Religion, Reform, Race (and Rockefeller):
Cleveland History Viewed Through the Lens of Philanthropy
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"Synthetic narratives must explore patterns of relations between various groups variously defined, not exclusively by the holy trinity of race, class, and gender. These relations will be relations of power, but they are embedded in culture and institutions, and they are mediated, at least in some cases, by larger ideals, even historically specific American ideals."

— Thomas Bender, 1994

I welcome this opportunity to speak about Cleveland and philanthropy because it provides an opportunity to present an argument that has evolved from over fifteen years of studying the city's history: I believe that Cleveland's history would be far better understood if it was deeply informed by the city's philanthropic impulse and the cultural framework of that impulse. I will focus my remarks on religion, reform, and race in Cleveland history, and because so much of my research has focused on University Circle and the philanthropic activities of John D. Rockefeller I will draw liberally on them to illustrate my remarks.

In general I believe that what I have to say will suggest:
(1) that the physical form of University Circle—its buildings, landscape and boundaries—can be understood as in large part shaped by concerns of religion, race, and reform; and
(2) that the obvious successes and accomplishments of philanthropy have been significantly limited by its inability to work outside of, or overcome, some of the deep divisions in Cleveland society.

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Religion has undoubtedly been the most important cultural force in Cleveland history. The overwhelming majority of Clevelanders arrived here with or were born into religious faiths of Judeo-Christian heritage, and a large portion acted out their faiths in part by the support of religious institutions. For Clevelanders the philanthropic impulse often has been almost inseparable from expressions of faith. Several years ago, in his study of antebellum benevolence in Cleveland, Michael McTigue asserted that:

For evangelical Protestants, benevolence was one of the fruits of conversion—virtually an outward sign of inward grace—since promoting the good of one's fellow creatures advanced the glory of God. Cleveland humanitarianism reflected this evangelical foundation. James A. Thome, minister of Ohio City's First Presbyterian Church, saw "the true idea of Christianity as a union of piety and philanthropy. The Second Presbyterian Church's Manual suggested that members ask themselves, "Is my religion merely negative, not doing any harm, or am I positively active in devising and executing schemes of goodness?" Similar sentiments were expressed by Baptist and Episcopal ministers.

This was the framework of religious expression in which John D. Rockefeller grew to maturity, and which led him in 1855, at age 16, to donate about 10% of his earliest earnings to his church, missionary activities, and the poor. As he grew wealthy he continued this pattern. This pattern of commitment of time or money, or both, he held in common with a large number of other leaders of industrial Cleveland, giving it one of strongest philanthropic traditions in the nation.

The religious framework for the philanthropic impulse was acted out in the 19th century largely within institutional frameworks, both the traditional one of churches, and the newer forms of associations that de Tocqueville celebrated as the marks of American culture.

In Cleveland the Old Stone (Presbyterian) Church, located on Public Square, was perhaps the model of an individual church as a well-spring of philanthropy. Any number of important projects sprang from its pulpit and pews, including temperance organizations and social settlements. One of the least known of them, however, is its influence on the moving of Western Reserve College to Cleveland.

The standard history of that episode, in which the 50-year-old college in Hudson was enticed to move to Cleveland by the gifts of Amasa Stone, makes it appear that the college moved largely for financial reasons—both its own penury and Stone's beneficence. But my reading of the sources indicates that Hiram Haydn, the minister of Old Stone, personally persuaded Stone to commit himself to the project.

Haydn was a graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York, and filled pulpits in Connecticut before being called to Painesville (Ohio) in 1866. He quickly became active in various eleemosynary orga-
nizations in the region and his speaking talents were so appreciated that when he was called to be associate pastor at Old Stone in 1872 he was appointed without delivering the usual trial sermon.⁵

Old Stone was a leader in the closely-knit group of Presbyterian churches in Cleveland that claimed a large number of leading citizens as members. Amasa Stone, Sereno P. Fenn, and Samuel Williamson, Jr. were pillars of the church: and Leonard Case rented a pew and left a portion of his estate to Old Stone. Haydn unhesitatingly urged on this congregation the philanthropic use of their wealth, once titling his sermon “The Getting and Spending of Money,” and frequently urging his congregation to support a re-formist agenda, including temperance.⁶

Haydn’s interests brought him in contact with Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio, about 25 miles southwest of Cleveland. A product of the Presbyterian-Congregational Plan of Union, an agreement made by the denominations in 1801 to join in the creation of congregations in the midwest, the college was opened in 1826 to train ministers for the region. Western Reserve College never was financially healthy, and in the 1870s had declining enrollments. Haydn, who was elected a trustee of the college in the 1870s, envisioned a way of solving both problems at once by moving the college to Cleveland.

