

Company would provide service. This was later refunded when more homes were built. Street lights were put only at intersections until a more comprehensive street lighting program was started in 1961.

Each of the mayors and his group of councilmen were constantly on the alert to keep their village a nice place to live. A zoning map was set up in 1929 allocating 400 ft. on all sides of an intersection for business purposes. Frontage and lot sizes were kept to a large enough size so people wouldn't be looking right into their neighbors windows.

Following World War II, Douglas Oviatt laid out Scottish Highlands, three streets north of Highland opposite Trebisky. Each lot was a 1-acre parcel with a minimum of 100 ft. frontage. Streets were named Douglas and Dumbarton, and included the east side of Harris Road which was a long established sidestreet. Oviatt was a land developer but not a builder, so lots were sold individually and not too much building was done until gas and water was installed in 1953 and 1954. Then the expansion started. Cary Jay Blvd. was built in 1956, the four streets across from the airport, Karen Isle, Nan Linn, Swetland and Horizon developed in 1955-56. Sunset and Skyline Drives were developed about this time, and Brushview was first developed as Pacini Drive. However after all the homes had been sold, the residents petitioned Council for the name change.

This sudden burst of home developments brought new people to the village, and with this came other problems. The school could not keep up with the extra enrollments, and several bond issues were put to the voters for school expansion. A south wing was added first to accommodate the kindergarten and lower classes, followed several years later with the north wing for the high school students. The gym came with this north wing but the stage came later, followed by another extension for the industrial arts rooms.

On September 3, 1940, the School Board sold the 6-acre corner lot and brick school building to the Village for \$3,676.20 for a future Village Hall. However, it reserved the use of the school building thereon for the custodian's residence for ten more years.

In 1950, the building was turned over to the village and the volunteer firemen, under the direction of Councilman Albert Verbsky, removed the partitions on the first floor and converted it into a Village Hall. Space was still at a premium and many of the records were still kept in the homes of officials. Police Chief Earl E. Richmond kept both police files and building records at the Hall, but in 1957, the increase in paper work as well as his police and building inspector duties, became too much. He asked Council for help, and Mrs. Helen Keidel, who had been attending Council meetings for a year and a half, became the first Vil-

lage Hall Clerk. Meanwhile the Fire Department obtained one of the old police cars and had it painted fire-engine red. To accommodate their car, they decided to remodel the basement of the Hall. They made the driveway around the back, approximately where the present drive is, and knocked out part of the basement wall for a garage door. They had to put a concrete floor down and partition it into two sections—one for garage and the other side for a meeting room.

As the months rolled by, the work upstairs became too much for just the four hours that Helen Keidel was putting in. In December, 1958, Mrs. Isabelle Noyes was hired for the afternoon. When Helen resigned in August of 1959, Emma Charske took her place, followed by Mrs. Esther Schmidt. Then in October, 1960, Isabelle Noyes accepted the position on a full-time basis.

Others working with her were Mrs. Trudy Hunera, who became full time police clerk until February 1966, and Mrs. Angela Castro who is still working. Police records are kept today by Mrs. Dorothy Subwick and Mrs. Patricia Wokety is Clerk of Mayor's Court.



City Hall Staff—I. Noyes, A. Castro, P. Wokety, D. Subwick

Division and Annexation

1958 proved to be a crucial year for both the school and the village. The school proposed a \$541,000 bond issue for the north wing and the start of the high school here. The village had a \$175,000 bond issue up for a village hall and recreation facilities. Both issues had been put before the voters once before and defeated. To add a little more confusion, a citizens committee was formed for dividing the village into three parts and annexing them to Euclid, So. Euclid and Lyndhurst—thereby taking Richmond Heights right off the map. The airport expansion was a vital point of controversy. Lack of sanitary sewers, and other municipal services were also points. By the Council's insistence of 75 foot frontage lots and developments complete with paving, curbs and waterlines, plus a gradual upgrading of the building code, some residents felt it kept Richmond Heights from getting greater tax returns. Council was just as particular with business interests that approached the officials. The shopping center people approached the city; apartments were refused; as were many smaller businesses which did not seem to fit into the picture envisioned by Council. However, that November both bond issues passed, and the annexation issue faded into obscurity.

Charter Commission

In 1959, Mayor Stephen Opalich and his Council could foresee that Richmond Heights could very well become a city with the 1960 census. The May election posed the question "Shall a Charter Commission be formed?" and a place to mark in 15 names for members. There was some confusion on who was elected but the Commission finally ended up as those in the picture.



Charter Commission Richmond Heights November 1958–November 1959

Top — Frank J. Brundic, Albert Blessing, Frank Seme, Roger Long, Anthony J. Ursich
Bottom — Harry Sherman, Walter Boone, Harry Peters, William Braun, Chester Morris

Results of the 1960 census came out in early Fall, and as was predicted, Richmond Heights was over the 5,000 residents, and could proclaim itself a city. An official ceremony to celebrate its new status was held at the school on November 12, 1960. A brief history of Richmond Heights was put out at this time, with current pictures of officials and prominent buildings. Ralph Viviano headed the committee, with Helen Keidel editing the booklet.

First mayor under City status was Harry N. Peters, who had headed up the Charter Committee and helped formulate the new type of government and later won over William Salerno (councilman) as Mayor.

This first year as a City brought about many changes. The new Charter set up new departments which were necessary to keep up with the rapid growth. The first fire truck was purchased at a cost of \$37,000, and John Pianeki was appointed as first full-time building inspector. 1961 saw Bill Stahler appointed as first full-time fire chief. The first apartment zoning was passed—for the Hillbrook Apartments at the north end of Chardon Road. Rezoning was also passed for the Hillcrest Square Shopping Center.

Our present mayor, H. Donald Zimmerman, was sworn into office in January 1962 and proceeded to organize a full time service department with Mike DeSan as Director. Bonds were issued for \$175,000 to build the new City Hall and after extensive searching for appropriate land, it was finally decided to build on the same corner lot, at Highland and Richmond.

