



1947 Far Hills Avenue
Dayton, OH 45419

THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Issue 2

Summer 2011

Save the Date!

Sunday, August 28
Summer Open House with classic British autos on the lawn of the Homestead!



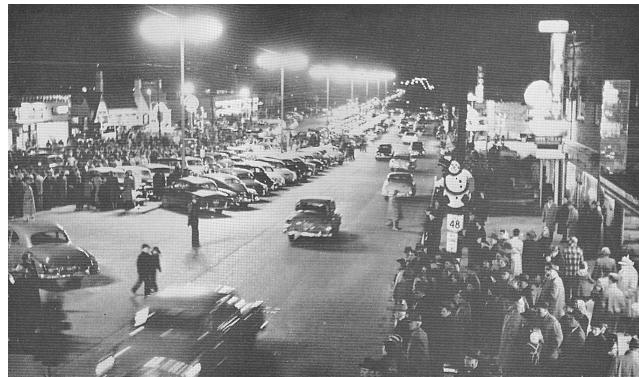
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DP&L + Oakwood = First in Nation

The Dayton Power & Light Company has recently been celebrating its 100 years in the Miami Valley with both an advertising campaign and by sponsoring a hands-on exhibit at the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery. Although electric service first came to Dayton in 1883 with a power plant and electric street lighting operated by the Dayton Electric Light Company, DP&L was not created until 1911.

Oakwood was an important part of the company's history, since, in 1952 DP&L debuted the first fluorescent street lights in the nation on Far Hills Avenue in Oakwood. The two photographs here belong to Dayton History. DP&L has kindly sponsored their reproduction costs so we could include them in our newsletter and archives. They are amazing photographs that capture the fluorescent street lights and the night life in Oakwood in the middle of the twentieth century. *—Harrison Stamm Gowdy*



Nation's first fluorescent street lights on Far Hills Avenue, c. 1952.

OHS Committees

Please get involved . . .

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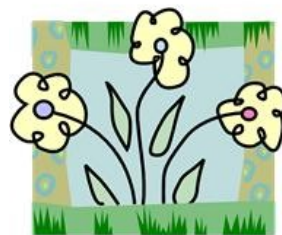
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A Message from the President

Welcome to the summer edition of the Newsletter. The past few months have proven to be very busy. An April presentation on classic Oakwood architecture at Wright Library was well attended. Also in April, the society hosted over 100 guests at our spring Long-Romspert Homestead Open House with the theme of "Life in the 1930s". The following month, the society participated in the That Day in May parade with the support of Mr. and Mrs. John Gray, who provided a vintage tractor and buckboard wagon; children from our youth programs dressed in period costumes rode in the wagon. Later that afternoon, the Homestead became a quaint café in what has become an annual wine-tasting tradition, as over 40 guests enjoyed sampling unique wines, beers and cheeses provided by Dorothy Lane Market. The Society's children's programs continue to be successful as Oakwood's youngest citizens learn about life in other times. Visit our website at www.oakwoodhistory.org to see these activities captured in delightful photos.

Society members are now planning events for the next several months. A summer Open House featuring classic automobiles on the lawn of the Homestead is planned for Sunday, August 28th. And, as you will read in this newsletter, an exciting walking tour is scheduled for September 25th. On October 16th, the society teams up with Wright Library to present "The Legend of Roswell". The autumn Open House will focus on harvest time. The Founder's Day Dinner is being planned and the holidays will be celebrated at our winter Open House in December. Watch local publications or visit the website for details of upcoming events.

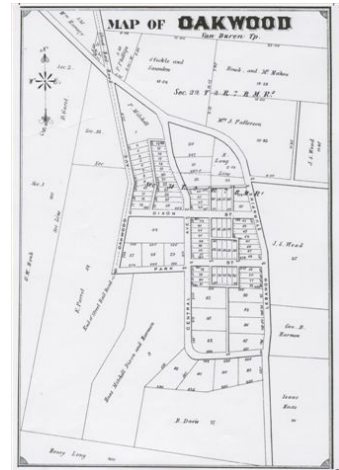
An organization such as the society cannot present such programs without the support of their members, the community, and city leaders and staff. Your interest in and attendance at our programs and events are greatly appreciated. —Mark W. Risley



Walking the Town of Oakwood: Save the Date

On Sunday September 25th from 2-4 pm, the Oakwood Historical Society will host an all new local walking tour to introduce the third neighborhood in Oakwood to have its own published walking tour pamphlet. The neighborhood is the Town of Oakwood and consists of the roughly triangular-shaped portion of Oakwood that was originally developed in 1872, which is the area bounded by Far Hills Avenue on the east, Oakwood Avenue on the west, Park Avenue on the south, and Thruston Avenue on the north.

