

Preserving the past, present and future of the Oakwood Community • Winter 2006



Founders' Day Dinner

New and long-time friends gathered recently at the Dayton Country Club for the Oakwood Historical Society's Founders' Day Dinner.

Music was provided by guitarist Tom Downs who entertained attendees with a variety of tunes from standards to some artfully done TV show themes.

After an outstanding dinner, the new Board was elected, a review of this year's events was presented and there was a viewing of the award-winning documentary *Sense of History - Schantz Park*. This video by OHS members John and Barb Moraites highlights six homes out of over fifty architectural gems which appear in the *Schantz Park Historic District Self-Guided Walking Tour* booklet published earlier this year by OHS with the assistance of the Oakwood Rotary Foundation.

Please read further in this edition of the *Quarterly* for more information on new Board members, the *Sense of History - Schantz Park* video, the walking tour booklet and other publications available through the Society.



Thanks to all our membership for
your support and participation in 2006!

New Board takes over in January

The Oakwood Historical Society will transition from the 2006 to the 2007 Board of Directors in January. During the annual Founders' Day Dinner, the following officers and directors were voted into office:

Officers

President - Mark Risley
Vice President/Secretary - Harrison Stamm Gowdy
Treasurer - Bonnie Hupman

Directors

Harry Ebeling
Kjirsten Goeller
Lisa Kell
Phyllis Niemeyer Miller
Teresa Prosser
Anne Rasmussen

What would you like the Society to do in 2007?

With a new year on the way and a new board ready to begin work, we would like to hear from you. If you have ideas for educational and programming activities and events, please tell us about them.

The Oakwood Historical Society is a community organization, and one of our most important goals is to serve the needs of the community. So, please, tell us what you'd like us to do. We look forward to your ideas and suggestions.

Please call Teresa Prosser, Programs and Events Chair at 293-8506.

A note from the outgoing president

Since this is my last opportunity to address the general membership of the Oakwood Historical Society as its president, I want to express as well as I can the gratitude I feel toward our members, our board of directors, and for that matter, the entire Oakwood community.

As I'm sure most of you would agree, Oakwood is a unique place to live. Very few communities in the United States today share the kind of beauty, tranquility and integrity that Oakwood has. I've commented numerous times throughout my tenure about this integrity and the people living in Oakwood who continue to keep that integrity alive. We can all sleep soundly each night knowing that we will never experience some of the notorious elements of suburban sprawl that many communities surrounding us must endure. The architectural treasures, the beautiful greenspaces, the commitment to quality education, and the old-fashioned neighborliness are something we all take for granted here.

In 2008 we will be celebrating Oakwood's centennial. One hundred years has passed since our community principles were first established and incorporated into the liveable city Oakwood is today. I can only hope that

as the generations pass through the next 100 years our citizenship will continue to hold these principles as dear in their hearts and minds as we do.

At the Society level, I want to thank all the Society members, officers and directors who have made my tenure as president so fulfilling and enjoyable. During the last three years, the Society has taken great strides in becoming an active resource for educational outreach in our community. The Homestead renovations, the walking tour brochures, the home restoration fair and the variety of annual social gatherings are all a testament to our membership's dedication to retaining our community's history and to our board of directors' vision and hard work.

All my best to the new board of directors as they lead the Society into the future.

Sincerely,



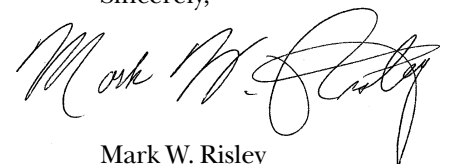
Teresa Prosser,
outgoing president

A note from the incoming president

The year 2007 will prove to be an exciting one for the Oakwood Historical Society as we continue to build ourselves into a vital educational resource on the history and preservation of our community. The Society will also participate in the planning of activities for Oakwood's 2008 Centennial celebration. In addition to annual events such as the Old Fashioned Picnic and Holiday Open House, we plan to add some new traditions to our roster of programming and activities. Along with the ongoing restoration of The Long-Romspert Homestead, the Society will host events and programs

designed to heighten the recognition of Oakwood, one of America's most intact early 20th century communities. We hope you will join us through membership or by attending our special events. We're looking forward to an educational and fun-filled year at the Oakwood Historical Society.

