



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

# The Historian

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

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## Message from the President

When Governor Mike DeWine issued his stay-at-home order on March 23, the Oakwood Historical Society Board recognized that our community was about to experience an unprecedented time in its history. While there would be countless national and international accounts of the pandemic's impact, there would likely be no comparable record of Covid-19's effect on Oakwood residents. Still, our lives dramatically changed the way we have worked, played, worshipped, shopped, parented, and cared for our families. So the Society started the Capture Oakwood Covid-19 initiative to ensure that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren would know how the lives of Oakwood citizens were variously affected during the pandemic. We don't know the new normal, but our historical records will serve one day to explain why and how some temporary changes took place and why some of those actually became permanent.

This issue of our newsletter will detail how Society volunteers planned the effort as it shares some of the accounts that will become part of our community's historical archive.

I am especially grateful for the encouraging support we received from our community leaders. Mayor Duncan, City Manager Norbert Klopsch, School Superintendent Kyle Ramey, Library Director Kristi Hall, Rotary Club President Bruce Reger, and Alumni Director Amy Martin each agreed to use her or his communication networks to reach constituent members and encourage participation. Thank you for partnering with us.

While Capture Covid-19 History has kept us busy, our Board members are always looking to the future. Plans for the fall Far Hills Speaker Series are in place. Three authors will present different perspectives on the suffragist movement to win passage of the 19th amendment. Allow me a slight spoiler alert: It wasn't a peaceful or pretty transition to the amendment's adoption, and our speakers don't appear soft-spoken about the challenges its advocates faced. I suggest you reserve the second Sundays of September through November to appreciate all sides of the important struggle that led to women gaining the right to vote.

Debra Edwards, manager of our Holiday Home Tour, has designed a tour of the Schantz Park Historic District as designated by The National Register of Historic Places. An area described long ago as a garden-like neighborhood, unusually rich in early twentieth-century American architecture and detail, this neighborhood is nearly as preserved now as it was in the early 1900s. Thanks to a team of dedicated researchers, this December tour promises to be an extraordinary experience.

We're also working on projects that enrich our community but aren't yet visible to the public. If you are curious and want to get more involved in our behind-the-scenes work, my contact information appears on page 2. Be part of our making history!

Warm regards,

Tiffany Rubin  
*President*



*Tiffany Rubin*  
*President of Oakwood*  
*Historical Society*



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***What is  
recorded here  
are authentic  
recollections  
of what we are  
experiencing  
at this moment  
in history.***



## Covid-19 and Suddenly our Lives Changed

In recent months, the news we hear or read reminds us that we are living through an unprecedented time. Our lives are upended. We're expected to do most things differently from how we have always done them. We've transitioned to anticipating daily change, and uncertainty seems to be a shared, pervading mood. Even the vocabulary we use to describe our everyday lives is different.

The newsletter team determined that this issue of The Historian should share accounts residents have submitted for inclusion in the Society's archive around the subject of the pandemic. There is also information about why and how the Society initiated the campaign to capture these community stories. This effort aligns with the Society's commitment to preserving and promoting Oakwood history. We don't know how this period will be remembered in the future, but we know that what is presented here are authentic recollections of what we are experiencing in real-time rather than reconstructed remembrances that are subject to hindsight biases. The Society's intent isn't to shape the history of Covid-19's impact; instead, it intends to archive contributions made by residents to record this unprecedented moment.

Dawne Dewey,  
Head of Special  
Collections  
and Archives  
at Wright



*Stay-at-home order leaves Oakwood business district deserted*

State University, shared with the Society what her department is doing to solicit peoples' pandemic stories. Both she and Alex Heckman, Vice President of Museum Operations at Dayton History, advised the Society to reach out to all groups in the community.

The Society collaborated broadly to determine how best to obtain stories from, among others, teachers, students, library staff and patrons, stay-at-home parents, high school alumni, Rotary Club members, city personnel, and church leaders. Dewey especially advised the Society to seek writings, drawings, photographs, and videos from young people. She indicates that theirs are the stories that often escape the historical record. "For example, the voice of a young person," writes Dewey, "is what makes the diary of Anne Frank so important to history."

## Community Leaders Respond

The positive response of community leaders was immediate. Mayor Bill Duncan encouraged residents and business owners at the City Council meeting on May 4 to support the Society's effort to capture the history of what is happening. "The success of the Historical Society's project," Duncan offered, "depends in large part on the participation of our residents and businesses." City Manager Norbert Klopsch included information about the effort on the city's webpage and asked city department heads to record how they are adapting city services to comply with changing guidelines. Bruce Reger, President of Oakwood Rotary, implored, "Let's be the leaders on this project!" He asked members to spend the time they generally use to meet on Friday mornings to pull their thoughts together. Amy Martin, Director of the Oakwood Alumni Association, had already begun contacting alumni to get their stories. The Society hopes to archive the work she is doing, particularly the stories she has gathered about alumni health care



*City Manager Norbert Klopsch*



*Oakwood City Council*



*Oakwood High School students Emerson Davis, Emma Rubin, and Ella Pleiman demonstrate social distancing six feet apart*

not recording an outbreak of anthrax on his family farm in western Iowa in 1953, for he can't remember in full how he felt as a nine-year-old during a 30-day quarantine period.