We will debut our newest walking tour with special events so be sure to look for more details as we develop the tour. Stay posted through our website www.oakwoodhistory.org. The Town of Oakwood is very important in understanding Oakwood's history and development. The tour focuses on the development of Oakwood's first neighborhood. —Harrison Stamm Gowdy



1875 Map of Oakwood

Volunteer Opportunity

The Oakwood Historical Society seeks a dedicated volunteer to organize two adult lectures or programs during the calendar year. This opportunity is perfect for a society member who would like to share his or her event planning and management experience on a per-project basis. Duties include working with the historical society board of directors on pertinent topics, contacting speakers, organizing the day or evening program, and generating publicity for the event.

If you are interested in volunteering for Adult Programming at the Oakwood Historical Society, please email Mackensie Wittmer mwittmer@gmail.com with the subject: OHS Events.



Committee Reports

Children's Garden Program

Plans are underway to start a second garden in the summer of 2012. We will watch the sun this summer to help decide the siting of the second garden and do preliminary work to get the new garden area into shape. Next year we will be able to offer two programs with different techniques and crops in each area.

2011
OAKWOOD HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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Committee Reports
Grounds and Facilities

The gardens have been in brilliant bloom this spring and summer thanks, once again, to the efforts of Jamie Sheehan who helps maintain the curb appeal of the Long-Romspert Homestead. And, the south boundary of the property has been cleared of much honeysuckle with assistance from the high school seniors; we are grateful for their help. Estimates are being gathered on the installation of a donated wood-burning

Crazy About Horses: New Exhibit in Homestead Gallery

The story of John H. Patterson riding horses with his executives is well known, and some readers may even know about King Tullis who managed stables in connection with the Old Barn Club and later at the Dayton Country Club. What may not be so well known is through the 1930s, '40s and into the '50s, horseback riding was a popular pastime for many residents in Oakwood.

Originally catering to adults who rode recreationally on bridle paths in and around Hills and Dales, riding became popular for the children of the affluent and younger people who maintained horses at the stables and were members of the Junior Hunt Club.

A new exhibit in the museum gallery showcases this little known part of our city's history. Large poster boards show young folks (some of whom still live here) riding in groups and at horse shows, adults playing polo and spectators at competitions with out-of-town clubs. There are photos of King Tullis and the stables at the Dayton Country Club.

In 1998, Phyllis Heck organized a show on the grounds of the Homestead with horses, saddles, and memorabilia, and the society has John Patterson's riding crop and boot puller that are also part of the current display. Come see the memories of years gone by at our next event. —Harry Ebeling



View of the stables at the Dayton Country Club.
Photo copyright John Huffman/ www.huffmanimage.com

Georgian and Colonial Revival Architecture

Georgian and Colonial Revival styles are found throughout Oakwood and are the main architectural theme of Shafor Heights. Based on 18th century designs, these homes became a popular revival style around 1895 and are still common today. Both styles were the result of architects and builders trying to evoke America's own patriotic past.

The Georgian Revival style was generally employed for larger houses in affluent neighborhoods and are clad in brick; Colonial Revival homes usually feature wooden clapboard exteriors. These two styles share many of the same characteristics: a rectilinear form, symmetrical facade, a columned portico, a fanlight window over the door, sidelight windows at the door and dormer windows with classical details.

Several recently constructed homes in Oakwood are of the Georgian Revival style with a consideration toward maintaining the architectural integrity of the community. —*Mark W. Risley*



Georgian Revival Home with fanlight and sidelights on the main entryway door.

Committee Reports

Grounds and Facilities

stove in the summer kitchen. We also have plans to repair the garage doors and have both the garage and carriage house painted by summer's end.

Programs and Events

Guests Enjoy Wines and a Tour of the Homestead

Once again, the Oakwood Historical Society Annual Wine Tasting was a big success. Dorothy Lane Market's own Jim Erwin was the expert pourer for the evening and DLM's Donna Howell put together delicious treats. We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone from Dorothy Lane Market for their care, time and professionalism. Also, thank you to Chad Cannon from Logos@work for creating the eye-catching sign. Finally, we would like to thank everyone who has attended over the past three years. It is because of you that this event has become a seasonal favorite.