Sincerely,



Mark W. Risley
incoming president

Schantz Park walking tour video receives first place award

A video of The Schantz Park Historic District Walking Tour, produced by Oakwood Historical Society members, John and Barb Moraites, has received a first place award in the 2006 Philo T. Farnsworth Video Festival. The video, entitled *Sense of History - Schantz Park*, won in the category of Documentary Public Awareness Non-Professional.

The Moraites created the video this year in support of the Historical

Society's Schantz Park walking tour community outreach project. The Moraites have spent years videotaping Historical Society events, and have been an important resource for our organization's ability to document and record activities throughout the years.

The Society is delighted by the Moraites' success and extremely grateful for their talents and generosity to the Society. Congratulations, Barb and John!

Oakwood Historical Society receives civil war era framed lithograph

Long time Society friend and supporter Emil Miller has recently donated a 51" x 72" framed lithograph of Andersonville Prison dated 1864. For years Mr. Miller and his wife owned a framing and art shop on Brown Street, and Mr. Miller believes that this lithograph is



particularly rare due to its large size. The lithograph is in its original frame with details around the edges. Mr. Miller explained that he has never seen one like it at this size, except in the Fort Sumter Museum. The size is so large that it takes up most of one wall. The lithograph will be on display at the Homestead beginning in December until we find an appropriate permanent display.

Board thank you's and welcome's

The Oakwood Historical Society would like to extend its gratitude to outgoing Board members **Jen Stoecker**, **Tracy Clare** and **Marilynn Sheehan**.

Jen and her family will be departing the area for other opportunities. Tracy will be leaving soon for a tour of duty in the Middle East. We wish them both the best of luck and look forward to Tracy's return home in 2007.

Marilynn is a proven, valuable resource of information to the Society.

Her love of and commitment to the organization and the Long-Romspert Homestead will always be an asset to those of us on the Board now and for the future.

The Society would also like to extend a hearty welcome to new Board members **Kjirsten Goeller**, **Lisa Kell** and **Phyllis Niemeyer Miller**. We look forward to their commitment, input and participation for the upcoming year.

Committee Reports

Programming— Mark Risley

This proved to be a very active year for Events and Programs. It started out with "The Humorous Mr. Lincoln", an excellent view of our 16th president's unique sense of humor. The society also sponsored presentations on The Westcott House (Springfield's Frank Lloyd Wright masterpiece), the many Treasures of Oakwood, Rookwood Pottery and a guided tour of Dayton's historic Woodland Cemetery. We enjoyed traditional events such as the Annual Old-Fashioned Picnic, the Pot Luck Supper and Founder's Day Dinner.

There was also the premiere of the Home Restoration Fair. This new event connected many homeowners with local professionals to help in restoring classic homes to their original appearance and structural integrity. There are already plans to present it again and, perhaps, make it an annual event.

Our most notable success was the debut event in June of the "Schantz Park Historic District Walking Tour" booklet which was co-sponsored by the Oakwood Rotary Foundation. Over 200 citizens attended who were interested in learning more about the fascinating history and the incredible architecture found in Schantz Park. Also debuting that day was "The Place to Live", a splendid reproduction of an original 1915 Schantz Park sales brochure. Both publications are available through the society.

Many seemed to enjoy these events with an average attendance of about 75 people. The success of these programs is truly attributed to the support of society members and that of the City, other local organizations and the many good citizens of the Oakwood/Dayton area.

We look forward to developing next year's schedule and adding a few surprises to the Events and Programs of the Oakwood Historical Society.

Oakwood Centennial documentary film in production

Committee Reports

Education — Mackensie Wittmer

The Education Committee has been focusing on the development of the new historical society website, www.oakwoodhistory.org. The website will continue to grow as more resources for the Oakwood community are added. The committee has also been supporting the Programs Committee and the City of Oakwood Centennial Film committee with various resources including a slideshow of 150 homes with images of how they looked in the 1910s - 1930s and how the homes look today. This slideshow is available on the website.

