



1947 Far Hills Avenue  
Dayton, OH 45419

THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Quarterly

Issue 3

Fall 2010



## Summer Programs for Children a Success!

### *Laughter and Learning*

The grounds of the Homestead were filled with joyful sounds as the society once again offered two historical programs for children in June and July. These programs, designed for 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders, are a reminder that the Homestead was once a home with children who may have enjoyed some of the same activities.

The children made butter, ice cream and even baked goods—though the baking had to be done off site. The younger children learned to use embroidery floss to decorate a small wall hanging with felt cutouts, buttons, and quilters' yoyo's using the running stitch; the older children made small (see page 7)

### *Going Local—Really Local*

Seasons in the Garden, a gardening program for elementary school students, continues to delight and surprise the participants. Background instruction on how to use tools, types of seeds and germination, and good and bad insects prepare the students for the fun work in the garden.



Participants enjoyed a variety of activities in summer programs.

Planting, weeding, watering, and protecting the plot from critters and destructive insects—is that a toad house?—prepare the new gardeners for picking.

Now busy harvesting, the students are sharing peppers, cherry tomatoes, oregano, and pole beans with their families. (How much the groundhogs and other hungry animals have taken home is not known.) Picking continues until the program ends with a session on putting up food. (see page 7)

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## Committee Reports

### Grounds and facilities

The long, hot summer is drawing to a close and the Long-Romspert Homestead remains a jewel among Oakwood landmarks. The gardens continue to show off their finery and the lawn is an inviting prelude to the features and programs of our house museum. Through this summer, an analysis has been made of work to be done about the Homestead. Electrical updating, gutter guards, and the restoration of the carriage house and garage are some of the items that are being reviewed for prioritization to ensure the Homestead will remain a vital part of the community for decades to come.

### Educational Programs

The summer included two historic summer programs, one for incoming 1<sup>st</sup> through 3rd graders and one for 4th to 6th grade students. As has become the usual procedure, we introduced new activities and concepts into the programs to keep things fresh for returning participants. Seasons in the Garden continues on a once-a-month basis. For our June program, which was held on Father's Day, we invited the fathers to attend as well. They helped churn homemade ice cream and worked in the garden along with their children.

## A Message from the President

Do you love history? Do you love Oakwood? Do you know someone who does? It's only September, but the Oakwood Historical Society is preparing for next year. In November we will vote in the 2011 Board of Directors. We welcome nominations and are looking for people who have the time and desire to get involved. Some board members work on the day-to-day operations of the historical society and some members work on a variety long term projects. The only requirements for board membership are that the nominee is a member (or becomes a member), can attend monthly meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday evening of the month, and has an interest. Please send any and all nominations to me at [mwtittmer@gmail.com](mailto:mwtittmer@gmail.com) by November 1. Thanks for your consideration and your help!

We have also made a change to our membership structure. Membership dues will run on a yearly basis starting on the date joined and expiring on that date 12 months later. Previously all memberships ran on the calendar year whether the member joined in January or in June. I hope that you will enjoy this new benefit. Please allow us time to adjust to this change and watch for a renewal letter in your mail. If you are a lapsed member, would you please consider renewing your membership? Your membership dollars help us maintain the Long-Romspert Homestead and expand our current programs.

Have a wonderful fall! —Mackensie Wittmer

## Welcome June Clarke, Our Newest Volunteer

June is working on a special project for the Oakwood Historical Society: Indexing and photographing all the donations from Ethel Romspert that have been re-acquired from Dayton History.

Currently living in Washington Township and a member of the Centerville Historical Society, June was born in Dayton and lived in Vandalia before moving to Long Island, NY, where she lived for 24 years. While in New York, she became interested in the Great Estates of Long Island and was a member of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities as well as The Huntington, NY, Historical Society.

Why is June volunteering with our society? Her own words answer best. "When I was a girl, my father would 'take us for a Sunday drive' to look at the lovely cottages and the great houses of Oakwood. That was my first interest in architecture." Photographing houses became a natural extension of her interest in historic preservation. "I am pleased to be able to help out with this project," she adds. We are more than pleased to welcome her to the society.



## Frank Stuart Patterson: Setting the Record Straight

*The last in the 4-part series about the Patterson family*

Visitors to Dayton and some long-time residents too frequently ask how Wright-Patterson Air Force Base got its name. Most people assume the Patterson half was for John H. Patterson, founder of NCR and significant driving force in the creation of Oakwood. For everyone who's curious about the correct answer, this profile of the short and tragic life of the brilliant Frank Stuart Patterson gives credit where it's due. His story begins with a recap of family ties from previous articles in this series.