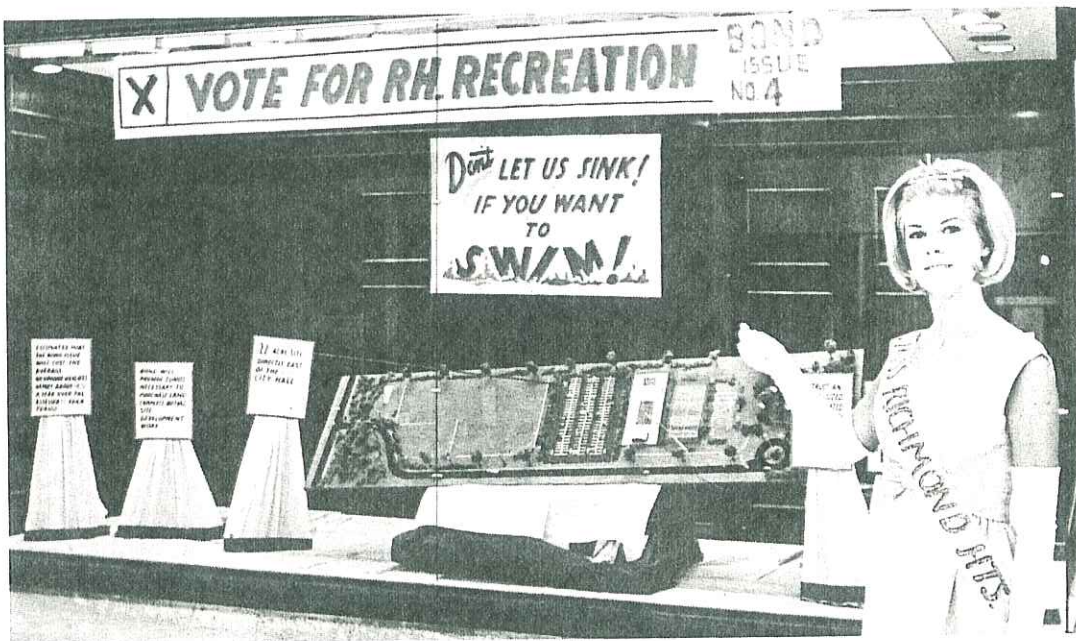
During Mayor Zimmerman's first year (1962), the council approved a Land Use Study by Barton & Gould in an effort to create a good balance between home and business and have an orderly growth pattern. This was the first year that the City Recreation Board took over the handling of the Home Day festivities, and permission was granted by the County to use a portion of the airport property. A charter amendment for partisan (and primary) elections was proposed by a citizen's group, but was defeated at the polls.



Mayor Zimmerman
Laying Corner Stone of City Hall

The City Hall construction got underway in 1962 and by October of the following year, it was in full use. 1963 also brought about a Charter Review Committee which recommended two changes—one amending the Zoning Board of Appeals and the other amending the organization of the Recreation Board. Both amendments were passed by the voters.

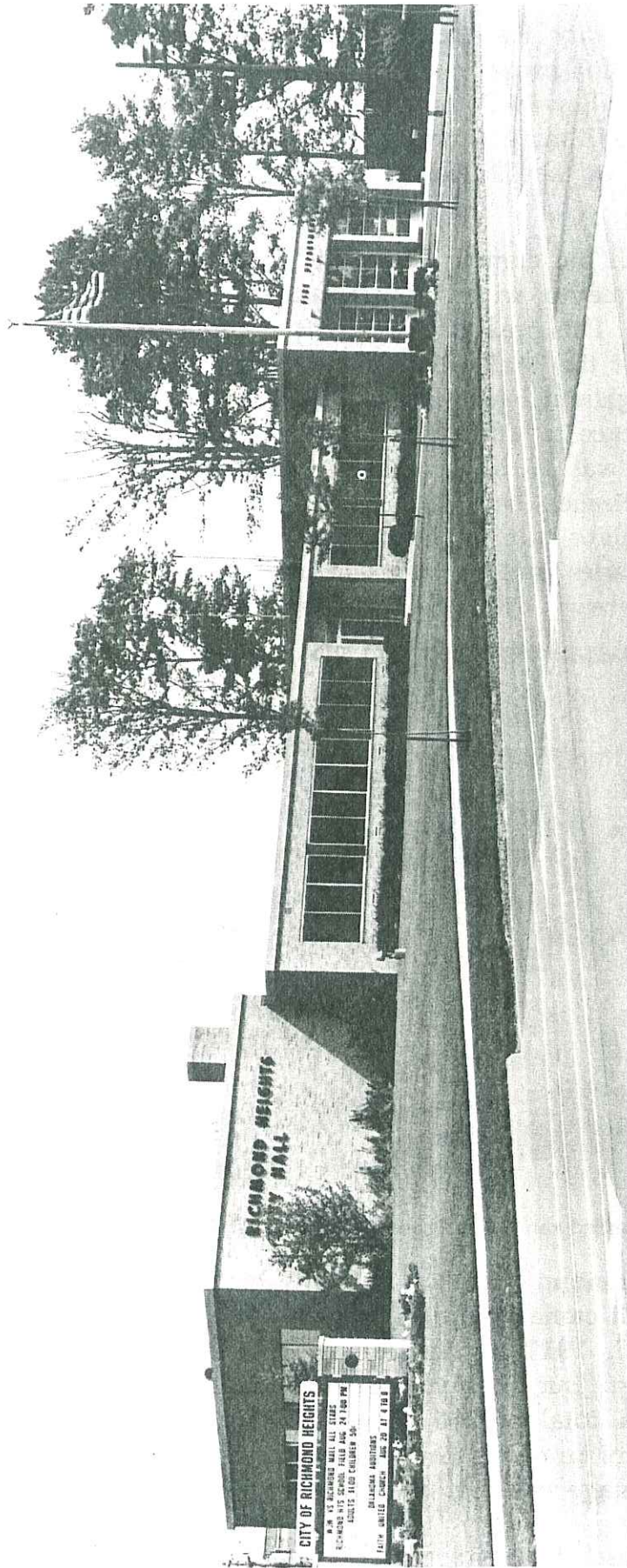
With the coming of the Richmond Mall in 1965, the City requested the State to widen Richmond Road to accommodate the anticipated traffic. This was started in early summer of 1966 and by the opening date of the Mall, Richmond Road was a 4-lane highway as far north as Highland Road. The new Mall gave the Recreation Board an excellent place to exhibit the proposed recreation park and swimming pool which was to be on the November ballot in the form of a \$250,000 bond issue. This was passed and the Recreation Board accelerated their plans with the hope of having a pool by summer '67. The building trades strike in the spring delayed their plans, but no doubt all will be ready by the next swim season.



Leslie Stroh – Miss Richmond Heights 1966 Urges Passage of Recreation Bond Issue

Richmond Heights residents have always been very conscientious when it came to voting. It may sound funny today that in the November 17, 1917 election for incorporation, the result was 38 for and 19 against. But when you look at census figures, Richmond Heights only had a total of 265 people (of all ages) in 1920. The 57 who voted 3 years previous consisted of men over the age of 21. Therefore, the percentage was obviously very high.

Census figures are interesting and show a growth pattern of a com-



City Hall Completed in 1963 – Bulletin Board is a Gift of the Kiwanis Club

munity. Between 1920 and 1950, the increase in population was very small— 1930 - 418 1940 - 507 1950 - 891

Because of the coming of gas and water in the mid 1950's, the population took a giant step. The next census made us the fastest growing community in the state of Ohio—from 891 to 5068 or a 468% increase. During that census, 2307 were listed as born from foreign stock as follows: 28% Italian, 14% Austrian, 11% German, 9% Czechs, 9% Hungarian, 9% Polish, 9% from the United Kingdom, 4% Russian, 4% Canadian, 2% Irish, 1% Swedish, and .3% each from Norway and Mexico.

Women received the right to vote in 1920, and the following year found Antoinette Rowland petitioning for a council seat. The next woman to try for council was Helen Keidel in 1961. Neither were elected.

Those who tried for the school board were a little more successful. Maude Phypers made it in 1931 and Celia Roach won in 1958. The following year Frances Williams won a seat, and Evelyn Walko was elected in 1963. When she had to resign because of health, Albertine Hoover was appointed to fill out the term.

