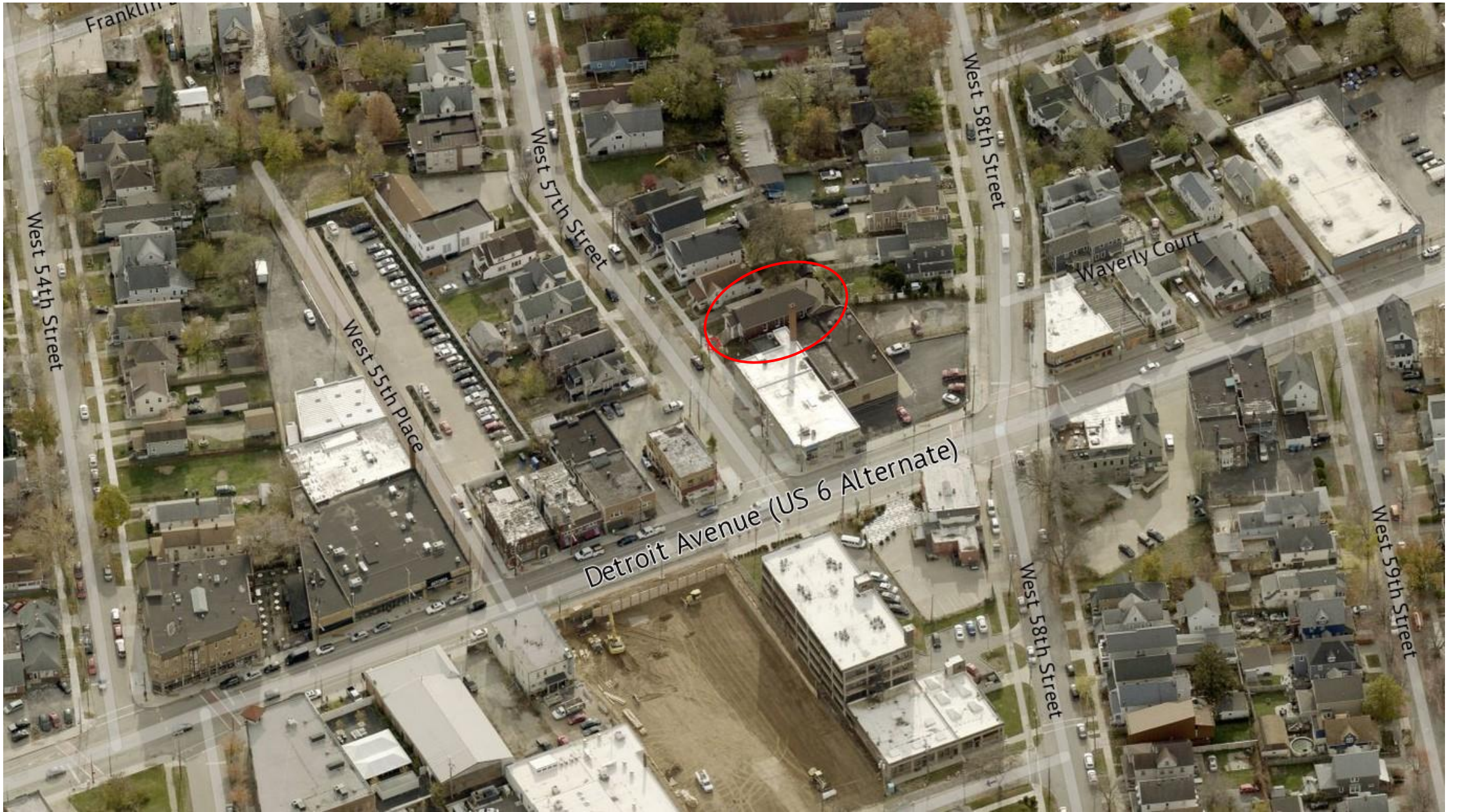


Cleveland Landmark Nomination

Romanian Baptist Church

1416 W. 57th Street



Romania History



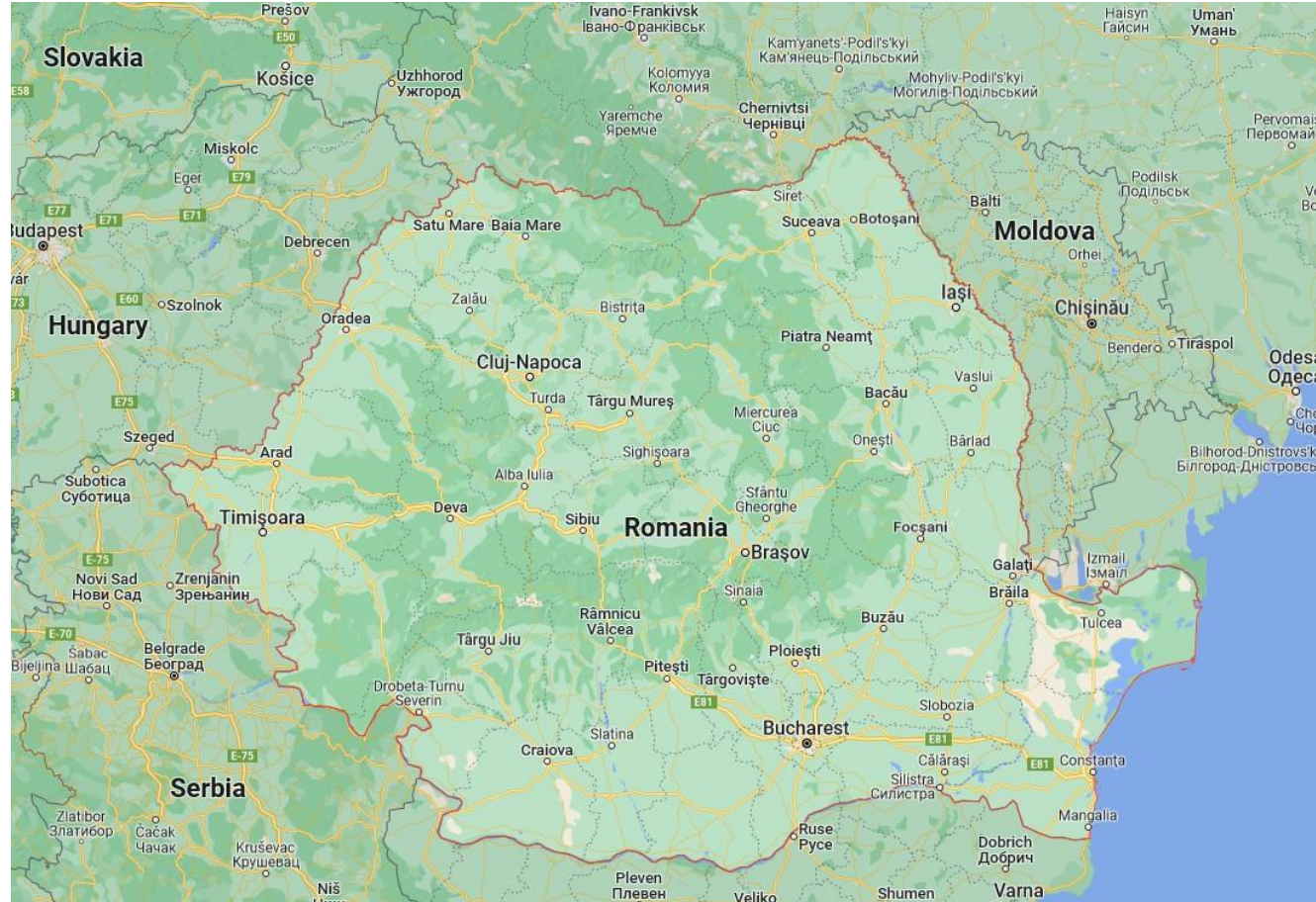
- Wallachia and Moldavia unified in 1859 via Prince Cuza
 - February 5, 1861 – Union formally declared creating Romania
 - Ottoman Empire
- 1877 – Romanian Parliament declares independence
- 1881 – Kingdom of Romania
 - Bessarabia occupied by Russian Empire
 - Transylvania part of the Austrian – Hungarian Empire

