



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

## A conversation with our oldest member, Bob Brundrett

--Harry Ebeling

*Bob's story is more than an interesting reflection on memories of the Homestead; it's the story of the influential families who developed the southern part of our city. Readers not familiar with the families may want to begin by reading "Ties that bind" (page 4) to know more about the people who first defined our boundaries.*

If you've attended our open houses over the years, you may have encountered Bob Brundrett. His grandfather was Peter Long, son of Henry Long, and brother of Laura Long Romspert. Henry built the Homestead we so proudly show off on every possible occasion. His other grandfather was George Washington Bartch whose daughter, Elizabeth Brundrett, was Bob's mother. Her father built the house, which was torn down several years ago, at the northwest corner of Dixon and Far Hills Avenues. The original lot went all the way back to Harman Avenue and had the "Green Barn" that was given to the city to build Harman School.

In our conversation in 1997 with Everett Yowell, Bob tells us he graduated from Oakwood High School in 1933, in the same class with Charlotte Shroyer, who also used to come to see us on many occasions, recalling that she was born in the rental house at 1945 Far Hills Ave. Bob recalls going to Harman School starting in the 4th grade when his parents purchased the house across from Harman School in the second block of West Dixon Ave. (His dad bought the home in 1923 and did major remodeling adding a library, garage, bathroom, and two bedrooms.)

When the discussion turned to the Homestead, Bob said "You see, I knew the whole bunch. I knew Mrs. Romspert, and Harry, and Maude, and I knew Maude's children." And, of course, Bob's aunts, Amelia and Lucretia Bartch were living at the house when Bob visited.

"I used to go down there when I was a little boy, about 7-8, and live for a couple of weeks in the summer time. I just loved that. Aunt Amelia had chickens up there on the hill ... where the pump house is. The land went up a sizeable hill from there, and Mrs. Romspert had chickens there. All that land over there where Henry's house is was just fields."

Bob's memories help us to understand the nature of the property then: the slope upwards of the property in the back (towards Coolidge Drive) and the big barn in the back of the principal house next to the Carriage House where 5-6 horses that worked the gravel pit were stabled.

**"I knew  
the whole  
bunch."**

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## Message from the President

### *Fall is upon us!*

The summer has been busy with the children's programs and the car show, "Classics on the Lawn." As school started, we joined with Wright Library staff to host StoryWalk® at Houk Stream Park and then had our Photo Shoot Fundraiser in late September. Our summer intern, Olivia Harrison, returned to Miami University, but not before completing her wonderful work of cataloging items that were donated from the Costas collection at the Wiltshire House and writing about her discoveries on our website.

Looking ahead to the remainder of the year, we have our annual Founder's Day gathering and our Holiday Open House. More information on these two events is in the "Save the Dates" column, but I must add how extra special these events are going to be for you and our wider community. We're changing things up a little planning events geared toward the busy and casual lifestyles of today without losing our traditions and history. Our year will end with a program for the children who will learn about different New Year's traditions.

The special focus of this issue is on the development of the south end of Oakwood. The Long-Romspert Homestead history is probably the most often asked question by visitors. Bob Brundrett was there and knew many being part of the family. His memories of the house and family are recalled here. Also, as reported by Harry, we have been fortunate to receive some special donations and acquisitions to add to the interpretive interest of the Homestead. These stories are inside this issue too.

The home and grounds continue to need and receive regular maintenance. A 150-year-old house with multiple outbuildings is always a challenge. We are fortunate that Larry Bilderback has been able to do some skilled carpentry repairs for us. At the moment we have three Boy Scouts who are planning to complete their Eagle projects for the historical society. And, at last, the wood burning stove, which was donated by Ron Versic and who is overseeing its installation in conjunction with Gary Brown, is very close to being usable in the summer kitchen. For all of these helpers we are very grateful.