Haydn’s plan was to find a wealthy individual who would guarantee the costs of moving the college, and after two years of effort he was able to persuade Amasa Stone, a trustee of his church, to assume the responsibility.⁷ Stone had made his fortune in bridge-building and railroad construction, and had expanded his interests into banking and the iron industry. He already had demonstrated a philanthropic dimension by funding buildings for the Home for Aged Women and the City Industrial School. In 1880 Stone agreed to assume the cost of the college’s removal to Cleveland but only under the businessman’s terms that he be given effective control of the board of trustees and that the undergraduate college be named after his son, Adelbert.

Most important for my story, however, the religious side to the establishment of Western Reserve in Cleveland did not end with the Haydn-Stone connection. Stone’s third stipulation for his philanthropy was that the site for the college be adjacent to the new Case School of Applied Science, just-founded but without a campus. In the matter of a site Stone was willing to follow the lead of a group of public-spirited citizens who raised money for the joint site by a subscription raised from Cleveland’s business elite.

It has often been thought—if historians have paid any attention to the matter at all—that the selection of the site across from Wade Park was made largely because Martha Ford and Liberty Holden were willing to offer their adjacent properties for a good price. But I think that the decision was framed by the temper-ance commitments of many of the principals.

Case Western Reserve University is located on land that was until 1868 part of the township of East Cleveland, and which from 1868 until its annexation by Cleveland in 1872 was the village of East Cleveland. This area was a hotbed of the temperance movement in Cleveland—just as the city was a focus of the national movement.⁸ Liberty Holden was a major figure Cleveland temperance, as were Martha and Horatio Ford, Holden’s neighbors. Another strong temperance advocate in East Cleveland was William Halsey Doan, descendant of the original settlers in the Circle area, and a petroleum merchant allied with John D. Rockefeller. One of Doan’s great accomplishments for temperance in Cleveland was the purchase and closing of the Wright House at Euclid and 107th in 1873, which had been the only tavern in the Wade Park area; the Women’s Christian Temperance Union replaced its libations with an ice-water fountain on Euclid Avenue, and Liberty Holden opened an alcohol-free family hotel on the site of the former tavern.⁹

While it seems clear that the future site of Case and Reserve was regarded as safe for temperance, it is more difficult to show that the group of men involved in the siting of the schools were dominated by the temperance mentality. I have looked at the thirty-nine men and one woman who were trustees of either Case or Reserve in 1881, or who donated $2000 or more to the land-purchase fund; and I have searched standard sources for evidence of their association with the temperance movement.¹⁰ For most of them I cannot find such association, but since men were supporters of temperance while women were the activists who received the publicity, it is perhaps not surprising that it is difficult to establish such associations.

Nonetheless, some of the most important figures in the group have strong temperance identities, including three who were trustees of both schools, Truman F. Handy, Joseph Perkins, and Samuel Williamson, Jr.; Alva Bradley on the Case board, and William Halsey Doan and Liberty Holden on the Reserve board; and the majority of the donors of $2000 or more to the land-purchase fund, such as Perkins, Bradley, Doan, Holden, Ford, John D. Rockefeller, Ahira Cobb, and Stephen Harkness.¹¹ I think that it is arguable that the area in which we are meeting was selected for the joint Reserve-Case campus

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because it was free of demon rum and therefore was a safe place for the education of young people.

Much of the rest of the history of University Circle has similar strong connections to religious values and missions, such as the immense symbolism of Lake View Cemetery; the founding of Alta House; the collections of art works given to the Art Museum; and, not least, the presence of so many churches and church-related institutions in the Circle, now and in the past.

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The matter of race in Cleveland remains, as it does for the nation, as it was when W.E.B. DuBois wrote in 1903 that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.” I want to use the broadest definition of race, much as late 19th-century and early 20th-century leaders of Cleveland did, and look at the differentiation between those who were, and those who were not, northern European Protestants. To use the most common terms, I want to address both race and ethnicity.

Cleveland history, and therefore each citizen of Cleveland, suffers from an inability to confront directly the dank mythologies of race with the purifying air of historical evidence. We have Kenneth Kusmer’s remarkably direct study of African-American history at the turning point, A Ghetto Takes Shape, and little else that confronts the realities of racial and ethnic divisions in the city.

