



# Heritage News

A quarterly newsletter of Glendale Heritage Preservation, Fall 2024

## Robert Clarke and the Book Bandit

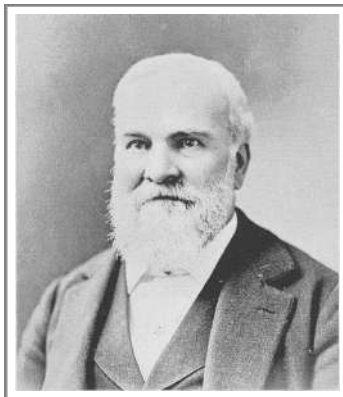
In 1990, Stephen Blumberg was arrested for stealing 23,600 rare and valuable books from universities and museums across the country, including books from the Robert Clarke Collection at the University of Cincinnati Library. He was sentenced to seven years in prison. He was known as the “Book Bandit” and was infamous as the most successful book thief in the history of the United States!

Robert Clarke (1829-1899) lived in Glendale at 70 East Fountain Avenue. In 1864, he purchased the three-story French Second Empire-style house from Ezra Elliot and had a rotunda library room built on



the side of the building. It was in this room that Robert Clarke kept his collection of 6,574 volumes of history, travel and exploration.

Robert Clarke was born in Scotland in 1829 and moved with his family to Cincinnati in 1840. After graduating from Woodward College, in Bond Hill, he purchased a small secondhand bookstore on Sixth Street. In 1858, Clarke purchased the H. W. Derby & Co. bookshop and named the combined bookseller Robert Clarke & Co. The



business grew from bookselling into printing and publishing, and from Sixth Street, to 31-39 East Fourth Street adjacent to Pike’s Opera House.

Clarke remained head of the company until his death in 1899 at the age of 70. After his death, the company continued in business on East Fourth Street until Pike’s Opera House burned to the ground in

1903, taking the company’s building with it. The firm moved across the street to a new location but never fully recovered.

It was acquired in 1905 by the Jay F. Laning Company, which eventually went into receivership in 1909.

Upon Clarke’s death, P&G president and Glendale resident, William Alexander Procter, purchased the entire library’s content with a view to donating it to the University of Cincinnati (UC). It was to be known as the “Robert Clarke Collection, donated by William A. Procter,” and became one of the founding collections of UC’s library.

Many decades later, in the 1960s and early 1970s, before there was a secured Archives & Rare Books Library at UC, Robert Clarke’s collection would fall prey to the notorious Book Bandit, Stephen Blumberg. After Blumberg’s arrest by the FBI and subsequent conviction, the University of Cincinnati’s books were returned to their shelves.



*Submitted by Martin Sinnott*

### **Founder**

Doreen D. Gove

### **Officers**

Martin Sinnott, President  
Carolyn Beaugrand, Vice President  
Carl Stritzel, Vice President  
Helene Sedwick, Treasurer  
Elizabeth Oldiges, Secretary

### **Trustees**

Maureen Base-Smith  
Jill Beitz  
Steve Bennett  
Sharon Borntreger  
Dr. Jim Brewer  
Roxann Dieffenbach  
Michelle G. Evans  
Nancy Floyd  
Peter Galbraith  
Joanne Goode  
Carol Muntz  
Patrick Myers  
Cameron O'Riley  
Connie Halbauer Redden  
Betty Robertson  
Rohit Sharma  
Judy Skillingstad  
Susan Swaine  
Rebecca Terrell  
Sheila Warman

### **Trustees Emeriti**

Addison Clipson  
Doreen Gove  
Peg Shardelow  
Jack Buescher

### **Archivist**

Joanne Goode

### **Gift Shop Manager**

Elizabeth Oldiges

### **Newsletter Editor**

Martin Sinnott

[www.glendaleheritage.org](http://www.glendaleheritage.org)

facebook: [@glendaleheritagepreservation](https://www.facebook.com/glendaleheritagepreservation)

email: [GHP@fuse.net](mailto:GHP@fuse.net)

## **Glendale Heritage Preservation Annual Meeting**

The Glendale Heritage Preservation annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12, in Christ Church Glendale's All Saints Fellowship Hall. Join us for a reception at 7 p.m., followed by the annual meeting at 7:30 p.m.

The highlight of the meeting will be a presentation by writer Elizabeth Garber. Raised in Glendale, she is an architect's daughter (Woodie Garber) and granddaughter (Frederick W. Garber), who is fascinated by architectural history.

Elizabeth will present on the Glendale residences designed by her grandfather's firm, Garber & Woodward, between 1904 and 1915.



*A drawing of 950 Forrest Avenue designed by Garber & Woodward. It was built in 1909 with funds from William Alexander Procter. It is known as the Mary Kent House after its first occupant.*

Later on, Garber & Woodward became one of Cincinnati's foremost architectural firms of the era. They were responsible for the design of: Withrow and Walnut Hills High Schools, the Union Bethel building (formerly the Anna Louise Inn for Girls), and the Cincinnati Club building in Garfield Place.