The position of Village Clerk was also sought by several woman. Gladys Stevenson opposed Henry Schroeder in 1937 and Emma Charske ran against John Stefancik in 1957, but neither were elected.

The name of Blanche Mirsalis should also be recorded as an avid worker for her community. She's been mainly responsible for the high percentage of voters in the past 15 years; working diligently to get new residents to transfer their addresses, or get registered for the first time. It was also her leadership that brought a Combined Health Drive to Richmond Heights for a once-a-year collection rather than so many separate drives.

Richmond Heights Populations

1920 - 265	1960 - 5068
1930 - 418	1966 - 9274 (est. from Press 8-17-67)
1940 - 507	1970 - CEI estimates 10,800
1950 - 891	1975 - CEI estimates 15,000

Just this past July, we dedicated the new Richmond Heights Post Office at the corner of Richmond and Highland Roads. But this was not the first!

A post office at Claribel, Ohio was established on December 4, 1889 and the location was exactly the same as the present post office site. Then, of course, it was the private residence of Arthur E. Shaw who made the original petition to the U.S. Post Office. The home was next

to the blacksmith shop which was on the corner. Mr. Shaw served as postmaster at this location until May 16, 1892 when Franklin W. Bell took over the postal duties. The picture shown here is the Quayle home, next door to Shaw's. We must assume that Mr. Bell rented the home from the Quayle family.



Claribel Post Office – 1892-1896
Home of Franklin Bell, Second Postmaster on Site of 444 Richmond Road

On December 21, 1896, George J. Heiss moved the post office to his home on the southeast corner to a location now known as 487 Richmond. He set up a series of pigeon-hole type racks in the living room and carried on as postmaster until January 31, 1902 when the office was discontinued and all mail went through the South Euclid Post Office and was delivered by rural free delivery.

It has been impossible to find out the reason for naming the post office, Claribel, except that Franklin Bell had a daughter, Clara; but the name stuck for a good many years. It was Claribel Corners, Claribel School (instead of Maple Grove, the official name) and Village of Claribel until 1918 when the new village officials thought a more appropriate name should be chosen, and it became Richmond Heights.

How well we know that during the 1950's when the area began to grow and zip codes were added, that Richmond Heights was divided into five sections and served through four sub-stations from the Cleveland Post Office and a small area of Chardon Road and White Road served through the Wickliffe post office in Lake County.

With her connection with the Pathfinder newspaper, Helen Keidel was in close contact with the Cleveland Post Office. To get the community into one zip code, she suggested a sub-station to be located in Richmond Heights to serve the extreme eastern end of Cuyahoga County. By 1961, after four years, she received assurance that one would be located within the area. This information she turned over in 1962 to Mayor Zimmerman who followed closely the proceedings of the proposed new sub-station. Surrounding communities were just as anxious to have this new station, but Mayor Zimmerman solicited enough help to get it here, and dedication ceremonies were held on July 28, 1967. Thus a postal sub-station has surely brought the community closer together.



Post Office – Dedicated July 28, 1967

The history of the village pretty much centers around the school and the civic duties of a few prominent families. Perhaps the synopses of the eight mayors plus a touch of "family history" and landmarks will set the stage for the turn of events in the mid 1950's.

Mayors

Hiram M. Case	1918 — 1921	4 yrs.
William R. Zeitz	1922 — 1927	6 yrs.
Wallis Slater	1928 — 1937	10 yrs.
Edison G. Williams	1938 — 1949	12 yrs.
Elwood H. Wills	1950 — 1957	7 yrs.
Stephen Opalich	1957 — 1959	3 yrs.
Harry N. Peters	1960 — 1961	2 yrs.
H. Donald Zimmerman	1962 —	

First Mayor Hiram M. Case 1918 — 1921

Hi Case moved to Richmond Heights after marrying widow of John Berg, who owned a large tract of land including and surrounding the Richmond Mall. He had served as Cuyahoga County Commissioner in 1901—1904. Before coming out here, he had been in the dairy business in Cleveland.

As first mayor, he guided the village through the period of organizing, when they had very little money with which to operate. However, changing from a township to a village made very little difference at first as the community was made up of farms and small acreage parcels.

Hi Case died in 1924 at the age of 77.



Hiram M. Case
First Mayor
1918 — 1921

Second Mayor William R. Zeitz 1922 — 1927



Mayor William R. Zeitz
1922 — 1927

It was 1915 when William Zeitz became a resident of Richmond Heights upon completion of his new home at 25608 Chardon Road. He was the owner of a finished lumber company.

Serving first as treasurer for two terms, he ran for mayor and carried out the duties of this office for three terms. He then ran for a council seat and served an additional term here. He was also a member of the Board of Education. He passed away in March of 1952.

One of the important events of his administration was the wiring of the village for electric power in 1923.

Third Mayor Wallis Slater 1928 — 1937

Wallis Slater was a native of Canada and came to Richmond Heights in 1924 when he purchased the house on Richmond Road which was the John Wenban farm. This house was on part of the 23-acre parcel which the county airport purchased from the village after the courts ruled in their favor.

He was credit manager of the Sterling & Welch Co. He served as President of the Cleveland Retail Credit Men's Co. He died in Feb. 1949.

He served during the depression years when many of the large property owners lost their farms due to unpaid taxes. The Village tried to give work to the more needy citizens, and in some cases, paid their rent.



Mayor Wallis Slater
1928 — 1937

Fourth Mayor Edison G. Williams 1938 — 1949



Mayor Edison G. Williams
1938 — 1949

The old white house on the corner of Richmond Road and Allendale Drive was the home of Ed Williams when he moved to Richmond Heights in 1910.

He was a charter member of the original volunteer fire department. First elected to council in 1931, he served three terms before running for mayor. He was active in the Stage Hands Union. He put on a big Christmas party every year at the school. He invited the whole village to attend and often included many acts from the downtown night spots and theaters. After 12 years, longer than any other Richmond Heights mayor, he died just eight days after going out of

office (January 9, 1950).

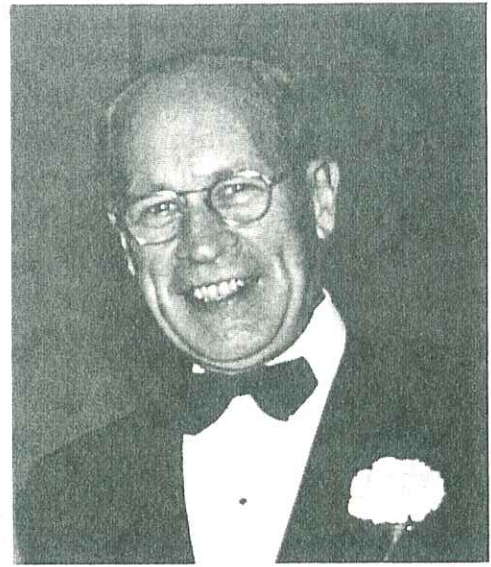
During his administration, the depression ended and World War II started. Much time was devoted to the war bond drives, civilian defense, and various agencies which assisted the war effort.

It was during the later part of his term that the East Ohio Gas Company started extending their lines into the Village.