Frank J. Patterson was the brother of John H. Patterson and also a co-founder of NCR. Frank married Julia Shaw (Carnell), patron and donor of the Dayton Art Institute; they had a daughter and two sons before Frank's early death in 1901. Mary Patterson Perrine married and lived in the East, Jefferson was the older son (profiled in the last newsletter), and Frank Stuart was born in 1897.

Frank Stuart was always interested in aviation, learning to fly at age 18 in the summer of 1916. He was attending Yale University when World War I broke out and enlisted in the Air Service of the Army in 1917. "Stu" won his pilot's wings, was commissioned a first lieutenant, and was assigned to Wilbur Wright Field as a test pilot in 1918. A Yale classmate, later to become a writer and publisher, said of him, "He had the qualities that go to make a great aviator – coolness in danger, presence of mind, self-reliance, a sense of tactics, contempt for death."

On June 19, 1918, Frank was assigned to fly a DeHavilland DH-4, designed by the British and built in Dayton at the Moraine plant of the Dayton-Wright Airplane Co. Americans called the plane "Liberty;" among enlisted personnel, it had the nickname "Death Hack" and "The Flaming Coffin." The flight was to test a fixed .30 caliber machine gun synchronized by a Nelson interrupter gear so that bullets could be fired between the whirling blades of a propeller in flight.

He and his companion, Lt. Leroy Swan, were to climb to 6,000 feet and fire 100 rounds into the ground, climb to 10,000 feet and repeat the test firing, and then climb to 15,000 feet for a final test. The dive from the third height was considered to be a spectacular feat by observers on the ground, but the plane didn't level off as planned, continuing as (see page 7)



## Archives and Acquisitions

We have finally re-acquired our original Eastlake chair from the restoration and repair shop. Although not permanently placed yet, it will be in the 1867 main floor. The piece, inherited from Ethel Romsper, was in very bad condition. Phyllis picked out new fabric, and Joe Battaglia, a loyal friend of the society, restored it. Be sure to look it up when you are at the Home-stead and note how the less ornate style of Eastlake furniture begins the transition to the Arts and Crafts style.



## OHS Committees **The English Tudor in Oakwood**

Please get involved . . .

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The term "revival" is applied to a number of architectural styles based on designs inspired from earlier time periods. English Tudor Revival is loosely based on a variety of 16<sup>th</sup> century English building traditions ranging from simple cottages to elaborate palaces. Found on many of its homes, larger estates and public buildings, this style is the one most identified with Oakwood.

In nineteenth century England, the Tudor was revived by such designers as William Morris and C.F.A. Voysey during the British Arts and Crafts Period. The style then became fashionable in America and was most popular here from 1890 to 1940, though the style is still applied to some modern structures today.

Clad in brick or stucco (or both), these homes feature half-timber beams, steeply-sloped, slate roofs, leaded glass windows often in a diamond pattern and stonework accents. True to inspirations from nature in design and materials, the half-timbers are often reminiscent of the rising and spreading limbs of forest trees. The chimneys are usually capped with decorative, but practical clay chimney pots. Doorways feature the Tudor (or broken) arch. Applied woodwork and stonework are often decorative in nature. The home pictured in figure 1 shows many of these elements.

Oakwood homes also show off variations of the Tudor theme. Almost fortress-like, the Jacobean Tudor features battlements along the roofline and sometimes buttresses as accents to the outer walls. The Germanic Tudor has a jerkin head (or



Figure 1: Classic English Tudor Revival

clipped) gable and Gothic style arches in the entryways. The Cotswold Cottage is a picturesque home that conjures up a whimsical storybook appearance with cozy corners, quirky angles and charming, artistic details.

Oakwood High School, Edwin D. Smith Elementary School, Wright Library, the Oakwood City Building and many local homes are all fine examples of Oakwood's architectural heritage. --Mark Risley

## Repeat Performance at Wright Library

The Oakwood Historical Society will present “The Classic Architecture of Oakwood Homes,” a program first given earlier this year to a sold-out audience. The date is Sunday, October 24, at 2:00 p.m. in the meeting room at Wright Library.

