly oak, covers most of the walls in the house, and the floors are of mahogany and rosewood parquet construction. Some of the fine oil paintings that hung in the home during its occupancy by the Mather family still are on the walls. One is Albert Bierstadt's "Emigrants Crossing the Plains," which Amasa Stone bought in 1868 for fifteen thousand dollars; another is "Aurora Borealis and the Statue," by I. Gudín, a French artist, painted in 1865. An Italian-style sunken garden, appointed with imported statuary and complete with arbor and fountain, was directly behind the mansion. A squash court sat to the end of the garden, near Chester Avenue.

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 162.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=162>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S. or applicable copyright law.



## EUCLID AVENUE

151

No automobile club anywhere in the world is so superbly housed as is the one in Cleveland. Its staff of two hundred employees buzzes about the job of rescuing motorists with stalled batteries and all the other little things that auto clubs do so well, in an atmosphere of Renaissance splendor that is a carryover from an era that was destroyed by the automobile. But the Auto Club has done the city, and all civilized people, a service by proving the old Mather home's usefulness. The American rule for survival is a stern one based mainly on utility value. Let the grand Mather mansion, this illustrious product of artisans and artists and magnificent memorial of the past, waver or falter in its service and the wreckers' claws will be scratching at its sides tomorrow.

But today it still stands, and it embodies the beauty that once filled the sweep of the avenue, winning the hearts of Clevelanders and the acclaim of all who visited the city.

Condon, George E.. Cleveland : the best kept secret.

New York, NY, USA: Doubleday, 1967. p 163.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/clevelandstatedr/Doc?id=10440741&ppg=163>

Copyright © 1967. Doubleday. All rights reserved.

May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S. or applicable copyright law.