Fifth Mayor Elwood H. Wills 1950 — 1957

"Al" Wills moved into Richmond Heights in 1948, occupying the home on the southeast corner of Richmond and Wilson Mills where the Hillcrest Square Shopping Center is today.

He was Vice President of the Murray-Ohio Manufacturing Company. He was elected mayor in a close 3-way race with the incumbent, Ed Williams, and Stanley Cornelius, former councilman. Each candidate had a slate of names for the various village positions, and a great deal of interest was shown in the election. He had to resign as mayor early in 1957 when his firm transferred him to Lawrenceburg, Tenn. He is now retired and a resident of Boca Raton, Florida.



**Mayor Elwood H. Wills
1950 — 1956**

The biggest achievement during his administration was piping the village for City water. This relieved a serious water shortage. It also resulted in large scale sub-dividing and the building of whole new streets of modern homes.

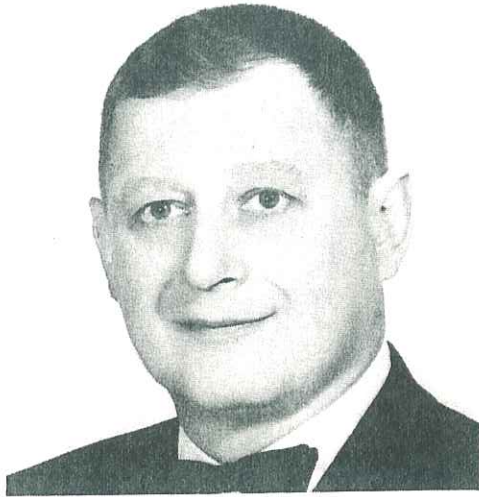
A cause of much controversy in 1955 was the reorganization of the volunteer fire department.

Mrs. Wills was active during the Korean War in organizing a service club made up of officials wives, wives of servicemen and other interested women. They kept in touch with the men of the village who were serving our country and sent gifts and food packages to them.

Sixth Mayor Stephen Opalich 1957 — 1959

The Opalich family moved to Richmond Heights in 1947, purchasing the home of William Zeitz, former mayor, at 25608 Chardon Road. Steve was the owner of the Non-Ferrous Metals Co. He was elected to council in 1949 and served until 1957 when, as President of Council, he became mayor when Mayor Wills resigned. Steve Opalich was elected in the fall of 1957 but did not seek re-election at the end of the term. He did, however, serve as Safety Director during the administration of Harry N. Peters.

The water program was completed while Opalich was mayor. Due to his efforts while councilman, and the efforts of Village Clerk Russell Hanslik, many property owners were persuaded to pay cash for their water connections, which meant that the project could move that much



Mayor Stephen Opalich
1957 – 1959

faster. It was during his administration that the County Commissioners brought suit against the Village to obtain the 23 acres of land which was in the path of the proposed runway extension.

Mayor Opalich took a great interest in developing the volunteer fire department, and the first large piece of equipment was purchased during his term. The \$37,000 truck was housed in a steel building which is now the service department.

Seventh Mayor Harry N. Peters 1960 — 1961

Harry Peters came to Richmond Heights with the first influx of people to buy in the new subdivisions. He bought the second house on Swetland Blvd. His profession was the selling and setting up of air conditioning and other equipment for retail stores.

He was first elected to the Board of Education, became chairman of the Charter Commission and served as Safety Director before being elected as the first mayor under City Status.

During his term, Bill Stahler was appointed as first full-time fire chief; John PianECKi was first full-time building inspector; the first apartment rezoning was passed for the Hillbrook Apartments; rezoning was done for the Hillcrest Square Shopping Center; and the airport land case was settled for \$38,000 with the City to keep 1.8 acres fronting on Richmond Road.

It could well be said that Mayor Peters guided Richmond Heights skillfully through the transition from a village to a city, operating under its new charter form of government.

He died in August, 1967.



Mayor Harry N. Peters
1960 – 1961

Eighth Mayor H. Donald Zimmerman 1962 to present

H. Donald Zimmerman moved his family to Richmond Heights in 1957, purchasing the home at 4932 Nan Linn Drive. He is an attorney with offices in downtown Cleveland.

He began his first term as mayor with a special swearing-in ceremony at the old City Hall with Common Pleas Judge John V. Corrigan administering the oaths to mayor and councilman. That first year he established a full-time service department, appointing Mike DeSan as director. A land use study was authorized by council that year, and the new city hall was started. 1963 brought a Charter Review Committee who came up with only two suggested changes, which were passed that November. In October, the new city hall was occupied.

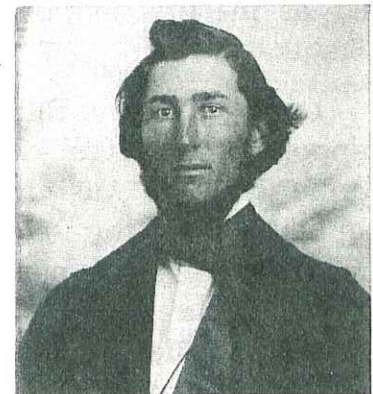
With the coming of the Richmond Mall, the State was requested to widen Richmond Road before the Mall's expected opening in the fall of 1966. Land was rezoned for the post office in 1966 and a recreation levy was passed for a recreation park and swimming pool. This year has brought the passage of a municipal income tax, similar to Cleveland's; the new snorkel truck for the fire department, and dedication of the post office. Zimmerman will run unopposed this November.

The Richmond Family

One of the first families to settle in this area was the Richmonds. Elihu Richmond came from Taunton, Massachusetts in 1815 at the age of 45, with his wife, Eliva Everett, and their six children. They came to Euclid Township by ox-drawn wagon, arriving in January. It was a hard cold winter with not much food, but plenty of wild life, including bears. The Richmonds purchased land from the Connecticut Land Company and built their home, a log cabin, which still stands today at 25625 Highland Road. It has been remodeled a number of times and covered with clapboard, but there are parts of the original building still visible.



**Mayor H. Donald Zimmerman
1962 –**



**Edmund Richmond
Great Grandfather of Earl**

As the children grew up and married, they received a share of the land. Edmund, who was 14 when they first arrived in Ohio, settled on the present site of the airport. He was Earl Richmond's great grandfather, and when Edmund died, the land was split between Earl's father and a brother.

Edmund, whose descendants are of most concern to us, married Olive Sprague and they had 8 sons and a daughter. Several of their boys fought in the Civil War, one as a drummer-boy, and are buried in Euclid Cemetery. One son, William, married Sophia Wenban in 1856 and they had 3 children. The Wenban family had come by oxen from Pennsylvania about the same time as Elihu Richmond. Charles, of the fourth generation, was born in a log cabin in 1859. He grew up and married Martha Langshaw, the fifth generation of Richmonds in this area became known. Earl was born on July 25, 1889. This is the Richmond we know today as our retired police chief. His service to Richmond Heights, and Euclid Township before that, was evidenced by his being a school bus driver, Marshall, and later as police chief.

