The property called Greenwood Farm, in Richmond Heights, Ohio, can trace its history back to 1798, when it was defined as part of the John Morse Tract in Euclid Township. Morse abandoned this land in 1809, and the ownership went to Jonathan and Seth D. Pelton, owners of other properties in the township. It is interesting to note that several maps make mention of a sawmill located along Euclid Creek, just north of the Pelton property. In 1872, Seth Pelton sold the land to George Thomas, who sold 18.62 acres to George and Kate Schmidt in 1894.

As railroads and canals made travel easier, farmland attracted a diverse work force within the emerging manufacturing industry. By 1903, the resulting population increase gave the northern portion of Euclid Township status as a Village. In November of 1908, George and Maude Phypers purchased the land from the Schmidts and named the property Greenwood Farm.
In 1917, South Euclid, Lyndhurst (first known as Euclidville), and Claribel were incorporated. The name Claribel changed to Richmond Heights one year later. It is thought that the name “Richmond” is attributable to several early generations of Richmonds living in the area.

Even though the Phypers property was in Richmond Heights, there was, as yet, no Richmond Heights post office, so the mailing address of Greenwood Farm was 3510 Richmond Road, South Euclid, Ohio. In 1960, addresses along Richmond Road were changed. The address is now 264 Richmond Road, Richmond Heights (or Cleveland), Ohio. The Cuyahoga County Recorder’s permanent parcel number (PPN), used as a legal identifier, is 661 08 005.

In April 1926, George and Maude sold slightly less than two acres to William Blank, their neighbor to the north, leaving them 16.73 acres on which to raise their family and develop their farm. The 16.73 acres remained one parcel until September 26, 1994, when the property was split between June and Thurlow Phypers—the first and the fourth of George and Maude’s six children. Thurlow took ownership of the west seven acres as “Deerhaven,” and June retained the front portion as Greenwood Farm. The name “Deerhaven” was chosen by Thurlow to honor the many deer that frequently emerge from the ravine of Euclid Creek.

A view of the east branch of Euclid Creek near the north end of Greenwood Farm.

Photo by Jim Danforth
The First House

When George and Maude purchased the property in 1908, it contained a nineteenth-century farmhouse. George had plans to enlarge and elevate the house, but it burned to the ground in 1916. According to George and Maude’s youngest child, Mrs. Ruth Danforth, after the fire, the family lived in a camp house and tents until a new house was built. The original farmhouse was located just southwest of the present home. The only remaining indication is a foundation depression.
The house built in 1917 remains almost as it was constructed. Both the interior and exterior have had no major changes, except in the kitchen area. The living quarters are on the first two floors: a total of 3,796 square feet. The house also has a finished attic, a large screened porch on the south side of the second floor and a full basement. The original roof was slate, and the contractor who built the home was thought to be Mr. Pointer, who had built many of the fine homes along Euclid Avenue in East Cleveland.

The Phypers house as it looked in the 1930s and 40s. With so many children and friends playing at Greenwood Farm, passersby would often look at the large house and ask:

“What orphanage is this?”

Phypers house under construction, following the 1916 fire.
Surplus road-paving bricks were used for the walls.
County records indicate the house was built in 1910. It was first used as living space for the groundskeeper who assisted the family in farming and gardening. Later, it was the residence of Thurlow Adams Phypers, known as “Turtle” to the family and “TAP” to his friends and co-workers. The only known alterations or improvements to the structure were completed in the 1960’s. The work included the addition of a room on the south side, a new front porch and aluminum siding.

The Barn

Photo by Jim Danforth
The barn is an example of those found on a working farm. According to Ruth Danforth, the family at one time had two horses, a cow, pigs, chickens, ducks, a goat and a few sheep. Turkeys lived in the ravine. To the family, the barn epitomized the sense of rural life at Greenwood Farm. It was also thought of as the remaining tie that connected the property back to the original farmhouse.

The style of the structure is known as an English or Yankee barn and is typical of those built in the nineteenth century. The Greenwood Farm barn is thought to have been built in the late 1800s and is constructed out of posts and timbers. Typical of the English barns, it is entered through its long side, through doors opening onto a center bay. It has a back bay for storage, plus two side bays—with one having access by interior steps to the second floor hayloft. Ruth remembers often swinging out of the hayloft on the pulley rope to the ground below (or jumping!). The south side bay was used as a chicken brooding area. The north side bay held enormous barrels used for making cider and vinegar. At one time, ice from the creek was stored in the barn, packed in sawdust.