Recently I came across a document that suggests that the typical histories of uplift and assimilation of ethnic groups are a weak representation of reality. In 1943 Rockefeller Foundation officer John Marshall came to Cleveland to pursue his interest in developing the study of regional history, and interviewed several Clevelanders representative of ethnic communities. He found that outside of politics there was an extremely strong divide between the northern European Protestant leadership and the rest of the city’s citizens. His informants described to him a pattern of severe social and economic discrimination against first- and second-generation central and eastern European immigrants, and against African-Americans, while he was told that new arrivals from northern Europe were readily accepted into the corridors of power and influence.

If we are to address the divisive matter of race and ethnicity frankly in the history of Cleveland, we must deal with some of the ugliest and sometimes dangerous aspects of human relations. University Circle provides several illustrations of the circumstances and consequences of these divisions.

About 1905 Jeptha Wade’s grandson, Jeptha Homer Wade, decided to lay out his land to the north and east of Wade Park as an elite residential community. The advertising brochure for what became known as the Wade Allotment claimed that

Every known improvement of the highest grade has been installed and the building restrictions for every lot have been worked out with one object in view, the ultimate beauty and protection of the entire allotment. These restrictions, together with the natural advantages of the property, can produce only one result, and that is a model residence section, for many years to come.

What was not made public in the brochure was that each deed had in it restrictive covenants requiring that the once purchased a lot could be resold only to Caucasians and protestants. Leaders of Cleveland business and industry who moved into the Allotment, and who for a generation made it the most elite residential area in the city, later discussed agreements to restrict future ownership of the houses by African-American institutions. Apparently the only residents of the Allotment who did not fit the covenant’s terms were the Irish servants who had quarters in the houses.

In The Making of a Ghetto, Kusmer discusses how a perceived incursion on the Wade Allotment was treated in 1925. Dr. Charles Garvin, a leading African-American physician, decided to build a house on the edge of the Wade Allotment, on Wade Park Avenue near Mistletoe Road. Kusmer writes that

Whites...used every conceivable tactic in their attempt to keep Garvin out of the neighborhood. While the house was being built, they harassed and threatened the workmen. Once construction was completed and the Garvins had occupied their new home, whites dynamited the house twice in an effort to force the ... doctor to leave.

Garvin and his family had the courage to stay, although a group of ten Allotment residents (including Garretson Wade, Jeptha Homer Wade’s son) attempted to form a syndicate to repurchase Garvin's lot and any future lots obtained by “persons who are considered undesirable neighbors, particularly persons not of the Caucasian race.” Those residents thought their action was “absolutely essential to prevent the rapid and serious deterioration of the entire neighborhood.” These are unmistakable statements of an exclusive concept of neighborhood and community.
This point of view seldom has been stated so clearly, but it has continued to inform at least some of the leadership of the Circle. We gain some insight into its survival though the views of Newton Baker, a two-term reform mayor of Cleveland, and a trustee of Western Reserve University from 1916 to 1937. One historian has noted that Baker's "thinking about blacks was hedged with contradictions ... he publicly espoused the rhetoric of intergroup tolerance and supported an educational campaign against prejudice and discrimination. Yet he ... looked upon blacks as an 'infant race' that needed guidance." Observing the heavy African-American migration to Cleveland in the 1920s and 1930s, Baker wrote to an acquaintance in 1935 that the Central district of Cleveland was inhabited by

[The] colored people who came here a dozen years ago.[They] brought with them their habits, which were better adapted to cabin life in the palmetto swamps than they were to the sanitary and hygienic needs of congested life in an industrial city. The houses they took over had recently been vacated by a fairly sturdy lot of people who respected their houses and kept them in repair. After ten years of the new occupancy, they had to be torn down to keep them from falling down or crawling away.

Baker's comment was not eccentric in this city: it was echoed forty years later in 1976 by Philip Porter, long-time reporter and editor with the Plain Dealer, who published a view of the recent history of Hough and Wade Park was just as defining as Baker's remarks on the Central district, and as codification of twisted history hardly has been exceeded in the annals of Cleveland:

The Hough-Wade Park area, once a fashionable residential section full of big apartments and fine single homes [by 1960] had been deteriorating rapidly. Large numbers of uneducated blacks, whose jobs as cotton pickers in the South had been eliminated by automation, had moved into Hough-Wade Park, doubling up with relatives; and by the mid-fifties, this whole section was fast becoming a slum....

