



THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CENTENNIAL 2008 PROJECT:

The Making of a Legacy

As all of us in Oakwood gear up to celebrate our centennial celebration as a community, the Oakwood Historical Society is asking for your help in restoring the Long-Romspert Homestead. Together we can create through the Homestead a living testament of our history not only for the year of celebration, but for the generations of children who will learn to cherish and appreciate our heritage through the programs administered by The Oakwood Historical Society.

The restoration plan is to interpret and create a living history of the past 100 years of our community's life by accurately recreating time periods throughout the Homestead. We will begin with the restoration and interpretation of the four period kitchens associated with the house: the 1875 summer and winter kitchens, the 1908 kitchen, and the 1920 kitchen. When school children tour the Homestead, these are areas they find most intriguing, and we hope these rooms will become the tool for educating our children and visitors about the history of Oakwood.

Cooking utensils, decorations, food items, paint choice and every other detail will be carefully researched and selected to create a fully functional kitchen of the appropriate era. We hope to share our community's Homestead kitchens with guests occasionally cook some warm treats for sharing, while weaving information throughout the experience to enlighten and educate.

The project will continue with the creation of a professional exhibit gallery to give the larger context of Oakwood history and the history of the Homestead's owners and the accurate restoration of the 1920 living room and dining room.

For all of this, we need your help. Our goal is to raise \$85,000. We have mailed each of you a letter, describing the project, and a donation card outlining the giving levels and benefits associated with each. If you have not yet taken time to complete and mail in yours, won't you consider it now? Each donation puts us just a bit further toward completing our goal of preparing The Homestead in time for the centennial celebration and creating a living legacy for future generations.

Thank you for your continuing support of the educational and preservation mission of The Society. Together, we can leave a legacy to our children and to our community.

Please see our inside article about the progress and specific descriptions of the Homestead's room restorations. Any questions can be directed to Teresa Prosser, past president and fundraising chair, at 293-8506 or teresa.prosser@sinclair.edu or to Phyllis Miller at 299-3837, local artist and restoration chair.

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Community Open House

Saturday,
September 29th
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The Long-Romspert
Homestead

Please come see the
restoration progress!

OHS Committees

Please get involved...

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Centennial Wish List

In addition to the funds needed to make the Oakwood Historical Society Centennial 2008 Project a success, we are also in need of furnishing and artifacts. If you happen to have one or more of the following items and would be interested in donating them to the society for this project, we would be most appreciative!

- Victorian kitchen artifacts
- Victorian era pot belly stove
- 1920's kitchen stove

Please contact Phyllis Miller at 299-3837 with any questions.
Thank you!

A note from the president

All year 'round is a good time to enjoy Oakwood in its natural splendor. Recently, your Oakwood Historical Society has prepared walking tours of the Schantz Park Historic District and Oakwood's nature parks. Whether you enjoy these organized tours or just walking around your neighborhood, the wide variety of mature trees and well-preserved historic architecture are both reasons why people enjoy making Oakwood their home and why their children often return here to raise their families.

Sidewalks are wide enough for two. The beautifully landscaped boulevards and well-maintained yards of Oakwood homes provide a restful scene as you make your way to a local restaurant, coffee shop or a friend's house.

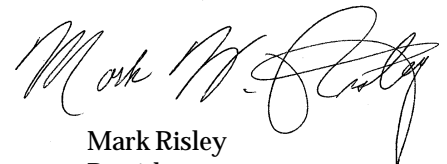
The changing seasons can make each walk a different experience as the foliage progresses from bare trees to the promise of green buds to full bloom, autumn splendor and back to winter's contrast. Mack Hummon stadium is a nostalgic place to watch a

game, but its track is often used by walkers and joggers, too. It's also the perfect venue to stop and enjoy daybreak or an evening moonrise.

Shafor Blvd is often referred to as "The Promenade." From before sunrise to long after sunset, people of all ages can be seen enjoying this suburban "trail." It stretches nearly the length of Oakwood and provides numerous examples of the types of trees and architecture that make up our community.

With its nature paths, wide sidewalks, scenic streetscapes and interesting destinations, historic Oakwood remains a perfect walking community. Taking a walk is good for the health, mind and soul. Please enjoy one soon and often.

Sincerely,



Mark Risley
President

Another good friend has passed away

Mary Lange Hayes, born in 1920 and who moved to Oakwood in 1924 and attended Oakwood schools, died in July of this year. There was no obituary, as was her wish; however, without violating that request, I'd like to share a brief remembrance of this cheerful and lovely individual.

