



The
Oakwood
Historical Society
— Make History With Us —

The Historian

Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • Spring 2020

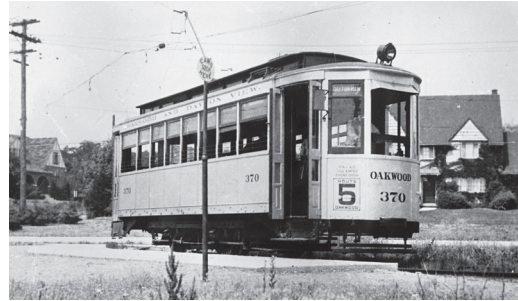
May 16, 2020 - A 125th Anniversary to Remember

by Tom Morrow

Traveling up the winding hills to Oakwood from downtown, today's drivers focus on staying within the narrow lanes and not exceeding the speed limit. Probably no driver other than myself on May 16 will drive the route as a way to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the electrification of the Oakwood Street Railway (OSRR).



I've always loved studying the history of transportation. It's fascinating to imagine myself as Isaac Kierstad, the first passenger to ride the OSRR horse car from Third and Main to Oakwood's "Five Points." Riding a passenger car on rails pulled by horses in December 1871 was first-class service to Kierstad. Gone was the slow, rough ride on cobbled or unpaved Fifth, Brown, and Warren Streets ascending the hills to Oakwood. The minimal friction from iron wheels on iron rails significantly improved Kierstad's comfort, not to mention it also reduced travel time.



While a smoother, faster ride represented a transportation advancement, horse cars still presented numerous obstacles to reliable, timely transportation. Horses could work only part of the day, they had to eat frequently, they deposited feces and gallons of urine on streets, and pulling cars up steep hills subjected them to exhaustion, injury, and sickness.

Initiating electric-driven service in May 1895 to "Five Points," the OSRR eliminated the animal-related obstacles to offer reliable public transportation services to the south of Dayton. How the OSRR grew into the Far Hills roadway as we know it now will be the subject of my Far Hills Speaker Series lecture on April 19, 2020. I'll share stories about mergers, rail extensions, legal deals, real estate development, and all the things I think about when I drive along Far Hills Avenue.

Inside

A 125th Anniversary to Remember 1

The Legacy of the Adam Shantz Family 2

Annual Wright at Home Tour..... 5

Upcoming Events.... 6

Society Looks to Share Stadium Story 7



Volume 8 Issue 1 - 2020

Website: www.oakwoodhistory.org

E-mail: info@oakwoodhistory.org

1947 Far Hills Avenue
Dayton, OH 45419
(937) 299-3793

106 Years at Hawthorn Hill!

WRIGHT at HOME
Presented By:

DAYTON HISTORY & THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Sunday, April 26, 2020
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Experience Hawthorn Hill!
Travel back in time through a mansion open house and enjoy a walking tour of the surrounding neighborhood.

TICKETS: \$25 per adult - day of
\$20 per adult in advance and OHS and Dayton History Members
\$5 per child - ages 4-12 (FREE - ages 3 and under)

PARKING: Oakwood Municipal Lot and along Park Avenue

For more information • 937-293-2841 • daytonhistory.org

WRIGHT at HOME

Sunday, April 26 – 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

\$25 per Adult – Day of Event

\$20 per Adult in Advance or OHS and Dayton History Members

\$5 per Child – Ages 4-12 (Free – Ages 3 & Under)

Free Parking – Municipal Lot and along Park Ave.

Full information available at www.oakwoodhistory.org or 937-293-2841

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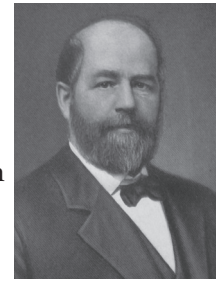
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The Legacy of the Adam Schantz Family

by David Schmidt

The Schantz Park Historic District is well known to residents living in Oakwood and the surrounding area. The district, which was added in 1992 to the U.S. National Parks Service's National Register of Historic Places, contains many of Oakwood's finest homes and includes excellent examples of classic architecture from the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. This housing plat was the vision of Adam Schantz, Sr., who was a successful brewer and businessman and one of early Oakwood's most influential citizens. The Schantz Park Historic District is just one example of the continued influence in the Dayton area that resulted from the vision, philanthropy, and business acumen displayed by Adam Schantz, Sr. and his heirs.