Gardens — Marilynn Sheehan

The blooms of the gardens were as beautiful as ever this year. Now the beds have been put to rest for the winter.

The Society is so grateful to the students with Oakwood Giving, who came two times and blew, raked, hauled and swept leaves at the Homestead for us. They are a great group of kids and we thank them so very much.

The next thing to look forward to will be snow removal...all a part of the joy of living in Ohio.

Membership—Jen Stoecker

It's time to renew your membership and support the activities of the Oakwood Historical Society. In December, members will receive a letter if their memberships are up for renewal and friends will receive an invitation to join the Society. Please consider making an additional gift to the Oakwood Historical Society to support the programming efforts of the organization.

Oakwood's Centennial is just a year away and since 2004, the Oakwood Centennial Film Committee has been working on a documentary film on the history of the city. Portions of the script are in their final stages and the committee is currently gathering images. We have already received some from private collections and would like to find more. We are looking for images of Oakwood that show everyday life, the building of homes, gradua-

tions, streetscapes, storefronts and more. We are also hoping to find personal home movies of Oakwood—movies that show dances at the East Oakwood Club, football games, horseback riding, school pageants and more. We are hoping you can help us. Please contact Harrison Gowdy at 643-4075. She will make arrangements for someone from the committee to meet with you. Thank you.

Oakwood ornaments for sale



The Oakwood Historical Society is selling charming Oakwood ornaments that display a variety of Oakwood landmarks: Harman School, The Oakwood High School, Smith School, Hawthorne Hill and Smith Gardens. These ornaments are wonderful additions to your ornament collection and will be cherished keepsakes for your children.

Ornaments are \$3 each, and if you would like to purchase some, please call Harry Ebeling at 293-0611.

To Those Who Make It Happen...Thank You!

...to Jill Kollars who puts together the mailing of the newsletters and postcards to the membership.

...to Barb and John Moriates who set up the refreshments for each of our programs and who clean up afterwards.

...to Mark Risley who spends what little free time he has chasing rodents from the Homestead and trimming up hedges.

...to Ginny Risely who often gets "drafted" by husband Mark to help out.

...to the City of Oakwood who donated available space in the city building for OHS archives and helped in the move of those archives from the Homestead to their new home.

....to Rob Wakerman for providing his musical talents at the summer picnic and the Holiday Open House.

...and to all the community members who attend the programs and other events in the support of OHS and the Oakwood community!

The Dayton Canoe Club



View of Dayton Canoe Club and the Island Park Dam from the Great Miami River

The Dayton Canoe Club at 1020 Riverside Drive in Montgomery County provides a rare glimpse of a time where the river was one of primary meeting places for friends and family. Still operating as the Dayton Canoe Club, this building serves as a present day example of the shift that occurred as Americans living in cities began to recognize organized outdoor recreation and exercise as a way to spend their leisure time. In Dayton, boat-houses, clubhouses and dance halls sprung up along its rivers – the Great Miami, the Stillwater, and the Mad and river recreation became a very popular pastime. The Dayton Canoe Club sits on the Great Miami River and was built in the Prairie Style, with its horizontal nature appearing to emerge naturally from the banks of the river.

“The Dayton Canoe Club, first originating in 1912, must get the credit for putting boating, especially canoeing, on the pedestal of popularity which it now occupies,” the *Dayton Journal* declared in 1915. Reaching out and sharing enthusiasm for canoeing with the larger community separated the Dayton Canoe Club from other canoe clubs in the area. One such group was the Stillwater Canoe Club, whose charter member and former Commodore, Charles W. Shaeffer, had a vision for a new club. Shaeffer

envisioned a clubhouse that offered more than simply a place for canoe storage. His vision included a building that offered a ballroom, a veranda overlooking the river, and a club room for games and other activities.

Though no architect can be specifically attributed to the original design of the Dayton Canoe Club, Oliver Ritzert of Dayton, Ohio was likely involved. Ritzert was tapped in 1919 to design the addition for the facility and he became a member of the Dayton Canoe Club in 1914. His office was located in the Callahan Bank Building in downtown Dayton. The rendering that he designed still hangs above the fireplace in the Club Room of the Dayton Canoe Club today.