One might be tempted to dismiss even Porter as a crank, if a highly-influential one, were it not for the recent echoes of Porter's words—referring to the occupancy of Hough by "an influx of uneducated, unskilled Southern blacks who had come North seeking factory jobs"—in the official history of the Cleveland Foundation. This kind of myth-ridden, divisive history seems to have a greater currency than the realities that African-Americans have been citizens of Cleveland from its earliest years, that the African-Americans who came to Cleveland in the first half of this century often were brought or lured here by firms wanting to employ them—particularly during wartime, that African-Americans were not less-educated, less-skilled, or less-attuned to urban lifestyles than any other immigrant groups that came to Cleveland, and that African-Americans have been limited by discriminatory practices to living in the least desirable, and most constricted dwellings in the city.

Nonetheless, it has been the Baker-Porter, we-they version of history that has tended to shape the current institutional and geographic legacy of race relations in the Circle and has set the stage for the development of the image of the Circle as a dangerous and crime-ridden area, and image that became current in the 1950s when the 105th and Euclid area became a site where whites and Blacks mixed. The most sensational case that shaped Cleveland attitudes was the 1966 rape and murder of a member of the Cleveland Orchestra chorus whose body was found at the south end of the Wade Park Lagoon. The ensuing newspaper publicity strongly suggested (though no one ever was arrested for the crime) that the perpetrator was a Black male from the Hough neighborhood—a suggestion that set the crime in the context of the historically volatile and stereotyped image of Black men victimizing white women. It is no wonder that when a campus safety committee of CWRU students and administrators convened in 1968 their report revealed that seemed most daunting by being "accosted by Negroes" (as they put it), and in the bluntest "we-they" terms argued that the Circle's private police force must be physically able to thwart the attempts of Hough toughs to operate criminally within the Circle. They must also possess the patience, intelligence, and discretion to deal with exuberant students and eccentric faculty members without alienating the academic community.

"We" are "exuberant" or "eccentric"; "they" are "toughs" and criminals.

Other ethnic relationships in the Circle have been quite as discriminatory, if not so fearful. Jewish Clevelanders found that they were not welcome when in 1905 the leaders of the Excelsior Club, a Jewish social organization, selected a site on Euclid Avenue between Western Reserve University's mens' and women's campuses. President Thwing of Reserve tried to block the sale by asking the trustees of the future art museum, then attempting to locate the site of the museum somewhere in the Wade tract, to declare
that the potential Excelsior site lay on a crucial accessway. The leaders of the club had political connections to Mayor Tom Johnson, however, and his support allowed them to proceed with the building. It is a great irony that the club's building was sold to the University in 1931 and the trustees renamed it Thwing Hall—the designation it carries today.28

The leaders of the Circle institutions also reacted negatively to the perceived incursions of the Italian community in adjacent Murray Hill. Although in the 1880s the daughter of the president of Western Reserve University had participated in the initial social missionary activity on the Hill, many leaders of the Circle probably shared the anxiety expressed in a Cleveland religious periodical of 1900 that the Hill's residents were "in manners, language and sympathies as un-American as though they still resided in their native lands."29

In 1914 the burgeoning Italian population across the Nickel Plate Railroad worried one of the Western Reserve University trustees who raised the old shibboleth regarding the possible decline of property values of the residences that the University owned on Adelbert and Cornell roads if the Italian "invasion having reached the railroad ... leak[s] across."30 The next year an agent of the University asked Vincenzo Campanella, the owner of abutting property, to be "very careful as to whom he sold the property." Campanella promised to sell only to Western Reserve University "or someone endorsed by the University."31 This kind of alarmism persisted in the Circle and could lead to absurd situations. In 1927 an officer of the Cleveland Museum of Art requested police protection for the museum during the hubbub over the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in Boston, even though he admitted that the museum had "received no threats or rumors of trouble."32

While my examples may not be persuasive, I think that they make clear that philanthropy in Cleveland, and in University Circle, which often is associated with rhetoric of universal brotherhood, has been riven with matters of race and ethnicity. Truly, the geographic and institutional shape of the Circle today—as well as Cleveland at large—is in significant ways determined by the interaction of race, ethnicity, and philanthropy.33

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Reform is a slippery term in American history, and this is not the place to pursue its historiography, but it is important to point out that philanthropy in Cleveland has supported largely conservative reforms—attempts to restore society to a remembered past or to bring it back into equilibrium.34 The temperance and settlement house movements, and urban planning are such conservative reforms.