Adam Schantz

Johann Adam Schantz, Sr. was born September 7, 1839 in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany. "Adam," as he preferred to be called, was the youngest of five brothers and, during his youth, Adam Schantz worked in a mill belonging to his family. Schantz and his brothers emigrated from Germany to the United States in May, 1854. Upon landing in New York at the age of fifteen years, Schantz entered the employ of his uncle, who operated a flour mill in Altoona, Pennsylvania. After one year, Schantz moved to Dayton, Ohio and took up employment for two years as a butcher. Afterwards, he spent several years moving throughout the Midwest and traveling through Europe. Adam Schantz returned to Dayton in the summer of 1862 and opened a small meat shop near the intersection of Brown and East Fifth Streets in the Oregon District. Soon thereafter, Schantz acquired property in the Englewood area known as the "Six Mile House," which was said to be situated exactly six miles from downtown Dayton and was a landmark for many years at the intersection of Ohio State Rt. 48 and Westbrook Road.

Adam Schantz married Mary Salome Latin in Dayton on March 29, 1863. Through the remainder of the 1860s, Schantz continued in the meat business. In 1871, he exchanged his Englewood property for property in Dayton View, which Schantz developed into a beef and pork packing plant. Over the course of the next few years, Schantz expanded his interests beyond the meat business by developing a small brewery at the site of the packing plant. In 1881, Adam and his brother George formed a partnership in the brewing business. In 1887, Adam purchased the interest of his brother, enlarged the brewery, and renamed the business



Advertisement for Adam Schantz Beer Riverside Brewery.

Adam Schantz also entered politics and successfully ran for election as a councilman for the city of Dayton. He was later appointed chairman of the finance committee for the city government. Schantz was also selected as a member of the board of the southern Ohio Stock Yards Company.

Prosperous in business, and seeing potential in the growth of the area south of Dayton, in 1880 Schantz purchased a 108-acre parcel of land south of St. Mary's Institute (present-day University of Dayton) and along the route of the Oakwood Street Railway. After purchasing the property, Schantz purportedly called his family together and said: "I have acquired one hundred and eight acres of land in Oakwood. It is my firm conviction and belief that Oakwood will some day become the most desirable residence district in Dayton. While I do not expect to live to see it, I charge you with the responsibility of developing this tract into the

most beautiful addition of homes about the city of Dayton. Further, I expect that this work be completed in fifty years from now.”

Schantz built a substantial brick home on his estate in 1884. He also became a successful breeder of trotting horses. In 1890, Schantz built on his property an “equine training park,” complete with a large stable and a half-mile race track. Schantz’ enthusiasm for horses was not without its perils. On September 1, 1891, Schantz suffered a broken leg when he was thrown from a horse he was riding on the track at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds.

While continuing in the brewing industry, Schantz developed a process for purifying municipal water. The process consisted of spattering the water over heated rocks, which prompted the precipitation from the water of lime and other dissolved minerals. This process also aerated the water, which improved the taste by removing dissolved gases and other impurities. Schantz was awarded a patent for the process on December 5, 1891. He used the water, which he named “Lily Water” after the calla lily on the Schantz family’s crest, for brewing. Schantz also bottled and distributed Lily Water as drinking water.

In 1901, Schantz passed through Daytona, Florida after a visit to Cuba. Schantz became so impressed with the Daytona area that he began spending considerable time in Daytona and pursuing business interests there. These activities included the purchase of large portions of real estate that he began developing. Schantz also built a municipal power and light plant and a facility for the production of ice and water that was purified by the Lily Water process. That same year, Adam Sr. turned over his business affairs to his son Adam Jr.

In 1902, Adam Sr.’s health began to fail. The following year, while he was in St. Augustine, Florida, some of his workmen went on strike. Schantz went out to encourage the men to go back to work. However, while he was talking with them, Schantz became ill and died soon afterwards at the age of 63.

Adam Schantz, Sr. was interred at Woodland Cemetery. His monument, which consists of a bronze statue of Schantz seated in a chair, is one of the cemetery’s most conspicuous features and stands near the cemetery’s main entrance.



Adam Schantz, Jr.

Adam Schantz, Jr. was born December 16, 1867 on River Street near downtown Dayton. He was schooled in Dayton and later became active in the Schantz family’s various business interests. At the age of 21, he was given power of attorney by his father to conduct his father’s business affairs as he saw fit. Upon his father’s passing, Adam Schantz, Jr. was named as executor and trustee of “The Estate of Adam Schantz.” This marked the beginning of a tremendous amount of business activity and landholding development by Adam Jr., with much of his efforts focused on Ludlow Street in downtown Dayton. Formerly, Ludlow Street had been regarded as simply “a good dirt street to the railroad station” that stood in the southwestern section of downtown Dayton. In response to questions about why he was so focused on that area, Schantz often replied: “You can’t lose on Ludlow.” Along with real estate and development, Adam Jr. pursued many other lines of business, including finance, utilities, insurance, and manufacturing.

