



The Historian

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Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • June 2023

Oakwood's Classic Architecture – Part I of II

by Mark W. Risley

Oakwood has always attracted the type of residents with the desire and the wherewithal to maintain, preserve or restore their homes. This is why there are so many well-preserved examples of early to mid-20th Century architecture in Oakwood. Rich in style and details, these houses represent the finest in living from homes designed by professional architects to durable Sears Kit Homes.

In the early 1990s when the Schantz Park section was presented to the National Register of Historic Places to become a designated historic district, it was lauded as one of the finest nominations they had ever received. This was due to the homes of Oakwood being in such beautiful condition.

In this two-part series, we will explore the different styles of architecture found throughout Oakwood.

The term “revival” is often applied to styles indicating they were influenced by historic architecture from an earlier time. The Revival Movement was inspired by early 20th Century Hollywood when people would see movies set in earlier times and they admired the classic architecture, thus requesting updated versions in homes being built.

English Tudor Revival

The hallmark of Oakwood architecture, this style is evident in several Oakwood schools, public buildings and larger homes and mansions.

Based on 15th & 16th Century styles, it was popularly revived from 1890-1940 and can still be found in some new construction today.

Main features are a front-facing cross gable, steeply pitched roof lines and, often, with half timbers on the exterior reminiscent of tree trunks with spreading limbs. Exteriors are clad in brick and/or stucco and decorative clay pots are evident on the tops of chimneys. There is hand carved woodwork and tile work throughout. Leaded glass windows are often in a diamond pattern or feature a stained glass decoration. Entry is gained through a Tudor archway in which the sides extend upward, then curve inward to meet a point at the peak. There are several variations in the Tudor style such as the castle-like Jacobean, the substantial Germanic Tudor, the whimsical Cotswold Cottage Style and the smaller English Cottage.



Craftsman

Although Oakwood is best known for its English Tudor homes, Craftsman is the most abundant style in housing. It is an original product of the American Arts and Crafts Period of 1900-1929. It was during this time that much of Oakwood was developed, which accounts for its popularity. It is a style that is easily applied to bungalow and four-square types of homes.

The Craftsman Style incorporates what is known as “revealed construction” when the construction values of the structure become part of the home’s decorative accents. Exposed rafter tails and roof brackets are seen under the eaves. Colors, materials, and textures from nature are also part of the style. Earth tones throughout and woodwork on the interior enhance the connection to nature. Often decorative designs are featured that are “simple, but not plain”. Stone, stucco and tiles are also used. Tapered porch posts are reminiscent of substantial tree trunks in the woods. It is a style that can be warm and inviting.



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1947 Far Hills Avenue (The Homestead)

Georgian and Colonial Revival

These styles were the result of architects and builders trying to evoke America's past and patriotism, gaining popularity around 1895 and still common today. The Georgian Style is applied to larger homes and estates in affluent areas while the toned-down Colonial Style is more evident in more modest homes.

Common elements include a rectilinear form, symmetrical façade, fanlight window over the doors with sidelight windows on either side, dormer windows with classical details and a columned portico with classical entablatures over the entryway.



Prairie Style

This is another original American style. Attributed to Frank Lloyd Wright, it was inspired by the broad, horizons of the farming plains and grassy prairies of the Illinois of his youth. "Horizontal" is the main aspect featured in the designs. A hipped roof, broad eaves, wide chimneys, and long bands of windows help to draw the eye from side to side.

Prairie was only popular from 1900-1920 but is now enjoying a strong revival in residential and commercial designs. It also, served as an inspiration for later designs in Mid-Century Modern architecture.



Dutch Colonial Revival

An early 20th century design inspired by an historic style based on a Hudson River style of the late 17th century. The original design was intended to reduce taxes by expanding a wide upstairs dormer, but still not qualifying the home as a two-story structure. The upstairs living area was further expanded by using a gambrel roof design.

These homes were made popular by promotions in mail-order catalogues between 1900 and 1935 and were popular with middle class, suburban families.