Robbins Family

It was in the early 1800's that William Robbins, Sr. settled where the Alva Stevenson property is now at 562 Richmond Road. His tract of land ran from Highland Road to just south of the house. His home was a log cabin built in 1794 on the high land just behind where the Stevenson barns are now. He was the first to start a sandstone quarry. Stone from the quarries was used for building material and still may be seen in the foundations of some of the older homes here.

In 1837 his son Samuel built the present home. Rafters and various timber used in this house were cut at the Ferguson Saw Mill on Highland Road opposite Karl Drive. An 1874 map shows a cheese factory near the home of a later William Robbins at 506 Richmond Road, now the home of Mrs. John Stefancik.

The White Family

Ohio Land Records show that in the early 1800's, Joseph White owned a tract of land in the area between Chardon, Bishop, White and Brush Rds. His descendents settled on White Road and it was so named. Joseph White's son, Stephen, and his wife came to Ohio from New York in 1824 and settled on Chardon Road. When Stephen died, he willed his farm to his son, Francis. This is the area where the apartments and the hospital are now. Another son of Stephen was Cyphron who settled on the land just east of Bishop. The third son, Augustus also lived east of Bishop.

Augustus was the grandfather of Mrs. Alva (Gladys) Stevenson. Gladys is the only descendent of the White family still living in Richmond Heights.

The Stevenson Family

John Stevenson was born in 1815 in Rochester, England. He, his three brothers and widowed mother came to Cleveland in 1827 (Doan Avenue area). In 1837 John obtained the Stevenson property on Richmond Road through the Connecticut Land Company. He married Mary Slade, who had also come from England as a child, and they lived in the house now owned by Mrs. Lyle Braund, 507 Richmond Rd. (The house was built in 1828 copied from a picture brought from England). John and Mary had six sons, all who moved away except the two youngest, Darwin (Everett's father), and Staple (Alva's father). John died in 1893 and Darwin and Staple received parts of the farm. Staple and his wife, Lillian Kessler from Mayfield, built their home on the southern part of it, at 529 Richmond and Alva was born there. Later Staple traded his farm on the east side for one on the west side, then owned by Sidney Robbins at 562 Richmond Rd., so that he might own the large stone quarry on the Robbins property. This was about 1900. Staple operated this stone quarry as late as 1930. Many of the culverts and bridges in this area were made with stone from his quarry. The culvert between the City Hall and the School has his name on one of the stones showing he was the builder.



Culvert on Richmond Road - Between City Hall and School Properties built by Staple N. Stevenson with Stone from His Quarry.

Darwin also married and settled along Richmond Rd. One son, George, was a member of the volunteer fire department and also served on the Board of Education. Everett built a home at 495 Richmond and his daughter, Sarah is his only descendant still living in Richmond Heights.

Alva Stevenson was very much a part of this community. He was

appointed Road Commissioner in the early days of incorporation, and gradually added the task of collecting the rubbish. It was dumped in abandoned quarry holes on the Stevenson property. At first there were two collections a year! In 1942, records show that it took 10 hours to collect and dump rubbish from all of Richmond Heights, at a total cost of \$23.75. Most of the equipment used in his work around the village was his own—the village did own at one time a horsedrawn road scraper which was later drawn by a Fordson. Up to 1960 when Richmond Heights attained city status, the only two pieces of equipment were a tractor and a power lawn mower.

Alva died in 1962. Gladys White Stevenson carries on in the family home. They have three sons, Bruce, Ken and Harold who are today in the construction business, still using some of the equipment owned and used by their father. You'll find Gladys's name in the school story, as she served for many years, first as teacher, and later as librarian.

The Oviatt Family



Douglas G. Oviatt, Sr.
Developer of Fine Homesites

The Oviatt family came from Connecticut about 1820 and settled in the area now known as Bay Village on the west side of Cleveland. It is not known just when the Oviatt's purchased property in Richmond Heights, but records do show that the Richmond-Highland corner was purchased by the school in 1858 from the Oviatt family.

Douglas G. Oviatt, Sr. became mayor of South Euclid in 1932 and served in this capacity until 1945. It was in the 1940's that he started buying large tracts of land in Richmond Heights. His first sub-division was the lots along Monticello west of Richmond Road. The following year, 1943 he sectioned off residential lots along Wilson Mills just east of Richmond and moved to an area on the west side of Richmond north from Highland. Then in 1945 he purchased 125 acres from William Champney and developed Scottish Highlands. The Champney's were not residents although they had a summer home along the lake. Pictures from that year show a good-sized lake in the ravine between Douglas and Dumbarton, which he dubbed Loch Lomond. The old Richmond homestead 25625 Highland, became the home of Doug's daughter, Ruth,

who restored it, although some of the old timbers can still be seen. This was originally a log cabin which was later covered with siding.

Today Doug Oviatt Sr. lives an easy life on a wooded lot on Dundee, in the new area behind Cary Jay Blvd. His son, Douglas Jr., carries on the Oviatt name, and was elected to the Richmond Heights Council in 1949 to serve several terms.

The Agar—Speer Family

Mr. George Speer lives alone today in the family residence at 164 Brush Road, a home over 100 years old. His mother, Rose (Agar) Speer, who passed away in 1965 at the age of 91, was born in this house. Her mother came to America from England when she was only 10 years old. The family settled on Water Street (now West 3rd) in the heart of Cleveland. She married George Agar and they bought the present Brush Road property from Iliasa Goodman, who was one of the earliest settlers of this area. And so, Rose was born on Brush Road.

Rose Agar became Mrs. James Speer in 1912. They had only the one son, George. James died in 1942 so for the next 23 years, Rose kept house for her son.

Trebisky Family

Vincent Trebisky came to Cleveland from Prague, Bohemia in the mid 1800's, and lived on a farm at Euclid and E. 55th Street. In 1860 he bought 33 acres at the southwest corner of what is now Highland and Trebisky Road.

Vincent had two sons, James and Frank. When James was about 12 years old, he was a member of the Euclid band that played at the Euclid railroad station when President Lincoln stopped here in 1861. James served as president of the Northern Ohio Grape Growers Association; and served two terms on the first Council of Claribel Village. He had two sons, Edward and Alfred, and two daughters, Elvine Cov-

ert Rutland and Hattie Heinz Quiggle. The first son, Edward was on the fire department, a Euclid Township assessor, election board presiding



Elmer Trebisky
Only World War II Casualty

judge, and Justice of the Peace. His son, Laurence, was also a fireman and elected constable for several terms.

James's brother, Frank, had three sons and a daughter. Frank Jr. (nicknamed Jack) married Miss Elizabeth Marous in 1922. "Lizzie's" family had also immigrated from Bohemia in about 1881 and lived on Trebisky in the first house north of Monticello Blvd. Lizzie served for many years as the cafeteria manager at Richmond Heights School until her retirement several years ago. Jack was elected Marshal for a number of years, and his son, Frank, served on Council in 1948 and 1949.

The only Richmond Heights casualty in World War II was Jack's nephew Elmer.

There are no Trebisky's living in Richmond Heights today.

The Verbsky Family

Albert Verbsky still lives at 24801 Highland Road just around the bend leading to the new General Electric plant. His great grandparents were among the first settlers in Richmond Heights.