The center bay of English barns could serve as a threshing floor and a wagon runway. In addition to the required farm equipment, the Greenwood Farm barn often housed “antique” cars, tractors and wagons collected by the family. The pit located in the floor of the Greenwood Farm barn was used to get underneath the vehicles when mechanical work was needed. Later it was used as a root cellar.
A vintage photograph showing the east face of the barn, with the original doors.

Looking north from the southern portion of the farm — July of 1998.
The dynamo house is thought to have been installed by George Phypers just after the house was built in 1917. It contained batteries and a generator that provided electrical power to the house and, at times, to the school across the ravine. The generator converted mechanical energy into electric energy.

It may be interesting to note that the dynamo house forms a connection to another local property: Walnut Hills Farm. Located just north of Greenwood Farm, Walnut Hills Farm was the boyhood home of Charles Brush, who became a major force in the electrification of America. After boyhood experiments with electricity at Walnut Hills Farm, Brush acquired his formal education at Cleveland’s Central High School and the University of Michigan. As an adult, Brush returned to Walnut Hills Farm for the purpose of perfecting his improvements to the dynamo principle. He completed his dynamo work in 1876, then concentrated on arc lighting. His work with the electrification of cities preceded that of Thomas Edison. Brush founded a company that later became General Electric.
This structure was known by the family as the Camp House. It was used, along with additional tents, as sleeping quarters during the summer when the existing house was being built after the 1916 fire. It was originally a temporary structure but was later made more permanent. Several friends of the Phypers family lived there over the years, the last being Mrs. Ethel Thomas. Mrs. Thomas had a great fondness for feeding raccoons—frequent visitors that emerged from the ravine of Euclid Creek.

The Camp House finally collapsed when a tree fell on it in the early 2000s.
George William Phypers was significant in local history, not only for his land holdings at Greenwood Farm, but also for his civic work and his prominence in the development of Cleveland’s insurance infrastructure.

George was born on April 8, 1873—the first of his parents’ five children. George attended school in the City of Cleveland until the age of fourteen, when he took a job as messenger boy for The Postal Telegraph Company. He next worked for five years in the office of the Lake Shore Railroad. At the age of 17, George wrote letters to newspapers in Egypt, Bombay, Israel and around the world, asking for English versions of their journals. Even at a young age, George was determined to acquire knowledge.

George Phypers’ first involvement in the insurance business occurred in 1893, when he joined Olmstead, Thomas and Company. After three years, George asked to have his hours reduced so he could attend Western Reserve University. The split schedule did not work well, so George left college and resumed full-time work with his employer. In 1900, George and his brother began to work for themselves in the insurance business.

On September 1, 1900, George married Maude Pauline Maynard from Ipswich, Massachusetts.

Maude Pauline Maynard was the daughter of New England naturalist Charles Johnson Maynard and Pauline Thurlow Greenwood. Maude’s maternal ancestors had come to Massachusetts from England, in the first half of the 17th century. Maude attended Smith College and was later a schoolteacher. Maude met George through George’s business connection with her stepfather, Thomas Swasey Farley, who was also in the insurance business in Cleveland.

After their marriage, George and Maude lived in a home on Stanwood Road in East Cleveland. George’s connection to East Cleveland would continue long after he moved the family “up the hill” to Greenwood Farm. George was one of the three men who formed the East Cleveland Baptist Church, which continues today as an anchor within the Baptist community.

In 1908, when George and Maude purchased the Schmidt property, the name “Greenwood Farm” was selected in memory of the large farm in Ipswich, Massachusetts, owned by Maude’s maternal grandfather, Thomas Smith Greenwood.
Maude and George transformed Greenwood Farm into a self-sufficient home, making use of the land and barn for growing and storing crops. The Appendix includes a layout of the land, completed by the Ohio Agricultural Extension Service in 1912—recommending a design that would provide the best yields and proper drainage for the farm. The drawing indicates the location of the original farmhouse that was present when the property was purchased from the Schmidts.

For many years, the farm had a variety of livestock, including cows, chickens and Tamworth boars. George loaned the boars out for a $2.00 stud fee or a choice of the resulting litter.