Italian Renaissance

Another style from history, this revived design was popular between 1890 and 1935. Features include an asymmetrical façade, usually, clad in stucco, a broad, hipped roof in tile and wide, overhanging eaves. First-story windows are often full length with arched tops.

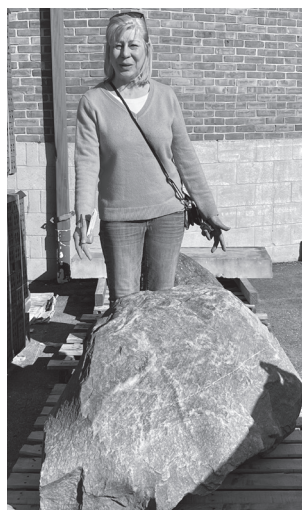


Spanish Revival

Popular from 1890 to 1935, this design is an eclectic mix inspired by the entire history of Spanish architecture. Homes are clad in stucco, have low pitched tile roofs and feature arched entryways and windows. There are massive and, often, carved wooden doors. Decorative art tiles may be evident inside and out. A “bell tower” feature on some of these homes evokes the Christian Missions of Early California.



Part II of “Oakwood’s Classic Architecture” will be featured in the next edition of The Historian quarterly newsletter and will explore more of the architectural styles found in Oakwood. We will also look at house types, their inspirations and provide some resources for those wishing to learn more about their homes.



Greetings Members,

It was wonderful to see so many of you this spring!

We were so pleased to partner with Dayton History in April to bring back the very popular and very special Wright at Home event to a sell-out crowd. Guests enjoyed an intimate glimpse of the magnificent Hawthorn Hill, home of Orville Wright, a history walking tour of Orville’s famous neighbors, and special presentations by Stephen Wright (the grand nephew of the Wright Brothers), and the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park. A huge thank you to Dayton History, our members, volunteers, and docents who helped make the day such a success.

We also welcomed huge crowds in the new community room at Wright Memorial Public Library during our Spring Far Hills Speaker Series lectures. It’s a great honor for us to introduce so many engaging topics to our very enthusiastic community. Thank you to our wonderful speakers and organizers of this very popular series. We’ll be back in the fall with more!

Our Century Home marker program that was launched last winter has been an overwhelming success. Over 40 homeowners have applied for the marker, and we are extremely pleased that so many in Oakwood take pride in our community’s beautiful and often historic older homes. On your next walk through the neighborhood, we hope you’ll take the time to admire a few of these markers now proudly displayed on many of our lovely homes.

We are also thrilled to announce that we will soon be unveiling three additional historic markers, thanks to the very generous grant from The Rotary Club of Oakwood. After the first two markers were placed in early Spring 2022 for the Town of Oakwood and Oakwood’s First Library, the Rotary approached the Society with their interest and support of additional markers. These next three will be placed within just a few weeks—so keep a look out for more information on the unveilings. And a fourth marker is now in the planning stages for this fall. We hope you’ll take the time to visit each of these markers. The goal of this program is share some of the important and historically significant places in Oakwood’s storied past with the today’s community and generations to come. We thank The Rotary Club of Oakwood, the City of Oakwood, and our past champions of this program— John and Mj Gray and Dan Turben—for their support of this important historical program. And special thanks to Snyder Brick and Block and the Dayton Country Club for their support and contributions for these newest markers.

And not to overlook our treasured Archives— it keeps growing and improving— please note the article in this edition about our newest artifacts, and a big thank you to our dedicated volunteers and donors to our Archives— it is our founding mission and we could not continue on this journey of recording and preserving history without you.

As always, thank you all for being a part of Oakwood history!

