



# Centennial Reflections

*Essays from the Oakwood Historical Society*

## A tale of three Oakwood families - intertwined

By Harry G. Ebeling

There's a substantial piece of Oakwood that we haven't looked into yet. Think of the area between Far Hills Avenue and Acorn Drive and between Patterson Road and Lonsdale. With the exception of the athletic field, it's a very neatly laid out area of moderate sized homes located close to the schools, parks and transportation.

It was developed by three families whose names are well known. This is easier to follow than west Oakwood was. The story of how Daniel Cooper had to bail out early settlers to save the titles to their land is told in many local histories. Cooper ended up with a great deal of land by patent from the United States. Part of it was the NE Quarter of Section 31 Township 2 Range 7 MRS which he sold to Peter Suman and which by court action came to William Suman. William sold the west half of the quarter section to John Van Cleve and the east half to John & Charles Fauver.

In 1863 Van Cleve sold his land to John Shafor who was in the stone quarry business but also invested in real estate. Shafor built the brick farmhouse at 118 Spirea Drive, which has been added on to, but still retains an attractive style. His sons, Walter and Charles, were in the stone quarrying business with him but sold out in 1896 and went into general contracting. Before his death, John sold 32 acres east of Shafor Blvd. to Acorn Drive and between Patterson Road and Spirea Drive, to Dury Smith, and this became the Acorn Homes plat in 1923. On Shafor's death in 1910, the rest of the farm went to his sons.



Charles Shafor sold his interest in 25 acres to brother Walter, and Walter bought more of the land between Patterson Road and Spirea Drive from Far Hills Ave. to Shafor Blvd. from the Wead heirs giving him the opportunity to plat Park Hill Plat in 1913. The houses he built there are described in a beautiful presentation sales brochure called "Beautiful Shafor Heights" which describes the homes and gives the names of many of the original owners and suppliers. He used architect Ralph G. Rossel for many of the 37 homes he built, except for the beautiful Craftsman Revival home, designed by Schenck & Williams, at 106 Spirea Drive which he built for himself. Walter Shafor built the Oakwood Community Center Building as The East Oakwood Club in 1920, and sold it to the Club in 1921. He used this in his sales brochure as an amenity to attract buyers. When it closed in 1928, he gave the rest of the block to the city for a park.

Walter's three daughters platted a three lot wide seven acre subdivision from Patterson Road to Spirea east of Shafor Blvd. in 1927. The daughters, Harriet L. Kimball, Margaret A. Jordan, and Susan A. Crawford, lived in three adjacent houses in the second block of Wisteria Drive. They participated with Gustav Hodapp in two sections of Shafor Oakwood Plats selling the high school athletic field to the city in 1925 and abandoning the idea of extending Harman Boulevard through to Far Hills Ave.

Returning to Van Cleve's sale of the east half of a quarter section to Charles and John Fauver (above), Charles sold 29 acres to John Shafor, but upon his death he left nine acres to Allen Fauver. Remember the reference to his farmhouse at 218 Patterson Road in the recent (March 4) Distinctive Homes section of this paper?

That's the strip that held up development of the Acorn Homes area east of Shafor Blvd. to Acorn Drive. This is the origin of Fauver Road, which became Hathaway.

Gustav Hodapp developed Shafor's Oakwood Plat and Shafor's Oakwood plat #2 with the Shafor daughters but was also a builder of many houses in the Shafor's Oakwood Plat #3. One of the most notable houses is "Normandy Castle" designed by Louis Lott in 1929, at 216 Harman Blvd. His son, Al, is noted for operating the Schnitzel-Bank Bier Garden at 1300 Shroyer Road during 1929-31. Offering ten cents a glass beer and German food with a band and dancing, it had outdoor service from a barn like structure. It closed due to labor trouble, so he tried a miniature golf course before building the Tudor style Shell gas station at the corner of Acorn Drive and Dellwood Ave. This familiar station operated until 1981 when it became the Seafood Station, then in 1987, Classic Creations Contractor, and from 1993 to present, Tudor Salon.

But I digress. Two little one block long plats are interjected from Schantz Avenue to Shafor Blvd. between Lonsdale Avenue and Dellwood Avenue. They are the I.E. Smith and Central Oakwood Plats which were apparently land bought from the Shafor daughters when they decided not to plat the athletic field property. Platted in 1925 and 1931, they were part of the rapid growth the Oakwood experienced before the Depression.

Thus the families of Shafor, Fauver and Hodapp are intertwined.