Just four months after the Dayton Flood, the Dayton Canoe Club was finished at a cost of \$15,000, including furnishings. Members marveled at the convenience of having 42 dry storage lockers only a few feet away from the Great Miami River and a dock that ran the entire length of the clubhouse. Canoe Club members also enjoyed both the Brunswick pool table and billiard table and relaxing on the veranda to the player piano or records on the Victrola. The clubhouse was also equipped with a ballroom that was available for dances and other socializ-

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Committee Reports

Archives and History— Harry Ebeling

The Archives and Acquisitions Committee has completed the transfer of our archives from the Homestead to the City Building. We've pretty much used up the space allotted. We're ready to cull and sort and index our materials and will be sending an S.O.S. in February.

An interesting find was some original notes and untranscribed tapes from Ed King's Oral History Project of the early 80's. One particularly long one was from Gertrude Schantz Weng, daughter of Adam Schantz, Jr. She relates stories of growing up in the Schantz Plat, and about her grandfather and father.

A recent acquisition came from Emil Miller, long time friend of the Society, and former owner of the framing and art work store on Brown St. He delivered a 57" x 41" framed print of Andersonville Prison in the Civil War, dated 1864. It is well preserved, with interesting detail and thought to be fairly rare. When one thinks that the Civil War was raging in the South at the time Henry Long was building the Homestead (1867), you realize what a wonderful donation this is.

Preservation— Harrison Stamm Gowdy

The Preservation Committee continues to work on its current project of designing and writing a handbook on the architecture of Oakwood along with information on common preservation techniques. The committee hopes to have this book completed for Spring 2007. The book will include brief descriptions of architectural styles with examples from Oakwood, information on how to research your historic property, a historic overview on the development of Oakwood, and information on repairing and renovating a historic property as well as information on common pitfalls.

Island Park

The immense popularity of canoeing in the 1910s and 1920s brought about the redevelopment of the “White City,” an aging amusement park directly across the Great Miami River from the Dayton Canoe Club. As early as 1911, the city began to make plans to renovate the property. Sand was brought in to create a beach for swimming; a new dance pavilion was erected in addition to a boat livery, canoe lockers and a motion picture. And, at the suggestion of the Dayton Canoe Club, the city changed the name of the park from White City to “Island Park.” The Welfare Department of the city also turned over the opening ceremonies of Island Park to the Dayton Canoe Club.

Over 25,000 people attended Island Park on its opening day and many eagerly anticipated the illuminated carnival in the evening. According to one account, “The boats met in the lagoon with their lights out. A signal of one pistol shot was given and the lights were turned on. News reports the next day said this of the special evening, “dim, fantastic Japanese lanterns swung from 200 canoes while glaring searchlights whipped to and fro, lighting up the banks and showing the almost endless chain of spectators that held position on both sides, as the illuminated carnival passed up the river.” The role that the members of Dayton Canoe Club played in the opening of its neighbor, Island Park, demonstrated a strong sense of civic responsibility. The joy of river recreation was not to be reserved for an elite few, but available for all classes.

Dayton Canoe Club, *continued from page 5*



View from veranda of Dayton Canoe Club looking out toward the Great Miami River

ing. In fact, the non-canoe related features of the Club house were so attractive to Daytonians that Canoe Club members developed a special option for those who were solely interested in a social membership.

The formal opening of the Dayton Canoe Club was celebrated with a regatta on July 12, 1913. Hundreds of spectators arrived to watch the festivities which included boat races such as the tilting matches, two man single paddle, the two man double paddle and the upset canoe race. The Dayton Journal stated, “Flags waved in the breeze from canoe and motorboat and clubhouse, while fair maidens cheered their favorites on to greater energy with black and orange pennants bearing the D.C.C of the club in charge.”

Canoeing clubs and social activities continued to remain popular at the Dayton Canoe Club through the 1930s and 1940s. In 1954, increased automobile traffic and the expansion of the suburbs around Dayton led the City to propose the demolition of the Dayton Canoe Club for a road widening project. Members of the Dayton Canoe Club met with the City Commis-

sion and argued the value that the canoe club brought to Dayton both historically and in the present day. The City Commission agreed to spare the club house although the property in front of the building was lost to the project.