Last, as promised earlier this year, we have now advertised for board members. If you are interested in contributing your time and talents, please let us know. Our board is a working board and is made up of volunteers like you who want to support the role we play in our community life, documenting the past and providing support as the community moves forward.



**More on our website!**  
[www.oakwoodhistory.org](http://www.oakwoodhistory.org)

Read "A weighty acquisition" and "Classic Car Show—a rousing success" by Mark Risley, see more photos, and check out more surprise findings by new "blogger," Sarah Pearson.

# Q & A

The timing of these two questions was perfect for this issue. Remember if you have questions, leave us a message at 299-3793, drop us a note by slow mail, or e-mail us at [info@oakwoodhistory.org](mailto:info@oakwoodhistory.org).

**Q. Does the historical society have any photos of Peach Orchard looking east?**

**A.** These two photos are interesting. The first one taken in 1912 is of an old tavern on the east side of Far Hills near Peach Orchard Avenue.



----- FAR HILLS EAST -----  
**OAKWOOD'S**  
 Popular Priced  
**Residence Plat**  
 Large Building Lots **\$1,100** and Up  
 A VALUE UNEQUALED IN MIAMI VALLEY

Residence of Henry Bross, at Entrance of Far Hills East Plat, Corner of Fauver Avenue and Triangle Avenue

Two years ago this was farm land—today a beehive of activity. Homes are being constructed in all directions. Drive out today and inspect the types of homes and quality of improvements.

The second photo is of an ad for the Far Hills East Plat; it is dated 1920. Note the line of copy that describes the entrance to the plat at Fauver and Triangle Avenue. Fauver was renamed Hathaway to avoid confusion with the street of the same name in Dayton.

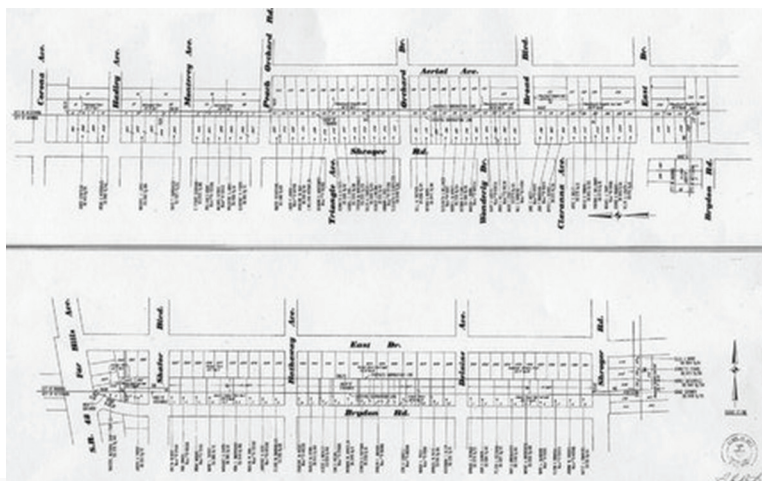
*--Mackensie Wittmer*

**Q. Why isn't Shroyer Road the east boundary of Oakwood?**

**A.** The road was set on the section line. Placing the boundary line one lot further to the east provided people access to the lots along Shroyer Road; however, the lots weren't made deep enough so an annexation fixed the problem.

The illustration (too small to read) is the recorded plat of the annexation Oakwood engaged in with Kettering in August 1978 to trade property to straighten out the city property lines. It shows the backyard swaps not only on Shroyer Road, but on East Drive as well.