University Circle as a whole can be seen as the product of reform-minded philanthropy. There is relatively little here that can be understood primarily as monument-building on the one hand, or eccentricity on the other. The Circle's institutions were by and large created by people who thought that they knew how to change some part of the world for the better. I already have pointed out that the very siting of the ancestral institutions of Case Western Reserve University—which gave us the term University Circle—probably was due to the temperance sympathies of the prominent individuals involved. There are similar stories to tell about how desires to serve the especially needy channeled the philanthropic acts of other Clevelanders.

The Cleveland Music School Settlement was founded in 1912 by Almeda C. Adams, daughter of a Baptist minister. Losing her sight within a few months of her birth, Adams was educated at the Ohio School for the Blind and later at the New England Conservatory of Music, where she was partly supported by gifts from John D. Rockefeller. In 1901 she returned to Cleveland, and began teaching music at three settlement houses—Central Friendly Inn, Hiram House, and Alta House. Possibly through her membership in the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church ("the Rockefeller church"), or through her service at Alta House (the "Rockefeller settlement house"), John D. Rockefeller took a continued interest in her career and gave her credibility in philanthropic circles.

When Adams decided in 1911 that she wanted to start a settlement devoted to music, she presented the idea directly to Adella Prentiss Hughes, the leading musical promoter in Cleveland. Hughes asked Adams to address the Fortnightly Club on the subject, and that group set up a committee which in 1912 established the Cleveland Music School Settlement. Its stated purpose then as now was to provide excellent instruction to musically-talented youths without regard to their ability to pay, and to contribute generally to the musical life of the city. Its unstated purpose was to train the children of immigrants to appreciate the music of the cultured, and thereby to draw the new generation away from alien traditions. Within a few years the settlement counted the children of eighteen different nationalities in its classes, and it took an
early interest in reaching into the African-American community. First operating out of the Goodrich House in downtown Cleveland, it moved to the fringe of the Circle in 1922, and then into the Wade Allotment in 1938.

Urban planning is an indirect kind of reform that intends to benefit all citizens by bringing physical order out of the chaotic results of an individualist-capitalist society. Certainly University Circle grew without significant forethought for most of its existence. The earliest effective step was the creation of the University Improvement Company in 1918 in order to control the development of the southerly vista of the new Cleveland Museum of Art, and to create a westerly buffer zone for the Circle. Numerous parcels of land were assembled to sell to acceptable institutions, and a uniform cornice height was set for the buildings. While only a few of the sites were filled with new buildings before the company went out of business—John Hay High School and Epworth-Euclid United Methodist Church among them—the plan was successful in drawing a westward line to the Circle.

It was not until the 1950s that a comprehensive plan to reform the Circle was begun. Elizabeth Ring Mather had a long connection with the beautification of the Circle by that time. She was active in the Garden Club of Cleveland, and in the 1920s helped raise money for and direct the construction of the Fine Arts Garden in front of the Museum of Art at the north end of Wade Park Lagoon. Subsequently she was a founder of the Garden Center of Greater Cleveland and worked with a landscape architect to lay out the Center's own gardens, located at the other end of the Lagoon.

At the death of her husband in 1951 she directed much of his estate to the creation of a foundation that was in part focused on supporting Circle institutions and providing for their exterior maintenance. Typical of her endeavors was the "Ivy Project Committee" she headed, which planted ivy along Adelbert Road and Euclid Avenue.

Deeply immersed in the affairs of the Circle, Mrs. Mather had an inspiring meeting with the great urban planner Robert Moses when he and his wife visited Cleveland in the spring of 1955. After a tea party at which she expressed her concerns about haphazard planning in the Circle, Moses wrote to her with the names of several planners and architects that he thought could provide her with "impartial, expert, critical analysis." Mrs. Mather soon discussed the matter with Western Reserve University president John S. Millis. When he proved receptive, she insisted that Case Institute of Technology be a partner in the project, and gave $75,000 to the two institutions to obtain a comprehensive urban plan. In 1956 Case and Reserve hired the Boston planning firm of Adams, Howard and Greeley, and when eighteen months later they delivered an acceptable document, the University Circle Development Foundation was created (with the addition of several other major Circle institutions) to execute it. That organization and its direct successor, University Circle Inc., have set the terms for the development of the Circle ever since.

I think that this is the place to point out that the federated organization (a combination of independent organizations) has been the preferred mode of organization for Cleveland reform movements in the 20th century. Others have pointed out that Cleveland in the 1910s was the birthplace of two of the most important organizational innovations of 20th century philanthropy—the community foundation and the community chest—and both are federationist in style. University Circle first tried to institute that format in the 1920s when the institutions founded the Cleveland Conference for Educational Cooperation, but it foundered on questions of land use and sank with the onset of the Great Depression. The 1950s model has had its major successes and serious difficulties, but has remained in place for forty years.

