



ViewPoints



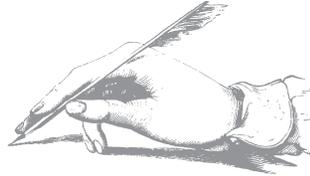
November 2004

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*V*N OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS/MARBLE CLIFF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Fellow Members,

What a beautiful Fall season we have had! The weather was absolutely perfect for all Grandview fall sports and provided a classical setting for those evening events. Your board has been working on several projects:

- The ongoing "Moment in Time" in the *ThisWeek* newspapers continues to be a big winner with readers, and we've received many compliments on it!
- A call from a White House speech writer seeking information about St. Raphael's sisters' residence (built in 1908 as the home of President Bush's great-grandfather) resulted in the president's mention of the Roxbury Road location in a campaign speech in Columbus to the Home Builders Association.

A recent donation of historical significance is an extensive collection of Higgs/Jones family scrapbook material, photographs, and memorabilia from the early 20th Century, the generous gift of Jeanne Jones Holder. Cataloguing of this material has just begun. It will be archived as a separate collection in the society's holdings. Many thanks to Mrs. Holder for such a valuable gift!

As always, if anyone has or knows of any materials that would be valuable in our historical efforts, we would gladly accept them.

It was wonderful to see such a fine turnout at our annual meeting. The featured program was "Corsets to Pantaloons: What early Ohioans Wore 1800-1810." The "fashion show" presentation by Mary Inman and Louise Pence was not only educational, but very, very entertaining! You may find more information about this program by visiting their website: www.threadstbrutime.net

Society membership is holding at about 150, with only a few memberships not yet renewed. Membership as a holiday season or birthday gift would be a wonderful idea! We welcome new Life Members Wayne and Pam Carlson, Ron Harris and Jane Hess, Rutbanne James and Joseph R. Miller.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of a new member to the board of GHMCHS. Karen Riggs brings a strong background of community involvement and we welcome her contribution to our efforts.

We thank you for your support of this newsletter and all our activities and welcome any comments or suggestions you may have.

Sincerely,
Tracy Liberatore, President

98+ AND COUNTING!

Grandview Heights will celebrate the centennial of its incorporation in the spring of 2006. GHMCHS will, of course, be a participant in 100th anniversary events. In the meantime, we publish here a 'snapshot' of Grandview Heights, prepared for a proposed but never completed 2003 "Book of Franklin County."

The City of Grandview Heights is a community of seven thousand residents located just northwest of the confluence of the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers. It is bounded by the City of Columbus, except on the west and northwest, where the city limit abuts Marble Cliff and Upper Arlington. The commonly perceived boundaries of the "Grandview Area" extend to King Avenue on the north and Olentangy River Road on the east, although the actual corporate limits are much smaller.

The transition of the area from farm and woodland to residential use began as early as the 1880s. The 1901 extension of a streetcar line across the Goodale Street bridge over the Olentangy River and into the area as far as the corner of Fifth and Arlington Avenues led to more rapid development and the incorporation of Grandview Heights in 1906. In its first decades Grandview Heights grew rapidly, becoming an independent municipality with its own mayor and council government, school district, police and fire departments, and public library. These departments maintain strong and long-standing records of excellence and of cooperation with neighboring communities.

Grandview Heights has remained attractive to new residents due to its mixture of residential, commercial and industrial development, its well-nourished pedestrian life, and its strong sense of place. A strong "social infrastructure" binds the community together. Many of the community's

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This issue sponsored by

GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL





98+ AND COUNTING! *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

activities center around the schools, although business associations and the Chamber of Commerce have been active for a long time. The Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society, founded in 1975, has been active in documenting and displaying the area's more than 100 years of history. Annual community events such as the Ox Roast, Memorial Day Parade and the Pumpkin Run bring the community together.

The Grandview Heights community enjoys a diverse population. Housing stock available includes large historic mansions, a wide variety of single family homes and a number of rental units. The municipality and the Grandview School District have a history of financial stability. The land use mix provides tax receipts that pay for public services that most residents rate as good to excellent. In particular, the school system is perceived as being extremely good. The Grandview School District includes the Village of Marble Cliff, which has more than 600 residents and enjoys an exceptionally strong commercial tax base.