Oakwood is fortunate to have many well-preserved examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture in its tree-lined neighborhoods. This program will explore the exteriors of those houses, their remarkable artistic details and some of the historical stories associated with many of the homes. The program will be presented by Mark Risley, current Oakwood Historical Society board member and past president. Advance registration is needed and is limited to the first 65 people. Contact Wright Library’s Reference Department at (937) 294-7171 to register starting on Friday, October 8. Mark your calendars and enjoy a Sunday afternoon at Wright Library. This popular program filled up quickly in April, so be sure to sign up early!

### 2010 OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Brick Walk – Tributes, memorials, and

Most of you who have been at the Homestead recently, have noticed the brick walk that the Scouts extended around to the front with so much care and effort. Have you taken the time to look at the engraved bricks randomly placed in it? This is a tradition that was started when we first acquired the house, as a fund raiser and to focus interest in the long term benefit of remembering our generous supporters. We still order and place bricks, like the ones that were recently purchased by loyal friends, Everett and Margie Yowell as a permanent reminder of their interest and remembering Margie’s parents – her mother a Long descendant and her father an early Oakwood Councilman.

You too can be a part of this project for \$100. We have a limited number of spaces on each brick. Forms available in the Museum Room.



## Kid's Page

### Woodland Cemetery Scavenger Hunt

Fall is a great time to visit Woodland Cemetery. Take your parents—and this page—to the cemetery and see how many of these things you can find.

- Find gravestones marked with a cross. Make a sketch of all the designs you find.
- Find the gravestone of someone named John.
- See how many angels you can find.
- Gravestones often tell about that person's life. See if you can find a soldier's grave.
- Can you find a gravestone in the shape of a heart?
- Woodland Cemetery is also an arboretum, a collection or museum of trees. How many different colors of leaves can you find?
- Can you find someone who died in 1913, the year of Dayton's Great Flood?
- Woodland Cemetery is home to many animals—both real and sculptures. Draw a picture of the different animals that you find.
- Can you locate flowers on some of the gravestones? How many?
- Can you find a gravestone with someone's photograph on it?
- Can you find the graves of these famous people?
  - Paul Lawrence Dunbar (African-American writer)
  - Wilber and Orville Wright (Inventors of the airplane)
  - Charles Kettering (Inventor)
  - John H. Patterson (Founder of NCR)
  - Albert Tucker (African-American basketball player)
  - Erma Bombeck (Writer, columnist, best-selling author)



## Summer Children's Programs

### ***Laughter and Learning***

(continued from page 1) weaving projects that they turned into animal puppets, purses, or both. They also made their own unique buttons to decorate their projects. Phyllis Miller, free-lance artist and Homestead decorator and illustrator, designed the weaving projects that proved so popular some children even gave up recess.

The dates for next year's holiday and summer programs are not yet set, but when they are you may want to include your children on a journey to the past.



### ***Going Local—Really Local continued***

This hands-on program, in its first year, is a perfect for those who want to understand where food comes from and how it grows. And, if you haven't been to the Homestead this season, take a few minutes and check out the garden. It's a treat!

## Frank Stuart Patterson

(continued from page 3)one wing fell off, then the rudder, then the other wing. The fuselage was powering down with the engine screaming until it struck the ground in a wheat field near the Mad River. Troops found the wreckage with the engine buried 5 feet in the ground; the bodies were gruesomely dismembered. (An accident board determined that a tie rod designed to connect two fittings to drift wires to take the backward strain on the wings had sheared, causing the wings to fold back and separate from the fuselage. This finding was contrary to an erroneous assumption that the machine gun fire splintered the propeller, which tore the wings off.)

Frank Stuart's funeral was at his mother's house on West First St.; Julia Shaw by then had married Harrie Carnell. Frank was buried in the family plot in Woodland Cemetery beside his father.

In 1924, the Air Service accepted the gift of 4,250 acres east of Dayton, including Huffman Prairie and Wilbur Wright Field that had been leased for flight training in 1917. The land was acquired after an intensive and short campaign to raise the \$427,000 in forty-eight hours by Frederick B. Patterson, son of John N. Patterson. (The dedication program in the historical society's archives lists many prominent Dayton and Oakwood residents as contributors.) The new parcels were dedicated as Wright Field in honor of both Wright brothers on October 12, 1927, and the laboratories and engineering shops at McCook Field were moved.

On July 6, 1931, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army signed an order designating The Fairfield Air Depot reservation as Patterson Field in honor of Lt. Frank Stuart Patterson. The two fields, Wright and Patterson, were maintained with separate names and identities until 1948 when they were joined with the creation of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

— Harry Ebeling

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