



The
Oakwood
Historical Society

— *Make History With Us* —



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Historian

Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • Fall 2015

A Brief History of the Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati Railroad

—David Schmidt

One of the more enjoyable recreational resources available to area residents is the Dayton-Kettering Connector, which is a bike path that traces portions of Oakwood's northeastern boundary. The section of the path bordering Oakwood extends from its crossing at Shroyer Road (near Dairy Queen; Figure 1), continues behind Carmel's and other businesses along Shroyer Road and, north of Patterson Road, winds through a serene, wooded corridor into the University of Dayton area. Runners, walkers, and cyclists regularly use the Dayton-Kettering Connector, which was formally opened on August 13, 2013 after the City of Dayton upgraded the path and stabilized the channel of the adjacent Rubicon Creek.¹

The Dayton-Kettering Connector follows a former railroad right-of-way that was deactivated during the 1970s. Many of the more seasoned residents of the Oakwood area remember the sights and sounds of freight trains that served businesses along the railway in Dayton and Kettering. These businesses included Earl D. Creager's construction company at 901 Shroyer Road, which was connected to the rail line by a spur that is still largely in place and visible from the bike path.



Figure 1

The railroad line was established during 1902 by the Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati (DL&C) Railroad, which developed, in large part, to serve the stone industry that flourished in the Dayton area from the 1800s through the World War I era. This industry was driven by demand for stone quarried from the Dayton Formation, which is a sedimentary rock unit occurring sporadically within the Miami Valley area. The Dayton Formation consists mainly of dolostone, which is a durable, altered limestone that was well suited to architectural and engineering applications before concrete became widely available.²

Dolostones of the Dayton Formation were quarried extensively during the Nineteenth Century at sites in Dayton and the Beavertown area of present-day Kettering. In the face of heavy demand for cut stone in the Miami Valley area, the supply of quality rock in these quarries began to dwindle by the 1890s. This situation caught the attention of Henry Lewis, who was a successful businessman living in Cincinnati.³ Lewis was aware that Dayton Formation rock, with an outstanding reputation among area builders, was in large supply at the Allen Quarry east of Centerville and that inactive, narrow-gauge railroad tracks ran near the quarry.⁴ Lewis conferred about this opportunity with Oakwood's Harold Talbott (Figure 2), who was a well-known civil engineer with extensive railroad experience.⁵

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**THE OAKWOOD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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- 2015 -

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Message from the President

This has been an active year for your Oakwood Historical Society.

In its second year, the Far Hills Speaker Series has been drawing crowds to Wright Memorial Public Library to enjoy programs on a variety of topics. The "Taste of Wine and Cheese" event is now an established tradition as the perfect relaxing occasion after "That Day in May" activities. Our annual "Classics on the Lawn" car show and open house drew a larger crowd as the field of beautiful, vintage automobiles grew from 25 cars to nearly 40 displayed on the grounds of the Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum.

Children's programs continued to grow with Oakwood youth learning about the ways that their great-grandparents conducted their everyday lives in gardening, cooking and other domestic duties. Dayton's historic Woodland Cemetery was the perfect setting when "Discover Woodland Days - A Walking Tour" highlighted famous Oakwood residents now interred at the cemetery. Our annual "Family Photo Shoot" gave families the opportunity to have professional photographs taken in The Homestead's historic settings at a nominal price.

All of these activities require the planning, efforts and, often, patience of society members, volunteers and the community to ensure their continued success. Planning for next year's activities is already underway. Watch for an exciting line-up of our traditional and new programs for 2016 and thank you for your continued support.



Annual Meeting to Honor WWI on the Homefront

This year's Annual Meeting will be held on November 11, 2015, Armistice Day, now commemorated with Veterans Day. Dr. David Schmidt of Wright State University will be the guest speaker; his topic will be *Dayton, Ohio: the Quintessential Home Front During "The Great War."*

The review of The Oakwood Historical Society's past year and finances will be presented, as well as the introduction of the Board Members for the coming year. Dessert and coffee will be served prior to the meeting, and a small donation of between \$5 and \$10 is requested to help cover the cost of refreshments and room rental.

Details: 7:00 p.m. November 11, 2015 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 33 West Dixie Ave at the corner of Far Hills Ave, in the Cloister. RSVP with your name and the number attending to the Oakwood Historical Society at 937-299-3793. See you there!

**Get more info on our
website or give us a call!**
www.oakwoodhistory.org
937.299.3793

A Brief History of the Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati Railroad (*cont.*)



Figure 2

Lewis and Talbott formed a partnership (The Lewis and Talbott Stone Company), purchased the Allen Quarry, and upgraded the quarry's facilities and operations. These improvements included the addition of a rail spur connecting the quarry to the main railroad line at Centerville Station, which stood east of the quarry and just north of Franklin Street. Lewis and Talbot also organized investors to purchase the rail line itself and establish the DL&C Railroad, which was incorporated on January 29, 1889.⁶

The DL&C Railroad ran northward from Lebanon through several small settlements,⁷ passed through the eastern portion of Centerville, and continued into the Hempstead area of present-day Kettering. The railroad's original route crossed Wilmington Pike,⁸ skirted the western edge of Beavertown Cemetery, crossed present-day Dorothy Lane, and passed over the Little Beaver Creek on a trestle that still stands in the northeastern corner of Delco Park (Figure 3). From Little Beaver Creek the railroad continued northward, parallel to Woodman Drive, until it intersected an east-west rail line belonging to the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton (CH&D) Railroad. This intersection, known as Lebanon Junction, stood west of Woodman Drive, just northwest of the present-day RootBeer Stande.