History. The beginnings of a residential community on the bluff above the Scioto River valley at the northern edge of Franklin Township occurred about 1890 when George Cambridge Urlin, Fred H. Croughton, and Edward Denmead purchased tracts of land west of Grandview Avenue and north to Fifth Avenue and platted them for development. Urlin built his home on the site of the present Summit Chase Condominium and platted the nearby area as Urlin's Grandview Heights, inspired, so the story goes, by his wife's exclamation of delight at the prospect across the river valley. The Croughton and Denmead plat included the area immediately west of Grandview Avenue. Other early plats farther west were John Chester's Chester Heights and John Tilton's Gladdington Heights, which survives as the only portion of Grandview Heights which extends as far north as Fifth Avenue. In 1911, Urlin developed Cambridge Boulevard south of Fifth Avenue in Marble Cliff. A number of the earliest homes from the 1890s survive today, mostly on the bluff immediately above Goodale Boulevard. The oldest home in the community is 987 Grandview Avenue, still referred to as the "Poor House," because it was built in the 1830s as the residence for the Franklin County Poor Farm, a short-lived effort almost immediately moved to another township because of the spring flooding of the Scioto River. This home was remodeled to its present form by William Bott in 1916.

Repeated efforts of developers to improve access to the area were finally rewarded in October 1901, when the trolley line was extended across the Olentangy River. In November, 1901, the first Marble Cliff incorporation included most of the area from river to river and north to King Avenue, but most of the area was detached in early 1903. Grandview Heights was incorporated in 1906.

The early commercial area of the community was on West First Avenue, between Ashland Avenue and Fairview Avenue, which

was on the trolley line. Otherwise, the nearest shops and services were in a few Fifth Avenue locations and on Olentangy River Road.

Development of the area east of Grandview Avenue began after the 1913 purchase of the Thomas Farm by Ben and King Thompson's Northwest Boulevard Company. Late that same year the brothers purchased the 1000-acre Miller farm north of Fifth Avenue, which they platted as The Country Club District, a few years later to be named Upper Arlington. From this time on, residents of what came to be called the Tri-Village Area shared civic and social life in many ways. For instance, the earliest Upper Arlington residents sent their children to Grandview schools, and for many years the Grandview and Upper Arlington Library was a single institution serving both communities. Marble Cliff has been part of the Grandview Heights School District since its establishment.

The Northwest Boulevard Company developed the residential blocks southeast of Grandview and First avenues at about the time of World War I, as well as the area near First and Virginia Avenues. The 1920s saw the annexation and development of much of the area east of Grandview Avenue, including the large Willard farm and the Salzgeber farm. The Salzgeber farmhouse still stands at the northeast corner of First and Grandview Avenues.

Rapid growth in the 1920s brought the construction of a new high school building to replace the old Harding School on Fairview Avenue, which had been built in 1895 as a Franklin Township school. In the mid-1920s a second elementary school was constructed in the eastern part of the city. When the new school was named the Robert L. Stevenson School, the 1911 Grandview School was renamed Edison School. The Harding School was demolished in 1930, and in the 1950s an award-winning kindergarten building was constructed on the site.

The 1920s also saw construction at First and Grandview Avenues of the Northwest Masonic Building, which included ground floor retail space. The Grandview Theater opened in 1926, and in 1928 developer Don Casto's first commercial project, called The Bank Block, and the first retail shopping center in the United States which included planned parking space, was built on the west side of Grandview Avenue between First and Third. In 1998 the Bank Block was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2001 an Ohio Bicentennial Historic Marker was placed there. A small retail center developed on First Avenue near Northwest Boulevard. The industrial section of the city developed on former farmland along West Goodale and in the area near the railroad east of Northwest Boulevard. The rezoning of the Goodale Boulevard corridor in 1945 to permit light industry brought a significant increase in tax income to the municipality. Grandview Swimming Pool, city-owned since the 1970s, was constructed on Goodale Boulevard in 1932 as a private enterprise. The original portion of Grandview Heights Public Library was built with the help of federal funds in the mid-1930s.

To Be Continued...



NEW DISCOVERIES

by Tom DeMaria

Tripping the Light Fantastic in Grandview Heights

Before there were any Arthur Murray Studios, Grandview Heights had its own dance instructor extraordinaire named Blanche Field Holmes. This important early purveyor of the arts and entrepreneur has intrigued me ever since I saw her name and students' pictures prominently featured in early newspaper articles about Field Day activities.



Blanche was born in Grandview Heights in 1901. She lived with her parents, Dennis and Emma Field, a brother, and three sisters first at 1219 and then 1226 Lincoln Road. Early issues of the *Highlander*, the Grandview Heights High School yearbook, reveal a young woman who was

extremely active academically as well as socially. She traveled to Chicago in 1916 as a high school sophomore for "dramatic training." When she graduated from high school in 1919 she was already well established as a dancer and local dramatic artist. Details are sketchy, but indicate that Blanche was conducting dance classes for Grandview youth before graduating from high school, and was actually in charge of choreographing and staging "aesthetic dancing" during the 1919 and 1920 Field Day celebrations. Some of the more memorable titles of 1919 dances and tableaux are: "On to Victory," "The Butterfly Dance," and "The Hoop Skirt Dance."