I do not think that historians have appreciated the degree to which John D. Rockefeller has both epitomized and influenced Cleveland philanthropy. His life could be characterized by the title of Hiram Haydn's sermon at Old Stone Church—"The Getting and Spending of Money"—and indeed Rockefeller titled one chapter of his reminiscences "The Difficult Art of Giving" and another "The Difficult Art of Giving." One could conclude from reading his correspondence that his philanthropic interests in Cleveland, which he regarded as home from 1853 until 1917, absorbed him more deeply than his business activities there—his always-brief letters seem more lively when dealing with philanthropic subjects. If Rockefeller was at all like his fellow money-getters, I think that our understanding of the industrialization of Cleveland ought to be revised to take into account the tremendous time and energy, no less the money, that were devoted to philanthropic activities.

In any case, by the 1880s Rockefeller was the wealthiest and probably the most philanthropic Clevelander, and his opinion and leadership were sought in almost any new endeavor in religion and reform. His interests were so broad that they are difficult to categorize, but a recent list of 118 Cleveland
institutions receiving his support from the 1860s to 1903, developed by Dr. Kenneth Rose, is suggestive. Of the nearly $1 million Rockefeller donated, those receiving $40,000 or more from 1860 to 1903 were the Alta Settlement House, Cleveland Baptist City Mission, the Cleveland Day Nursery & Kindergarten Association, the Cleveland Parks Commission, the Erie Street Baptist Church, the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, and the Cleveland YMCA. Within the next twenty years he and the new foundations he had created more than doubled these gifts.47

Let me briefly review some of the highlights of John D. Rockefeller's philanthropy by the categories that I have examined in this talk: religion, race, and reform.

Rockefeller's heaviest and most frequent contributions were in the area of religion. He honored his own churches, the Erie Street Baptist Church and the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, most often, but he gave for particular purposes to other Baptist, Christian, Congregational, Methodist, Methodist Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches. He supported William Halsey Doan's revivalist Tabernacle, and he gave to various church-related social missions, including temperance work and residences, and frequently to the ministry, offering pensions to ministers and their widows, and stipends to seminary students.

Rockefeller's involvement in racial matters was relatively modest, although it was in Cleveland that he heard a talk about a seminary in Atlanta for African-American women. Within two years he had made a series of gifts that set it on a firm footing, and the grateful founders named it Spelman Seminary after his wife's abolitionist parents. Certainly some of his earliest recorded charitable contributions, made in the five years before the beginning of the Civil War, were to African-Americans individuals or causes,48 and he made a substantial gift to Cleveland's Home for Aged Colored People, now the Eliza Bryant Center. In 1904 he made a pledge of $6000 to the construction costs of the Antioch Baptist Church, an African-American congregation warmly recommended to him by lawyers in Cleveland, and paid the full amount in spite of the congregation's difficulty in raising the full $10,000 that Rockefeller had stipulated as the match for his gift.49

But his greatest benefactions to African-American causes were nationwide: in 1902 he founded and began endowing the General Education Board in 1902, charging it with improving African-American education at the secondary and college level in the South. For the next fifty years the Board was a primary source of funds for innovation and improvement at the historically-Black colleges.

Rockefeller's Cleveland philanthropy also included support of institutions aimed at the city's ethnic population, including Alta House in Murray Hill, the Cleveland Day Nursery and Kindergarten Association, the German Baptist Church and German Baptist Publishing Society, Hiram House, and the YMCA.

Perhaps the broadest field for Rockefeller's philanthropy in Cleveland was his interest in reform. His magnificent gift of Rockefeller Park to the city in 1896 "completed the city's ownership of the entire Doan Brook Valley from the headwaters to Lake Erie."50 Rockefeller believed in the morally-improving qualities of leisurely walks or carriage rides in woods and fields, and presumably like many others in Cleveland saw it as an antidote to many of the evils of city life. But Rockefeller also believed in the morally-improving qualities of work, and gave liberally to Amasa Stone's Industrial School which provided employment and education for indigent children.

Rockefeller had a deep commitment to temperance and was a regular correspondent and supporter of men and women in that cause, particularly William Halsey Doan, Joseph Perkins and Anna Prather. He was a heavy donor to of the Nonpartisan Women's Christian Temperance Union, in which his wife was active, and to the WCTU's offshoot, the Central Friendly Inn. He gave to several other missions and institutions that "saved" men and women and from drink, and to institutions that provided a sheltered, temperate environment for children who otherwise might suffer the temptations of the street.