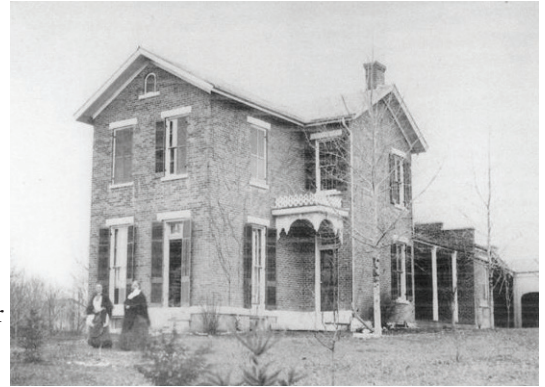
*--Harry Ebeling*



## Ties that Bind

### *The Long and Shroyer families*

- Peter Long came from Maryland and purchased a quarter section (90 acres) of land in the area of Southern Blvd. (The house is still standing on Laurelwood Road on the west side of the boulevard.) Henry Long, one of Peter's 13 children, was one of the earliest settlers in Oakwood.
- John Shroyer was another early settler in Oakwood and was also from Maryland; he purchased land in Oakwood, including a section (360 acres) that went east from Far Hills Avenue to Shroyer Road and from Lonsdale Avenue to Peach Orchard Avenue.
- Henry Long married Harriet Shroyer, daughter of John Shroyer; Henry and Harriet had five children, Laura was the youngest.
- Henry purchased a quarter section of land in Oakwood in 1856 and built the original home while temporarily living in a cabin on Park Road. The Henry Long Farm also had a peach orchard and a sand-and-gravel operation.
- When John Shroyer died, the family split his holdings and Harriet got the farm and also bought her brother's interest. When the two farms merged, the Henry Long Farm was approximately 282 acres.
- Laura Long married Alexander Hamilton Romspert; they had two children, Maude and Henry.
- When Alexander died, Laura and her children moved back to the family home.
- When Henry and Harriet died in 1896, the farm was divided and Laura took 90 acres bounded by Park Road (north), Peach Orchard (south), Far Hills Ave. (east) and approximately Deep Hollow (west.)
- Laura rented the orchard at Peach Orchard Road and Ridgeway Road, ran the sand-and-gravel operation, had rental properties in other areas of Dayton, added to the original part of the home, built the house at 1945 Far Hills Avenue, and over the years sold off parcels of the farm.
- Maude married Guy T. Shroyer, a descendent of the Shroyer family; Harry married Ethel Gilbert. Laura Romspert died in 1943.



### *and the Bartch family*

- (John) Michael and Elizabeth Bartch were from Pennsylvania and had four children, Amelia, Lucretia, Emily, and George. George moved to Dayton and, after Elizabeth died, Michael moved to Dayton in 1888.
- Michael and George went into business together: J.M. Bartch & Son, Contractors and Builders and dealer in Duke's Patented Sliding Window Screens and Doors.
- Michael and his family lived near the corner of Far Hills Avenue and Peach Orchard Road.
- Most likely meeting as neighbors and with Laura needing help with her farm and businesses, in 1897, Laura arranged for the Bartch family to move into the Homestead.
- Michael kept his carpentry business while helping Laura.
- Michael died in 1918 and, by this time, Emily Bartch had married; Amelia and Lucretia stayed on in the house to care for Laura.



## A Conversation...*Cont.*

He also clarified the layout of the shared living space and told of how Mrs. Romsper would open the door between the two halves of the house and call, "Meil, Meil" (Amelia) to come and help her. That's the kind of help the two sisters rendered for their pay. Amelia was the principal caregiver; she was the older of the two. They both had gardens north of the present garage where they grew flowers and vegetables. At one time Amelia raised rabbits in the Carriage House. There are stories of seeing Ameila cutting the grass with a push lawn mower. Lucretia had a job at NCR and later as a dental assistant.

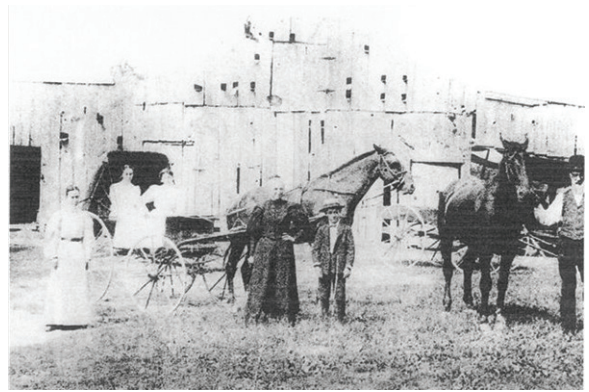
While he spent much time with his aunts, Bob also remembers Saturdays with Mrs. Romsper when she went to collect rent from her tenants.