I interviewed her last year by video in planning for the Centennial Celebration in 2008. Although I have known her for years, it wasn't until this pleasant interview that I learned about her interests and the fun she had living on Harman Terrace. Her older brother, Julian, and her sister, Betty, were part of the experience.

While in high school, her best friends were Aubrey Toulmin, Adele Grimes, and Elly Grimes. They had the "Leash and Muzzle Club" which met at the Toulmin's house on Haver Rd. It was purely social - except the time they decided that they had to do something to justify their existence. So,

they took a dog census of the Oakwood Manor, duly noting the breed, age, sex, etc. of the occupants!

She also recalled Mrs. McMaster, the librarian of the Park Avenue Library, Cotillion, and roller skating down Oakwood Avenue. She went to the NCR School House for the Saturday morning movies and treats, and helped herself to the grapes from behind the Kling house on W. Dixon before it was torn down.

I used to know her when she lived on Grandon Rd. before Dick Henry died. Then she married Charles Hayes for the latter part of her life, and they were very happy. Confined to a wheel chair in her declining years, she supported many good causes, including The Historical Society.

She concluded our interview with this telling remark, "I'm glad my parents had the good sense to move to Oakwood."

—Harry Ebeling

Oakwood's Natural Parks

The Oakwood community has always valued its green space. Early on in its history, several prominent, forward-thinking citizens set aside land that was designated to always remain undeveloped. As a result, Oakwood has several natural woodlands that continue to provide serenity to residents and visitors. Loy Garden, Elizabeth Garden and Houk Stream (Friendship) Park are virtually connected by their trails. Much of these were bridal paths from a time when private estates maintained their own equestrian stables.

These woodlands have many natural features not often found in a suburban setting. A large, mature taxus bush stands sentry near the entrance to Loy Garden where the stream tumbles its way through the park. Elizabeth Gardens Park features Douglas Fir & White Pine evergreen trees. Further on in Houk Stream, an ancient seabed is revealed where fossilized shellfish and coral depict prehistoric life.

Many species of wildlife and vegetation indigenous to Ohio can be found here. Birds are plentiful. Woodpeckers often punctuate the daylight hours and owls can be heard serenading the night. Deer, fox and raccoon share the woods with opossum, squirrels and chipmunks. In the stream, small fish dart through pools of water. Oak, maple, sycamore and other trees create a canopy over the landscape. Throughout the year, the different seasons bring a constantly changing appearance to the woodlands making them an ideal subject for photography.

Loy Garden

Situated between Park Road and Forrer Road on 1.58 wooded acres, Loy Garden was created in 1929 as a device in the will of Katherine Loy as a memorial to her late husband Henry. Their former home sits adjacent to the Park Road entrance to the trail.

Loy Garden features a multi-level walking trail that falls and rises as it follows the stream through the park. Notice the large taxus bush near the Park Road entrance. In one area, facing park benches provide a quiet retreat in which to enjoy the park's natural features. Stone stairs lead down to a wooden footbridge with a handrail. The trail rises again, then winds its way downward toward Forrer Road.



Elizabeth Gardens

A joint effort of prominent citizens Eliza P.T. Houk, John H. Patterson (founder of NCR) and Henrietta Parrott established Elizabeth Gardens (once a former gravel pit) along with Houk Stream in 1912. Both parks sit on 12.5 acres of natural woodland and, in 1919, another 1.34 acres was added where Park, Forrer and Ridgeway Roads

meet. Elizabeth Gardens is named after the mother of Mrs. Parrott.

There is a trail entrance from Forrer Road across from Loy Garden. The

continued on page 4

Trees of the Woodlands

Houk Stream:

1. Twin Basswood
2. Cottonwood
3. Hard Maple
4. Sycamore
5. Locust/Maple Combo
6. Twin Ash
7. Cottonwood
8. Hard Maple

Elizabeth Gardens:

1. Cottonwood
2. Hard Maple
3. Dogwood
4. Douglas Fir
5. Dogwood
6. White Pine
7. Birch
8. Buckeye

Loy Garden:

1. Maple (with burl)
2. Taxus Bush
3. Sycamore
4. Cottonwood
5. Shagbark Hickory
6. Wild Cherry
7. Cottonwood
8. Red Oak

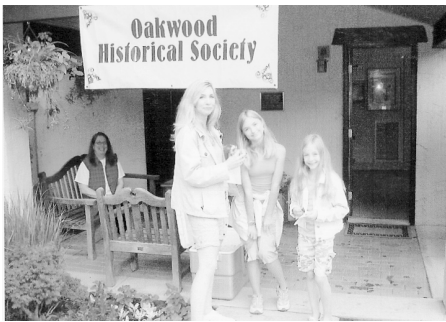
An Oakwood Acorn

In the Far Hills business district where parallel parking is designated, a small tree is planted at the end of each parking space. This makes determining the space much easier when trying to park "between the lines." If you're between the trees, you're in the parking space!

