



2004

THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS/  
MARBLE CLIFF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# TOUR OF HOMES

May 9, 2004



**FIVE BEAUTIFUL  
HOMES OF  
HISTORICAL  
AND AESTHETIC  
SIGNIFICANCE**





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987  
**GRANDVIEW AVENUE**



**THE BRANNAN RESIDENCE**

The stone walls of this home are likely the oldest surviving structure in the Grandview area. This area, now known as “Grandview Terrace”, was not always a residential property. This home, known to the community as “The Poor House”, was built in 1832-33 as the major component of the first Franklin County Poor Farm, for the accomodation of paupers and the indigent ill. The regular spring flooding of the Scioto River valley made the site relatively inaccessible and its use for this purpose lasted only a few years.



**A CHRONOLOGY**

- 1832 Franklin County Commissioners purchase a farm “in the forks of the Whetstone” and commence the erection of a “Poor House building”, which was completed and ready for the reception of paupers on the first day of February, 1833.
- 1839 ”the commissioners of Franklin County are hereby authorized to sell... at such price as they may deem expedient, the poor-house and lands thereto attached...”
- 1839-1890 a series of farmer/owners
- 1890 Frederic Denmead purchases, from several owners, lands on the west side of Grandview Avenue from Dublin Road north to Third Avenue, including the “Walcutt School” one-room schoolhouse, now the site of the BP Station. The land is platted into lots for development by Croughton and Denmead.
- 1894 Columbus socialite Cinderella Holman purchases, for \$13,800, lots 72-80 of the Croughton and Denmead subdivision, encompassing all the land between Broadview and Grandview

Avenues, north from Goodale to the present Grandview Terrace entrance. The 1900 federal census lists her occupation as “farmer.” Cinderella and her son Harry Holman are listed in the Columbus (Society) Blue Book from 1904 to 1915. She was among the “Lady Managers” of the Home for the Aged, “Monypeny Hall”, on East Broad Street across from Franklin Park. Cinderella Holman died in 1914; her funeral was held at home.

- 1915 William “Billy” Bott, of Bott Brothers Tavern on North High Street, now the Elevator Brewery, purchases the Holman estate and begins the development of Grandview Terrace as we know it. He builds 1070 Broadview as his personal residence. “Billy” Bott had been a third party in the notorious 1899 divorce of Peter Sells, circus proprietor, and his wife, Mary.
  - 1916 987 Grandview is renovated, modernized and offered for sale.
  - 1917 The home is owned and occupied by Walter and Louise Alsdorf. Alsdorf was executive secretary of the Ohio Good Roads Federation. The Alsdorf family lived here until 1943.
  - 1946 James J. Hughes, M.D. and his wife Margaret purchase the house and raise their family here.
  - 1968 Hughes’ son, James S. Hughes, Columbus City Safety Director, and his wife Patricia reside here.
  - 1973 Harry and Donna Featherstone begin a brief ownership. Harry was executive vice president of Orrville Products.
  - 1975 Dennis and Maureen “Mimi” Hughes Murphy purchase the home and reside here until 1994, completing an almost unbroken Hughes family residency of nearly fifty years. Dennis is a partner in Carlile, Patchen and Murphy. Their daughter Margaret was married in the home. Mimi remembers the home as “the absolute best hide-and-seek house”, and also remembers the Soap Box Derbies on Grandview Avenue hill.
- Dennis and Maureen Hughes Murphy now live in Annapolis, MD.
- 2004 Current owners are Michael and Deborah Brannan.

This unusual home has many unique architectural features. Dental molding and corbels adorn the roof line outside, and both front and back feature a center gabled dormer with matching hip dormers on either side. The structure is built primarily of limestone, most likely Columbus limestone from our local quarries. The outside steps are large limestone slabs. The two side entrances may be later additions.

Woodwork in the home varies and has some unusual features. The dining room mantel is ornate quarter-sawn oak, circa 1898-1902. The front entryway features oak woodwork, including a large staircase, with a newel post that once housed a newel lamp. The front parlor is select birch (not a local wood, and costly); the pocket door to the back sitting room also is birch. These probably date to the Holman years.

The back parlor was originally two rooms, hence the two fireplaces. There are four second-floor bedrooms and a large, airy common area, which spills out onto a rooftop porch. The upstairs has transoms above the doorways, for hot weather air circulation. The upstairs also has yellow pine woodwork and several built-in drawers.

The third floor is not open to the public, but has a long narrow hallway, two small rooms and a small bath.



