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## The Overwhelming Verdict: WOW!

The restoration of the homestead's first floor is officially completed! We did it!...and it's a huge WOW! Two events happened in July which presented the work to the public. The private preview open house was held from 4-7 pm on Friday, July 25th with Harrison Gowdy, Mackensie Wittmer, and Phyllis Miller serving as docents and Teresa Prosser and Harry Ebeling serving as hosts. It was a great success with Mayor Judy Cook, Dayton Foundation Barbra Stonerock, Dayton History Gwen Haney, members Jim and



1865 living room/dining room

Homestead before) visiting the homestead. Serving as docents were Mark Risley as the "context" setter/greeter in the 1865 parlor, Phyllis Miller in the 1865 part of the homestead, Harrison Gowdy in the 1920 part, Kjirsten Goeller in the 1908 kitchen, Harry Ebeling in the 1908 kitchen and then in the 1920 living room/dining room, and Marilynn Sheehan in the summer kitchen. Ed and Evie Hermann and Everett and Margie Yowell served as front porch greeters. Arlene Graham from Fiberworks also did spinning wheel demonstrations. During both events, comments were highly positive both about the restoration work and about the gallery exhibit. Teresa, the events organizer, sends a sincere thanks to all who helped make these events the success they were...and with special thanks to Phyllis Miller for her guidance and talent and to Karen Fleming for doing the beautiful calligraphy on the donor acknowledgement.



1865 sunroom

Marilynn Sheehan, donor Tom Metz, and councilmen William Duncan and Steve Byington (along with wife Laura) in attendance. The community-wide open house on Saturday, July 26th from 10-2 was an equally huge success with close to 100 people (many never having been to the

## OHS Committees

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### Please get involved...

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## A note from the president

What a busy summer! The historical society has been actively helping with the Centennial on many fronts, and we are quite pleased with the results. This four-month effort has been done by behind-the-scenes planning for over a year. The City enlisted Madeline Iseli and Dick Good to head up the event, and they got busy in the fall of 2006, calling together people who were interested in and who had skills to contribute to the program. With regular meetings to stimulate these folks, they fanned out into the community to gather support for their various jobs.

It all came together, and you have seen the several end products as the summer has progressed. I observed this as a member of the committee and saw some of our members really pitch in. Harrison Gowdy and Mackensie Wittmer grabbed the ring and saw to the completion of the writing and producing of the made-for-television CD titled *Our Home on the Hill*. Produced by Roy Flynn of the University of Dayton, it is of memorable quality and will be a valuable keepsake.

The coffee table book *From Acorn to Oak Tree* was produced by talented team of individual which included local artist and society member Lisa Reeder and chaired by our Quarterly newsletter publisher, Anne Rasmussen. This incredible book is another keepsake to be kept for future generations.

The material for the Centennial *Reflections in the Oakwood Register* has been gleaned from our archives and from the books published by the historical society. We also contributed substantially to the CD, the coffee table book, and to features in the Dayton Daily News.

The team for the Centennial Committee has had the full support of the Mayor and City Manager who have left no stone unturned to make this a memorable year. We have one last event on August 17th, co-chaired by our loyal member Sally McBride Solarek, before wrapping up the celebration of 100 years of Oakwood history.

Harry Ebeling, President

## A friend indeed!

You may not have noticed the passing of an old friend of the historical society in 2007, but many of us remember the quiet old gentleman who often attended our functions and had a genuine interest in our programs. Emil Miller died on May 27, 2007. He had retired from the business he owned, Art Frame Gallery on Brown Street, which he ran with his wife, Stella, who had previously died in 2001.

President Harry Ebeling remembers him principally for an act of generosity and concern for the society when he contacted Harry to make the gift of the O'Dea Andersonville Lithograph which is prominently displayed in the winter kitchen of the Homestead. It was only months before his passing that he called Harry to meet him with something he wanted to donate. A friend brought him and the lithograph to the house, and all three carried it in where Harry first got

to see it. The print is 40" X 60" in a beautiful frame, and it is a true collector's piece. Dating from 1879, it tells the story of the horrific conditions of the southern prison during the Civil War. It is truly a rare work of art, copies of which are in museums.