Debra Edwards

President, The Oakwood Historical Society

Notes

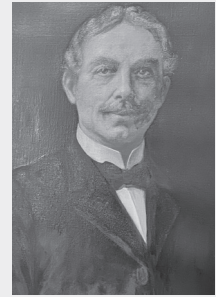
From The Archives

Our Archives continues to grow its collection. Earlier this year the Society was gifted with two extraordinary and original oil portraits from the Mead family, much due to the thoughtful guidance of esteemed Centerville resident, Rus Kindrick. The paintings include a stunning full-length portrait of Oakwood's "first lady" Katharine Houk Talbott, by Dayton artist Emil Hermann, and a very lovely portrait of the dashing Harry Eldridge Mead. The Mead and Talbott families were among the most leading and prominent of early Oakwood. Both families are often cited in Oakwood history. They were also very much intertwined.

Katharine Houk Talbott was the daughter of Eliza Thruston and George Washington Houk. In the early 1860's, George and his brother David Houk purchased approximately 30 acres in what is now Oakwood, along with an existing four-room house, for their parents. George and Eliza Houk soon moved into the house with his parents, and after numerous later additions, the estate became known as *Runnymede*. Katharine Houk and her husband, Harry Talbott, later inherited and resided at *Runnymede*. In 1927 Katharine built the largest free-standing private recreation hall in the country at that time on the *Runnymede* estate, which became known as the *Runnymede Playhouse*.

Katharine Houk Talbott's sister, Marianna Houk, married Harry Eldridge Mead in 1876. Harry E. Mead was the son of Daniel Mead, who founded the Mead Corporation, and Harry E. Mead had served as Vice President of the Mead Corporation after forming the H.E. Mead & Company. Harry Mead's son, George Houk Mead, led the Mead Paper Company from near collapse during the early 1900s and built *Little Woods*, the grand estate now off Runnymede Road on Little Woods Road. George Houk Mead married Elsie Louise Talbott, one of Katharine Houk Talbott's seven daughters, 1914.

The Society's Archives includes many other precious documents and artifacts chronicling the history of the Houk, Talbott and Mead families, and we are so grateful to the Mead family and Mr. Kindrick to be the recipient of these historic portraits. With these newest additions to our Archives we hope to soon curate a future exhibit to share much more of our interesting and varied artifacts of these prominent families of Oakwood.



"Classics on the Lawn Car Show" Returns

Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 20th, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. as The Oakwood Historical Society presents "Classics on the Lawn Car Show and Open House". After a 3-year hiatus due to Covid concerns, this event returns to the grounds of the Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum. Popular among local automobile enthusiasts, the car show will feature some of the finest



examples of classic, vintage, special interest, and exotic cars from the area.

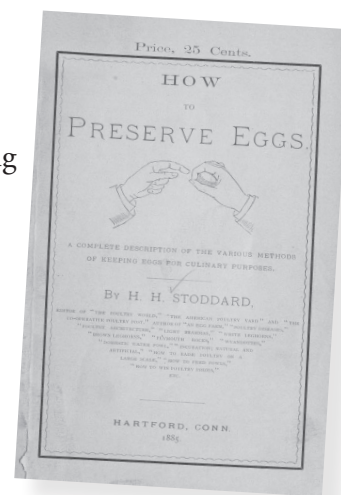
Additionally, “The Homestead” and its outbuildings will be open for tours for visitors to see home life depicted as it was from the 1860s through the 1920s. A BBQ lunch will be available at a nominal price for guests and their families. Parking is available on side streets or enjoy a summer walk or bike ride to the event. We hope you will join us to spend a special day of fabulous automobiles, historic buildings and gardens, and tasty BBQ under the tall pines of one of Oakwood’s iconic landmarks.

Preserving Eggs before Refrigeration – Part of a Series about Cooking in the 1800s

by Linda Pearson

Before refrigeration, and with older breeds of multi-purpose chickens, eggs were not easily available straight from the chicken year-round. Chickens lay eggs in warmer weather, and with longer daylight hours. There is a spot on the chicken’s eye that detects the amount of light, and it lays when there is enough light. During colder months with less sunshine the hens did not lay eggs in a cold climate. You might get too many eggs during the five months of spring and early summer, and few during the winter. What about that Christmas Pudding you want to make? Today, of course, modern egg chicken breeds used to artificial light and warm buildings give us eggs all year.