# 1234 WEST FIRST AVENUE

## THE SZABO RESIDENCE

It is not an exaggeration to say that every inch of this grand home has undergone renovation during the past 36 years so that neither the house, the garage, nor the landscape resemble the original.



In 1924, Murray D. Lincoln, his wife Anna, and their daughter Elizabeth became the first occupants of this home, having purchased it from the Northwest Boulevard Company, developers of Grandview Heights east of Grandview Avenue. Lincoln was executive secretary of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and, in 1926, founder of the Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company, which eventually became Nationwide Insurance. Murray Lincoln was a member of the Columbus Riding Club and kept a horse and sulky on the property. GH/MCHS member Lucile Osborn recalls being given a ride, along with Elizabeth Lincoln, to a friend's house on Tremont Road. The east side of the current carriage house was still an abandoned stable with horse manure in it in 1968!

A Lincoln legacy on the property is the large pine tree near the garage, which was planted in honor of Elizabeth Lincoln's tenth birthday in 1925. The Lincoln years here were marred by the tragic and untimely death of their only child, 15 year-old Elizabeth, after a weeklong illness. While her death certificate indicates heart disease, Grandview classmates Lucile Osborn and Esther Evans recall being told their friend "Betty" had suffered an attack of appendicitis. Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln moved from the home and Grandview in 1934.

Six families owned and occupied the home between 1934 and 1968, when it was purchased by Hilo Lane residents Lajos and Wilhelmina (Willy) Szabo. Mrs. Szabo recalls that with two small sons and Mr. Szabo having just opened his architectural firm, money was tight. Since they could not afford to build the house of their dreams, they purchased this property



for its potential, and began what became a 36-year transformation. Lajos only half-jokingly commented that he was more enamored of the large maple tree than of the house, eventually incorporating the tree into a deck design.

The house had forest green shingle siding at the time of the Szabo purchase. During the initial remodeling the Szabo family lived on the second floor while the first floor was transformed by enclosing the east side porch and dividing it to provide a living room entry and a work area off the kitchen. The green shingles gave way to an English Tudor design with red brick bottom and stucco top. All interior walls were stuccoed and doorway arches modified. A major project in 1980 included a basement wine cellar, a finished attic, and a dormer enlargement of the master bedroom. The original garage became a carriage house with recreation room, and the grounds were graced with a grape arbor, walkway and fountain.

Major renovations during the last ten years include the creation of the dramatic new front entrance with its distinctive tower, the interior focal point of which is an etched glass dome, originally from an English conservatory. The rear of the house was extended ten feet for three stories to provide a new kitchen and bath.



The Szabos have adopted the "waste not, want not" philosophy of Lajos' Hungarian background, and have done much of the work themselves. Architectural elements have been salvaged from other sites and reused. For instance, the woodwork in the sitting room off the dining room was once office dividers at a Huntington Bank branch.

Cabinetry in the sitting room, the wine cellar gate and the benches in the garden were "discards" from job sites. The beautiful tile floor in the kitchen is one of the Szabo's recent projects, consisting of tiles Lajos and Willy found in the "seconds" yard of Seneca Tiles, Inc. in Attica, Ohio.

The most extensive and longest-term remodeling of all the homes on this year's tour has transformed a typical 1920s two-story home into an exceptionally distinguished Grandview Heights residence.

# 1051 URLIN AVENUE

## THE RONALD HARRIS AND JANE HESS RESIDENCE

Commissioned as a residence of substance by Harry D. Freeman in 1895, this Urlin Avenue residence was completed in 1897 by builder Thomas Hills. Harry Freeman, listed in the Columbus [Society] Blue Book, served as secretary and treasurer of both the Laminated Tube Company and the Ohio Realty and Construction Company when George C. Urlin, a Grandview Heights founder whose plats gave Grandview its name, was president of these firms. The Columbus Press-Post of Sunday, August 18, 1901 printed a drawing of this house, with a caption reading: "The building illustrated herewith is the new residence of H. D. Freeman, located on the west side of Urlin Avenue, Grandview Heights, near Arlington. The house is a model suburban home, built upon a knoll that give (sic) it a commanding position and accentuates its attractiveness. Mr. Freeman has provided a large wind-pump which supplies a capacious water tank on the barn so that water under pressure is always at hand."



HARRY D. FREEMAN  
Secretary-Treasurer The Ohio Realty and Construction Company

The Freeman family moved away in 1912, and in 1919 Frederick Ernest Shaffmaster became the owner. Shaffmaster, who served as president of the Commonwealth Savings Bank and F. E. Shaffmaster & Co. (a butter and cheese brokerage), installed modern plumbing and converted the gas lights to electricity before selling the residence in 1931. From 1934 to 1967 this was the residence of Ward G. Reeder, Ohio State University professor, and his wife Vivian.