After Emil sold his business, he was a resident of Lincoln Park Retirement Community and an active member of the First Church of Christ Scientists. Having no family to take care of, his estate was divided generously among the church entities, a college, and a nursing home, with a generous provision for The Oakwood Historical Society, which has been designated for use in restoring the second floor.

These funds, along with those from generous Society friends, will make the Homestead a truly beautiful showplace and educational house museum for generations to come. What a tribute to the Millers!

# Historical Society memorial brick walk upgraded by Eagle Scout

The path to the front door of the Long-Romspert Homestead has been a long time in completion but thanks to an Eagle Scout project, it is now an attractive access from the rear parking area to the front door. Jonathan Pearson, a junior at Oakwood High School, took on the project to complete his Eagle badge, the highest rank in boy scouting. Planning started in the spring when he came to Society President Harry Ebeling in search of a project. Harry suggested the brick walk as one of the Society's long term and unaffordable goals. Jonathan submitted a written proposal with a cost estimate of \$2,000 which was approved by the board.

Pearson consulted with his scoutmaster Matt Kell and advancement committee member Nick Steiner and got technical advice from Brett Landrum of Garwood Landscaping. He then lined up boys from Troop 101 to help, and they began in mid-June when the heat and humidity was at its highest. Several parents helped throughout the project which was interrupted several times by rain. It took twenty days of labor by thirty-two scouts and several adults who put in 210 hours of hard work. Garwood Landscaping provided a trailer to haul away excess dirt and delivered loads



Eagle Scouts hard at work!

of bricks, sand and gravel.

The Homestead now has a four foot wide path running 120 feet along the south side of the house, using its many memorial bricks which have been donated over the years. Professionally installed with layers of gravel, it should last for many years and provide access to the front from the rear area. This is the third Eagle Scout project which has enhanced the historic building and grounds and has benefited the community, and the board is just thrilled with this latest improvement. Heart-felt thanks goes to all involved.

We invite you to inspect the walk and keep us in mind for a memorial or tribute to a friend or loved one. The bricks are custom made at a cost of \$100. Please contact any board member for details or visit the Society website at [www.oakwoodhistory.org](http://www.oakwoodhistory.org)

## Congratulations!

The Board and membership wish to congratulate Society President Harry Ebeling for being one of four recipients of the Oakwood High School Distinguished Alumni Award on August 16<sup>th</sup>.  
Congratulations, Harry! You've always been #1 with us!

## Committee Reports

Archives & Acquisitions  
Harry Ebeling

The first of many professional exhibit panels have been created and hung in the Gallery. It is the result of the work of Lisa Kell, Teresa Prosser, Jeanne Palermo, Scott Smith, and Dan Cummings. The exhibit is definitely another WOW! for the homestead and the society. Work is already being discussed for another project having to do with the outbuildings/site. Details to come later!

Website—  
Mackensie Wittmer

The website continues to receive many requests each month including questions about residents' homes, comments on Centennial articles, and requests for information about events. The website continues to grow as a resource for the Oakwood community and was recently spotted on Wikipedia!

Cataloguing—

The Oakwood Historical Society is embarking on the computer cataloging of its photos and objects. A special thank you to the Oakwood Rotary who supplied the funds to purchase the specialized computer software. Lexis Nexis donated the laptop computers, and volunteers are underway to organize the 1300 photograph scans created by the Oakwood Centennial Film Committee.

## Committee Reports

Buildings & Grounds—  
Marilynn Sheehan

The rental house continues to have work done in preparation for subsequent tenants and a huge thanks goes to Mark Risley for all the work he has done and for the work he has overseen. This work has included painting, cleaning carpets, ripping up carpet, refinishing floors, cleaning appliances, and take out honeysuckle from the front lawn. Now, we just need a new tenant!

We are so happy to have the brick walkway complete. It looks great! As soon as we start getting some rain, we will have to plant grass seed. Even though the gardens are in a bit of a summer slump, many people who came to the Open House thought they were lovely. We are so pleased that the fellows from Depend-A-Lawn were able to keep the lawn looking so good while all the work was going on for the brick walkway. They are also doing the lawn next door while there is no tenant.