The First Presbyterian Church Cookbook from Dayton, Ohio, published in 1873, provides two recipes. Neither mentions that the eggs need to be kept in a cool, dark location such as a basement, as that must have been obvious.



To Preserve Eggs

One heaping pint of salt, one scant pint of lime, and six quarts of water. Let the pickle stand a few days, stirring it occasionally; drop the eggs in carefully without cracking them. They must be fresh.

For Keeping Eggs

One and a half pints of lime, and five cents worth of beef suet. Slack the lime; then add one and one-half gallons of water. Render out the suet and put with it; let all come to a boil. Have a wire ladle; slip a few eggs at a time in the boiling solution for a minute; then lay them on something to dry; then pack away in a box, in either saw-dust or bran.

Note that this is a mineral lime, not the citrus. One minute boil is meant to coagulate just the very edges of the egg white to further seal that porous eggshell from intrusions of bacteria or loss of moisture.

There were many other methods, as illustrated by a writer who summarized a number of research studies in a 48-page scientific article during that same general time period, 1885. HH Stoddard wrote for agricultural and poultry publications, of which there were many. These methods include packing in sawdust, hay, oatmeal, salt, and bran with the shells not touching each other. He also suggested standing eggs on their ends, as this keeps the yolks away from the sides of the porous shell where they may be more likely to adhere and be spoiled. Some had luck with standing on the pointy end; others on the round end. The air bubble thus stays in place, better cushioning the yolk. Eggs we buy in supermarkets today are usually packed pointy end down. There are also eggs rubbed in oil, butter, or lard to seal the shell before other methods are used. In some cases, the eggs are still as fresh as ever after a year of preservation.

One interesting aspect of egg preservation was the fact that the eggs were not stripped of their “bloom” before preserving. The last coating of the eggshell before it is laid is an extra coat called “bloom”, which helps to keep the pores on the egg sealed shut against bacteria. It enables an egg to stay fresh for at least three weeks and often longer at room temperature. Modern grocery store regulations require eggs to be washed and stripped of this bloom before being packed and shipped to stores. These eggs do not have that extra coating and must be refrigerated immediately.

References: *The Presbyterian Cook Book, Dayton Ohio, 1873*

How to Preserve Eggs (1885): <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/82815#page/3/model/1up>

Washing Eggs the Why and How

Over the Years...

Highlights from the City Council Minutes Digitization Project

100 Years Ago in Oakwood (Apr-Jun 1923)

Council holds a special meeting to discuss the need to “appropriate” property from Emma Conover to widen Aberdeen Ave from Shafor Blvd to “the east line of the Oakwood Railroad Company’s right of way.”

NOTE: At this point, what we know as the northbound boulevard for Far Hills Ave did not exist in front of what is today Wright Library. Dayton-Lebanon Pike ran two ways in what are today the southbound lanes of Far Hills Ave, and “Far Hills Ave” back then was an access street reachable at Dellwood or south of Monterey, with the Oakwood Street Railway running between the two roads with no street crossings. At what’s today Wright Library, Emma Conover had not platted the land ... so there was no Far Hills Ave (that is the northbound boulevard) going through her lot.

Two Council Resolutions (162 and 163) resulted from this action, one to “appropriate” the property for the other half of Aberdeen Ave, and another to complete Shafor Blvd thru Emma’s property. Once Emma sold the property, Smith School would be built on the east end, and later the Wright Library on the west end. A couple weeks later Council would pass Ordinance 393 to widen Aberdeen and Ordinance 394 to extend Shafor.

75 Years Ago in Oakwood (Apr-Jun 1948)

[Below is verbatim from the Council Minutes. From this writing, no one in 1948 understood exactly what Monsanto was (still) doing in Runnymede Playhouse, as the activities related to the atomic bomb were still highly classified]

On June 7 Mr. Lawrence Rauh of 231 W Dixon addressed Members of Council advising he was again appearing before them relative to the EXCESS NOISE made by the Monsanto Chemical Company located in the Runnymede Play House. He understood that they had renewed their lease for another year, when Dr. Hockwalt had advised that they would be in their Miamisburg Plant by Fall.

