



The
Oakwood
Historical Society

— Make History With Us —

Historian

Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • Winter 2016



The Geology of West Oakwood

—David Schmidt

The story of the geology of west Oakwood begins with the region's bedrock. An excellent place to view the local bedrock is in the bed of Houk Stream approximately midway between Ridgeway Road and Runnymede Road. In this area the bedrock occurs in pavement-like surfaces with occasional ledges forming short waterfalls. Geologists refer to this arrangement as in situ bedrock, meaning the rock is situated in its original site of deposition. (In other words, the rock hasn't been moved from another location by transporting agents such as water, wind, ice, or gravity.) This rock was deposited during the Ordovician Period (443.8–485.4 million years ago (Mya)) when shallow, tropical seas covered the region. Close inspection of the rock reveals the presence of small, branching, stick-like fossils called bryozoans. These were colonial, invertebrate animals that secreted a calcium carbonate framework much like modern corals.

This bedrock surface in Houk Stream is characteristic of the overall bedrock in southwestern Ohio, southeastern Indiana, and northern Kentucky. This regional bedrock, known as the *Cincinnatian Series*, is sedimentary rock consisting of alternating limestone and shale. This interspersed pattern is conspicuous along road cuts and other exposures in this area. The limestone is the harder, more resistant rock that forms ledges whereas the intervening shale is much softer and is highly susceptible to weathering into blue-gray mud. The limestone was derived mainly from the shells of invertebrate animals living in clear seas, and the shale resulted from regular influxes of sand, silt, and mud carried westward by ancient rivers and oceanic currents from the ancestral Appalachian Mountains which, at that time, stood very high in the east.

The bedrock surface in Houk Stream is among the uppermost rocks in the Cincinnatian Series known as the *Drakes Formation*.

This formation was also formerly exposed in Oakwood at a quarry in the present-day vicinity of the Hollinger Tennis Club that stands just west of the Dog Park at Creager Field between Shafor Blvd. and E. Schantz Ave. Limestone from this quarry was used to build the turreted mansion standing at the northeast corner of E. Schantz and Sorrento Avenues and also the gateway to the Schantz Plat at the intersection of E. Schantz and



Figure 1

Oakwood Avenues. In both examples, the gray-colored, fossiliferous rocks of the Drakes Formation form the main portions of the structures and are trimmed by lighter-colored rocks of the Dayton Formation. Other examples of the Dayton Formation occur as foundations in some of Oakwood's earliest houses, the steps in the former home site behind Wright Memorial Library, and the rocks in the old lookout tower in Hills and Dales Park. Rocks of the Dayton Formation were used throughout the Dayton area for engineering and architectural purposes before concrete became widely available.

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Volume 4 Issue 4 - 2016

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Message from the President

The members, volunteers, and Board of Directors of The Oakwood Historical Society continue to pursue its purpose to research, preserve, display, publish, and educate our friends and fellow citizens in the history of Oakwood. We have the Long-Romspert House Museum which is special as various sections of the house represent how people lived in the 1860s up to the 1940s. A walk through The Homestead is a walk through time from the days of "Little House in the Prairie" to the Roaring 20s up until the years prior to World War II. If you have not visited us recently, please do! You will be delighted and inspired.

We actively sponsor presentations on the local history, architecture, and woodland treasures of Oakwood and Dayton with our host, the Wright Memorial Pubic Library. Walking tours through the historic Oakwood landscapes occur regularly.

TOHS is proud to partner with Dayton History in presenting Hawthorn Hill each spring and to celebrate the life of Mr. John H. Patterson with a tour of his childhood home, the Patterson Homestead. Additionally, we support Woodland Cemetery in the Woodland Days Walk.

Connect with history and *Make History With Us!*

Carol Holm
President

Leadership Opportunities Available!

The following list of positions at TOHS shows the many facets of leadership opportunities available for our members. You may find something of interest to you, whether that is decorating for a special event, programming for children's events, sharing your business or organizational skills with us, or maintaining connections with other organizations. It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes many of you to continue The Oakwood Historical Society outreach.

