



The
**Oakwood
Historical Society**

— *Make History With Us* —

Historian

Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • Spring 2017

*Welcome to the Spring Edition of Historian, the newsletter of
The Oakwood Historical Society.*

Last year proved to be a busy one at The Society with new and traditional events and programs. Yes, spring is just around the corner, and The Society is planning another exciting year with history at the heart of it all.

We cherish our partnerships with other organizations, and you will see that these co-sponsorships will be evident in many of our programs and events.



The History of the Oakwood Street Railway

--Tom Morrow

(With a large debt owed to Don Brabson, who did the research to unearth the very early material)

The Oakwood Street Railway traces its original start to two horsecar lines.

The Dayton Daily Journal reported the Dayton View Street Railroad filed certificates with the state of Ohio on May 2, 1870, for a horsecar from Third and Main to Dayton View. The incorporators intended the line to go up Main and proposed three different routings to the Dayton View (Monument Ave) bridge:

- Main to Water (today Monument Ave) to the bridge
- Main to First to the bridge
- Main to Second to Perry to First to the bridge

The incorporators were JM Matthews, JA Jordan, WA Barnett, JW Stoddard, TL Neal, and JO Arnold. First ordinance for the franchise was passed in October of 1870, with the routing from Main to Water. Line construction started in June of 1871. The first Board of Directors included JA Jordan, WM Mills, JW Stoddard, H Stoddard, JB Cotton, JO Arnold and WA Barrett.

The Dayton View Street Railroad started operations in September of 1871. The car barn was built at Salem and North Ave, and the line operated from Salem and River (today, Riverview) down River to the Dayton View bridge, across the bridge to Water (today, Monument) to Main and south on Main to Third St.

The Dayton Daily Journal reported papers filed with the state of Ohio on July 19, 1870, for what became the Oakwood Street Railroad, with routing from Third and Main, down Main to Fifth, to Brown, to Warren, and then to the junction of Warren and the Lebanon turnpike (today, Oakwood, Far Hills and Thruston). The incorporators were I Haas, JW Stoddard, W Dixon, Mitchell, JH Patterson and JA McMahan. First ordinance was passed in May of 1871, with the routing as above. Line construction started in July of 1871. The first Board of Directors was composed of I Haas, JH Winters, W Dixon, HE Parrott, GL Phillips, SJ Patterson and JH Patterson. I Haas was elected President, and JH Winters was voted in as Secretary and Treasurer.

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Website: www.oakwoodhistory.org

E-mail: info@oakwoodhistory.org

1947 Far Hills Avenue
Dayton, OH 45419
(937) 299-3793

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**THE OAKWOOD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- 2017 -

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Message from the President

When you receive this, the snowdrops of Winter will have bloomed, and the yellow daffodils will soon arrive to herald Spring.

The Oakwood Historical Society has planned another exciting year for you, much of it centered at our historic Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum. The Homestead was originally constructed in the 1860s and enlarged over the eras following. Each build was during times of uncertainty, but the future was embraced with faith.

Our Society is dedicated to interacting with families, promoting education in “hands-on” ways and providing new prospective for our community and our future.

Yearly we offer programs for children, active walking tours, a visit to Hawthorn Hill, a wine and cheese tasting, a vintage car show and holiday activities.

Additionally, we partner with the Wright Memorial Public Library to present the *Far Hills Speaker Series* on selected Sundays throughout the year to give background and depth to our proud understanding of our community’s contributions to American Life.

The support of you, as members, the community, schools and volunteers makes our history come alive. JOIN US! Visit our website, www.oakwoodhistory.org. We are always looking for volunteers and/or expertise to contribute to our efforts. There are many ways your talents and interests can be showcased.

Connect with history, and *Make History With Us!*

Carol Holm
President

Restoration Project Underway at "The Homestead"

This past December, The Oakwood Historical Society teamed up with the *Oakwood Farmer's Market* to host *Winter Market*. Over 400 people visited The Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum to shop among the 17 vendors for holiday gifts and treats. In order to accommodate this event, furniture and carpets were removed from the first floor of The Homestead and stored in the basement and other rooms. After *Winter Market*, the board saw this as an opportunity to conduct a restoration project to areas needing attention.

Board member and local artist Phyllis Niemeyer Miller began plaster repair and painting. An ongoing problem with plaster along the base of the south wall is now suspected to be related to exterior stucco issues. The interior and exterior walls have been ventilated to allow drying and to minimize moisture collection in this area. With warmer weather, exterior stucco repair may be planned. Mark W. Risley and structure systems specialist Gary Brown restored many of the light fixtures throughout the house. Several fixtures had acquired a coat of silver paint somewhere along the way. Stripping and cleaning revealed beautiful brass bright work. New wiring and replica Edison-style light bulbs have returned these fixtures to their original appearance and ensure their safe service for many years to come.