Romania History

- March 27, 1918 – Bessarabia and Romania unified
- December 1st, 1918 – Unification Day as Transylvania and Romania join together
- Romania officially recognized via the Treaty of Versailles and Treaty of Trianon



Romania



Romanians to America

- 1895-1914 Greatest migration
- 85% of migration from three areas
 - Carpathian Foothills
 - Transylvanian Plain
 - Bihor Massif
- “Migration proceeded along well-traveled courses to specific destinations in the city creating ethnic settlements from these concentrations.”
 - Broad cultural identity for Romanians
- Estimated 120,000 Romanians to America

Romanians to Cleveland

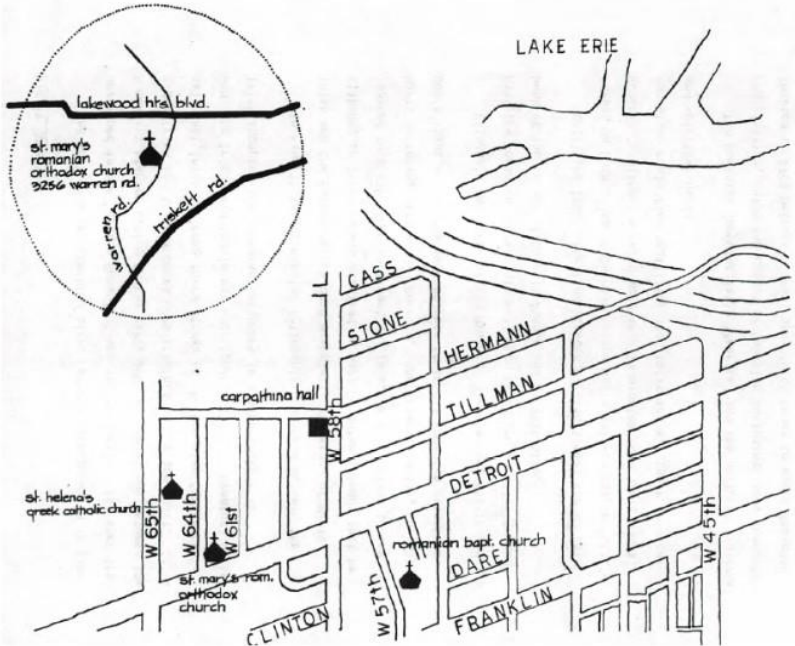
- Transylvanian Saxons were typically the first to leave
 - By 1891, this settlement was large enough to support a mutual benefits society
- “This settlement attracted peasants from ethnically mixed villages which affected more than 80 villages in the area.” (Saxon and Romanian)
- Solitary Migration vs. Chain Migration
- No regional separation
- Primarily to earn money to pay incurred debts and buy land back in Romania