Archivist Business Manager	Membership Coordinator
Children's Programs Director/Assistants	Museum Docents
Community Outreach Representatives	News/Media Specialists
Education Facilitators	Newsletter Editor/Writers
Email Communications Expediter	Research Analysts
Event Coordinators	Retail Sales Manager
Fundraising Specialists	Secretary
Gardening and Cooking Enthusiasts	Webmaster
Grounds and Facility Managers	

Events and Fundraisers - 2016 Summary

--Leigh Turben

The Oakwood Historical Society is having a great year of events, and has reached over one thousand history-loving individuals. We have had twenty-two scheduled events in 2016, ranging from the always popular *Classics on the Lawn*, where Mark Risley worked tirelessly to bring you a collection of pristine classic cars to our annual *Taste of Wine and Cheese* – a great way to wind down after a busy day at *That Day in May*. And don't forget everyone's favorite *Wright at Home* where we partnered with Dayton History to tour hundreds of people through and around Hawthorn Hill. Our *Far Hills Speaker Series* events, which we host with the Wright Memorial Public Library, continue to educate, inform, and enlighten us on a variety of fun and interesting subjects.

For a full list of our events please see our *Annual Report* available at The Homestead.

Grounds and Facilities

--Mark Risley

Past president Mark Risley returned in 2016 as the *Grounds and Facilities Chair* tasked with the upkeep of the Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum at 1947 Far Hills Ave. The home serves as the headquarters for The Oakwood Historical Society and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The original part of the house was built in 1864, making it one of the oldest homes in Oakwood. A substantial addition in 1923 made it into one of our town's larger homes at the time.

Sitting on over 1.25 tree-shaded acres with many of the structures being near or over 100 years old, the property requires significant maintenance as any "old house" lover and owner knows. The flower gardens are lovingly tended by longtime, dedicated gardener Jamie Sheehan who ensures the plantings provide a constantly-changing, colorful appearance throughout the warmer seasons. The grounds are regularly mowed by *Depend-A-Lawn* skirting The Homestead with a carpet-like smoothness. City services provide yard waste removal and refuse pick-up. Weed and pest control are ongoing tasks. Tree trimming, leaf removal and limb pick-up is done by Board volunteers. Paint touch-up and stucco repair are other minor projects that can be done, voluntarily, on weather-permitting days. Fortunately, no major repairs were required in 2016.

Boy Scout Eagle Projects were also an effective way to maintain The Homestead's classic appearance. This year, Scouts completed a sub-ground downspout drainage project along the south side of the house which helps direct rainwater away from the foundation. Brick resetting and repair ensures the walkways are level and safe. The kitchen garden was weeded and the fencing upgraded to keep crop pests out. This garden is now ready for children's projects in 2017, all thanks to the Boy Scouts.

Inside, visitors are taken with the furnishings depicting domestic life from an 1860s farmhouse to a 1920s suburban home. Plumbing and electrical upgrades are underway, and at our insurer's direction, "exit" signs are installed over all first-floor doorways. Interior cleaning is done by a great team of volunteers.

This beautiful home serves as a picturesque location for tours, events and photography. Your membership fees and generous donations help The Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum remain as one of Oakwood's iconic landmarks.

Children's Program

--Linda Pearson

The Children's Garden Program was on hiatus this year while getting the garden renovated for next year. Thanks to a Boy Scout Eagle project there is new rust-free chicken wire fencing around the exterior, new soil in the raised beds, and new landscape fabric covering the walkways. The garden and program will return next spring!

We had a new fall holiday craft class early in November, which drew a different crowd for us – older elementary and junior high students! The young people made beautiful pinecone Christmas trees, created a delicious snack, and toured The Homestead. Plans are ongoing for new programming in 2017.

Geology of West Oakwood (cont.)

Although the Dayton Formation probably does not occur as part of the bedrock anywhere in Oakwood, scattered examples of Dayton Formation rocks occur in the footpaths in Houk Stream and Loy Gardens. Rocks of the Dayton Formation were formerly quarried at several sites in Dayton, in the old Beavertown section of Kettering (near the intersection of Dorothy Lane and Wilmington Pike), and in a large quarry to the northeast of downtown Centerville.