Jamie has accepted flowers to be planted from Jean Woodhull, Louise Maher, Bill Hager and Marge Rich. I'm sure it will make the gardens beautiful in the spring.

## The Final Piece

All non-profit groups apply for grants for charitable sources in hopes that they will strike a responsive chord. Our society is no different, but when we check out the guidelines we often find out that some requirement precludes us. When we apply, we often have the feeling that being from Oakwood is a strike against us because of the – you know – image: Why would we need money if we're from Oakwood?

What most people fail to realize is that when we inherited the Long-Romspert Homestead, it did not come with any kind of financial or endowment support. Therefore, we rely heavily on memberships, rental from the house next door to the Homestead, and donations to do our work. Over the last year when the Homestead's restoration work and educational plans took on full steam, we started applying for grants...without much success.

...That is until June when we finally were successful and received a discretionary grant from The Dayton Foundation under a program that encourages new programs and continuing needs that do not fall into other categories. This limited program encourages applications for unmet needs associated with their programs.

Our new exhibit gallery and educational efforts certainly fall into this category, and we were successful in showing the need for money to support the professional exhibits and interpretative plan for the Homestead



The first panel of the six-panel exhibit in The Gallery

to depict the historical growth of the area, and indeed the nation, from 1865 to 1920.

With the \$10,000, we have contracted with professional experts who will provide the material so that visitors and students to the Homestead site will be able to see, hear, touch, smell, and sometimes even taste what it was like to live and work during an important transitional time in our city and in our Country. The added benefit of the contracted work will be the creation of free-standing stanchions in the rooms and on the grounds so visitors can participate in a leisurely self-guided tour.

We greatly appreciate the Dayton Foundation's support, and with their help, we are actively working to fulfill our educational goals.

Come see the Oakwood Historical Society booth at

### Oakwood Holiday Showcase

sponsored by Oakwood MOMs

November 8, 2008 11:00-4:00

Oakwood High School West Gym

40+ local vendors, door prizes, and free holiday snacks

Free Admission

[momsofoakwood.org](http://momsofoakwood.org)

# In 1867....

The year 1867 was much in discussion at the Oakwood Historical Society's recent Summer at the Homestead program for elementary children. That was the year the first part of the Long-Romspert Homestead was completed and that was the year the historical society chose to reproduce for the children who participate in the three-day program. The program was based at the homestead in the original summer kitchen, which would have been brand new in 1867.

During the program, the children experienced activities that would have been typical on a farm such as the Long farm right after the end of the Civil War. The children did chores (washing dishes by hand, churning butter, washing clothes on a washboard), participated in handicrafts of the time (braiding rag rugs, scouring wool for spinning), helped prepare and preserve food (peeling and drying apples), and learned a bit about clothing, customs, and manners of the time period. To help the children get into the era, there were aprons and pinafores for the girls and vests for the boys.

For many, the favorite part of the day, however, were the group games played outside on the lawn. Drop the



Handkerchief and Blind Man's Bluff were novelties to these modern children, but they had a wonderful time discovering these old favorites. Puss in the Corner, Run Sheep Run, and other games also helped them stretch their legs.

Many of the children who participated had recently studied local history as part of their social studies curriculum. Some had also been on a guided tour of the Homestead with their school class and wanted to return for a more in-depth experience. They were not disappointed. Parents whose children attended the program gave it high marks. Their children left their homes in the morning eagerly bound for the Homestead at 9 am and came home at noon chatting about what they had done and learned. According to one parent, "My son enjoyed every element of the program, and I admit this was way beyond my expectations."

The staff of the historical society is looking forward to offering more programs for children, and future programs are already in the early planning stage. Photos from this year's summer program and information about future programs will be available on the Society website at [www.oakwoodhistory.org](http://www.oakwoodhistory.org). Needless to say, Summer at the Homestead will be repeated next summer since many of the children have already expressed interest in returning; they have work to do on the farm! Much thanks to Linda and Sarah Pearson who developed the program, organized the helpers, and conducted all of the activities.