Floors were cleaned and treated during this winter restoration period. As with any older home, required maintenance to plumbing and door mechanisms were also addressed.

Back to *Winter Market*... It was a resounding success, and discussions are underway to determine if this may become an annual event with The Oakwood Historical Society and the *Oakwood Farmer's Market* group.

The *Far Hills Speaker Series* returns!

Partnering with Wright Memorial Public Library, the *Far Hills Speaker Series* (FHSS) has provided numerous informative programs that have been very well-attended. This series returns again in 2017 with another lineup of interesting topics. These programs are held on designated Sundays at 2:00 PM in the library's lower level meeting room.

On **March 5th**, Oakwood resident Tom Morrow of The Dayton Railway Historical Society and Cincinnati Transit Historical Association will present *Public Transit in Oakwood from the Early Days to the Present*, a discussion of the various forms of public transportation available to Oakwood residents from 1871 to today. This program will feature vintage photos of horsecars, streetcars, steam train, interurban railways, trolley and diesel buses, all of which were essential to the establishment and development of Oakwood.

On **April 30th**, David A. Schmidt of Wright State University brings us *Where Town and Country Meet: A Tour of Oakwood in 1913*. Take a fascinating and nostalgic stroll through historic images of the Village of Oakwood as we view notable features of its early development. We will also be introduced to some of the people who have made important and lasting contributions to Oakwood.

May 7th brings us *The Lost Gettysburg Address*. If you are an enthusiast of Abraham Lincoln and American history, this will be a remarkable insight by author David Dixon as he provides a better understanding of the political context of the Gettysburg dedication.

On **June 4th**, we are excited to welcome author Linda Carrick Thomas with her new book *Polonium in the Playhouse: The Manhattan Project's Secret Chemistry Work in Dayton, Ohio*. During WWII and at the height of the race to build an atomic bomb, an indoor tennis court in Oakwood became a secret Manhattan Project laboratory. This book offers a fascinating look inside the Runnymede Playhouse and how this vast and complicated project changed world history. It also introduces the men and women who raced against time to build the initiator for the bomb. The book debuts on May 28th, and this will be one of Ms. Thomas' first stops for a program and book signing.

After a summer hiatus, FHSS returns on **September 17th** with *Bishop Milton Wright: Father of Wilbur & Orville*. Bob Bowman, President Emeritus of The Franklin Area Historical Society, will introduce us to the patriarch of the Wright Family who lived out his final days at Hawthorn Hill in Oakwood.

On **October 15th** and just in time for Halloween shenanigans, Society Past President, Mark W. Risley, presents *The Legend of Roswell*. In 1947, "something" crashed in the desert outside of Roswell, New Mexico. Was it a weather balloon, top secret program or a UFO? This program explores the story of the ongoing myth of alleged alien visitors and the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base connection.

On **November 19th**, FHSS 2017 wraps up with *Flyers in the Finals*. The 1967 Dayton Flyers, an un-ranked, Cinderella team, defies the odds and makes it to the NCAA finals. This program is presented by Michael Williams just in time for the University of Dayton basketball season.

New Board Members Welcomed

Three new members join the *Board of Trustees* for 2017. Donna Cooper returns after a 1 year hiatus and brings her experience in organizations and fundraising to The Society. Tiffany Rubin is new to the board and will also provide her expertise in fundraising efforts. Homestead neighbor Leanne DeLange is also new and has taken on the communications task. All will enhance the efforts of your Oakwood Historical Society.

The Society wishes to express their sincere appreciation to Nicole Crawford and David A. Schmidt who are departing the Board, but will continue as active volunteers and contributors.

The History of the Oakwood Street Railway *(cont.)*

The Oakwood Street Railroad started operations in December of 1871. The carbarn was built at the bridge over Rubicon Creek (approximately Brown and Caldwell today), with the bridge being composed of the remains of the knocked-down Patterson Mill and built on the site of the old mill. The line was operated from the carbarn north on Warren St (back then, what we know as Brown St south from Warren was known as Warren St) to Brown, north on Brown to Fifth, west on Fifth to Main, and north on Main to First.