Romanians in Cleveland

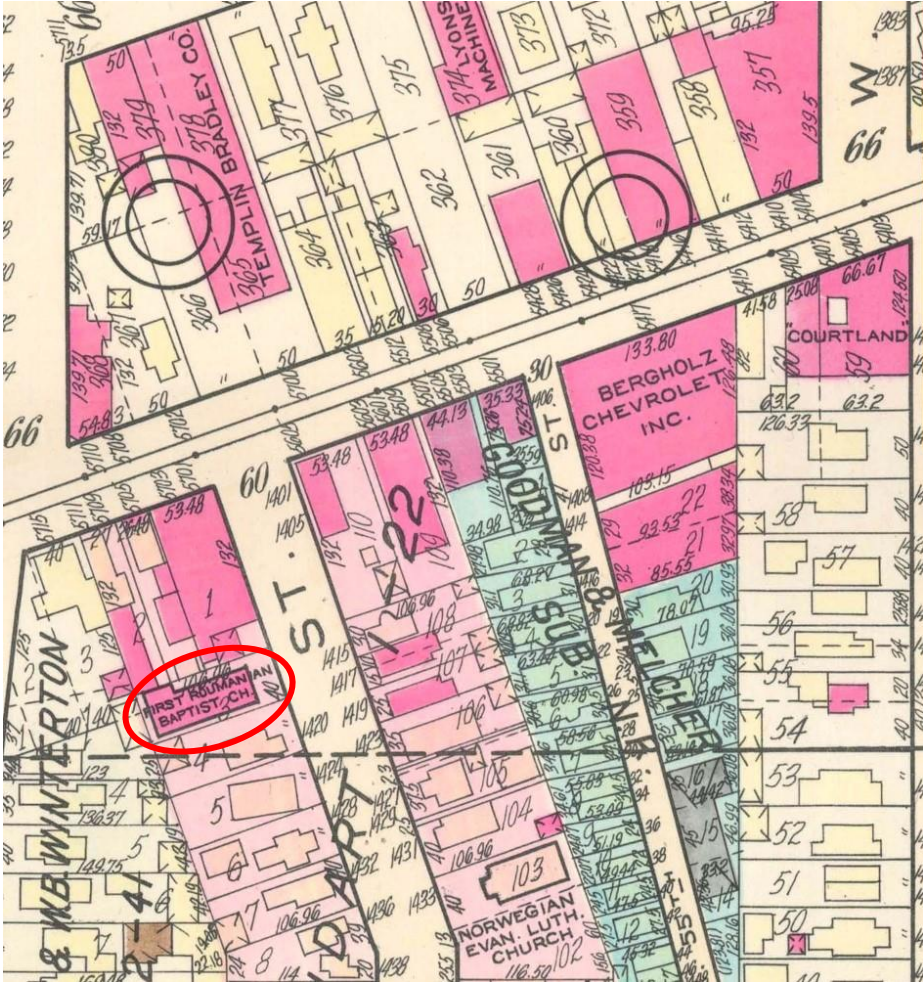
- 1902 – First Romanian mutual benefit society (Carpatina)
- Romanian settlement on west side of city
 - Detroit Avenue between W. 45th and W. 65th
 - Within an Irish settlement
- First Romanian Parishes in America
 - St. Mary Orthodox
 - St. Helena Byzantine



Little Romania



LITTLE ROMANIA OF CLEVELAND IN 1920's: Some American Romanians still live between West 65th and West 61st, others moved one hundred streets to the west, within a half mile radius of St. Mary's Romanian Church on Warren Road.



Romanian Baptist Church

- Organized in 1910
- One of the earliest of this denomination in the United States
- L.A. Gredys was a Romanian missionary in Cleveland
- Six members started meeting for services in Romanian at Olivet Baptist Church (Bridge Ave./ W. 52nd St.)
- Later rented a house on Tillman Ave. new W. 58th St.
- Later rented “Pilgrim Congregational Church” on Herman Ave.

Romanian Baptist Church

- Gredys also preached in Akron where he enlisted Mihai Farc (Michael Fark) to assist in Cleveland
- Gredys was called to pastor the Akron Romanian Baptist Church in 1914
- Under Fark's leadership, the congregation grew and a new church was planned.
- Fark was missionary to congregations on both east and west side of City
- Land donated for the church but construction delayed due to outbreak of WWI

Romanian Baptist Church

- Constructed in 1922
- Architect John H. Graham
- Designed buildings in greater Cleveland
 - Laurel School – Shaker Heights
 - Main Building
 - Residence Hall
 - Kindergarten Building
 - Fairmount Presbyterian Church – Cleveland Heights
 - Coventry Library – Cleveland Heights
 - Film Exchange Building - Cleveland