"I remember sometimes on a Saturday, Aunt Amelia, Mrs. Romsper and myself would go out on the west side. We'd take the Oakwood Street Car and get a transfer. . .and get off at Broadway or some place out there and start walking. She [Mrs. Romsper] would stop and go in some place and get a few dollars. She made a lot of money from people paying weekly. Then we'd come back and stop at the Arcade and get a nice big salt doughnut."



Bob also revealed that Mrs. Romsper had other boarders, including a single lady who worked for NCR and that he lived there too in 1936 in the "back (room) on the right" when he went to work at NCR. Bob later became a science teacher in Troy where he still lives today.

*Update since the interview.* I recently had the pleasure of renewing our acquaintance. Bob is alert, well into his nineties, and last year was able to take the Honor Flight trip to Washington D.C. accompanied by family members.



*Left to right: Amelia Barch, Lucretia Barch & Maude (in buggy), Laura & Harry Romsper, Michael Barch (with horse).*



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Please get involved...

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## At last: Portraits of Henry & Harriet (Shroyer) Long!

We have told the story of Henry Long's travel to Ohio in the 1820s, how he acquired land in Oakwood, his marriage to Harriet Shroyer, and how they built the Homestead in 1867.

Henry and Harriet raised four children at the Homestead before their deaths in 1898. The tale of how the children divided up the farm and the residue of the Shroyer farm is told elsewhere, but we have never had a portrait of the couple to fill out our gallery. When Edgar Herrman died last year, his daughter came forward with wonderful portraits to fill in our story. They are now hanging in the parlor as you enter the home. The portraits of Laura Romspert and her husband, Harry, are in the dining room of the original house along with one of John Michael Bartch. Our gallery is complete!

## New piano in memory of Ethel Romspert

We often tell how we were given the Homestead. Although we had formed the society and solicited members and had started getting memorabilia, books and records, we had no "home" until 1985 when Bill Hager planted the seed with Ethel Romspert to leave her estate to the historical society.

Ethel was an educated lady; her interests were in gardening and especially playing the piano and organ for churches in Dayton. Bill, who is quite a good musician, made her acquaintance and slowly befriended her sharing many Sunday afternoons at the Homestead playing the piano. She had an upright and he bought another one and they played duets quite happily.



When we inherited the house--with no contents--and started soliciting the community for gifts of furniture and appropriate period and decorative items, Bill made a gift of the baby grand piano in memory of the good times and the lady who made the Homestead possible. We have enjoyed the piano for 25 years and have it tuned once a year in preparation for our Holiday Open House and other events.

In an effort to be accurate to the period and in memory of Ethel, we asked around if an upright was available locally, and, a few months later, our piano tuner, Steve Leadingham, found one that would be donated by Centerville High School. We acted promptly and now have a Packard piano (shown in the photo) that dates back to the 1900-1930 era. It's in good shape and retains its tuning; it was built in Fort Wayne, IN. The company (no connection to the Packard automobile) is no longer in existence having been bought by Story & Clark who retained the Packard name until the middle of the 20th century.

## Doll House Display

The society has received a generous gift from long-time member and supporter, Carol Holm, of a family artifact. This beautiful handcrafted, 2-story colonial style doll house was made for her by her grandfather, John C. Johnson, an Iowa farmer and cabinet maker during the 1940s. It shows loving care in every detail throughout—in the kitchen, living room, dining room, bedrooms, staircase, and attic. Although it took him several years of his spare time, he didn't skimp on quality or originality.