In October of 1871, while the Oakwood line was under construction, the Dayton View Street Railroad and Oakwood Street Railroads agreed to occupy each other's tracks, with the DVRR cars running to Main and Fifth, and the OSRR cars running to Main and First. At approximately the same time, the DVRR and OSRR petitioned the city for franchise changes: Oakwood requested their franchise to go down Main to Union (today, Stewart) to Warren (today, Brown) and south to Main (this, in spite of the fact that they had graded Fifth, Brown and Warren, and were in the process for laying tracks). Dayton View's franchise was extended down Main St to the Fairgrounds (presumably with trackage rights on the Oakwood line). However, not enough subscriptions were elicited on Main St to persuade Oakwood Street Railroad to change the routing from Brown St, so the line to the Fairground was not constructed (then).

In March of 1872, the Dayton View Street Railroad requested a franchise from the City Council to extend their line on Fifth St to Wilkinson and then to the Union Depot at Sixth. In April of 1872, the DV started construction on Fifth St, to get to the Union Depot via Ludlow. The line to the Union Depot began operations in May of 1872.

In June of 1872, the Oakwood Street Railroad arranged terms of a lease of the Dayton View Street Railroad and began to run cars from the northern terminus to southern terminus, the length of the combined road "about four miles."

In July of 1872, the Oakwood Street southern end of the line was extended from the stables at Rubicon Creek to "the summit of the hill" aka, "Oakwood Park," aka "The Grove" which is thought to be at or very near the intersection of Oakwood Ave and Park St, and Eugene Parrott's house. Service on the line between the stables and downtown was nominally every 10-15 minutes; service up the hill was only several times a day (initially 7 trips per day). On Sundays, the service up the hill was increased to half-hourly in order to carry increased excursion/weekend traffic. By August of 1872, the DVRR/OSRR abandoned the newly built line to the Union Depot, leaving the tracks in the street for several years. After that, no Dayton horsecar line ever went within a block of the Union Depot.

In February of 1875, the OSRR/DVRR mortgage was foreclosed, and the combined road was bought by a consortium of investors: Stoddard, Parrott, Mitchell, Mumm, Phillips, Barney, Hodgen, Buth, Maj Smith, SJ Patterson, Stickle, Perrine, Shaw, Garst, Leonhardt, Geiger and Bosler. In the description of the operation, the road was described as "not prosperous" and run "very much out of repair."

In 1876, Charles Clegg became the railway President and begins a 40 year involvement in its operation. Circumstances surrounding his installation are unclear. In April of 1876, the line schedule showed 10 cars a day up the hill. In June of 1876, the OSRR announced their desire to move the car stable closer to the city, and that they intended to run an occasional car to the Hill and Dayton View; the regular run was to be from the River to the Stables.

In May of 1877, the OSRR opened a line down Main St from Fifth to the Fairgrounds. The OSRR abandoned this line from Fifth to the Fairground in June of 1880. In April of 1879, the OSRR opened a line up Main St to McPhersontown (probably to the canal race). Subsequently, public baths were built, whose patrons the OSRR carried. In April of 1881, the OSRR abandoned the line to McPhersontown. In July of 1881, the OSRR began running an omnibus three times a day to McPhersontown. This is a very early example of a street railway company replacing a rail line with a bus. It is not clear what the effect of these two extensions were on operations, and if/how the cars were thru-routed.

In January of 1886, the carbarn at the stables (built on the site of the Patterson Mill) burned to the ground. In April of 1886, the company opened a new barn at the corner of Cemetery (today, Fairground Ave) and New Brown (today, Brown St).

No announcement of abandonment of service up the Oakwood Hill has been found; the contemporary and subsequent accounts (line length in the 1890 census and an 1894 interview with Clegg where he talked of extending the line south past the city limits at Irving Ave) of the line operation would indicate the service ended at the new stable, or perhaps Union St (today, Stewart St). The existing building at 1141 Brown St was built in 1886 as part of the Oakwood Street Railway complex.

In May of 1895, the Oakwood Street Railway (OSRy) electrified and extended the line to operate from Salem and North Ave to Five Points (Oakwood, Far Hills and Thruston). At that point, they had a total of 16 single end single truck Barney and Smith cars. In four orders in 1896, 1899, 1903 and 1907, they purchased or built themselves a total of 14 more cars. Six of the original 1895 cars were sold to the Piqua and Troy Railway in 1906-7. In 1907, the OSRy lengthened a Piqua and Troy double truck car, numbered 395 (this car has been cited in other histories as a "New York Elevated car" -- it was not). In 1910 and 1916-1918 OSRy purchased six more double truck cars, numbers 400-405. Subsequently, car 395 was renumbered to 406.

