

# **UNIVERSITY CIRCLE**

## **An Alternative Community**

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It is fitting that the R.T.A. characterizes the relationship between downtown Cleveland and the University Circle area as a “Dual Hub,” recognizing the prominence of the latter’s parks, museums, university, and other cultural and social institutions. This unique assemblage of institutions is not the result of general philanthropy, however, but rather stems from specific actions taken in the latter half of the nineteenth century by Cleveland’s philanthropic elite to create an alternative community at the Doan’s Corners site. Here, amidst the sylvan setting that gave rise first to Lake View Cemetery and the Doan’s Brook string of picturesque park lands, the physically and morally healthful environment would counterbalance the industrial pollution and ethnic immigrants that were transforming downtown Cleveland.

This alternative community building activity was both a process of civic philanthropy and at times a means of marketing suburban real estate. The park donated in 1884 by Jephtha Wade was bordered by other lands that his family developed as an elite residential community. The developer of another such real estate project —Patrick Calhoun—donated much of the land for the actual University Circle, both as a formal public entrance to the growing park system and as a streetcar entrance to his Euclid Heights Allotment. This duality of motive, half civic and half entrepreneurial, was the key to understanding the prominence of the alternative community created at University Circle.