His great grandfather Joseph was born in Bohemia in 1795. He became a coal mine owner when still a young man, and sold it for \$20,000 in gold. With this, he sailed to America. The journey took six weeks by boat and 4 weeks by land. In 1861, he purchased 600 acres of wooded land on the top of Highland Road hill and built first a home, then a saw mill, and finally came barns and a cider mill. His family grew up and settled in the same area. Al was councilman for 22 years and his cousin, Roger, served 16 years. Today, Al's daughter, Alice, (Mrs. Jack Vrh) lives next door at 24777 Highland. The General Electric Company property was part of the Verbsky farm and was purchased in 1955.



Albert Verbsky
Councilman 24 Years
President of Council

Shebanek Family

John Shebanek's family came to this area in 1866 following the Civil War, and purchased a large tract of land running south from Highland Road. The house at 475 Trebisky Road is over 125 years old, and John was born there.

He married Hazel Somnitz, who was also of Bohemian parents, immigrating to this area over 100 years ago. They were married in

St. Paul's Church on Chardon Road, the first Catholic Church in the entire Western Reserve. John has always been a farmer, and is still doing a little farming today. He found time for other activities, though, serving on the fire department for 20 years, three of these as Fire Chief. He was also a policeman, and school board member. Some may remember him as a school bus driver.

John's brother, Joe, who ran the farm with him for many years, was elected to the first council in 1918 and served for 12 years. He also

was a member of the volunteer fire department for almost 25 years. A sister, Theresa (Mrs. Joseph Rehar) taught at Chardon Road School.



John Shebanek
*Former Fire Chief—Board of Education
 President—Has Lived in City Longer than
 Any Other Person*

Gradually the Shebanek acreage has been shrinking, as new needs enter the picture. Most of the road frontage now has homes and just 4 years ago, John and Hazel sold 4 acres behind their orchard to add to another 4 acres behind the homes to the south to make a future school site. School Board plans were changed and now the Recreation Board has the temporary use of this land for ball diamonds.

Court Family

James Court owned a large parcel of land at the top of Highland Road hill on the present site of the Georgetown Apartments. He built a house there in 1866, which was torn down in 1966 to make way for the apartments.

In 1901, his son, Charles Court, sold the farm and bought 64 acres on Highland Road near Harris. His son, Charles Court Jr. served on the first Council. He was also Vice President of the Northern Ohio Grape Growers Association. In 1926 he moved to Elyria.



Charles Court
*Last Surviving Member
 of First Council*

Charles Court Jr. was the last surviving member of the first Council. He came back to Richmond Heights in July 1966 to visit and became very much interested in commemorating the 50th anniversary of Richmond Heights. Some of his memoirs are included in this book. He was

again present at the opening of the Mall in September 1966, but died suddenly in April 1967.

Charles Court recalled the landing of a double-winged plane by a Lieutenant of the French Army on a pasture at Highland and Richmond during World War I. The Frenchman was here on a mission to sell war bonds, and was scheduled to land in Willowick, but missed the mark. The plane was guarded by Edgar Heiss, the Village's first marshal.

Ironically, Charles Court Sr. became the first air-age casualty in Richmond Heights. In 1923 when he was leading some cows to the barn, a low flying plane frightened them and one of the cows jumped on him and stabbed him with her horns. He died a few hours later.

Another member of the Court family who served his community was Charles' cousin, Bert Court. Besides being a volunteer fireman, he served on council for a number of years.

Keyerleber Family

Frederick Karl and Regina Keyerleber came to Cleveland in 1851 from Freidenteil, Germany with several brothers and sisters. They lived on the present site of the terminal tower where the older children were born. In 1860 they went back to Germany and returned to Cleveland in 1880. One brother, Charles, served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Frederick Keyerleber operated a wagon shop on Woodland Ave. for a number of years. In 1881 they bought 50 acres on the corner of Chardon & Richmond from Simeon Harvey who had purchased it from N. Merrille in 1877. This included both sides of Chardon & Richmond and all of the present business area around the corners and Brushview Road. This was formerly known as Pelton's Corners, but was later called Keyerleber's Corners. This property also included a cemetery. 43/100 acres was set aside for a cemetery and the right-of-way to Chardon Rd. The cemetery was in the approximate area of Lawson's Store at 218 Richmond Rd., just north of Chardon. There were some head stones with the name "Gray" on them and the date of death 1817, but they have all disappeared. It is believed that they were taken away to be used for walks.

Two brothers and two sisters remained in the area. Mrs. Fred Rieger (Elizabeth) lived at the point at Chardon & Brush where the home of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Neustedt now stands. Mrs. Anton Strohm (Frieda) lived just east of the Richmond Heights Hospital. Paul G. retained the original property and Frederick R. lived at 188 Brush in the house now occupied by his granddaughter, Mrs. Harry Daus. Frederick R. served several years on the Euclid Township Board of Education and Paul G. served as tax assessor, Village Treasurer for 12 years, and Richmond Heights Bd. of Ed. for 8 years. His son, Herman, served on the Council

for 18 yrs. Ernest was on the fire dept. for 25 yrs. and Fred W. was fireman for 25 yrs., Village Treasurer for 3 yrs., Village Clerk 2 yrs., and Clerk of Council for 2 yrs.

The following descendants of Frederick K. Keyerleber still live in Richmond Hts.: Ernest, Ann, Fred W., Philip and Barbara Keyerleber, and Alberta and Don Daus.

The Berg Family

John Berg came to this country from Germany and settled on Richmond Road in 1890. He purchased 153 acres on Richmond & Wilson Mills and 65 more acres where Anderson School now stands.

He operated the stone quarries at the rear of his property (now behind Faith Church) and did the mason work on some of the Gordon Park bridges and some along Route 20. He also farmed a portion of his land, and trained horses for the elite carriage trade along Euclid Avenue. John passed away in 1901 and his widow later married Hiram Case who was to become the first mayor of Richmond Heights.



Ronald W. Berg
Solicitor 25 Years

John Berg's son, George, continued in his father's footsteps. The home was just south of Faith church and George and his wife lived there, and then later built several other homes south of their original home. They lived there until the Richmond Mall took over that whole corner. George served on the first Board of Education for 4 years and then ran for Council where he spent 20 years as Councilman.

George's son, Ronald (nicknamed Bill) served on the fire department and was Village Solicitor for 25 years, through 1959.

Henry Berg (who was John's brother) also settled in Richmond Heights, but his farm was on the corner of Highland and Richmond. His son, Frank, was a school board member for the first 12 years of its existence. Frank and his son, Maurice, were both on the volunteer fire department, and Maurice was elected Village Treasurer in 1934-35.

Hanslik Family

Joseph Hanslik Sr. came from Bohemia to Richmond Heights in 1890. He purchased land from the Shebanek farm on the east side of Trebisky Road. Today the parcel straddles the city boundary between Richmond Heights and South Euclid. Two sons, Ed and Frank, still live

in the house which is just over the line into South Euclid. A third son, Charles, taught for a number of years in the old Chardon Rd. School. Joseph Jr. served on the first Board of Education and was re-elected to serve a total of 12 years. He was also a member of the volunteer fire department and was custodian for the school in his later years. Joseph Jr. had two sons, Floyd and Russell who were both volunteer firemen. Russell is well know for his civic responsibilites — serving as Village Treasurer for 8 years, Clerk for 14 years, and appointed Finance Director for the first two years of City status.

