



The
Oakwood
Historical Society
— *Make History With Us* —

The Historian

Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • Winter 2018

Looking Back on 2018

Dear Members,

The other day I was talking to my friend and fellow board member Linda Pearson, and we were commenting on what an amazing year 2018 had been. All of the Society's work over the last few years was paying off: our events have been bigger and better than ever, and our innovative agenda was attracting a new audience. That's when Linda said, "We are so much more than that old house on the hill!" I couldn't agree more, and I decided then to use her quote as the theme for the 2018 annual report, which is condensed in this issue of the newsletter.

At the beginning of the year, the board outlined three goals for 2018; through the year we implemented them as follows:

Strengthen Internal Operating Procedures – The challenge in a small organization is to strengthen controls without slowing down the process. While this is an ongoing job, we were able to implement dual control on our expenses and will continue to reinforce our procedures for archival work, maintenance, and security.

Focus on Preservation – With a new preservation coordinator at the helm, we were able to establish and communicate our role in preservation within the community, build a digital archive for property preservation, and introduce and organize the inaugural Holiday House Tour for Oakwood.

Increase Awareness within Our Community – Here we excelled in every aspect: in our events and speaker series; in our website, newsletters, and social media; and in community involvement. We hosted or participated in thirty-four events this year, almost three per month, with four of the events attracting a total of 1,600 people! We are "More than the old house on the hill" indeed!

I invite you to read the newsletter and share my pride in what our Society has accomplished in 2018. Even more, I invite you to be active in the Society's programming for 2019! Think about how your talents can benefit the Society and Oakwood and contact one of the committee chairs listed in this newsletter. Make a New Year's resolution to make history with us!

Respectfully yours,

Leigh Turben, President



*Oakwood Historical Society President
Leigh Turben*

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Volume 6 Issue 4 - 2018

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Support the Historical Society and Save on Your Taxes

If you are 70.5 years or older, a charitable contribution to the Oakwood Historical Society made directly from your IRA can help preserve our community's history while likely lowering your tax bill.

Talk to your CPA to learn more about how you can help support the great programs presented by the Oakwood Historical Society.



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2018: Another Year of Making History

In addition to presenting many successful events in 2018, the Society had many behind-the-scenes successes that enlightened its volunteers and enriched its programs. Here are some highlights.

The Far Hills Speaker Series

In its sixth year, the Far Hills Speaker Series continues to inform and entertain. In collaboration with Wright Library, the Society sponsored lectures on a variety of interesting topics, presented to standing-room-only crowds. The Lutheran Church of Our Savior was the site for the series, a move necessitated by the program's popularity.



The Far Hills Speaker Series moved to a larger venue due to the program's increased popularity

Archive Development

Work continues to inventory the Society's archival collection. When completed, the next step will be to digitize documents and pictures of interest to the community.

In a separate complementary effort, Tom Morrow is working to create a property preservation digital archive that will contain historical data obtained from the city and county associated with every home in Oakwood. This will preserve information gathered by the city and Society, as well as make information accessible to homeowners.



Old-time baking techniques demonstration at the 2018 National Conference of the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums

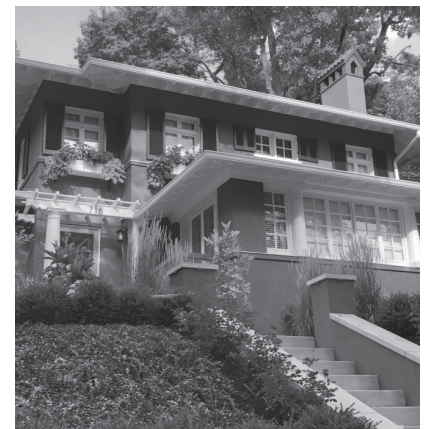
homeowners shared the history of their homes and welcomed 500 guests to enjoy their holiday decorations. By all accounts, this first-time event was extremely well received. The

Preservation Education

The Society works closely with city and homeowners to ensure that planning accommodates needed functional changes, without destroying the historic integrity and community character that makes Oakwood a desirable, livable city. Preservation is a community-engaging mindset that allows residents the opportunity to work together to treasure the past and manage positive change.

