



## Cleveland Heights Congregations, OH (IMG) (Images of America)

*By Marian J. Morton*

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**Cleveland Heights Congregations, OH (IMG) (Images of America)** By  
Marian J. Morton

Since the last quarter of the 19th century, dozens of religious congregations have made their homes in Cleveland Heights. They have been Presbyterian, United Methodist, Evangelical, Roman Catholic, Jewish (Conservative, Orthodox, and Egalitarian traditional), Unitarian Universalist, Greek Orthodox, Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Christian Science, Episcopalian, African Methodist Episcopal, and Congregational and now also include a wide array of community and nondenominational churches. Sponsored by established congregations, encouraged by real estate developers and public officials, and usually welcomed by residents, churches, synagogues, and temples have fostered the suburb's growth, sometimes maintaining and sometimes changing Cleveland Heights neighborhoods. Their houses of worship, ranging from modest renovated storefronts to stately cathedrals, have enriched the city's landscape; their religious pluralism has nurtured ethnic, economic, and racial diversity, as well as controversy and conflict; their calls to action have sometimes aroused the community's conscience. Religious congregations, in short, have helped to sustain the vitality of Cleveland Heights.

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## Cleveland Heights Congregations, OH (IMG) (Images of America) By Marian J. Morton Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #5038837 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Arcadia Publishing
- Published on: 2009-01-19
- Released on: 2009-01-19
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x .31" w x 6.50" l, .83 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 128 pages

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**Editorial Review**

Review

Title: Book traces history of local congregations

Author: Lindsay Betz

Publisher: Sun Press

Date: 6/1/09

In her book "Cleveland Heights Congregations," author and resident Marian Morton traces the history of the city by looking at the history of its religious institutions.

The book, released through Arcadia Publishing, includes almost 200 historical photos of religious institutions.

"I was trying to describe the enormous range of religious experiences here," Morton said. "It reflects the enormous range of the Cleveland Heights experience."

She said the history of religion in the city can be likened to the history of religion in America as a whole.

"This is a very special place, but nothing that happens here happens only here," she said.

Morton's book traces the history of congregations in the city.

Before congregations could afford to build their own churches they often worshiped in shared or public spaces like schools, she said.

"Some of them were very small congregations and didn't have their own houses of worship," Morton said.

The first congregation in Cleveland Heights was the Fairmount Methodist Episcopal Church -- now Church of the Saviour. It began worshiping in the Superior Schoolhouse, 14391 Superior, in 1875.

In 1878 the congregation -- which was called Heights Methodist Episcopal Church for a period of time -- built a gothic-style church just south of the schoolhouse.

It then moved to 14284 Superior Road, where Christ Our Redeemer African Methodist Episcopal Church lives now. This building is the oldest standing religious structure in the city.

Jewish institutions first came to Cleveland Heights from Glenville and central Cleveland.

Morton said the first Jewish institution in the city was the Mayfield Cemetery, 2749 Mayfield, which was established in 1890.

Other Jewish institutions -- including the Oakwood Club and the Montefiore Home -- were also established.

The first Jewish congregation, Morton said, was the Heights Jewish Center, which was organized in 1923 as the Heights Jewish Orthodox Congregation.

It worshiped at numerous locations throughout the city, including a house on Euclid Heights Boulevard, before moving to University Heights in 1979.

The first Jewish temple in city was the B'nai Jeshurun-Temple on the Heights, which opened in 1926 at 3130 Mayfield.

In doing research for the book Morton said she discovered many things, but was struck by the wide range of church architecture in the city.

"Like all buildings, churches say something about the place," she said. "We have so many kinds (of

churches) because we have so many kinds of people."

She said it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of religious congregations currently in the city, but said there are probably about 50.

Morton tried to include every congregation in the city's history and received a huge amount of help from many of them.

All proceeds from the book will be donated to the Heights Emergency Food Center, a nonprofit organization committed to Judeo-Christian principles.

"I got so much help from all these congregations, and it seemed like an appropriate thing to do, to give the proceeds (to the center)," Morton said.

Morton, who recently retired from her job as a history professor at John Carroll University, has written two other books about Cleveland Heights and one about Lakeview Cemetery.

"Cleveland Heights Congregations" is available at local bookstores, including Appletree Books, Borders Books & Music and Mac's Backs Paperbacks.

Title: Cleveland Heights Congregations provides rare glimpse of the past

Author: Hugh Fisher

Publisher: Heights Observer

Date: 1/25/2009

The richness of Cleveland Heights history continues to be revealed in the latest book by Marion Morton, "Cleveland Heights Congregations" (Arcadia Publishing). In this new book in Arcadia's Images of America series, Morton tells the story of the evolution of Cleveland Heights' many religious congregations.

Most Heights congregations had their origins in some of the earliest religious institutions in Cleveland. As

times changed, they made their way to the Heights, as did so many individuals during the early part of the 20th Century. Morton identifies the origin of each congregation and chronicles further changes in the rich histories of these great institutions. Central to Morton's story is that no matter how much Cleveland Heights has evolved and changed, the city's religious institutions have remained an important stabilizing influence.

Images of America series books are all about the pictures, and Morton serves up an excellent collection of images focused mainly on the buildings associated with Cleveland Heights' congregations. Arguably, congregations are about people, and Morton has plenty of photos featuring people. But her focus on the built manifestation of each congregation serves the reader well since most of the structures and scenes shown still exist in one form or another. Where they don't, we get a glimpse of what our community looked like in the past. Significantly, Morton has found rare images of Cleveland Heights buildings. Certainly there are many of the usual suspects, the classic images of our city, but Morton has uncovered generally unseen images by digging into the archives held by the congregations themselves. For any connoisseur of Cleveland Heights imagery, this alone makes the book worth having.

Images of America series books are often let down by their photo captions. Not so in this case. Morton's captions are well researched overall and usually provide the reader with thematic context, date, location, and commentary on interesting details in the photos.

Morton's new book is a must have for anyone who loves Cleveland Heights history.

#### About the Author

Marian J. Morton is professor emeritus of history at John Carroll University and the author of many articles and books on Cleveland history, including three other Arcadia titles: Cleveland Heights, Cleveland's Lake View Cemetery, and Cleveland Heights: The Making of an Urban Suburb.

## Users Review

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#### Lucia Morrone:

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**Ernest Poole:**

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