Mr. Rauh said that the excess noise of grinding machines; the frequent loud talk of employees outside the Plant; employees going back and forth in trucks; was placing the Monsanto Chemical Company in the factory class right adjacent to one of the finest neighborhoods in the City of Oakwood. At this point Mr. Bergren advised that he has dispatched Members of the Police Department to the Monsanto Chemical Co many times and was endeavoring to do everything within his power to counteract excess noises for the benefit of the neighborhood. Mr. Sandwich, the new Manager at Monsanto, promised him time and again that he would check on excess noises.

The City Solicitor, Mr. Matthews, at this time advised Mr Rauh that Mr. John Eickler in the office of Senator Bricker, Washington D.C., was trying to get an authentic report as to whether Monsanto had renewed a year's lease, but up to the present time had not heard from him.

Mr. Storms then suggested that the City Manager direct a letter to Mr. Sandwich of the Monsanto Chemical Co. to PLEASE ABATE ALL UNNECESSARY NOISES; that possibly some factory operations could be moved in the Plant to a less noisy location; that the Guards at Monsanto should be instructed to report to Mr. Sandwich all excess noises; in other words he should be written at close intervals regarding complaints the Council of the City of Oakwood received almost daily regarding excess noises at Monsanto Chemical Company Plant.

50 years ago (Apr-Jun 1973)

The City has been receiving complaints from mothers about the crowded conditions around the grade schools and junior high schools when they pick up children after school. Public Safety will discuss with PTA safety committees approaches to address this issue.

Council concurred on the request of Mrs. William Keyser, wife of a former Mayor of Oakwood, for a dedication ceremony for the Mayors’ Plaza in Oakwood on September 15, 1973.

A petition was presented to Council by residents on Ravenwood Avenue requesting Council change the name of Ravenwood Avenue to Thruston Boulevard East. Mr. Foell reported that the majority of residents

on Ravenwood Avenue have signed the petition. Subsequently, a letter of objection has been received from a Ravenwood Avenue resident and that after consideration of this and any other objections, a convenient changeover allowing a numerical progression will be accomplished.

It is reported the City has been facing a problem in the regard to collections, in particular those involving grass and yard clippings. Although legislation exists whereby it is prohibited that such matter be placed at curbs, rather than being containerized, citizens have increasingly ignored said requirements. Therefore, it is hoped that through a positive approach of reminding citizens of possible drainage problems and aesthetic factors being suggested by the Environmental Committee, that this situation can be remedied.

25 years Ago in Oakwood (Apr-Jun 1998)

A Special Use Request was approved for Karrington of Oakwood (now Brookdale) for an adult day care program (Alzheimer’s patients) on an interim basis until the impact on the neighborhood could be gauged. Oakwood will again be recognized as a Tree City, USA, the highest number of awards in the area. The City Manager and the Mayor will attend the event, sponsored by the City of Dayton.

A Public Facilities Task Force has identified some preliminary conclusions regarding Oakwood public facilities: the public works facilities are deplorable, very old and not efficient; and the public safety works are inadequate for today’s needs, i.e., prisoner traffic throughout the building and that the fire apparatus sits in the service yard. They are proposing consolidation of all public works at 210 Shafor and the Safety Department at 30 Park, but are still reviewing cost and design options, as well as administrative accommodations.

Want to Get Involved?

The Oakwood Historical Society is a volunteer-run, nonprofit organization dedicated to the history of Oakwood. We welcome ALL volunteers! Today we are looking for someone with creative energy to help with our marketing, and for someone who enjoys computer work to maintain our membership database. But, we always need people to assist with research and grant application. If you enjoy puttering around the house, we have a whole Homestead that awaits your TLC. And if you like to host events, you will find a happy place at the Historical Society. Take the first step. Drop us a line at Info@OakwoodHistory.org. We’d love to hear from you.





THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1947 Far Hills Avenue
Dayton, OH 45419

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