Holiday Home Tour

This sold-out event featured seven architecturally unique private homes in various



One of seven homes on the well attended Oakwood Holiday Home Tour



City Manager Norbert Klopsch held a meeting at the Homestead in July so that staff could see the amazing changes taking place at the Homestead

tour revealed how many Oakwood homeowners are really do-it-yourselfers, or at the very least, have the vision to effect a renovation that meets new needs. These homeowners share an appreciation for architectural integrity, a gift for fusing the old with the new, and a generous spirit of community.

Professional Development

Linda Pearson, Chair of the Society’s Education Committee, attended the 2018 National Conference of the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in June. The conference session most relevant to Society business focused on developing a living history program with a small

staff. Participants in Pearson’s Homemade at the Homestead classes enjoy the recipes and techniques she gains from out-of-print books acquired from her contacts with other ALHFAM professionals.

Outreach

A scout troop from London, England, that was visiting Oakwood Boy Scout Troop 101 toured the Homestead and enjoyed hand-cranked ice cream.

City Manager Norbert Klopsch held a staff meeting at the Homestead in July so Leisure Services Director Carol Collins, Finance Director Cindy Stafford, Law Director Rob Jacques, Public Safety Director Alan Hill, and Personnel and Properties Director Jennifer Wilder could see the amazing changes taking place at the Homestead.

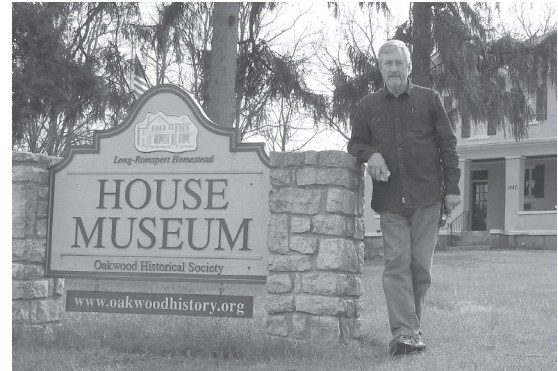
Ted Perry, the great-grandnephew of Henry Long, traveled from Memphis, Tennessee, to visit the Homestead last April. Ted and his wife, Gaynell, were researching their family history. A grateful Gaynell expressed, “Family stories revealed during our tour breathed life into gravestones in a way that mere genealogical paper trails could never have done.”

To promote Society programs, members manned a booth at seven of Oakwood Farmer’s Markets.

Yoga enthusiasts gathered on the Homestead’s lawn two Saturdays in September to enjoy their morning stretch. This program was meant to recruit members and welcome residents to the Homestead.

Education Programming

Acting on community feedback, the Society invited adults to participate in programs traditionally offered only to children. The Herb Academy children’s series became Homemade at the Homestead; the pilot programs Lotions and Potions, Pasta and Pesto, and Bread and Butter were enjoyed by all.



Ted Perry, the great-grandnephew of Henry Long, traveled from Memphis, Tennessee, to visit the Homestead last April



Bread and Butter pickle canning education program



Pasta and Pesto Homemade at the Homestead education program

OHS Committees

Please get involved . . .

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Refinishing the living and dining room floors

Never-Ending Maintenance

Maintaining the house and outlying buildings of the Long-Romsper Homestead is an ongoing effort. The Society is deeply appreciative to the volunteers who help with this work. The highlights:

- The wood floors in the living and dining rooms of the 1920 side of the house were refinished; scrubbing, sanding, and applying polyurethane took over an hour per square foot of flooring.
- Boy Scout Eagle Candidates Kyle Lethander (Troop 193) and Logan Connelly (Troop 101) oversaw the painting of the summer kitchen and building a partition in the garage. The partitioned area will house tools and equipment.
- Fourteen Oakwood High School seniors removed debris from both the carriage house and the garage and painted a room in the 1920's side of the basement.
- Work on stucco on the house's south side began last spring. Workers discovered that a load-bearing board had been removed, causing interior wall bricks to collapse. This repair may solve a water problem that has plagued the Society for 20 years.
- 150 years of dirt from the 1920's basement floor was carried out in 15 five-gallon buckets. The basement was thoroughly cleaned, and storage shelves were added.



Debris was removed from the carriage house making ready for structural repairs

- Reglazing and painting the windows continues.
- Major structural repairs to a termite-damaged support beam in the carriage house are under way. Windows and doors are also being repaired.
- Weed and critter control is ongoing.
- Two chairs from the 1920's living room have been repaired.



Society website

Online and Social Media

The Society's online and social media presence continues to grow; the Society has over 1,000 Facebook followers. The Society's website communicates information about events, ticket and book sales, and resources about Oakwood history. Email blasts remind Society members about upcoming events.