Schantz also continued managing the family’s brewing business. On March 1, 1904, Schantz organized the merger of six Dayton breweries into a group called the Dayton Breweries Company, of which he became president. In addition to brewing and distributing beer, the company also produced Lily Water and ice, both of which were distributed throughout the Dayton area.

The merger of the Dayton Breweries stemmed in large part from a need to balance the interests of the brewing business with the growing temperance movement and mounting calls for the prohibition of alcohol. Schantz responded to these concerns by refusing to supply the products of the Dayton Breweries to outlets in areas where saloons were not wanted or to saloons that had difficulty controlling the behavior of their customers. Schantz stated: “The chief motive of the consolidation of Dayton Breweries is to elevate and regulate the saloon business in the city so that it shall be better for the public, the saloonist, and the brewer.” In 1907, Schantz was elected president of the Ohio Brewers’ Association. He held the position for thirteen years, leading the organization through many difficult struggles that preceded the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment and nationwide prohibition.

Adam Schantz, Jr. also carried forth his father’s plans with the platting in 1907 of the “Adam Schantz’s Estate

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Please get involved . . .

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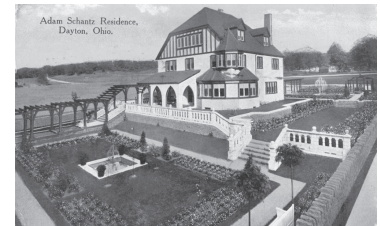
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Schantz Park Lookout Tower

of lots also varied from street to street, which provided opportunities for houses of several economic levels. The Olmsted Brothers' landscape architectural firm, which was concurrently landscaping the grounds of NCR and Hills and Dales Park, designed the landscape of Schantz Park. Adam Schantz, Jr. built his family home at the western entrance to the plat. His children included a son, Adam III and a daughter, Gertrude.

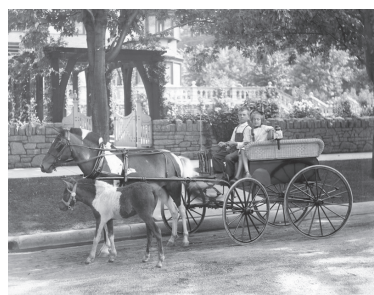
After the Great Dayton Flood of 1913, Adam Schantz, Jr. became a leader in the Dayton Citizen's Relief Committee, which was organized to survey the situation in Dayton in the wake of the flood and provide relief measures. After much discussion among the committee, Schantz proposed that a minimum of \$2 million needed to be raised to provide effective flood prevention. To show his faith that such a large amount of money could actually be raised, Schantz opened the fund by pledging \$120,000; half of which was given by his father's estate (with consent of the heirs) and half from Schantz' personal funds. After a major fund drive, over \$2 million was indeed raised, which led to the development of the Miami Conservancy District and its successful design and implementation of the innovative flood-control measures that have protected the Miami Valley area for nearly a century.



Home of Adam Schantz, Jr.

In 1917, upon the United States' entry into the "Great War," Schantz was instrumental in making arrangements for a suitable site for a large airplane field and supply station to support the country's war efforts. In just three days, Schantz optioned and purchased multiple farm properties east of Dayton that adjoined the towns of Osborn and Fairfield. Afterwards, Schantz turned the land over to the U.S. government, which then developed Wright Field, a predecessor of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

In 1919, after passage of the National Prohibition Act, the Dayton Breweries Company began selling its properties and liquidating its assets. The company formally went out of business in 1920. Like his father Adam Sr., the younger Schantz maintained a winter home in Daytona, Florida. Schantz, accompanied by his wife, left for Daytona in January, 1921, seeking respite from the stress of business and the disappointing end of the Schantz family's longstanding brewing enterprises. While on a stop in St. Augustine, Florida Adam Schantz, Jr. passed away at the relatively young age of 53. His father had also passed on in the same city eighteen years prior.