In 1968 the family of Geoffrey D. and Betty Manack took possession. Over the next seventeen years the Manacks performed extensive remodeling, including moving the front entry to the side, opening the third floor with a spiral stairway, and removing the butler's pantry. In the course of removal a board was found with a penciled message which reads: "Built by Thomas Hills March 4th 1897 the day that Old Grover Cleveland was kicked out of the White House and he will be the last Democrat Preasidnt (sic) that will ever go to the White House is the prophisy (sic) of Thomas Hills Corner of Third & Oakland aves Grand View Ohio March 4th 1897." This now hangs framed in a second-floor office.

Significant architectural details include ornate brass hardware, decorative windows, cherry and oak woodwork, a massive diagonal fireplace and a waterfall staircase complete with gargoyles.

Current owners Ron Harris and Jane Hess have polished this jewel with renovations that are historically accurate. From the addition of a carriage house with attached pergola, to the 2003 installation in the dining room of stained glass which replicates the existing original 1897 windows, restoration has carefully returned this residence to its Victorian grandeur. Avid collectors, the couple imported Minton China tiles from England to use in the 2001 restoration of the fireplaces.



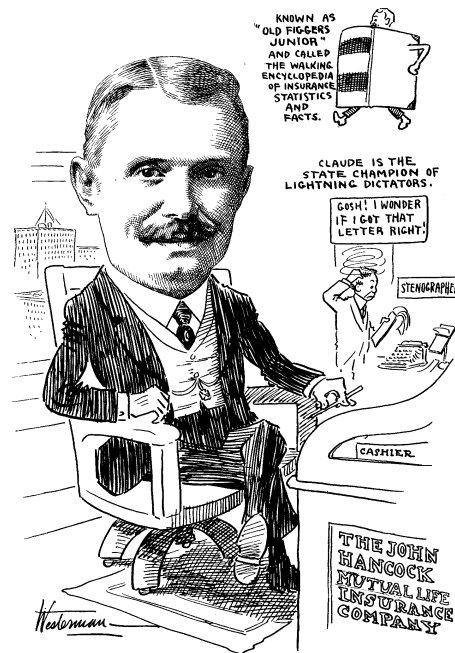
Harris and Hess have found the perfect home to serve as the setting for a stunning collection of period furnishing and family heirlooms. Every room contains notable items ranging from antiques reclaimed from the Harris homestead in Oklahoma to the Hess family's Kentucky rifle attributed to Daniel Boone. Vintage toys, including an electric train in the carriage house second-floor guest suite and Ron's childhood blocks from the 1940s, and family photographs, ranging from tintypes to snapshots of Hess and Harris attending Grandview Heights High School dances, enhance the decor.

The remarkable refurbishment of the last decade creates a warm family ambience and returns this regal Victorian beauty to the elegance of Freeman's era.

# 1101 BROADVIEW AVENUE

## THE RANDAZZO-FARMER RESIDENCE

Built in 1906, this wonderful Dutch colonial home was designed by architects Dawson and Holbrook and built for Claude K. Seibert. The home was described in the January 26, 1908 *Columbus Dispatch* as finished in “mahogany, quartered oak, and white enamel” and having “large open air sleeping rooms.” With its gambrel roof, cypress siding, and limestone chimneys and trim, this gem well deserves its commanding location on a Broadview Avenue hilltop. In 2000 current owners Carol Farmer and Sam Randazzo completely restored the home to its former character, while updating it for the convenience of modern living.



CLAUDE K. SEIBERT  
Cashier The John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company

This home's original owner, Claude K. Seibert, was a successful entrepreneur and prominent citizen of Grandview Heights. The Seiberts occupied this home until 1927. C. K. Seibert enjoyed an illustrious career in the insurance industry, at the height becoming Second Vice-President of the National Life Insurance Company. Mr. Seibert was also president of Fifth Avenue Floral Company, which he founded in 1905. This company had extensive greenhouses on Fifth Avenue and a retail shop on East Broad Street, and by 1923 was selling \$100,000 worth of flowers and shrubs annually. A founding member of Boulevard Presbyterian Church, Mr. Seibert served on Village Council and as Grandview Heights' fourth mayor from 1915 to 1919. His commitment to the community continued after his term as mayor, as evidenced by his advancement of money to Grandview Heights in 1922 to purchase parkland.