2007 Summer Memories



Young, old, and everyone in between enjoyed this year's annual Old Fashioned Family Picnic held July 15 at the Long Romspert Homestead.



Walking tour of Oakwood's Loy Gardens and Houk Stream Parks in June. The tour ended at Smith Gardens with refreshments and socializing.



1908 Buick Roadster displayed by Society life member, Larry Hardy. Old timers (not quite 1908) enjoyed the Buick which is as old as Oakwood. Harry Ebeling, Ed Herrman, David Smith, and riding shotgun is Evie Herrman.



Dedication of new building on Far Hills. Lebanon Citizens National Bank Lobby has historical pictures of Oakwood from our archives.

Gardens, *continued from page 3*

trail is mostly level and meanders along the stream through the park. Several park benches are nestled among the trees and overlook the stream that cuts deeply into the landscape. A walk along what was originally a bridal path provides the best enjoyment of the park. The trail ends near the intersection of Forrer and Ridgeway Roads.

Houk Stream (Friendship) Park

Across Ridgeway Road, Forrer Road becomes Oakwood Avenue. In this area is the entrance to Houk Stream Park. From Elizabeth Gardens, the stream is directed under Ridgeway Road into the park. Also a former bridal path, the trail follows the stream through mature woodlands. Park benches are also provided in this scenic area.



There is a small dam that gives the restful sound of falling water. Just below the dam, the stream cuts down to bedrock to reveal the ancient seabed from the Late Ordovician Period, approximately 440 million years ago. Fossilized remains of shellfish and coral from a time when a shallow sea covered Ohio can be seen in this area.

The path continues through tall, old growth trees before ending at Runnymede Road. In the spring of 2007, a large tree fell in this area creating an opening in the leafy canopy above the park. Over time, nature will fill in this area with the broadening of other nearby trees and new growth from the forest floor.

Recently, the City purchased more acreage adjacent to Houk Stream Park which will increase its size and add more trails to the area.

These parks are carefully maintained by the City of Oakwood who inventory the trees and keep the trails open. Dedicated local volunteers such as the Cub Scouts help keep the areas clean.

When enjoying these natural areas, hikers are advised to stay on designated trails, be aware of uneven ground, use caution when crossing roadways, supervise children at all times and refrain from removing plants and natural formations from the parks.

"Take only photographs and memories, leave only footprints," and visit often.

—Oakwood parks photos by Erin J. Fowler

The Transformation of The Homestead

Three years ago, there was the front parlor; two years ago, there was the middle parlor...and now there is the 1865 dining room!

Yes, the Homestead is transforming, returning to its historic time periods as a way of helping students and other visitors to the Homestead understand the time and people of an era gone by.

What does this transformation involve? It means stripping old wallpaper, washing down bare plaster walls, repairing those plaster walls, determining the most appropriate depiction of that room, and then choosing the right wall color or wallpaper and trim paint. Then begins the real work...the work of restoring the room: painting walls and ceiling, wallpapering, cleaning floors, painting trim, finding the right furnishings and placing them in ways that would have been typical for the room and the way the room was used and then finding the right decorative items that complete the look. All of this requires literally hundreds of volunteer hours, under the direction of board member and local artist Phyllis Niemeyer Miller, and becomes a labor of love for those involved as it quickly consumes all free time.



West interior wall of central dining room (original house) showing Rookwood fireplace



South wall of central dining room (original house)

Who benefits? Everyone! The school children who visit The Homestead as part of their curriculum on local history and the visitors who wish to learn more about Oakwood's history but also the large social history of America as it moved from a rural to a suburban culture....all come to understand what it meant to live in the years between 1865 and 1920. This is the unique story that The Homestead tells...and it is the story The Oakwood Historical Society wants to tell in more complete detail in time for Oakwood's centennial celebration next year.

So that the public can start to read the story in its prologue form, The Society will host a community open house on Saturday, September 29 from 10 am to 3 pm (parking behind the Homestead is limited so it's suggested that parking occur on the side streets surrounding the Homestead). Visitors will see the completed restoration of the first three rooms and will be able to view depictions of the plans for the remaining first floor rooms including paint color and fabric swatches.