In Feb of 1912, the 1886 car barn at the corner of Fairground and Brown burned to the ground. A new car barn was built and opened in 1913 near the site of the original car barn, south of the Dayton Lebanon and Cincinnati crossing on Brown St (which would be across Rubicon Creek), near today's intersection of Brown and Caldwell.

In April of 1915, the Oakwood Railroad Co (a wholly owned subsidiary of the OSRy) began an extension up the Oakwood hill, past a new housing development, Park Hill, and terminated between Forrer Blvd and Aberdeen Ave. The south end of this extension was built in what today is the esplanade separating the northbound and southbound lanes of Far Hills Ave. This extension was opened on January 1, 1916, as a feeder line from Five Points using shuttle cars. The Oakwood Railroad owned the trackage, and the OSRy operated the line. By March of 1916, enough cars had been double-ended to support regular operation from Forrer/Aberdeen to downtown.

In the spring of 1918, another line extension from Forrer/Aberdeen to Hadley/Monteray was begun. On May 14, 1918, two Dayton and Troy flatcars broke loose from their motor car and plunged down the hill in the middle of the night, destroying the building at Brown and Fifth. The line extension opened in July of 1918.

In May of 1935, the OSRy franchise was in sight of expiration. The youngest cars on the line were nearly 20 years old, and the oldest cars were over 40 years old. The OSRy requested to convert to trolley buses, and both the Dayton and Oakwood councils approved new franchises. The trolley bus line was extended from Monteray to Dell Park Ave, and the line turned around in the intersection of Far Hills and Dell Park. The conversion took place on January 19, 1936, using 15 Pullman Standard trolley buses, numbered 20-34. The private right of way in the middle of today's Far Hills Ave (which back then separated Lebanon Pike and Far Hills Ave) was ceded to the city of Oakwood as part of the franchise. In the summer of 1936, Oakwood took 6-8 feet of the east side of the private right of way in order to permit two lanes of travel in each direction and created the present Far Hills Ave boulevard.

In 1949, the north end of the line was extended one block to loop Salem -> Oxford -> Meridith -> Lexington in order to accommodate three new Marmon Herrington trolley buses, numbers 36-38, which could not navigate the previous small loop at Salem and North Ave. In 1951, OSRy bought one more Marmon, number 39.

In 1950, the south end of the line was extended four blocks south to Dorothy Lane, looping Far Hills -> Dorothy -> Shafor -> Brydon. In 1958, the loop was reversed in order to avoid three left turns in heavy rush hour traffic.

On the motor bus side, concurrent with the conversion to trolley buses in 1935, residents of Patterson Park (just to the east of Oakwood) indicated a desire to have bus service. OSRy declined to extend the trolley bus there and concentrated on the trolley bus conversion on Far Hills Ave. Patterson Park approached OSRy a second time in late 1936 for a line, and OSRy again ignored them. In March of 1937, Patterson Park shopped their interest to another bus company in Dayton, the St John Transportation Co. OSRy then discovered their desire to operate a line, and in April of 1937, spun off Dayton Suburban Bus Lines, running a line down Shroyer Rd and also into the Belmont area.

OHS Committees

Please get involved...

Archives & Acquisitions

Harry Ebeling
293-0611
hebeling@aol.com

Education

Linda Pearson
648-9702
lindapinoh@gmail.com
&
Lisa Kell
charybdismom@yahoo.com

Events

Board members (by event)

Facilities/Grounds

Mark Risley
294-2537
therisleys@ameritech.net

Facilities/Interior

Phyllis N. Miller, consultant

Membership

Leigh Turben
lturben@woh.rr.com

Newsletter

Lisa Kell
charybdismom@yahoo.com
&
Zachary Kell
farhillsdesign@gmail.com

Publicity**Research & Outreach**

Harrison Stamm Gowdy
643-4075
stammgowdy@sbcglobal.net
&
Mackensie Wittmer
291-2831
mwittmer@gmail.com

Website

Melissa Dalton
mel@meldalton.com

The History of the Oakwood Street Railway (cont.)

Oakwood Street Railway / Dayton Suburban Bus Lines continued until October of 1956 when City Transit bought both lines and incorporated them into their operations. The OSRy Pullmans went to the dead line at Bolander Ave, never to run again for City Transit, and were subsequently junked in 1959, along with many of the original People's Railway 1-18 trolley buses. The Marmons were renumbered 527-530 and continued in operation for City Transit until 1977; the Dayton Suburban GMCs retained their existing numbers for City Transit, some continuing to run into the mid 1960s. The carbarn at Brown and Caldwell became Ray Bryant Chevrolet and then Frank Z Chevrolet, and the carbarn building was then torn down in 2012 to build housing for the University of Dayton.