George and his brother, Charles, incorporated their insurance business as the Phypers Brothers Company in 1909. By 1910 the company was Cleveland's fifth largest and was mentioned in a volume on the History of Cleveland. Charles eventually left the company and George merged it with that of Mr. Harold Neale. Today, that company is still in existence in Independence, Ohio, and is known as the Neale-Phypers Corporation. Over the years, George would become well known in the insurance industry. He served as president of the Insurance Board of Cleveland from 1947-48.

In 1925, George was elected to the Council of the Village of Richmond Heights and served for thirty-two years, including several terms as Council President. He guided Council into a contract for the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company to provide the community with electricity. Prior to that, George had run power lines from his Greenwood Farm dynamo to the local one-room school house—located on Chardon Road, across the creek from the farm.
George Phypers
A man of many facets

George Phypers was a disciplined, business-like person, who—like Baron von Trapp—expected his children to line up when he whistled. He once chased one of his grandchildren all around the large front yard at Greenwood Farm, until the rebellious youngster was herded onto a waiting schoolbus. Yet, George was fair, had a good sense of humor and liked to play. He enjoyed family trips to the amusement park at Euclid Beach. He was quite skilled at Chinese checkers. He liked to play math games with his grandchildren.

George had a fondness for Guava paste and had wood-boxed 'bricks' of the confection shipped from Florida. He liked to make apple cider and, occasionally, he would slip out to the barn for a swig of some that had gone a little 'hard'.

At dinner, he would often recite absurd limericks, such as: “Mary had a little lamb; you’ve heard that oft before, but did you know she passed her plate and asked for a little more?”

George was a great an admirer of Theodore Roosevelt and had a collection of books by and about him. He read widely on the subject of religion and was a staunch anti-papist. He also owned a copy of S. R. Crockett’s humorously illustrated Sir Toady Lion, an Improving History for Old Boys, Young Boys, Good Boys, Bad Boys, Big Boys, Little Boys, Cowboys, and Tom-Boys.

George saw a lot of changes during his lifetime. He seemed to take them all in stride. On the occasion of the second moon landing, in 1969, George recalled the day in 1905 when he watched an early airplane fly over Euclid Beach and Lake Erie. What apparently impressed George most about the event was the pilot’s seat: a regular office chair!

George was a man of great energy. In his nineties, he was still going to the office every day. When he was ninety-six, he and his grandson Douglas made some modifications to the root cellar at Greenwood Farm. George did the work; Douglas watched.

The adage “They don’t make ‘em like that anymore” seems to apply to George Phypers.
Maude Phypers was a quiet, gentle woman, but one with an indomitable Yankee spirit. She never completely lost her Massachusetts accent or forgot her childhood experiences on her grandfather’s salt-marsh farm near the Ipswich River. Her naturalist father, Charles J. Maynard, and her uncle Emory Greenwood (also a naturalist) gave her a good grounding in understanding the natural world.

As a girl, Maude often searched for Captain Kidd’s treasure, reported to have been buried near the Diamond Stage boat landing at the Ipswich Greenwood Farm. Throughout her life, she wrote poems inspired by her real-life encounters with nature or derived from her childhood fantasies about fairies and pirates.

Maude was extremely well educated, as the books in her collection attest—ranging from The children’s nature book A Tale of the Nest, to Little Women, and on to Select of Orations of Cicero and The Education of Man by Friederich Froebel (which discusses the influences of nature and parents on children’s spiritual development).

After her marriage, Maude Phypers was quite influential in the community. She was active in civic affairs, was on numerous committees, and participated in Cleveland’s historical preservation. She was the recorded owner of Greenwood Farm for many years and took a great interest in George’s insurance business.

Maude assisted neighbors when babies were born and was remembered by a daughter-in-law as the personification, in word and deed, of a great Christian lady.

Maude made a warm home for her family. For the delight of her children, she sewed stuffed ‘goblin’ toys, based on the magazine cartoon characters “The Brownies,” created by Palmer Cox. She cooked vegetables grown on the farm, and she preserved the farm’s fruit in vacuum jars. One of Maude’s specialties from her Massachusetts roots was Boston baked beans (made from scratch).

Late in her life, Maude was still making early morning trips to the barn to collect the chicken’s eggs. In the summer, she would often vacation in New Hampshire, where she climbed the hills, keeping up with her children and grandchildren.