As decades passed and updates were made to the home, woodwork was painted and fireplaces were walled over. Purchased in 1991 by the present owners, they have made several improvements over time, including adding the back porch and central air conditioning. In 2000 Ms. Farmer and Mr. Randazzo set out to accentuate the home's original grand character, while adding modern comforts and convenience. The nine-months' project, with contractor Stonecroft, Inc. and designer Dennis Blankemeyer of American Furnishings Co., encompassed a painstaking restoration and remodeling of the residence.

Today the results of their extensive efforts abound. Several fireplaces, including those in the dining room and master bedroom, were uncovered to reveal locally quarried limestone hearths worthy of restoration. Period light fixtures were installed and natural woodwork and four sets of original pocket doors were brought back to their former glory. An upstairs bedroom was creatively converted to a modern and luxurious bathroom as part of the master suite. The kitchen was thoroughly updated and reconfigured, with windows added to take advantage of natural light and views.

A stereo sound system was also wired throughout the home. In addition, a bedroom suite was created on the third floor, adding 650 new square feet of living space to the existing 3100 square feet on the first and second floor.

The present house still reflects its rich past, noticeable in such accents as refinished cross beams and stairposts and the restored turret window seat. Still intact is the glorious, original nine-panel stained glass window from Germany, along the main staircase, entitled "The Enchanted Wood." These stunning features and the largely original floor plan retain the original charm of this home as it was constructed for the C. K. Seibert family, while the modern conveniences make it a welcoming residence for today.



# 995 WOODHILL DRIVE

## THE BALCH RESIDENCE

This 1939 home, designed and built for himself by Columbus architect Todd Tibbals, is on lot 16 of Utopia Subdivision, a less than 3 acre development and one of the last sections of this part of Grandview Heights to be platted. The 1938 plat shows Woodhill Drive as Utopia Drive. The house is featured in November, 1940 *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine as one of three small homes with inspiration from the past and noticeable D. A. (door appeal). The present owners display in their den a poster, "Doors of Columbus", featuring their entrance doorway in the center.



*Photo from "Better Homes and Gardens" article*

Tibbals credited the Italian hill country as his inspiration and called the home an Italian cottage. Its most noticeable feature is the deepset doorway surrounded with blue and white Florentine tile. The whitewashed stone was originally capped by a heavy, red-tile roof and there were deep blue shutters. Tibbals described how he solved the ravine site problem by making the interior three levels: entrance level living room, second level kitchen and dining room, and upper level bedrooms and bath; and then creating the street-front illusion of a single horizontal line. *Better Homes and Gardens* called this home "a charming answer to the small house problem."

Tibbals sold the house in 1941. Because of similar design characteristics, the present owners believe that four other homes nearby were likely designed by Mr. Tibbals, who later became a longtime principal in the Columbus architectural firm of Tibbals, Crumley and Musson. A duplicate of this house was built on Barrington Road in Upper Arlington in 1958.

After 1941 the property passed through the hands of a series of 10 owners, only one of whom occupied the house for more than four years. Owen and Frances Balch, who purchased the home in 1985 and have brought it to its present pristine charm, can boast the longest ownership in the

home's history. By 1985 the roof tiles had been removed because of leaks and damage to the interior. The south porch had been enclosed with jalousie windows, wood paneling and a wood floor, the interior wall opened up as a wide arch, and the space used as a dining room. While retaining the exterior appearance as much as possible, the Balch's have replaced all the windows in the entire house, the roof and siding, and improved the driveway with paving blocks.

Owen and Fran made major changes to the kitchen. The glass blocks under the kitchen window are original. An original small, closed entry from the patio has been incorporated into the kitchen space and a half-wall with shelves and a pass-through was removed to double the size of the kitchen, including extended cupboards and countertops along both north and south walls. The hand-painted tiles on the backsplash all around the kitchen were made by Fran Balch's mother, Margaret Fish. The tabletop tiles, which change with the season, were made by Fran or her mother.

The copper planters on either side of the stairs between the living and middle rooms are original. The living room originally had a flush fireplace, which now boasts a mantle, handmade for the Balchs by a friend as a wedding gift. The glass doorknobs and doors in the home are original, but all have been refinished, including the star shaped adornments.

Most of the artwork displayed throughout the home was made by Margaret Fish. On the living room wall is a painting of the ancestral Balch home, built in Beverly, Massachusetts in 1636. Many of the ceramic pieces throughout the home were made by Fran.

Owen and Frances Balch have repaired, remodeled and renovated their home with great respect for the original design, and have created a twenty-first century home of comfort and convenience which still retains the welcoming ambience promised by its 1939 "door appeal."







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