Figure 2

Returning to the bed of Houk Stream, visitors making a short walk in the upstream direction from the limestone “pavement” encounter a pleasant area that has been landscaped with large, rounded boulders, short walls in the stream embankment, and a small concrete wall over which the stream flows and plunges into a small pool. Looking into this pool from on top of the surrounding boulders, visitors may notice that in the embankment near the edge of the pool the thinly-bedded, Ordovician-aged rock is overlain (just above the waterline) by thicker chunks of tan-colored rock. This type of transition is known as an *unconformity*. It forms the boundary between two different rock units and resulted from a prolonged pause in the deposition of sediment. This unconformity at Houk Stream represents the end of the Ordovician Period, when the earth underwent a major cooling phase. During this time, as the earth cooled, water became increasingly bound up as ice in the earth’s polar regions and in high-altitude glaciers. As a result of this impoundment of water on the land surface, sea level eventually dropped below the edges of the continental shelves. This resulted in a major loss of marine habitats and an accompanying mass extinction of invertebrate animals.



Figure 3

The rocks on the upper side of the unconformity at Houk Stream are part of the *Brassfield Formation*, which was deposited during the Silurian Period (419.2-443.8 Mya) the earth warmed, sea level rose, and shallow, tropical seas returned to the region. The Brassfield Formation consists mainly of high-purity limestone. This quality makes the rock suited to the production of Portland cement, a key component of concrete. Rocks of the Brassfield Formation have been quarried for many years in the Fairborn area. Oakes Quarry Park, which is a former quarry and now a public park, is an excellent site for observing the Brassfield Formation and collecting fossils. The park is part of the City of Fairborn Parks and Recreation Division and stands to the east of downtown Fairborn, just northeast of the intersection of I-675 and SR 235.

After the final retreat of the region’s shallow, tropical seas, the bedrock in this region was subjected to a long phase of weathering and erosion. These processes incised stream channels deep into the local bedrock, with some of the major channels being hundreds of feet deep and several miles wide. The weathered and eroded bedrock surface in this area was later further modified by the complex actions of glaciers and glacial meltwater during the Pleistocene Epoch, 11.7 thousand years ago (kya) to 2.58 Mya. Several advances and retreats of glaciers, which consisted of enormous sheets of ice estimated to have been up to a mile thick, occurred during these “Ice Ages.” The ice sheets transported large quantities of sand and gravel into the region that buried many of the area’s ancient stream channels. This produced the local buried valley aquifer system, one of the cleanest and most abundant aquifer systems in the country.

The actions of glaciers and glacial meltwater resulted in the wide variety of landforms that occur in the Oakwood area. The landscape of the flat-lying area to the east of Far Hills consists mainly of *ground moraine*, which is material deposited by melting glaciers as they retreat relatively quickly over the ground surface and shed sediment at a relatively uniform rate. Conversely, the more hilly landscape to the west of Far Hills is composed mainly of *end moraines*, which are deposits of sediment forming when the margins of a melting ice sheet remain in place for a relatively long time. During this time, the forward flow of ice occurs at the same rate that the leading edge of the ice melts back. This results in a conveyor belt-style accumulation of sediment at the ice margin.

In west Oakwood, this produced large deposits of well-washed gravel that, at several sites, became gravel pits. Gravel excavated from these sites was used for improving the area's early roads and probably served on a limited scale as aggregate for concrete.

The parks in west Oakwood contain many large, rounded boulders that have a very different appearance than the local bedrock. A good place to view this contrast in rock types is in Houk Stream between the Centennial Bridge and the culvert underneath Runnymede Road. The large boulders resting in the local stream beds and surrounding area are called glacial erratics. These were transported into this area by glacial ice and, in some cases, have been carried for several hundred miles from their original locations in present-day Canada. The boulder bearing the bronze plaque at *The Rotary Bridge* in Houk Stream is a good example of a glacial erratic from Canada. The boulder consists of gneiss (pronounced "nice"), which is a type of metamorphic rock that has been subjected to high temperature and pressure. These influences have increased the sizes of the mineral crystals in the rock and segregated them into distinct bands. Sharp-eyed visitors to the parks in west Oakwood may recognize other examples of gneiss in the local stream beds.