Although the pace of activity at the club house has changed as recreational habits and activities have shifted over time, membership in the Dayton Canoe Club has remained steady. People from all different sections of Dayton hold membership in the club. In addition to on-river canoe/kayak storage, the Dayton Canoe Club continues to hold special kayaking and canoeing excursions social activities over the holidays. Those who are interested in finding out more information about the Dayton Canoe Club can call 937-222-9392.

—by Jen Stoecker

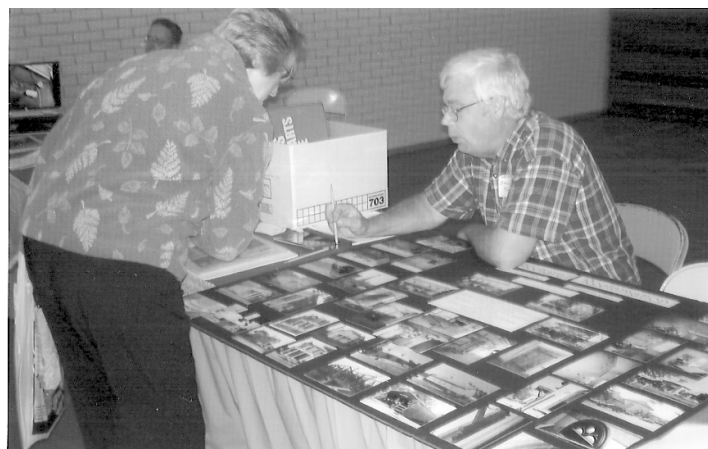
Resources:

The Dayton Canoe Club: an illustrated history, 1912-1996

Edited by Curt Dalton

Photography by Robert Hock

OHS Home Restoration Fair

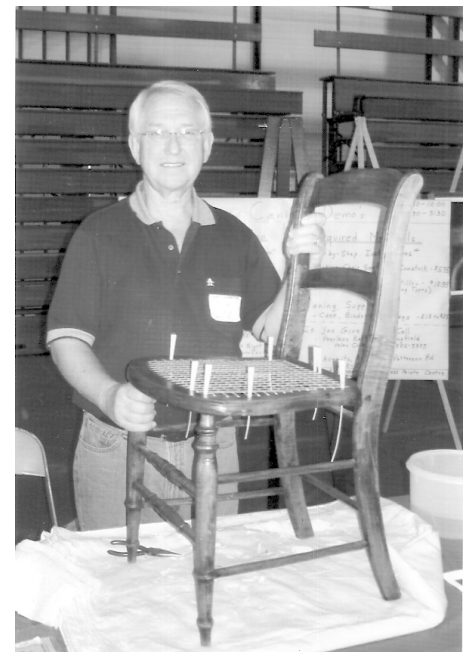


Oakwood Historical Society sponsors first Home Restoration Fair

The Home Restoration Fair enjoyed a successful debut in September. Numerous homeowners were able to connect with craftpeople and experts to seek guidance in the preservation and restoration of classic homes. Many of the exhibitors reported that they enjoyed participating and were able to answer questions and promote their businesses to those who need it the most.

This was a first-time-ever event for the Society and we recieved a lot of positive feedback and suggestions from attendees and exhibitors. We will be looking into repeating this event and, perhaps, making it an annual tradition.

Our thanks to the attendees, exhibitors, Society members and especially to the staff of Edwin D. Smith Elementary School whose assistance helped make the Home Restoration Fair a reality.





THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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oakwoodhistory.org

After months of research, planning, design and implementation, the Oakwood Historical Society website is up and running. Our overwhelming gratitude goes out to Mackensie Whitmer who took the reigns and singlehandedly created this site for us. Please take a look at this evolving project. There are all sorts of interesting Oakwood factoids and links to other interesting historical information. And, please give us your feedback, so that we can continue to provide the kind of information you would like to see on our site.

**The Oakwood Historical Society
website has arrived!
Bookmark it!**