Glendale Heritage Preservation's annual meeting is free and open to everyone. You can expect Ms. Garber to provide an insightful presentation on some of Glendale's most interesting houses.

## The Convent of the Transfiguration Celebrates 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Glendale

In the 1960s, I attended Christ Church Glendale, but a few times a year my mother took me to the stone Bethany Chapel at the Episcopal convent on Albion Avenue for Evensong. I put on a white cap, knelt in the pew, and gazed up at the beautiful wooden carvings above the altar. The nuns in their blue habits leaned forward to pray, a priest waved a metal censer billowing frankincense smoke, while uniformed children from Bethany School sang.



This convent was created from a vision by Eva Matthews. Eva (1862-1928) was raised on East Fountain Avenue, while her father fought in the Civil War. She would transform personal tragedy by manifesting a community “House of Women,” dedicated to caring for children.

Eva Matthews was a daughter of U.S. Senator and Supreme Court Justice Stanley Matthews. She grew up in a family impacted by the loss of four children who died of scarlet fever in one month and the loss of another sister a few years later. These losses moved her brother Paul to go to seminary, and Eva grew up determined to live in a spiritual community devoted to caring for mothers and orphans. After working together with a small mission in Omaha, Paul was appointed head of a church in Cincinnati’s West End; Eva and her assistant, Beatrice, started a mission house for teaching poor mothers to cook, sew, and sing hymns.

Eva saw the impact of the city’s polluted air and water, with typhoid and cholera infecting infants, children and the women caring for them. In the summer of 1897, she created a fresh air camp in Glendale on the Allen homestead (at Congress and Fountain Avenue) where they cared for 200 people in the fresh country air. At the end of the summer, Eva realized she couldn’t return the babies to the unhealthy conditions of the city. By the following spring of 1898, Eva and her brother Mortimer, bought a farm on Albion Ave with an uninhabited manor house. The women and children camped on the land while the farmhouse was renovated, and the old ballroom became their chapel.

During her years of mission work Eva, with guidance from her brother Paul and the Episcopal Bishop, developed a plan for a modern Anglican religious community of women. She was inspired; she wrote a rule of life for the community, envisioned their habits as she traveled in the Holy Land, and modeled their lives on Mary and Martha of Bethany. She chose the story of the

Transfiguration for the name for this community. In September of 1898, the Bishop blessed the founding of Bethany Home. Five years later, Sister Eva Mary, the spirited child of Glendale, assumed the position of Mother Superior.



Mother Eva’s vision and fundraising resulted in the building of homes for orphans in the 1920s. In 1928, a stone chapel was designed for the convent as a gift by Ralph Adams Cram, architect for St. John the Divine Cathedral in New York City. Although Mother Eva did not live to see the chapel completed, the community continued to thrive. By 1940, Bethany Home was a vibrant community of 40 nuns, nurses and teachers, and 80 orphans.

The Convent was invited by bishops to send sisters to establish schools, clinics, or orphanages in the US, the Caribbean, and for 30 years in Wuhu, China.

The Convent of the Transfiguration has grown and changed to meet the needs of those they are called to serve. Bethany School is now the second most energy-efficient school in the country. The Transfiguration Spirituality Center offers individual and group retreats. During the Covid epidemic, the sisters grappled with how to support their community. *Food for the Soul* was born, providing a food pantry, and delivering meals to those in need. The Convent can now look beyond its first 125 years to face the changing needs of their community.

*Submitted by Elizabeth Garber*



44 Village Square  
Glendale OH 45246

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
Permit No. 3478

## Christ Church Glendale Organ Crashes

In October 2022, the exterior pipes of the Christ Church Glendale organ fell from their perch 12 feet above the sanctuary of the Church, missing the altar by inches. This incident signaled the end for the 146-year-old organ.

The organ was built in 1876 at a cost of \$15,000 by the New York city company, Hilborne L. Roosevelt, for the concert venue Chickering Hall, also in New York city. It was an organ designed to fill the 1,450-seat

concert hall with sound. It had 36 ranks (a row of pipes all of which make the same sound, but at different pitches) and 2,001 pipes.



Chickering Hall, New York City

Chickering Hall closed in 1901, and the organ was put into storage. The next owner was Thiel College PA, but they never installed it. Finally, in 1910, Christ Church bought the organ. It was converted from a concert hall organ to a church organ by the company M. P. Möller from Hagerstown, MD, and installed in Christ Church in 1913. Newspapers from the time of the conversion were found pasted to the boards used in the structure of the organ.

Christ Church Glendale has been the organ's home for the last 109 years until that fateful day in 2022. As it was, Christ Church Glendale was already contemplating replacing the organ. With the wheels already in motion, it wasn't long before a contract was signed with Casavant, a Canadian company that has been building organs since 1879. The new organ will have 42 ranks and 2,660 pipes at a cost of \$1.6 million. Installation is expected at the end of 2024.

Möller rebuilt the organ in 1940 and some of the pipes were put aside and kept in storage by Christ Church, just in case. Well, their life is not over! These pipes from the 146-year-old organ will be included as part of the new organ.

*Submitted by Martin Sinnott*