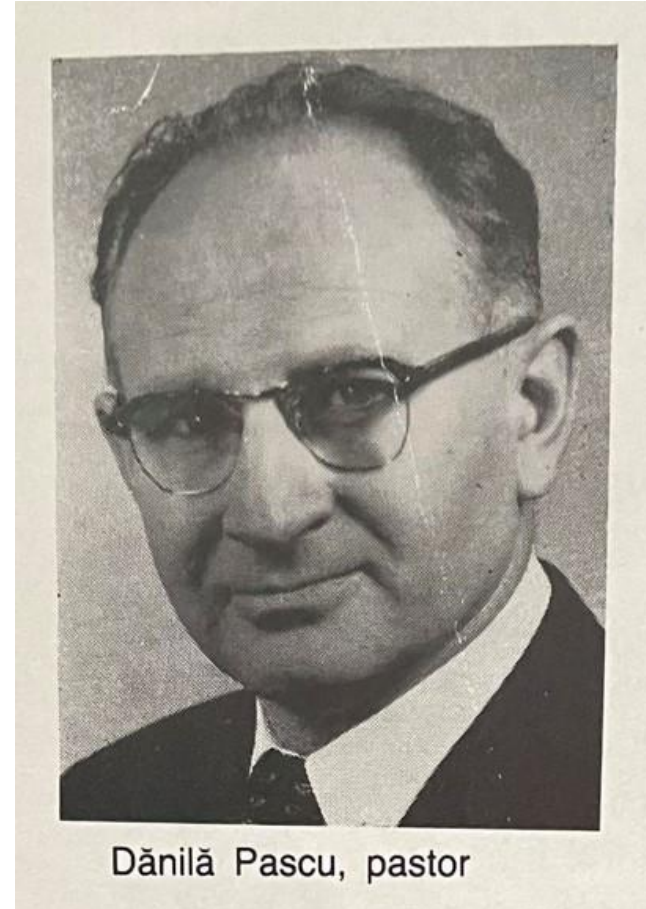


Romanian Baptist Church

- With the completion of the church, Fark was given full-time status as a Missionary.
- 1925 – Fark was ordained as a minister
- 1939 – Fark called to pastor the Romanian Baptist Church in Aurora, Illinois
- The new pastor to be called would be there for 35 years

Rev. Danila Pascu

- Unable to return to Romania due to the war
- Invited to become pastor of the parish in 1939
- 1940 – Initiated the Romanian Radio Hour ministry
- 1941 – His wife and two children arrived in Cleveland



Rev. Danila Pascu

- After World War II, he was sent to Europe to investigate the plight of refugees
- His report was influential in creating special funding through the Baptist World Alliance Board
- Helped resettle hundreds of displaced Immigrant families
- Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965
 - Testimony solicited by Congressman Michael Feighan
 - Family integration should be a top priority when granting entry permits

Romania in WWII

- Romania became a military dictatorship (National Legionary State) under Ion Antonescu in 1940 and was aligned with Nazi Germany
- King Michael (Regele Mihai) I participated in a coup which ousted Antonescu and declared an armistice agreement with the Allies in 1944



Romania Post WWII

- In 1945, King Michael forced to appoint a pro-Soviet government headed by Petru Groza as Prime Minister
- After two years, King Michael was forced to abdicate the throne, sent into exile, had his properties confiscated and his citizenship stripped
- Romania would become a Communist dictatorship until 1989

King Michael visits Cleveland



Romanian Baptist Church

- The congregation would continue to grow primarily with new members arriving from Romania through refugee camps
- They would finally outgrow the West 57th location and actively began to look for a new property
- In December 1989, the congregation purchased property in Parma for their new sanctuary and the West 57th church is sold
- April 29, 1990 – Celebration of the inauguration of the new facility

Romanian Baptist Church



- The building meets the criteria for Landmark Designation
 - Age
 - Integrity
 - Significance

Romanian Baptist Church



Significance

- Its character, interest or value is part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or the United States
- Its location is a site of a significant historical event
- Its identification is with a person who significantly contributed to the culture of the city
- The property exemplifies the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the city
- The historic property is identified with an architect whose work has influenced the development of the area
- The historic property embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation
- The historic property relates to other distinctive areas which are eligible for preservation activities, based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif
- The historic property's location or its singular physical characteristics represent the establishment or are a familiar visual feature of the neighborhood

Thank you

- Research assistance from:
 - Heather Lazar
 - David Jurca
- Source material
 - *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City* – Joseph J. Barton (1975)
 - *Romanian Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland* – Theodore Andrica (1977)
 - *History of the Romanian Baptist Church in Cleveland* (2017)