The DL&C was unable to negotiate satisfactory trackage rights with the CH&D Railroad for passage from Lebanon Junction into downtown Dayton, which prompted the DL&C to begin work during 1901 on its own western line into the city. Harold Talbott routed this branch northwestward from the Hempstead area and across Shroyer Road near the Oakwood/Dayton border. From the crossing at Shroyer Road, the route followed the valley of Rubicon Creek (Figure 4), which provided a smooth and convenient pathway along the two-mile run and 200-foot drop in elevation between the Shroyer Road crossing and the National Cash Register (NCR) facility.



Figure 3

The DL&C Railroad completed its connection to NCR during 1909 after several delays stemming from difficulties securing property and rights-of-way across Dayton streets. The final line into downtown Dayton was completed in 1912 following the construction of an iron bridge across the Miami and Erie Canal west of NCR, extensive cutting and filling along a route near the Great Miami River, and elevation of the railway over Washington Street in downtown Dayton. This new line provided a direct route from the Lewis and Talbott quarry in Centerville to the southwestern area of downtown Dayton, where Harold Talbott "directed the work of laying out a modern stone yard, which quickly became one of the largest in the country, and one of Dayton's most important industries. [The stone yard] extended along Longworth Street for quite a distance, paralleling the ... railroad yards."⁹



Figure 4

The railway's connection to NCR provided a fortunate overland link from Cincinnati to Dayton during the 1913 Flood, when all other direct rail connections between Cincinnati and Dayton were washed out and impassable. Relief trains from Cincinnati brought Red Cross workers and supplies, other food and medical provisions, boats, a fire engine company, National Guard units, and other rescue and relief personnel.¹⁰

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A Brief History of the Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati Railroad (*cont.*)

A newspaper story reported of yet another type of provision delivered to Dayton along the DL&C route:

On April 1 [1913] one of the combination cars on the regular train from Cincinnati looked like a small arsenal. At least ten blue coats with Winchesters were guarding a box containing \$300,000 in cash which was consigned from a bank in Cincinnati to John H. Patterson at Dayton. The money was to be used to “pay the bills” of the flood.¹¹

This pre-World War I era marked the peak of the DL&C Railroad, when its yearly operations consisted of transporting several thousand passengers and several tens of thousands of tons of freight. Most of the freight was



Figure 5

stone from the Lewis and Talbott quarry that was delivered to Dayton, Cincinnati, and other portions of the Eastern United States. The DL&C Railroad also carried coal to various institutions and commercial yards along its route (Figure 5). Among these was the J.A. Wills Coal Company, which was operated by an Oakwood family and stood at the northwest corner of the Shroyer Road crossing. This site was later occupied by a Parkmoor drive-in restaurant (Figure 6), which was part of a chain that was popular in Dayton during the 1950s and 1960s.

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Figure 6

The DL&C Railroad, and the various railroad companies that succeeded it, have a highly complex history of ownership, financing, and financial difficulties.¹² The routes served by the DL&C and its successors were never very profitable, which was a condition worsened by the post-World War I proliferation of automobiles and a reduced demand for railroad passenger service. Further, the growth during the 1920s of the ready-mix concrete industry, combined with increased availability of high-quality Indiana Limestone from quarries in south-central Indiana, drastically diminished the market for Dayton Formation dolostone. These factors, along with a general consolidation of the railroad industry after World War II, led to a gradual, section-by-section deactivation of almost all of the route formerly served by the DL&C Railroad. Presently, the only active section is a 1.7-mile line along Woodman Drive from the former Lebanon Junction southward to the Tenneco (former Delco) facility.

Enduring benefits of the Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati Railroad include the Dayton-Kettering Connector and numerous cut-stone house foundations, retaining walls, gate and fence posts, horse hitching posts, and other distinctive components of Oakwood's rich architectural heritage that originated from rocks quarried by the Lewis and Talbott Stone Company.

Notes

¹ Rubicon Creek originates near the Shroyer Road crossing and flows alongside the Dayton-Kettering Connector before disappearing into a culvert just south of Irving Avenue. The culvert channels the creek below the ground surface to an outfall at the Great Miami River just west of the Dayton Marriott hotel. Prior to the 1920s, Rubicon Creek flowed in the open along the southern edges of the University of Dayton and National Cash Register areas and, during the 1800s, powered mills operated by the Patterson family.

² Examples of the Dayton Formation in local architecture include the Old Courthouse at Third and Main Streets in downtown Dayton and the chapel and main gateway at Woodland Cemetery, which consist of Dayton Formation stone trimmed by Lake Superior Sandstone, a red-colored sedimentary rock from Wisconsin. Dayton Formation stone was also used in much of the infrastructure of the Miami and Erie Canal, including the lock on the grounds of Carillon Park.