I must conclude by noting that Rockefeller's philanthropy also extended to those traditional objects, colleges and universities to train the mind, hospitals and medical schools for treating the sick, and cemeteries, if all else failed. Indeed, after 1890 he became convinced that the great object of his philanthropy should be, as he put it, "an attempt to cure evils at their source," and when he found that education could be harnessed to develop those cures, particularly in medicine, he turned more and more to the support of higher education and medical research (but thankfully not to cemeteries).51

Rockefeller's most storied philanthropy in higher education is aiding in the founding and subsequent operation of the new University of Chicago, which he was persuaded to support as the focus of Baptist higher education west of the Appalachians. But Rockefeller did not neglect his hometown. In 1904 Rockefeller gave Case School of Applied Sciences $200,000 to build the physics and mining engineering buildings, and permitted one of them to bear his name.52 In 1910 he gave $250,000 to Western Reserve
University's medical school endowment on the condition that it raise another $750,000, which the university did.53

In this portion of my remarks I have touched on only a few major outlets for Rockefeller philanthropy in Cleveland, and I have tried to expose a few glints of the richness of the documentation that is in the Rockefeller family archives. Few scholars have exploited these sources, and I urge you to consider research in them as a means to expanding our understanding of Cleveland history.

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To what point does my paper bring us in our quest to better understand Cleveland? That question can only be answered in the broader context of American history, and I want to leave that task to Jon Teaford, whose works on 20th-century American urban history attempt to show where are cities have been and where they might be going, even with the best and most earnest efforts of philanthropy. According to Teaford

...the reality of the twentieth-century American city has deviated markedly from the promises and programs of reformers and planners... The actual twentieth-century American metropolis

... has been an uncoordinated mass of clashing social and ethnic fragments. American urban history is a tale of unwilling accommodation rather than harmonious cooperation. It is the story of diverse groups vying for territory, income, and power, of barriers that arose between those sometimes hostile groups and the bargaining and brokerage necessary to reduce their conflicts

...Although many have dreamed of the city as a cohesive community, the dream has not been realized.34

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Notes

2 David C. Hammack made this point in his essay on Cleveland philanthropy, which I recommend as an excellent starting point for any discussion of the subject: David D. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski, eds., The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 764-68.
4 Ledger A, series F, RG 1, Rockefeller Family Archives (hereafter RFA), Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter RAC), North Tarrytown, NY.
6 Annals of Cleveland 57 (1874): 25, 749, 847, and 58 (1875): 100, 822; Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, pp. 156-57, 397, 403-4, 789-90, 1053; Ludlow, Old Stone Church, pp. 219, 221.
7 Hiram C. Haydn, Hudson to Cleveland, 1878-1890: An Historical Sketch (Cleveland: Western Reserve University, 1905), pp. 38, 44; Western Reserve College trustees' minutes, June 25, 1878, July 7, 1880, Case Western Reserve University Archives (hereafter CWRU Archives), Cleveland, Ohio; "From the Reverend H.C. Haydn, D.D.," in [memorial book for Amasa Stone] (Cleveland: n.p., 1886), p. 20.
List of original incorporators of Case School of Applied Science, minutes of the CSAS trustees, March 29, 1880, CWRU Archives; list of subscribers to the fund to buy land for Case School of Applied Sciences and Western Reserve College, minutes of the Western Reserve College trustees, March 19, 1881, CWRU Archives; list of Western Reserve College and Western Reserve University trustees, 1826-1921, "Miscellaneous Trustees" folder, box 19, Charles F. Thwing Office Files, CWRU Archives.

In the context of this paper it is important to note that one of the first acts of those who were considering a joint site for the two schools was to consult John D. Rockefeller: L. Little to John D. Rockefeller, May 1, 1880, folder 192, box 25, RG 1.2, RFA.


John Marshall diary, September 7-9, 1943, RG 12.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

Wade Park Allotment (Cleveland: Corday & Gross, [1905]), n.p.

Wade Allotment Association papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, OH; memorandum of agreement, property owners on Bellflower Road, June 23, 1915, and abstract of deed covenant, J.C. Cromwell to Lillian M. Baldwin, October 14, 1920, box 1, Secretary-Treasurer's Office Files, CWRU Archives.

Author’s interviews with former residents of Wade Allotment: Jack Brayton, July 23, 1984; Helen Wade Greene Perry, July 23, 1984; and Mary Barkwell, July 21, 1984.