Maude was an amazing and inspiring woman.
George and Maude had six children spanning twelve years. June, the oldest, often acted as a second mother to the younger children, but even this was not enough for such a large family and so, from time to time, domestic workers were hired. A room on the third floor was used for live-in help when needed. The rest of the third floor was a single large room—a perfect play area. Here the youngsters practiced fencing, played billiards and staged their own theatrical performances (complete with sliding curtains, programs and tickets).

Maude and George allowed the children the freedom to play in the wonderful surroundings of Greenwood Farm. The children delighted in building a playhouse high in a large tree in the ravine. The youngest child, Ruth, was hoisted to the tree house in a blanket tied to a rope. The children also erected Indian tepees on the small island in Euclid Creek and painted themselves with ‘war paint,’ made by grinding the colored rocks found along the creek. When the children were needed for lunch or dinner, or in an emergency, they would be summoned by ringing a large bell mounted above the back door of the main house.
The sharp bend in Euclid Creek where the Phypers children liked to play. Snakes swam here.

The back of the house, showing the bell that was rung to summon the Phypers children when they were playing or working outdoors.
Play was not allowed to diminish the discipline and importance of the children’s schoolwork. Reading and education were stressed in the Phypers family.

The library at Greenwood Farm contained volumes ranging from the time of the Civil War to contemporary literature and reference books. Children’s books were plentiful.

In addition, each child was expected to perform chores at Greenwood Farm. At times the children, under Maude’s direction, would set up a vegetable stand at the roadside of rural Richmond Road and sell the many crops that were grown at the farm.

These signs, found in the barn at Greenwood Farm, are from a slightly later time, but are similar to those which would have been used by the Phypers children.
After the construction of the new house in 1917, Maude’s mother moved to Greenwood Farm, bringing with her many photographs and artifacts from the original Greenwood Farm in Ipswich, Massachusetts. As the widow of her second husband, Thomas Swasey Farley, she was known by the family as “Grandma Farley.” She was held in high esteem by the Phypers children and their friends. Mrs. Farley lived at the Ohio Greenwood Farm until her death in 1932.
June Greenwood Phypers

June, the oldest of the six children, lived at Greenwood Farm from age eight until her death in 2002, at age 100. She never married and was a fiercely independent woman. Like her father, she enjoyed traveling and reading. June attended Denison University and took her horse, Talent, with her on the train to college. She taught typing at the Shore Center High School in Euclid from 1931 to 1968. She later taught French at Villa Angela. She was very interested in history and the arts and often attended plays and concerts in Cleveland.

In the 1950s, Greenwood Farm was given to June by her father.

Paul George Phypers

Paul graduated from Case Institute of Technology. He and his brothers were avid football players in school. Over the years, Paul owned farms located in Wisconsin and Florida. Paul can be credited with developing many varieties of Caladium (holiday plants whose leaves are variegated).

Paul had three children by his first wife, Harriet Ellen Thornhill: William, Paul Junior and Daniel. “Billy” died at age ten in a farming accident.

After Paul’s death in 1999, Paul Jr. and Daniel, carried on the operation of Paul’s commercial farm and greenhouse in Florida. That farm, known as Happiness Farms, is now the world’s largest supplier of Caladiums. Paul’s sons continue to celebrate both their father’s and grandparents’ love of nature.

Fordham Sutcliffe Phypers

Fordham (Fritz) graduated from Adelbert College in 1928. His first wife was Grace Pinney. They had three children: Marian, Dean and Laura. Laura died at age 15, after battling cancer for many years. In 1940, several years after Fordham and Grace divorced, Fordham married Dorothy Lenart. They had two daughters: Dorinka and Melissa.

According to his daughter Dorinka, Fritz had enjoyed several vocations during his lifetime, including farming, playing pro football and selling life insurance. He also drove heavy equipment for the lumber industry, and was a pro boxer. He reveled in traveling the Florida back roads, relying on his unerring sense of direction. He and Dorothy were avid golfers for many years. In Bartow, Florida, Fritz began selling tractors and citrus harvesting equipment. He was well known and respected in this industry. Fritz retired in his early 70’s. He and his wife Dorothy remained in Bartow until his death at age 85, in 1991.
Thurlow Adams Phypers
Thurlow (Turtle or TAP) was known in the Richmond Heights area as an excellent mechanic and hunter. He was also a founding member of the community’s Volunteer Fire Department. For several years he owned and remodeled the original schoolhouse located on Chardon Road. He was the only one of the Phypers children to serve in the military and was very active in the Church of Christian Science. As an adult, Thurlow returned to live at Greenwood Farm, making his home in the groundskeeper’s house at the rear of the property. He lived there until his death in 2000.