So, if you're curious to see how the restoration is progressing, join us on September 29!

Founder's Day dinner slated for Nov. 14

Be sure to mark your calendar for **Wednesday, November 14 at 6:00 p.m.** and plan to attend The Oakwood Historical Society's annual Founders' Day Dinner at the Dayton Country Club.

The Board of Trustees will give a year-end report of Society activities and present the following slate of 2008 nominated officers and board members followed by our official election:

Officers:

Harry Ebeling—President
Mark Risley—Past President
Harrison Gowdy—Vice President
Lisa Kell—Treasurer
Karen Fleming—Secretary

Board members:

Marilynn Sheehan
Mackensie Wittmer
Phyllis Miller
Kjirsten Goeller

This year's program will also feature a slideshow and talk by Mark Risley on early 20th Century architecture. This presentation was recently given at the University of Dayton Life Long Learning Institute and features many homes from the Schantz Park Historic District Walking Tour brochure published by the Oakwood Historical Society.

The Society will be mailing out invitations to this event approximately three weeks beforehand, which will include the full menu and entertainment for the evening. Look for your invitation in the mail! But just to whet your appetite here's a quick preview of the menu:

Choice of the following entrees:
Roast Pork Loin with natural jus
Chicken Picata with Lemon Caper Sauce
Grilled Atlantic Salmon Filet
Vegetarian Pasta
House Salad
Sautéed Mixed Vegetables
Baked Potato
Dessert

You can make your reservation today by filling out the form on the back page and mailing it in! 5

The NCR Boys' Gardens 1897-1934



*Young boys work the gardens in early spring,
NCR Archive Photo*

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

Building a Boy:

The History of the National
Cash Register Company Boys'
(and later girls')
Gardens 1897-1934

Thursday
September 20th
7:00 p.m.

Social time begins at 6:30 p.m.

Lutheran Church of Our Savior

155 E. Thruston Avenue,
Oakwood
*Parking and entrance at the rear
of the church.*

Reservations are not
necessary.

This event is free and
open to the public.

The NCR Boys' Gardens was the first corporate sponsored garden program, and progressive reformers regarded it as the largest and most complete garden program in the United States.

Every spring, young boys planted gardens on NCR property adjacent to the factory. The boys tended to their individual plots, cultivating vegetables to sell or take home to their families.

The NCR factory stood in a neighborhood of shacks, derelict buildings, and waste plots, which John H. Patterson believed was a business deterrent. In 1896, Patterson renamed it South Park and led a movement to improve the neighborhood by giving money to residents who improved their property and starting programs to engage troublesome neighborhood boys. Patterson believed the neighborhood boys had nothing better to do in the summer than vandalize the factory, smashing windows and damaging machinery.

In the spring of 1897, Robert Patterson, John's brother, lent two acres of land on South Main St. for the boys' gardens. The land was divided into 50 plots, and in the first year forty boys ages ten to fourteen joined the program. In May 1899, NCR moved the gardens to Locust St. near the Oakwood Pottery Company. The gardens were moved to take advantage of better land, water pipes, and to

allow the boys to reach the gardens without crossing streetcar traction lines. In 1904, the Olmsted Brothers, whose father designed Central Park, designed a formal, patterned system for the boys' gardens. The new design included a center fountain with concentric radial plots and grid-like gardens on either side.

Every year, the boys filled out a membership application to participate. The children not accepted into the program received tools and seeds for a home garden. In the second week of April, NCR plowed and marked the plots. By the third week in April, the boys were planting. NCR provided the tools, seeds, and a head gardener to instruct and supervise the boys. NCR issued each boy a hoe, rake, and spade with an attached number tag that corresponded to his assigned garden. Each boy cleaned his own tools and stored them in the correct place in a tool shed at the corner of Locust and Rubicon Sts. NCR gave each boy a notebook to track his garden's produce and to record his sales at market. Throughout the summer the head gardener would give lectures about hygiene, manliness, conduct, and the necessity of work. He also explained technical gardening subjects like germination and fertilization. Each boy grew the same vegetables, and different seeds were simultaneously planted on the same land to take advantage of different growing

seasons and reap the most out of the land in a single summer. The boys posted a current bulletin of fair market vegetable prices to estimate profit, and established a co-operative patch for melons, peanuts, and popcorn. All of the boys worked the same hours: 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. These hours were rigidly enforced, and no boy could work overtime without asking the head gardener for special permission. NCR's welfare director signed time report cards for parents and for NCR's permanent records. The boys exhibited their best produce at the Montgomery County fair at the end of the season.