The setting is lovely and the wine and food wonderful, but the company can't be beat! I encourage everyone who hasn't stopped by to mark their calendars for next year. Remember, this event always follows That Day in May activities. See you all next year on the porch of the Homestead. —*Kjirsten Goeller*

Learning and Laughing: Joyful Notes from the Education Chairs

Our children's summer programs are proving to be a great success again this year! Using the 1930s as our historical era of interest, the children learned how people lived through the Great Depression by using ingenuity, creativity and a healthy dose of good, old American "can-do" spirit.

After learning about thrifty folks in the '30s, the children made their own patchwork pillows to take home. They learned about and listened to radio programs as a form of entertainment. They also learned about and played the games of children from over 70 years ago. After all the hard work, the children made (and consumed) foods popular in the 1930s from homemade noodles to chocolate chip cookies. They discovered that if you eat enough popsicles you can create a treasure box! A wonderful time was had by all, and we thank our hard-working volunteers without whom we could not offer such wonderful programs: Mrs. Jamie Timmer, Mrs. Pelagia Benin, Erika Meitzner, Heather Brooks, Sarah Pearson and Jonathan Pearson.

Our children's garden program is also off and running! The children have planted and tended their garden and are beginning to reap the fruits of their labors. The vegetables are all growing like crazy thanks to the cool, rainy spring, so the children are anticipating a delicious harvest from now until well into the fall. Besides finding out about plant propagation and care, our eager learners also learn about garden friends and foes like various insects and other creatures. This will help them keep the gardens happy and healthy at their own homes as well as in the Homestead Kitchen Garden.

This spring, a successful 1930s-themed Open House at the Homestead hosted the high-achieving Academic Decathlon (AcaDec) team from Oakwood High School. AcaDec students prepared and presented posters and PowerPoint® presentations about different aspects of the Great Depression. A soup kitchen was set up in a tent in the side yard to serve our over 100 visitors.

In May, members of the society took kitchen gadgets, photographs, antique clothing, and old-fashioned children's games to third-grade students at Smith and Harman elementary schools. Many thanks for volunteers who supplemented our board members in presenting this information to the students: Mrs. Jamie Timmer, Mrs. Colleen Gabriel, and Sarah Pearson.

In early June, four graduating Oakwood High School seniors did three days of community service at the historical society. Ethan Kissock, John Ostendorf, Erika Meitzner, and Alexandra Morris washed windows, cut down and stacked lots of honeysuckle for pickup, and did many preparations for the summer children's programs. —Linda Pearson and Lisa Kell



The Argonne Forest—in the Miami Valley!

History buffs know the Argonne Forest as one of the definitive battles of World War I just as Gettysburg was to the Civil War. But the Argonne Forest in Montgomery County, now a faded page in local history, is related only by virtue of the fact that it was off Gettysburg Avenue in what is now Possum Creek Metro Park.

Judge Null Hodapp, a Veteran of the WW I European campaign, started buying land in 1926 before he became a Municipal Court Judge in Dayton. His vision was to create a place where veterans and their families could get together for outdoor relaxation. He started by building a club house, followed by a swimming pool. He named it in memory of WW I veterans and a friend who had died in northern France a few hours before the Armistice. He gradually added a gas station, riding stables, and a dammed up creek for fishing, canoeing and swimming. Null bought four street cars from the Oakwood Street railway when it converted to trolley busses in 1934, using one as a concession stand and the others converted and rented for cabins. There was a midway with a shooting range, pony rides, an outdoor dance platform, a Figure 8 race-car track, and a ball diamond with bleachers. Null's nephew, Ruey, remembers the big 4th of July celebrations, complete with a re-enactment battle, and a fireworks display that attracted up to 10,000 people, climaxed by a final burst with an American flag. (July 4 was Null's birthday.)

Null continued buying land, nearly 400 acres, for the project until 1938, and lived there until his death in 1945, while serving his second term on the Montgomery County Common Pleas Court. The park continued to flourish until gas rationing in World War II affected the ability of people to get to it. The last fireworks display was 1941. Changing life styles and war priorities brought the park to a gradual end. Null had tried without success to persuade the Montgomery County Commissioners to move the fairgrounds to the site.

His heirs sold off the land, mostly to the Montgomery County Park District, which maintains 300 acres as part of the Possum Creek Reserve. The park map shows the corner where the amusement park once stood, but only a few rotting foundations are a reminder of a wonderful personal tribute to fallen soldiers and a reminder of good times for their families. —Harry Ebeling

Oakwood Grille



Sunday . . . and
Every Day in the
Week

SUNDAY DINNER

55c • 65c • 75c

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The information that you submit will be used only by the Oakwood Historical Society and not given or sold to outside parties.
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