The furnishings, which are from the 1940s, were donated by various family members and generally purchased at Marshall Field department store in Chicago. The needlepoint rug was made by Carol's mother, Arlene Carlton, and is just one of the carefully selected pieces. Carpeting in the hall and one bedroom was cut from old serge trousers. Many items deserve a special look, including the secretary/ bookcase and Magnavox radio/record player in the living room, ice tongs and egg crate in the kitchen, washing machine in the laundry room, bathinette in the nursery, and silverware in the dining room. Look for the false teeth, phone, bed warmer, toilet jar, and sewing machine in the master bedroom. Thanks to Carol for thinking of us!



The doll house is currently on display in the "music room" on the 1867 side of the Homestead. It will remain there through the Open House in December when it will be moved upstairs to the children's toy room. Be sure to visit us in December and take a look. It's a don't miss!

## Children's Programs

--Linda Pearson & Lisa Kell, Children's Program Coordinators

The Garden Program continues to meet regularly, and our attendance numbers are back up now that summer vacation is over and school has started. During the month of August the vegetables were maturing quickly, so we had multiple picking sessions. We sold kale, chard, and broccoli seedlings at the Oakwood Farmers Market. We had planted the seeds in early July, and they were finally big enough to take to market in August. These are fall crops so they should produce at least until the first hard frost and possibly beyond depending on where they are planted. It was fun to see Oakwood residents buying our seedlings and fun for the kids to get to help at our booth.

We took a tour of the produce section of DLM, led by the produce manager Michelle, to see how produce makes its way to market. Each child got to take home a small bag of fresh produce and herbs. At the beginning of September we picked enough tomatoes, peppers and onions to make a large batch of salsa. Luckily our gardeners like to chop. At one point we had seven chopping at once! We served it as a snack; then everyone took some home for their families. The salsa got rave reviews!



The program continues through October so the children can learn how the garden changes as we get into the fall months. We planted new crops in August that will be maturing during the fall. The fall activities will include drying herbs and making some special food using garden produce again.

The Winter Holiday Children's program is in the planning stages. Due to the holidays falling mid week, our scheduling is a bit more difficult. We will focus on New Year's traditions and will hold sessions on December 26, 27, and 28. We are discussing with Wright Library staff the possibility of afternoon children's movies that would be shown after our programs for those who are looking for a longer day of activities.

## Save the Dates

**November 14, 2013: Founder's Day & Annual Meeting** – Dayton Country Club – \$12 – 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**“A History of Five Rivers MetroParks: 50 Years of Conservation, Education, and Recreation”**

Dave Nolin, Director of Conservation, Five Rivers MetroParks.

Join us for our annual event and hear the story of Five Rivers MetroParks as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. A more casual event this year, we'll enjoy a delicious dessert bar and beverages with an optional cash bar. Bring a friend, invite a new neighbor and introduce them to *your* historical society.

Reservations can be made by calling 937.643.4075 or by sending an e-mail to [www.oakwoodhistory.org](http://www.oakwoodhistory.org). Checks can be mailed in advance to the homestead.

**December 8, 2013: Holidays at The Homestead** – 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

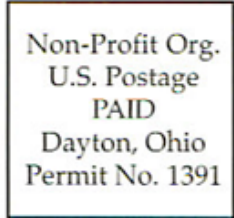
Enjoy the beginning of the holiday season with your family with a visit to the Homestead. See how the “two” homes were decorated for the season, look at the recent acquisitions. There'll be games, music, treats--a “make merry” afternoon for all.

There'll also be a featured display of our collection of toys through the first half of the 20th century. If you have a toy you would like to loan or donate to the historical society for this display, please call us at 299-3793 and leave a message.

*This issue of the newsletter sponsored in part by*

**THE OAKWOOD  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

1947 Far Hills Avenue  
Dayton, OH 45419



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First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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