Adam III and Gertrude Schantz in front of their home ca. 1913

Robert Schantz Oelman, grandson of Adam Sr. and nephew of Adam Jr., was born on June 9, 1909 to Edith Schantz Oelman. The Oelman family lived in one



NCR Boys' Gardens

of the many large brick homes that were built for members of the Schantz family along both sides of E. Schantz Ave. between Oakwood and Glendora Avenues. As a boy, Robert Oelman worked in the NCR Boys' Gardens adjoining the NCR factory complex. The gardens were the brainchild of John H. Patterson, who developed the gardening project to keep local boys out of mischief. Oelman reminisced about catching occasional glimpses of Patterson inspecting the garden plots, which stood southeast of NCR Building 10, the large office building along South Main Street.

After graduating college, Oelman joined NCR in 1933. Stanley Allyn, CEO of NCR, recalled of Oelman: "His work began to impress Colonel Deeds and me in 1942." Oelman later became Allyn's assistant and regularly traveled to Washington, DC, representing NCR during the World War 2 years. Oelman rose to the rank of NCR Executive Vice President in 1950 and became President of NCR in 1957, guiding the company's highly successful research in microelectronics and its transition from mechanical cash registers to electronic machines. Robert Schantz Oelman was also a founder of Wright State University and instrumental in its development from a small branch campus into a large metropolitan university.

Please visit The Oakwood Historical Society's website at www.oakwoodhistory.org for a copy of the Self-Guided Walking Tour of the Schantz Park Historic District. The booklet includes extensive information about the history of Schantz Park and the unusually rich architectural styles and details of homes in the district.

April 26 - Annual Wright at Home Tour

Once a year, on a Sunday afternoon, the Oakwood Historical Society and Dayton History offer a combined tour of the Wright brothers' Hawthorn Hill estate and the neighborhood that surrounds it. Neighborhood Tour Guide Harrison Gowdy likes to quote Aesop, the Greek fabulist, and storyteller, to explain why the neighborhood tour grows in popularity: "A man is known by the company he keeps." While Wrights' neighbors weren't building airplanes, they were engineers, lawyers, librarians, and manufacturers of products as varied as tools and snack crackers. Their histories offer insight into the everyday lives of Wright family members and their associates.



The neighborhood tour is researched by Society volunteers and engages the imagination of residents who walk it routinely but may not necessarily appreciate all of its historical context. And while much information is available online about Hawthorn Hill, information about the neighborhood is not, which is why the Society enjoys sponsoring this event.

The tour guide will take you back to 1910 to locate Oakwood's first school and library, its first church and water tower, and the original shops constituting Oakwood's developing commercial district. Guests view the house the Cheez-It snack-cracker maker designed and built and stand on the spot where Oakwood's first truant officer and one-person public works and sanitation department used to dump city trash. Guides also point out the elegant Spanish Revival house built by Oakwood's first city engineer and the homes owned by the presidents of DELCO, Frigidaire, and the Seybold Machine companies. Featured also are homes designed by Dayton's most prominent architectural firms: Schneck & Williams, and Herman & Brown.

It is remarkable how many extraordinary people lived within such a small geographical location during a most illustrious period. The tour, offered just once annually, best explains why Oakwood residents feel privileged to live in this community. "Whenever I walk by these homes," reflects Gowdy, "I am really in awe of the contributions early Oakwood residents made to this community." Gowdy highly recommends the tour to anyone who wants a better understanding of why city leaders and long-time residents often describe Oakwood as a "special place."

The tour is Sunday, April 26, noon to 5:00p.m. \$25 per adult on the day of tour. \$20 per adult in advance or OHS and Dayton History Members. \$5 per child ages 4-12 and free for children three and under. Free Parking available at the Oakwood Municipal Lot and along Park Ave.

Full information available at www.oakwoodhistory.org or 937-293-2841

Far Hills Speaker Series – Spring 2020

Grand Eccentrics: When Dayton was America’s “Silicon Valley”

Sunday, May 31 at 2:00 p.m., Wright Memorial Public Library



Presenter Mark Bernstein recounts the achievements of Orville and Wilbur Wright, Charles Kettering, James Cox, John H. Patterson, and others as he shares the impact Ohio individuals had on America’s 19th to 20th centuries.

Mark Berstein is an author with particular interests in American biography and social and technological history. Mark lived in Dayton for nearly 30 years; he takes pride in sharing stories about Ohio’s government and technology leaders. In addition to numerous books he has written, his magazine articles have appeared in Smithsonian, Smithsonian Air & Space, and American Heritage of Invention and Technology.