## Committee Reports

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### Education—All

(Please see article about the Summer at the Homestead program)

### Fundraising— Teresa Prosser

Because of the generous bequeath from Emil Miller, the restoration of the second floor is off to a running start. Donations continue to come in from community and society members. Once the second floor is complete, fundraising will again begin in earnest to restore the 1865 carriage house and the 1920 garage as interpretative sites for the change in transportation.

### Programs— Kjirsten Goeller

A garage sale is being planned for mid-October, followed by the Founders' Day Annual Meeting on November 19th and the Holidays at the Homestead on December 14th. Details to come!

### Membership— Teresa Prosser

The membership database has been updated, and an additional membership database has been created to allow the society to target its future mailings.

# Ohio Artisans and the Tiffany Studios

## Committee Reports

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Restoration—  
Phyllis Miller

(Please see The Overwhelming Verdict: WOW! article)

With work completed on the first floor, we have moved to the second floor. Paint colors have already been identified for the 1920 section, and the painter has been scheduled for late August. Also, we may be receiving multiple and original items from Dayton History which will largely furnish the second floor in addition to adding some pieces to the first floor. We will receive official word late August...and we are keeping our fingers crossed! The 1920 section should be completed in time for the Holidays at the Homestead event. The 1865 second floor will most likely take at least a full year to complete.

Preservation/  
Centennial Celebration—  
Harrison Stamm-Gowdy

Work is once again underway on the Preservation Handbook and should be a valuable resource for people looking to restore their homes in an accurate and sympathetic manner. Oakwood's historic homes are one of our biggest assets, and people are interested in doing the job right!

The Centennial film is finished and is a huge success. Well done, Mackensie and Harry who are so wonderful Harrison can't wait to work on another project with them!

So here is the typical story—Thomas Edison encouraged his friend Louis Comfort Tiffany to design an electric lamp. The result was the iconic Tiffany lamp with its stained-glass shade. Tiffany sold his first lamp in 1899, and the lamps went on to become coveted collector items.

In 2007, the New York Historical Society opened an exhibit entitled “A New Light on Tiffany” which elaborated on the story and explored the turn-of-the-century practices in the Tiffany Studios. The inspiration for the exhibition was the recent discovery of Clara Driscoll's letters.

Clara Driscoll was born in Tallmadge, Ohio. In 1887, at 21 years of age, Miss Driscoll went to work in New York at the Tiffany Glass Studios. She went on to head the Tiffany Studios' Women's Glass Cutting Department. Driscoll's letters discovered at the Queens Historical Society and Kent State University Library offered first-hand information about the inner workings of Tiffany Studios and revealed previously unknown details about the design and production of Tiffany lamps and other luxury objects.



Design for a Comb with Leaves and Berries, c. 1910  
Virginia V. Blakeney, American, 1878 - 1963  
Watercolor on paper  
Image: 10 15/16 x 7 15/16 inches, The Dayton Art Institute, Bequest of the artist, 1963.136.30



Design for a Necklace with Five Graduated Drops, c. 1910  
Virginia V. Blakeney, American, 1878 - 1963  
Watercolor on Strathmore board  
Image: 9 1/2 x 7 7/8 inches, The Dayton Art Institute, Bequest of the artist, 1963.136.24

Driscoll's correspondence reveals that she was primarily responsible for many of the firm's most iconic lampshades including the Wisteria, Dragonfly, and Peony. The exhibition focused on the “Tiffany Girls”, the women who labored behind the scenes to create the masterpieces now linked to the Tiffany name.

Tiffany Studios under the direction of Louis Comfort Tiffany was a strong proponent of the Arts & Crafts movement. It is, therefore, not surprising that local jewelry designer Virginia Blakeney was also designing work under the Tiffany name.

Born in 1878 to William J. and Margaret (Sanford) Blakeney, Ms. Blakeney was a lifelong resident of the Dayton area, living at 424 W. 2nd Street (originally her parents' home) until 1933 when she moved to 620 Harman Avenue where she remained until 1960.