The old school house on the Corner of Highland & Richmond has many memories for Russ Hanslik. His grandfather, Joseph Sr. was a stone mason who helped build the Maple Grove School. Russ attended both school and Sunday School classes there; he called it "home" for a number of years after the new school was built and his father was school custodian (the school board sold the Maple Grove School site to the Village in 1940 with the stipulation that they were to keep it for the custodian's residence for the next 10 years). After 1950 when it became the Village Hall, Russ, as clerk, kept a strict account of Council doings there.

Joseph Jr's oldest son, Raymond, is the only Hanslik still living in Richmond Heights today.



Russell W. Hanslik
*24 Years Service — Treasurer, Clerk,
 Finance Director*

Harms Family

Louis Harms owned a large vineyard in Put-In-Bay, Ohio but moved to Euclid Township in the late 1800's because it was noted for its good grape crops. His property began at the Euclid Ave.—Chardon Rd. Corner; on the present site of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Shrine. He put his farm into grapes and also had a wine press. He was buried at the top of Chardon Road hill and a small building with a steeple was built over his grave. However, his remains were moved to Euclid Cemetery when the property was sold.

Louis Jr. had a farm further out on Chardon Road and it extended across the ravine to the present Harms Road. He served as a township trustee and also as mayor of Euclid Village.

A second son, Charles, remained on the farm on the hill. He was a county commissioner at one time and was also a Euclid councilman.

Mrs. Louis Baeckler, Charles' daughter, recalls how Harms Road got its name. When Charles Harms was a county commissioner, his was the first name on the list, so this is the name they gave the first street that they put in.

Henry Schroeder



Henry Schroeder
49 Years Service in Village –
Schools – Township

No person had as much influence on the formation and operation of Richmond Heights for so long a period of time as Henry Schroeder.

He was born in Cleveland in 1864 on E. 14th Street opposite the Erie Cemetery. Both parents were from Germany. Henry married Miss Johanna Rolf and shortly thereafter in 1895 moved to a farm on Richmond Road where he specialized in dairy farming. He became a member of the Euclid Township Bd. of Education and was on the Board at the time of incorporation. He was active in this event and became Village Clerk for the next 24 years. At the same time he served on the Richmond Heights Board of Education. He is probably one of the few people in the country who served in both capacities at the same time.

Curtiss-Wright Corporation purchased his farm in 1929 to start operations, which brought much controversy. He moved to 610 Richmond and after retiring from his dairy farming, was known as "Uncle Henry" and was always available in the daytime when urgent decisions had to be made regarding either school or village affairs.

Phypers Family

The name Phypers is dotted throughout the history of Richmond Heights. Their huge home at 264 Richmond Road was the unofficial teenage center for the north end of the newly formed village. The third floor was a huge recreation room and was the scene of many neighborhood parties. George Phypers, now 94 yrs. of age, was then Vice President of the Neale-Phypers Insurance Company and believed in progress and in the future.

He was the first in town to own a car. When radios became available, he would invite the neighbors over to listen to his latest model. His home had electricity which was generated by a Delco light plant powered

with a gasoline engine. The Beechnut (Chardon Rd.) School was just across the ravine, so he had wires strung to the school house so they could hold special school programs and community "home days".

He put out a mimeographed newspaper called the Megaphone for about 5 years. He served faithfully on the Village Council for 32 years, several of which were as its president.



George Phypers
Council 32 Years – President of Council

Mrs. Maude Phypers started many clubs which would be equivalent to the present 4-H clubs. She was the first woman to serve on the school board.

Of their 3 sons and 3 daughters, only Thurlow and June still lives here. He was a charter member of the original fire department and a part-time policeman.

Their present home at 264 Richmond is actually their second. The family moved here in 1908 but their home burned to the ground in 1917, and was replaced by the present building.

Swetland Family

The only piece of land which was referred to as an "estate" was the Swetland Estate on Richmond Road across from the Airport. Truman Monroe Swetland purchased the property in the early 1900's and set about to remodel the house. It was an L-shaped two-story frame building built in 1842 by Levi Richmond and the family softened the lines by adding the huge porch which extended beyond the main building. For the past 12 years, it has been owned by the Frank Mavecs who have remodeled and redecorated the more than 125 year old home.

The Swetlands were very much against the airport. When Curtiss-Wright first opened the field, the family became concerned with the "low-flying and dangerous aircraft." They did manage to get a court injunction to stop the flying, but for many years, planes were towed in, repaired, and towed out again. During the depression years, no activity existed, but when the County bought the land in 1946—they succeeded in getting the injunction lifted. Their suite against Curtiss-Wright resulted in many laws being passed to govern the operation of airports and the case was widely quoted.