Overview of Revenue and Expenses

For the period January through October 2018, total revenue was \$43,347, and expenses equaled \$26,677. Society events generated considerably more income (\$18,416) than membership dues (\$4,585). Other major sources of revenue were corporate sponsorships and foundation funds. The Harry Ebeling Memorial Fund is being used to restore the carriage house and garage. The largest portion of Society expenses is tied directly to facility and grounds maintenance.

The Legacy of Bill Hager

Longtime Oakwood resident and early president of the Oakwood Historical Society C. William Hager passed away on November 27, 2018. In addition to Bill's work in historic preservation at the federal and state levels, he is credited with facilitating the successful nomination of the Schantz Park Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. He also played an influential role in Ethel Romspert's decision to donate the Long-Romspert Homestead at 1945/47 Far Hills Avenue to the Society.



Bill Hager

How Bill Hager persuaded Ethel Romspert to leave her estate to the Society deserves retelling: it is a story of friendship and it recounts how a person with a historian's heart facilitated a widowed friend's desire to perpetuate her family's legacy. Romspert was the wife of Harry H. Romspert. After Ethel married Harry in 1910, his mother, Laura Long Romspert, renovated the home her parents had built in 1867 so that Harry and Ethel lived on one side, and she lived on the other. Harry and Ethel did not have children. Laura died in 1943 and Harry died in 1969. Ethel continued to live at the Homestead, one of Oakwood's oldest homes, for another fourteen years.

During an interview in spring 2014, Bill recounted how he and Ethel met. He had taken a choral youth group to sing at the First United Methodist Church on Salem Avenue where Ethel served as a pianist. She asked him to come to her home to meet with contractors bidding to repair her slate roof. When he entered the house to discuss the bids, Bill noticed her piano. He asked to play it and performed for her a Chopin waltz.

Although she was forty years his senior, Ethel and Bill forged a friendship based on music. Ethel had two pianos, an upright which she played in the 1920 living room while Bill played a spinet in the adjoining dining room. On Saturday afternoons they frequently played for each other, usually classical music or hymns from her hymnals.

Over time it can be assumed that Ethel, a college-educated woman, took an interest in Bill's other hobby – preserving local history. As their friendship and common interests deepened, Bill made Ethel aware of the need the fledging Society had to find a place to showcase the memorabilia, books, and records relevant to Oakwood history that it had come to acquire. Ethel's decision to leave her Long-Romspert estate home to the Society likely reflects her interest in preserving her family's history as well as the friendship she shared with Bill and other members of the Society. She recognized the need and appreciated the impact she could make.

Lawyer Robert F. Jefferis, president of the Society in 1984, recalled that Mrs. Romspert on July 19, 1984 appeared before him to formally acknowledge the escrow deed to be conveyed to the Society in accordance with her terms. He also wrote, "Mrs. Romspert donated the above property...as the result of a friendship-trust relationship between Mrs. Romspert and Mr. Hager." This is how Bill Hager helped orchestrate a permanent home and historical museum for the small City of Oakwood.

The Society will truly miss Bill's leadership, vision, and commitment to local historic preservation.

Your IRA Can Make History!

It may be possible to use your IRA to support the Society and save on your 2018 taxes up until this April's filing date. Your tax and investment advisors can help you to determine how this type of donation affects your tax status.

Members with IRA accounts must begin drawing a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from that account at age seventy and a half, whether or not they need the funds. These required distributions increase the account holder's tax liability because they are taxed as ordinary income. However, if the required distribution is transferred directly from the IRA to a 501(c)3 organization, the account holder's tax liability is reduced and the Society, which is a 501(c)3 organization, can use the donation to further its mission.

Although formerly in banking, Leigh Turben cautions that she can't advise a person regarding IRA distribution options. As President of the Society, however, she welcomes every opportunity to explain why supporting the work of the historical society has long-lasting value. Contact her at 937-750-0494.

Thank You, Members!

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- Videographers Dorothy & Bob Wickline
- Miami Valley Communications Council

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- Dorothy Lane Market
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What Is Unique about Your Home?

We are researching offbeat qualities of houses in Oakwood for a possible future article in the Historian. Perhaps your home was moved from another location, was a farmhouse or a store, or has unique features. Send an email to healyjackson@gmail.com, and we will get back to you!



CAROL J. HOLM
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Dayton, Ohio



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