Not much is known of Blakeney's life. It is known, however, that Blakeney left the Dayton area in the early 1900s to travel and study in France and Belgium. It is after her return that she began producing designs for not only prominent Dayton families but for large jewelry houses including Tiffany Studios. Her work was graceful and elegant which reflected her personality as well as the personality of her clients. Blakeney, like many Arts & Crafts designers, was an avid

## ...and there are more thanks!

- Scott Smith Graphic Design – doing the layout of the Gallery exhibit panels
- Dan Cummings – producing the exhibit panels
- The Dayton Foundation – funding the Gallery exhibit and interpretative plan
- Jack Pearson – supervising the Scouts' brick walk project
- Jonathan Pearson – installing brick walk
- Linda and Sarah Pearson – developing the children's summer program
- Jeanne Palermo – serving as Gallery and exhibit consultant
- Jamie Sheehan – gardening
- Arlene Graham from Fiberworks – performing spinning wheel demonstration
- Anonymous Donor – donating numerous artifacts for winter and summer kitchens
- Swigart's Furniture Refinishing – rebuilding & refinishing chair
- Battigaglia's Upholstry Co. – recovering sofa & chair
- Mark Neimeyer – building of 1865 and 1920 models of homestead
- Tom and Marion Metz – donating household antique and other items
- Custom Frame Services – restoring Andersonville lithograph
- Art Frame Gallery – cleaning and restoring oil paintings
- Josh Turner – doing the carpentry work for the Gallery & carriage house
- Valley Painting & Paper Hanging – stripping wallpaper, painting of rooms and ceilings
- AAbel Master Carpet Repair – serging and repairing carpets
- Fazel Rug Gallery – cleaning carpets
- Wells Electric Service – installing fixtures
- Shad Ankeney Electric – doing the Gallery electrical work
- Peter Bolmida – repairing the 1930 phone and clock
- Kent Miller – hanging art work
- Ginny Risley and son Robert – removing large honeysuckles
- Depend-a-Lawn – maintaining the lawns
- Dayton History – supplying original Homestead pieces
- ...and, of course, the board members who, whether they were doing the work themselves or helping organize the work, have persevered tirelessly to complete the restoration of the first floor in just eleven months!

## Ohio artisans, continued

flower gardener, and her love of flowers is reflected in the floral-like designs of her jewelry. According to the Dayton Art Institute's biography of Blakeney, she often sketched in her garden and then produced preliminary designs for her jewelry in watercolor renderings which are considered art in themselves. From these, she produced the actual jewelry with tools she made herself. She designed rings, necklaces, and pendants made of silver or gold and then enameled or set with precious stones of diamonds, amethysts, topaz, and pearls used singly or in combinations.

Blankeney, by all accounts, was

an extremely complex and interesting woman and has been described as regal and reserved with a commitment to perfection. At the end of her life, Blakeney was a recluse and nearly blind. When she died on April 24, 1963 at age 84, she was buried at Woodland Cemetery in Section 113, Lot 229 with her parents who had predeceased her in 1925 and 1911.

Her sketches, along with other gifts, were bequeathed to the Dayton Art Institute (DAI) which also has a collection of Blakeney jewelry, generously donated by Mrs. Virginia Smith and daughter Jeanne Smith, relatives of Virginia Blakeney.

## 2008 Programs

Sept. – Woodland Cemetery Tour

Date to be announced

Sept. – Homestead Garage and Art Sale

Nov. 19 – Founders Day & Annual Meeting  
“A Centennial Celebration”  
Dayton Country Club

Dec. 14 – Holidays at the Homestead  
Community invited and house tours available



THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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[www.oakwoodhistory.org](http://www.oakwoodhistory.org)

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## Oakwood: The Far Hills

The popular standard history of Oakwood, a the centennial edition is a reprint of the 1983 publication with an introduction scanning the 25 years since it was first published. The original book is in demand but no longer available. Many residents have a copy in their libraries and have bought them for their children and families as a priceless memory of life here.

This reprint, available in soft cover, is offered by preorder order only. Prepaid orders will be taken by the Oakwood Historical Society for delivery in April/May 2008.

Mail your check for \$25 to:  
Oakwood Historical Society  
1947 Far Hills Ave.  
Dayton, OH 45419  
Indicate "The Far Hills" on the Memo on the check  
Add \$2.00 for Postal Delivery  
You will be notified when they can be picked up

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Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the reprint of Oakwood: The Far Hills. Please reserve in my name.

( ) I will pick up at the Historical Society. Please notify me at the phone number below:

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