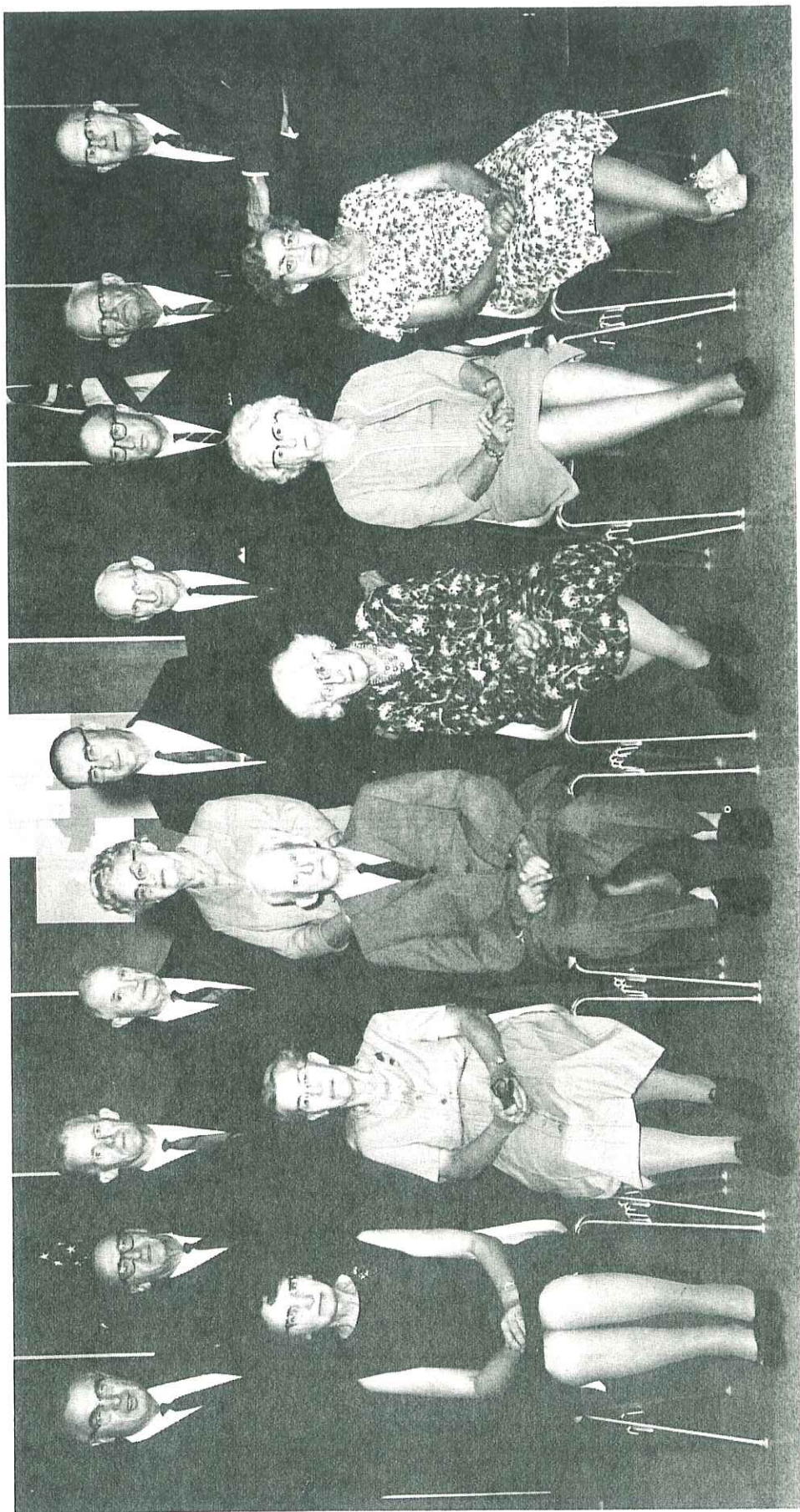


Truman Swetland in Rear —R.H. Swetland Driving a 1902 Mobile Steamer

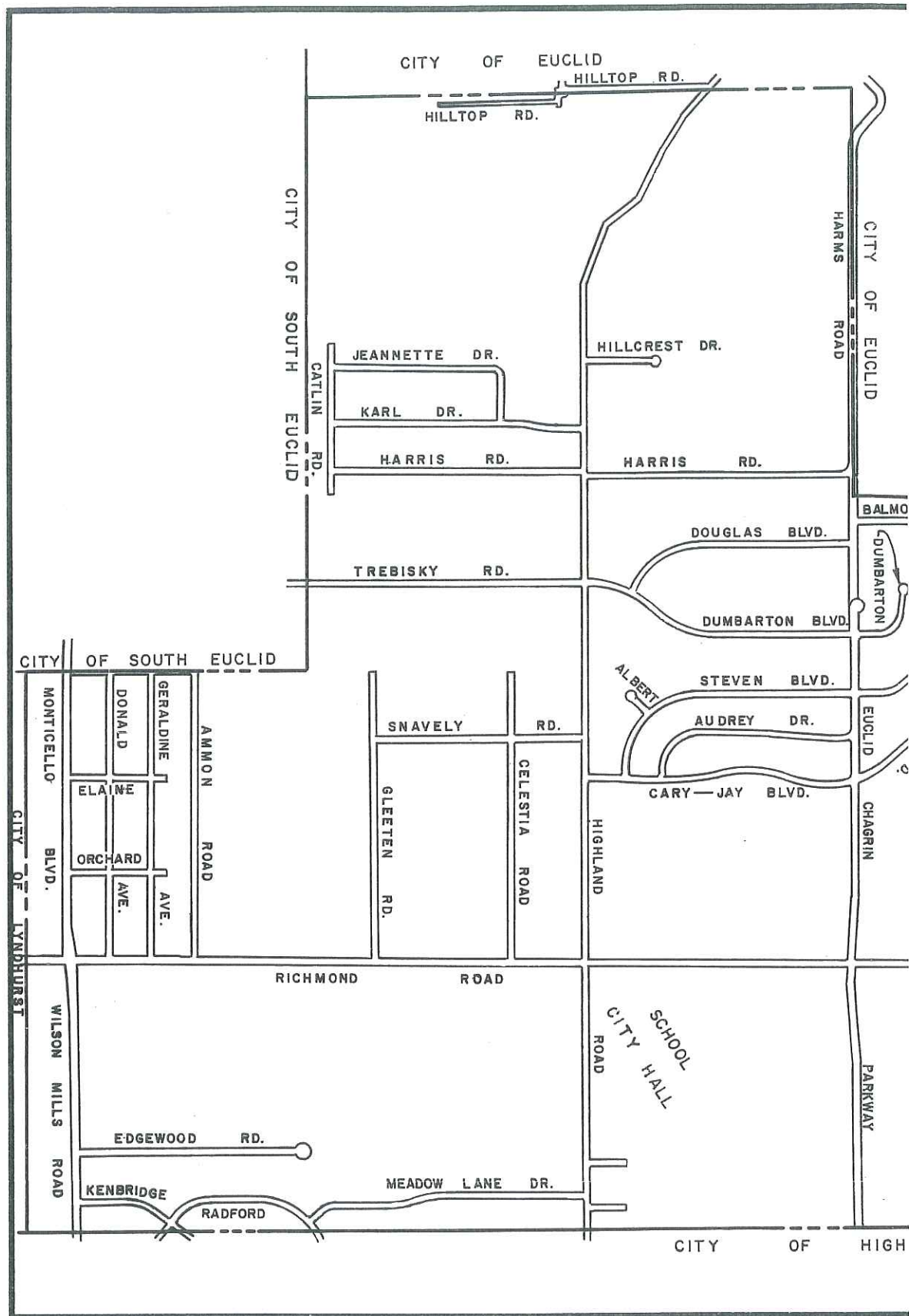
Residents of Richmond Heights who lived here in 1917

Raymond Hanslik	2071 Idlehurst Dr.
*Miss Ann Keyerleber	26300 Chardon Rd.
*Ernest Keyerleber	26300 Chardon Rd.
*Fred Keyerleber	26328 Chardon Rd.
George Phypers	264 Richmond Rd.
Miss June Phypers	264 Richmond Rd.
Thurlow Phypers	266 Richmond Rd.
Earl Richmond	427 Richmond Rd.
Florence Richmond (Mrs. Earl)	427 Richmond Rd.
Mrs. Frank Sadosky	173 Brush Rd.
Hazel Shebanek (Mrs. John)	475 Trebisky Rd.
*John Shebanek	475 Trebisky Rd.
*George Speer	164 Brush Rd.
Gladys Stevenson (Mrs. Alva)	562 Richmond Rd.
*Albert Verbsky	24801 Highland Rd.
Ernest Marvar	263 Richmond Rd.

* Born in Richmond Heights, Ohio



Present Residents Who Lived in Richmond Heights in 1917
 Rear—F. Keyerleber, E. Marvar, T. Phypers, E. Richmond, F. Richmond, E. Keyerleber, A. Verbsky, R. Hanslik, J. Shebanek, G. Speer
 Front—A. Keyerleber, J. Phypers, G. Phypers, L. Sadosky, G. Stevenson, H. Shebanek



CITY OF
RICHMOND HEIGHTS

1967