The Oakwood Street Railway: The Impact of Its Electrification

Sunday, April 19 at 2:00 p.m., Wright Memorial Public Library



When the Oakwood Street Railway converted from horse to electric power on May 16, 1895, its impact on Oakwood’s development was immediate. Presenter Tom Morrow traces the history of transportation in Oakwood.

Tom Morrow is a member of the Dayton Railway Historical Society and the Cincinnati Transit Historical Association, and a Board Member of the Oakwood Historical Society. Tom has lived in Oakwood for 34 years and is retired from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. His favorite hobby is managing two photo websites: www.trolleybuses.net and www.daytontrolleys.net.

Tours, Tasting, and Learning

Wright at Home

Sunday, April 26, from noon to 5:00 p.m.

Hawthorn Hill, 901 Harman Ave., Oakwood, OH 45419

The Wright Family home, Hawthorn Hill, will be open for tours, and Society volunteers will conduct walking tours of Orville Wright’s Oakwood neighborhood. See the article on page 5.



That Day in May Wine Tasting

Saturday, May 16, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Long-Romspert Homestead and House Museum - Tickets go on sale April 18 - \$25 each or \$40 per couple and may be purchased at oakwoodhistory.org.

Enjoy the great tastes of premium Australian and New Zealand wines served with light hors d’oeuvres. It’s the perfect end to a delightful day of community celebration.



Children’s Garden Program

*April through September 2020 Long-Romspert Homestead and House Museum
Cost and schedule TBD*

Linda Pearson, chair of the Society’s Education Committee is planning a Children’s Garden Program for children in grades 1 to 3 that begins in April and runs through September. Participants will plant a garden, tend and harvest it, and then enjoy eating the fruits of their labor. Two classes per month on Sunday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. will be scheduled. There will be other optional bonus sessions as needed to pick vegetables and herbs that are at their peak. Children who miss classes due to summer family activities will have opportunities to catch up during the bonus sessions. See oakwoodhistory.org for more details.



Society Looks to Share Stadium Story

Society Board members love to answer the oft-asked question: What exactly does an historical society do? Immediate past President of the Society Leigh Turben is known to seize the moment, particularly when the person posing the question is relaxed and sipping wine at a holiday party. Yet when Oakwood High School Alumna '59 Barbara O'Hara, posed this question, her intent was more specific. O'Hara asked, "What has the Society done to capture the history of Mack Hummon Stadium?" It was a targeted question that even Turben, knowledgeable about past Society initiatives, couldn't answer. O'Hara said she has sat in the stadium observing all the young people and wondered how many of them know anything about what prompted the stadium's building and why it is known as the Mack Hummon Stadium. "The place holds so many good memories that are worth capturing." Responding to her request, Turben now asks: "Is there a volunteer who would like to investigate the history of the stadium? Does someone recall a memorable time spent in the stadium you want to share? Were you a student of Mr. Hummon or a friend of the family?"



Yes, Turben is looking to identify a person who has the curiosity to capture the stadium's history and is looking for a meaningful way to give back to the community. The ideal candidate is a person who enjoys investigative reading and talking with people who have memories to share. Note, O'Hara is already pursuing a different historical anniversary project that touches on Hummon, which is why Turben didn't recruit her. If you have answers to any of the above questions, please contact Society Newsletter Coordinator Healy Jackson at healyjackson@gmail.com or 937-294-1941.

Society Seeks Sponsors for *The Historian*

The Society researches, preserves, and publishes stories about Oakwood's history in its newsletter, *The Historian*. The publication fosters a shared sense of history and community, and it aptly does so. The Society seeks to preserve history and to capture local history as it unfolds. It's a significant effort, and is accomplished primarily through the work of volunteers.

The cost of a corporate sponsorship of the newsletter is \$200 per year. If you represent a business, please consider becoming a corporate sponsor. Dear readers, you are the Society's only sales force. Most businesses welcome the opportunity to support a worthy cause. Please reach out to business owners you know and tell them what *The Historian* means to you.

The Society thanks our long-time newsletter sponsors listed on page 7. Sponsors help us preserve the past, create the present, and secure the future of the Oakwood community. For more information about corporate or individual sponsorship, contact Carol Holm at (937) 671-6673 or lawholm@gmail.com.



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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The Oakwood Historical Society Membership Form

Membership Categories *(Please check one)*

- Individual \$25.00
- Family \$35.00
- Business \$50.00
- Bronze \$75.00
- Silver \$100.00
- Gold \$200.00

Receive a \$5 Discount *(Check if applicable)*

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The information that you submit will be used only by the Oakwood Historical Society and will not be given or sold to outside parties.