Wright at Home

On **Sunday, April 23**, The Oakwood Historical Society teams up with Dayton History to present *Wright at Home*. The Wright Family home, Hawthorn Hill, will be open for tours, and The Society will conduct a walking tour of Orville Wright's Oakwood neighborhood and highlight its noteworthy residents of the past. This event is from noon to 5:00 PM and there is an admission fee. Visit www.oakwoodhistory.org for more details.

A Taste of Wine & Cheese

After the events of *That Day in May* on **Saturday, May 20**, relax with fine wines, good food and great conversation in the historic Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum. Our annual wine tasting continues to gain in popularity and is a great way to tour The Homestead with its vintage furniture and artifacts. Relax and return to another time from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM that day.

Children's Gardening Program

After allowing The Homestead's kitchen garden to rest for a year, the *Children's Gardening Program* returns for 2017. Young participants will prepare the garden then plant, tend and harvest vegetables and herbs for their families' use. Linda Pearson is making arrangements, so visit www.oakwoodhistory.org for details to be posted soon!

Classics on the Lawn Car Show & Open House

August is the heart of car show season in Ohio, and *Classics on the Lawn* has grown into a notable automotive event in the Dayton area. Vintage restored, original classic and special interest cars will festoon the lawn of The Long-Rompert Homestead. Plans are underway for a day of cars, food and tours of The Homestead. Again, visit www.oakwoodhistory.org for more details as they develop.

The Oakwood Historical Society serves the Oakwood community and surrounding areas by researching and archiving its history. If you would like to participate in our programs or events or provide volunteer support, please contact us at 937-299-3793 (leave message) or at info@oakwoodhistory.org and let us know your area of interest.

You can also visit us at www.oakwoodhistory.org and "Make History with Us!"

Discover Woodlawn Days

On **Sunday, October 1st**, The Society partners with Woodland Cemetery to present *Discover Woodland Days*. Autumn is the perfect time to stroll through this historic garden cemetery and meet some of the famous and infamous people who have made Woodland Cemetery their final resting place. Tour guides will escort you through the grounds, while volunteer actors depict various characters. The cemetery is truly history at rest. Tours begin at 12:00, 12:30 and 1:00 PM. Wear comfortable walking shoes.

Annual Family Photo Shoot

Sign up for your 20-minute session with local professional photographer Betty Cochran at the historic Long-Romspert Homestead. Surround yourself in vintage beauty, selecting a picture on the elegant veranda, a lush English garden, or in a fun antique car. Your quality photos can be made into holiday cards or professional family portraits. Visit www.oakwoodhistory.org for more details on this annual favorite.

Home & Harvest

The Patterson Homestead Tour is another partnership with The Society and Dayton History. Visit this lovely, historic home and neighborhood, led by docents from Dayton History and The Oakwood Historical Society. Tour the house and grounds, enjoy programs and experience the art of hand working from another time.

Annual Meeting of The Oakwood Historical Society

Please join the board and members of The Oakwood Historical Society for this free program and annual meeting at St. Paul's of Oakwood in the Cloister. Light refreshments will be served.

Holidays at The Homestead

A traditional community favorite for several decades, join us to enjoy a holiday gathering with vintage decorations, hands-on crafts, festive food and drink at the Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum, an iconic Oakwood landmark. An early December date will be established soon.

For updates on all programs and events, visit www.oakwoodhistory.org for developing details.



Park Avenue Antiques



"The Oakwood Store"

FERNEDING
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CAROL J. HOLM
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Dayton, Ohio

asphalt & concrete
Houser
black top • sealing • striping



LCNB
National Bank

**THE OAKWOOD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

1947 Far Hills Avenue
Dayton, OH 45419

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED
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Please Renew Your Membership!

The Oakwood Historical Society Membership Form

Membership Categories (Please Check One)

_____ Individual _____	\$25.00
_____ Family _____	\$35.00
_____ Business _____	\$50.00
_____ Bronze _____	\$75.00
_____ Silver _____	\$100.00
_____ Gold _____	\$200.00

*\$5 Discount: Student Senior Active Military

Date _____

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Business/Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

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Phone Number _____

E-mail Address: _____

The information that you submit will be used only by The Oakwood Historical Society and will not be given or sold to outside parties.
Please make check payable to: The Oakwood Historical Society, and mail to: 1947 Far Hills Ave. Dayton, OH 45419