NCR employees judged the boys' gardens for annual prizes. They inspected the gardens at lunch time when the boys were away at school or work and awarded prizes based on five criteria: value of product (30%), condition of garden and tools (20%), attendance (20%), deportment (20%), and condition of account book (10%). Patterson hosted an elaborate dinner at the NCR Officers' Club for all the boys and to award prizes to the ten best boy gardeners. NCR placed the winning boys' names and pictures in the monthly employee newsletter and the local newspapers.

By 1903, Patterson was speaking widely on the program, and even commissioned three dimensional models and 6000 feet of film for his lectures. Several companies adopted and adapted NCR's garden program, including Natural Foods (later Shredded Wheat) and Cadbury.

The garden program was designed to improve the boys' behavior and the surrounding neighborhood, but the boys didn't always become model children. In 1902, roughly fifty boys were expelled from the program throughout the summer. The gardens operated on a demerit system, and the boys were expected to work on school holidays and the entire summer break. The instructor issued demerits for absences, neglecting crops, rule infractions, and in extreme cases expelled the boy. In 1903, the ten winners all had at least one demerit



*Olmstead designed gardens for young boys,
NCR Archive Photo*

and one winner had sixteen demerits. Even the best gardeners were getting in trouble.

In 1910 the boys organized into the Boys' Garden Company, incorporating and registering with the State of Ohio. Each boy held one share valued at one dollar. The boys elected officers and held regular business meetings. At the end of the season, the company calculated the amount of money earned by selling the produce and paid a \$12 dividend to each stockholder.

By 1915, NCR had instituted employee and girls' gardens in addition to the original boys' gardens earning a combined \$10,000 that year. The boys' gardens had been reduced to one and one-half acre. In 1916, eighty boys were in the gardening program, but by 1919, only thirty-one boys remained. After a move across the canal to Shaw Field in 1923, the gardens were rarely mentioned in the NCR newsletter. Prosperity through the mid and late 1920s adversely affected the gardening program, and the explosion of the Dayton suburbs and car transportation took employees and their children away from South Park. By 1930, the boys and girls were alternating days in the gardens. NCR did maintain many other welfare programs through the 1930s and the Second World War. However, a 1934 NCR News article mentions that NCR employees were laying out the lines for new athletic fields in Shaw Field. Although it is possible that a portion of the boys' and girls' gardens remained after 1934, there was no evidence of the gardens in the NCR newsletter in the following years.

Committee Reports

Preservation— Harrison Stamm Gowdy

The preservation committee is continuing to work on the Preservation Handbook. This project keeps its core group of volunteers busy. It is very exciting to see progress being made, and we hope to have the handbook done by the 2008 Centennial.

The OHS Board is also starting discussion on next steps in the preservation of the homestead. The Long-Romspert Homestead is a unique property in Oakwood. Its history tells the story from our city's beginnings through its rapid growth in the 1920s. Within the Homestead are four unique kitchens (c. 1865, c. 1890, and c. 1920). In 2002 and with your support, OHS was able to restore the oldest kitchen known as the summer kitchen. We are currently looking into restoring our newest kitchen which dates from the 1920s followed by our turn-of-the-century kitchen. The restoration of the 1920s kitchen is sensitive for it will serve both as an interpretation space and a working kitchen for OHS functions. We are hoping that as we plan this restoration that you, our membership, will assist through both financial donations and the donation of period pieces including cookbooks, dishes, and more.



THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1947 Far Hills Avenue • Dayton, Ohio 45419

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Newsletter Editor: Anne Rasmussen

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RESERVATION FORM FOR FOUNDERS' DAY DINNER

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Dayton Country Club

555 Kramer Road, Oakwood

Cash Bar and Social Hour at 6:00 p.m. • Dinner at 7:00 p.m. • Program at 8:00 p.m.

Name _____ & _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

ENTREE CHOICE: _____ Breast of Chicken Marsala
 _____ Grilled Atlantic Salmon Filet
 _____ Roasted Pork Loin

Fruit/Cheese
Entree Course - choice to the left
Mixed Vegetables
Rosemary Roasted Red Potatoes
Ice Cream

_____ Reservations @ \$25.00 per person = \$ _____

Make check payable to: OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 Mail to: Doris Dobeleit, 1901 Shroyer Rd., Dayton, OH 45419 - Phone 293-9747

RESERVATION DEADLINE IS THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2007