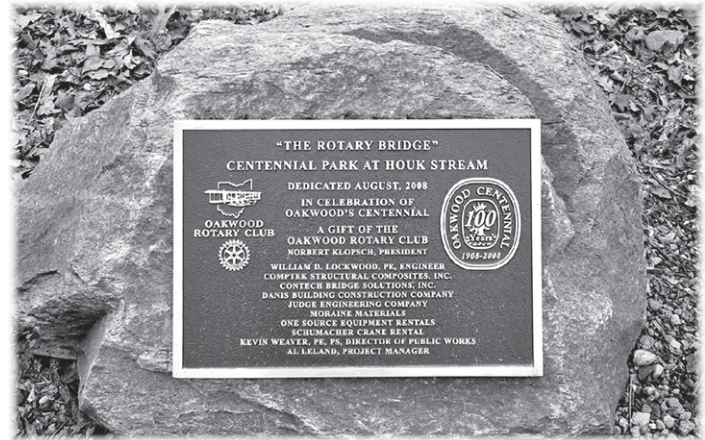


Figure 4



Figure 5

As glaciers melted back during the ice ages, they released enormous amounts of water that formed torrential flows over the local landscape. These streams established much of the modern-day drainage systems in the area. An example of the power of glacial meltwater is visible in a light-colored boulder that stands in the bed of Houk Stream a few tens of feet downstream from the culvert under Ridgeway Road. This boulder contains rounded features known as glacial potholes. These features formed when the boulder was still part of the regional bedrock and probably situated a few miles or tens of miles to the north. The rounded features were formed when the rock was subjected to the prolonged scouring action of smaller rocks trapped in eddies (small whirlpools) in cracks and pits in the upper bedrock surface and at the base of powerful streams of glacial meltwater. A later pulse of glaciation probably plucked the scoured rock from its original location and transported it to its current resting place in Houk Stream.

Notes

Figure 1. Drakes Formation bedrock at Houk Stream. (Photograph by the author)

Figure 2. Examples of Dayton Formation rocks used for architecture in Oakwood. (Photograph by the author)

Figure 3. Gateway to the Schantz Historic District at the intersection of Oakwood Ave. and E. Schantz Ave. Fossiliferous rocks of the Drakes Formation are trimmed with lighter-colored rocks of the Dayton Formation. (Photograph by the author)

Figure 4. Gneissic boulder at The Rotary Bridge at Houk Stream. (Photograph by the author)

Figure 5. Glacial potholes in a boulder at Houk Stream. The boulder is located just downstream from the culvert underneath Ridgeway Road. (Photograph by the author)

Figure 6. Short waterfall at Houk Stream. This view is looking eastward towards Ridgeway Road. (Photograph by the author)



Figure 6

OHS Committees

Please get involved...

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Treasurer's Report

--Brian Mettling

For the 2016 year, my goal as Treasurer was to maintain 100% accountability of our funds and find thrift in every dollar we commit. Donations and membership dues keep The Society operating and able to subsidize TOHS programs in the community. *Wright at Home*, the joint fundraising event with Dayton History, was our second biggest generator of income, and we are thankful for their partnership.

TOHS collected over six thousand dollars from our monthly events, but these events also require significant funding to execute. The Society is in a unique situation in that upkeep and improvements to our museum property is constantly required to facilitate these events. Yearly requirements to maintain the homestead are ten thousand dollars. These expenses are partially offset by the endowment fund we established with the sale of our 1945 Far Hills Avenue property, that will allow us to keep enjoying the property for years to come. Additionally, this year we completed an independent financial audit, and the reviews were satisfactory. As we enter 2017, we will find new ways to continue reducing our operating overhead and keep quality programs well-funded for the future.

The Oakwood Historical Society currently has over 200 active members in the community, and an additional 30 who are lifetime members. Your membership dues are greatly appreciated!

New Volunteer Position Available - Newsletter Editor!

The Oakwood Historical Society announces an opening for the position of *Editor of the Historian*, our newsletter.

This position involves:

- Staying aware of TOHS activities & schedule to keep upcoming newsletter content current and relevant
- Soliciting appropriate articles and photos
- Editing submitted articles to ensure clarity, excellent grammar & historical accuracy
- Getting print-ready articles to the TOHS graphic designer in an accessible format
- Working with the TOHS graphic designer to produce a high quality product on a quarterly basis

Please apply by submitting your resume and/or cover letter, or letter of interest, to info@oakwoodhistory.org

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