³ Henry Lewis was involved with several railroads in and around Ohio and was also instrumental in the development of several trolley systems in Cincinnati.

⁴ This narrow-gauge rail line was constructed during 1881 by the short-lived Toledo, Delphos and Burlington Railroad. The line was widened to standard gauge during 1892 by the Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati Railroad.

⁵ Harold Talbott later built the first concrete and stone bridge across the Miami River at Main Street in downtown Dayton, presided over the Dayton Wright Airplane Company, and served as the first mayor of Oakwood. His wife, Katherine Houk Talbott, was a well-known Oakwood philanthropist.

⁶ Six investors incorporated the DL&C Railroad. They included Gabriel B. Harman, George W. Houk, Harry E. Mead, and Harold E. Talbott of Oakwood and William P. Callahan and William P. Huffman of Dayton.

⁷ Several of the geographic locales along the DL&C Railroad (e.g., Lelan, Kitchner, Venable, Edgewood, Manor, Oak Ridge) had names that have since been abandoned.

⁸ The crossing at Wilmington Pike occurred at Roslyn Station, which was a trolley station near the present-day Wilmington-Stroop Branch of the Dayton Metro Library. The station stood along a trolley route extending from Dayton to Spring Valley through Beavertown and Bellbrook.

⁹ Burba, H., "Reviving a Once-Famous Industry," Dayton Daily News, September 30, 1928.

¹⁰ Hauck, J. W., 1986, *Narrow Gauge in Ohio: the Cincinnati, Lebanon & Northern Railway*, Pruett Publishing Company, Boulder, p. 211.

¹¹ The Western Star [Lebanon, Ohio], April 3, 1913, p. 1.

¹² See Hauck, 1986 and references therein.

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A Brief History of the Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati Railroad*(cont.)*Figure captions:

Figure 1. Rubicon Creek and the Dayton-Kettering Connector looking northwestward at the Shroyer Road crossing, 2014. *(Photograph by the author)*

Figure 2. Harold E. Talbott. *(Hover, J. C., & Barnes, J. D., 1919, Memoirs of the Miami Valley, Chicago, Robert O. Law Co.)*

Figure 3. Railroad trestle at Delco Park, 2014. *(Photograph by the author)*

Figure 4. Historic and modern views of the Rubicon Creek valley. The photographs are from similar vantage points looking southward towards the crossing at Patterson Road. The absence of vegetation along the eastern embankment in the historic photograph suggests it was taken shortly after the creek valley was widened during 1902. *(Historic photograph: Souvenir Booklet, Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati Railroad and Terminal Company, 1912; modern photograph by the author, 2014)*

Figure 5. Coal dock near the former Beavertown section of present-day Kettering. The barn to the right currently houses the Treasure Barn antique business on Dorothy Lane. *(Souvenir Booklet, Dayton, Lebanon and Cincinnati Railroad and Terminal Company, 1912)*

Figure 6. Southeastward view of the Shroyer Road railroad crossing and the adjacent Parkmoor drive-in restaurant during its grand opening in 1956. *(Photograph by Rollyn E. Puterbaugh Sr.; image courtesy of Rollyn Puterbaugh, Jr. and the Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University Libraries)*



The
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Far Hills Speaker Series - "The Great Flood of 1913"

--Mark Risley

Sunday November 8, 2015 at 2:00 PM Wright Memorial Public Library, Lower Level, 1776 Far Hills Avenue
"The Great Flood of 1913"

This program is an overview of the historic flood of 1913 that devastated the Great Miami River Valley from Piqua to Hamilton and all points in between. It looks at Dayton before the flood, then explores the flood from its causes to the event itself to rescue operations, the aftermath and, finally, to the incredible response of the citizens of the Miami Valley to ensure it would never happen again. A comprehensive PowerPoint program, it is a story told with numerous vintage photographs of the era and is approximately 90 minutes in length.

Mark W. Risley is a retired airline flight operations coordinator and an advocate of history and architectural preservation. He is the president of The Oakwood Historical Society, past co-chair of The Oakwood Preservation Trust and also served on the steering committee during 2011-2013 for events commemorating the 100th anniversary of Dayton's Great Flood of 1913, and is involved in local independent film production.

The presentation will run 1 1/2 hours and is free and open to the public. *We hope to see you there!*



Holiday Open House

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year... or so goes the Holiday song! Add The Oakwood Historical Society's annual *Holiday Open House* to your list of Must-Do events for December and, indeed, have a wonderful time!

The Long-Romsperst Homestead will be decorated in lively and appropriate historic fashion; spiced apple cider will be simmering over the fire in the summer kitchen; a spread of delicious Christmas goodies will delight your eyes and palate, and there will be live holiday music!

Join your neighbors for a fun, relaxing time during this free community event at The Homestead on December 13 from 1 until 4 p.m. No reservations necessary – simply come join us for the Most Wonderful Time of the Year at The Oakwood Historical Society!



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