W.H. Boyd, G.G. Wade, C.W. Collister, et al., to residents of Wade Allotment, October 14, 1925, historical collection, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, Ohio.

Almost thirty years later Garretson Wade is reported to have reiterated his opposition to African-American ownership of Wade Allotment properties in a meeting with a representative of Western Reserve University: [John White], "Memorandum on Wade Park Properties," July 30, 1953, 1DB9:4-8, CWRU Archives.


Philip W. Porter, Cleveland: Confused City on a Seasaw (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1976), p. 181.


The Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Cleveland Press extensively covered the murder of Marjorie A. Winbigler on November 7, 1966, and continued almost daily stories for three weeks. Several northern Ohio newspapers also picked up the story and published series on the incident. Press clipping book, 1966, Musical Arts Association Archives, Severance Hall, Cleveland, Ohio.

University Student Services Committee, “Safety on the University Circle,” April 18, 1968, box 3, J.S. Millis Chancellor Files, CWRU Archives.

Lloyd P. Gartner, History of the Jews of Cleveland (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, [1978]), pp. 94-95; Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, p. 383. Twing's antisemitism surfaced again in 1921 when he denigrated a fund-raising campaign by calling it "Jewish," thereby offending chairman of his board of trustees, Samuel Mather: Samuel Mather to Charles F. Thwing, June 7, 1921, Samuel Mather folder, box 20, Charles F. Thwing Office Files, CWRU Archives.

"An Italian Mission," Beacon Light (May 1900), copy in folder 1, container 3, I.T. Frary Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society (hereafter WRHS), Cleveland, Ohio; B.F. Whitman, et al. to John D. Rockefeller, October 18, 1888, box 49, RG 1.2, CWRU Archives.

Homer H. Johnson to C.F. Thwing, April 7, 1914, Land Acquisition folder, box 3, Charles F. Thwing Office Files.

Michele A. Vaccariello to C.F. Thwing, April 2, 1915, Land Acquisition folder, box 3, Charles F. Thwing Office Files.

I.T. Frary to W.R. Hopkins, August 19, 1927, folder 5, container 2, William R. Hopkins Collection, WRHS.

34 I agree with the premise of Van Tassel and Grabowski's "premise that reform movements in Cleveland emanated from a stable, Protestant, upper middle and upper class": "Introduction: Cleveland and Reform," in Van Tassel and Grabowski, eds., Cleveland: A Tradition of Reform, p. 6.

35 I have relied on Silva Zverina's And They Shall Have Music: The History of the Cleveland Music School Settlement (Cleveland: Cobham and Hatherton Press, 1988) for my account. For John D. Rockefeller's support of Almeda C. Adams see his correspondence in Letterbooks 37, 215, 223, and 224, RG 1, RFRA.

36 Planning and reform in Cleveland are linked by Teaford in his Cities in the Heartland, pp. 137-40.

37 Eric Johanesen, Cleveland Architecture, 1876-1976 (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1979), pp. 124-25; Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, p. 377; Cleveland Plain Dealer, Sunday Magazine, June 17, 1934, p. 11; Rose, Cleveland, p. 867; J.A. House to W.R. Hopkins, December 3, 1928, folder 14, container 6, William R. Hopkins Collection, WRHS.


41 John S. Millis to Mrs. William G. Mather, May 11, 1955, box 4, J.S. Millis Office Files; T. Keith Glennan to Darwin H. Stapleton, July 9, 1985, in author's files. C.H. Cramer argues that Reserve had a long history of contentious land acquisition in the Circle, and that Case had to be involved in the arrangement so that it would not look like a land-grab by Reserve: Cramer, Case Western Reserve, p. 274.


44 Carlton K. Matson and Harold T. Clark, "The Cleveland Educational Group Plan," Your Garden 1 (March 1928): 442-48; minutes of joint meeting, executive committee and planning commission, March 1, 1928, and minutes, annual meeting, April 28, 1930, Cleveland Conference for Educational Cooperation Records, WRHS.


47 For the total of his gifts I am relying on the calculations of Joseph W. Ernst, Director Emeritus of the Rockefeller Archive Center: Joseph W. Ernst to George Taylor, May 19, 1987, in author's files.

48 Ledgers A and B, Ledgers and financial volumes, RG 1, RFRA.


50 Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, p. 752.

51 Rockefeller, Random Reminiscences, p. 112.

52 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to Charles S. Howe, April 5, 1904, in Case School of Applied Science trustees' minutes, April 11, 1904, CWRU Archives.