Thurlow was married to Margaret Camm and, after her death in 1981, to Margaret (Beth) Olive Kern. Thurlow had no children.

Marian Lois Phypers
Marian (Monie) studied drama and wrote several plays, one of which—"Bitter Wine"—was published in an anthology of short plays. In 1940, she married Wendell Quelpurud Halverson, a Presbyterian minister. In the late 1940s, Marian, Wendell and their family moved to La Grange, Illinois—twenty miles, or so, from Chicago. Marian occasionally wrote articles for magazines.

When Wendell was appointed Presbyter of New York City, the family moved to New York and had an apartment overlooking Central Park. Following that assignment, they moved to Storm Lake, Iowa, where Wendell was the president of Buena Vista University. Both Marian and Wendell were very social and active in their communities, and Wendell was prominent in the Norwegian Society. Marion and Wendell had three children: Peder, Ingrid and Timothy.

Ruth Smith Phypers
Ruth attended grade school at the one-room school near Greenwood Farm, known as the Chardon Road or the Beechnut School House. She then attended Euclid High School. According to Ruth, after high school, her father felt she needed a bit of “polishing,” so she was sent to Laurel School in Shaker Heights. After being polished, Ruth attended both Western Reserve and Stanford University—graduating from Stanford with a B. S. in Biology. She married Charles Garrison Danforth, who was later a teacher of biology and geology.

Ruth and Charles collaborated to write an educational pamphlet about birds. Ruth earned her masters degree and teaching credential from USC in Los Angeles and later taught elementary school. Ruth and Charles had three children: James, Douglas and Lynn.

Following the death of Charles, Ruth returned to Greenwood Farm. To this day, Ruth continues to study the birds that visit the farm.

Ruth, the last surviving child of Maude and George, has fond memories of growing up at Greenwood Farm. In a recent interview, Ruth remembered the Sunday ritual of the family: church in the morning, lunch at home and then a ride in the country with the whole family. (On Sundays, cards were never played, alcohol was not consumed and motion pictures were not attended.)
The Later Years

Over the years, as the children were growing up and moving on to start their own lives, George and Maude made very few changes to the structures or the use of the land. George continued to build his insurance agency, served on the council and taught Sunday school at the Wilson Baptist Church, which stood at east 55th and Quincy. According to an article in the Plain Dealer dated October 8th 1959, written by Mary Strassmeyer, George was still teaching Sunday school at the age of seventy, just as he did when he was sixteen.

....he taught seventeen-years-olds giving them extra-curricular lessons on a week night when he would take them on a tour of the city. His one big teaching theory is “If you and your class get to talking about a problem, go out and see what it is all about.”

The world changed enormously during the lifetimes of Maude and George, but they remained constant in their beliefs and values. Their home always provided a reassuring and nurturing place for the extended family to visit.

Maude died March 14, 1964, at the age of ninety-two. George died October 27, 1972, at the age of ninety-nine. Today the home at Greenwood Farm is occupied by Ruth and her son Douglas.

The Greenwood Farm Heritage

Both George and Maude made it a point to educate their children to respect the environment and the creatures dependent on it for survival. Those lessons, along with the daily experiences on the farm and in the ravine of the east branch of Euclid Creek, provided the Phypers children with a true understanding of the world of nature. Maude’s gentle influence is probably what turned this understanding into a life-long love.

Share this heritage and love as you tour Greenwood Farm.
The name "Phypers" may derive from the occupation name "Pipers." Ancestors of both the Phypers and the Sutcliffes came to England from Holland in the 1500s—the Phypers to help with draining the English fens; the Sutcliffes to escape religious persecution.

George & Catherine lived five miles apart in England, but met for the first time in America.

A SHORT GENEALOGY OF THE G. W. PHYPERS FAMILY OF GREENWOOD FARM RICHMOND HEIGHTS OHIO
This 2005 document has been revised and rewritten by Douglas Garrison Danforth, Lynn Maynard Schroeder and James Greenwood Danforth from a document researched and written by Jeffrey S. Morris for the City of Richmond Heights.

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