Blanche Field spent the summer of 1919 as a dance instructor in a girls' camp in the Adirondacks in New York. By 1920 she was enrolled in the prestigious Louis H. Chalif Normal School of dancing in New York City, which was one of the earliest schools in the U. S. to instruct teachers in dance.



Blanche outside her home studio at 1714 First Avenue circa 1944. The sign advertised dance instruction and kindergarten classes.



Blanche with a dance ensemble at the Chalif Studio, New York City circa 1922.

The school was located across from Carnegie Hall and in the heart of the early 20th Century arts district of Manhattan. One can only imagine what the transition must have been like for this young woman from Grandview Heights, Ohio.

Returning to Grandview in 1921, Blanche established her studio in rented space on First Avenue and offered kindergarten classes as well as a wide variety of dance instruction. GHMCHS member Jeanne Jones Holder recalls, "Mother used to pull us on a sled down to First Avenue when we were in kindergarten, to Blanche's place where the Foettinger Furriers were (1629 First Avenue)." In April of 1921 a reporter from the community publication, *The Norwester*, shadowed Blanche and her students and left the studio exhausted. Blanche conducted kindergarten from 9:00 to 11:30 and then offered dance classes for students and adults until 8:00 p.m. Her early achievements, independence, and entrepreneurial spirit are amazing, given the culture of her times and her young age. Blanche's daughter, Janet Cochran Oates, of Prescott, Arizona indicated that her mother was also a "stock actress" in Madison, Wisconsin for a number of years. By 1936 she had returned to Grandview, built a home with a studio at 1714 First Avenue (see photo), and resumed teaching dance to the youth of Grandview. Recitals were held yearly at Edison Elementary School.

Blanche quit teaching dance by 1955, retired to Florida with her husband Dick Holmes, and passed away in 1990. Her legacy as the first lady of dance in Grandview continues. If any of her former pupils are reading this piece feel free to share any memories or photos. The GHMCHS would love to hear from you!

Special thanks to Blanche's daughter, Janet Oates, for details about her mother; to Jeanne Jones Holder for her recent donation of Higgs/Jones memorabilia containing information about Blanche Field; and to GHMCHS board member Terry Smith for his help in researching this article.



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of the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society!

Please complete the information below and send with your check made out to: **GH/MC Historical Society**
Mail or drop off at the **Grandview Heights Library,**
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ViewPoints is an occasional publication of the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society.

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Columbus, Ohio 43212

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Contact Editor Patrick Mooney
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ideas or to discuss photo contributions.

Reminder to Annual Members

Renewal time is here! Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society membership year runs from October through the following September. The mailing label on this newsletter shows the expiration date of your membership. Your continued support is solicited and very much appreciated.

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Ruthanne James is a third-generation Grandview resident. Her father, Mike Tocci, was born at 1791 West Fifth Avenue while her grandfather Tocci was chauffeur and gardener for Julius Stone. She remembers her aunts' stories of 'readying' the Stone house for numerous parties. When her Mom and Dad were dating they would take water to the Stone family cows on Route 33.

Ruthanne and her late husband Charlie purchased their first Grandview home in 1976 at 1177 Grandview Avenue, formerly the home of her great-aunt and uncle Hazel and Bob Hexter, owners of the Grandview Bicycle Shop. Their son Andy was born in 1979. In 1984 the James family moved to 1104 Westwood Avenue, where Ruthanne enjoys maintaining her husband's above-ground pool of Koi fish, gardening and landscaping. Ruthanne loves flowers, and collects paperweights and vintage dog art.

After attending St. Christopher Elementary School and Bishop Ready High School ('68), Ruthanne completed a B.A. in Fine Arts at OSU. During her student teaching she met two Grandview teachers ('fascinating women'): Frances Majors, art teacher at Edison and Stevenson Schools, and Ruth Fridenstein, art teacher at Grandview High School. Ruthanne has been 'hooked' on Grandview history and the historical society since her introduction to the 'Grandview Story' by these two teachers.

Ruthanne James holds a Master of Fine Arts in gifted visual education from Capital University, has been teaching art at Sedalia Elementary School in Groveport for 32 years, and does not see retirement in the near future.

1685 WEST FIRST AVENUE
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The Grandview
Heights/Marble Cliff
Historical Society