## You Can Help Make History

Hopefully the stories shared in this newsletter provide an example of how to get started. There is no "right way" to express yourself. Use the medium with which you are most comfortable. Contribute stories, photographs, drawings, videos, and whatever more.

The Society's branding tagline, Make History with Us, is a plea to act now so that our experiences can be shared with future generations. Submit your accounts to oakwoodhistory.org, and the Society will preserve them. PDFs, DOCs, JPGs, JPEGs, and PNGs files can also be sent to covid@oakwoodhistory.org. If you have questions or want to get involved with this project, contact Healy Jackson at healyjackson@gmail.com or (937) 299-3793.

professionals and business leaders who are doing their part to mitigate the pandemic's destructive impact. School Superintendent Kyle Ramey rallied his teachers to act, and they have. Sixth-grade Social Studies Teacher Jennifer Simpson will contribute the journals students have kept since the stay-at-home order went into effect.

The major obstacle the Society faces is that people might think that their stories are unimportant.

Dayton attorney Merle Wilberding, a regular contributor to the Dayton Daily News, opined, "It is important that we preserve our pandemic experiences and our new way of life so that our families, our communities and our country can understand the full impact of this pandemic, both for the lessons we learned and for the personal experiences we endured." He writes how he regretted



*Pandemic "Chalk on Sidewalk" art on West Hadley. Artist unknown*

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Please get involved

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## Accounts Residents Have Shared

As the coronavirus forces big changes in our daily lives, The Historian is capturing how different people are coping with or adjusting to the uncertainties of quarantine. The Society appreciates the thoughtful words and observations submitted by residents willing to help us record history.



*Healy Jackson's children*

### Healy Jackson

*Profession:* self-employed college admissions coach, tutor, and freelance writer

*Household:* three adults

*What you have learned:* “My six adult children, living in different time zones and working 24/7 shift schedules, competently modify drinking games to accommodate the Zoom format.”

A confirmed optimist with the ability to disregard scientific data, Healy greets most days with the belief that the shelter at home restrictions will lift the very next day. She says she feels lucky that she had some experience with quarantine living following her bilateral knee surgery several years ago. Staying at home for Healy isn't easy. She welcomed the night Mayor Duncan declared that neighbors should come out of their homes at 6:00 p.m. to greet one another. In fact, she walked the street, beating a wooden spoon against a large kitchen pot to prompt neighbors to come out and discover the source of the racket. “There has always been a strong sense of camaraderie on our street, and Mayor Duncan's proclamation was just the impetus we needed to pull ourselves together,” said Healy. What gives Healy the most hope is her belief that June and July will boom with activity because everyone's getting out after being cooped up for so long.

Healy and her daughter both work from home. Whereas her daughter has always conducted all her work remotely, Healy misses her direct contact with students and clients. “It is harder to get students to open up about their college and professional aspirations,” comments Healy, “when it isn't possible to be fully present next to the student.” She will miss attending the graduations of students she watched struggle through their college decisions.

Having to wear a mask to shop is a great incentive to move through the grocery store quickly. For three weeks, Healy noticed it was impossible to find flour or lentils on the shelves at Meijers. Again, she expresses how lucky she is that not finding particular items at the grocery store is her biggest Covid-19 inconvenience.

Missing food items haven't been her greatest worry. She talks about her daughter, who is a nurse, and her son-in-law, who is a doctor, both of whom work in different emergency departments in Cleveland. She talks about not meeting her newest granddaughter and missing her other three grandchildren in Minneapolis because her daughter and daughter-in-law are both doctors working in hospitals. She got the firm, “It's not a good time for you to visit,” message from the newborn's mother as she and her husband were putting their packed suitcases into the car. That disinvite stung. There are also missed funerals. Healy has lost her Godfather, two extended family members, and one dear friend, all of whom

died suddenly after long illnesses. Funerals are for the people who are grieving, and she expresses how surreally strange it feels not to be present when friends and families deserve comfort.



Megan Smith

## Megan Smith

*Business owner:* Saint Anne the Tart and Oakwood resident

*Household:* one adult, three children

*Greatest worry:* Keeping her business open, paying her employees, and homeschooling her boys.

In late March, Megan stood with her team and a small contingent of customers at the bakery and heard the Governor give the stay-home order. It would be effective until May 1—that was the day from which, as a small business owner, she would need to stay afloat. Megan wondered if she had the hustle or the adrenaline to sustain her. Soon she learned there would be no Paycheck Protection Plan or Small Business Administration monies for her. She considered whether her team could “...recover from the demoralizing sucker punches of increasing loss? Could we

fight off the inevitable exhaustion until May 1?”

Megan used social media to broadcast her frustration. Her Facebook post described her mental exhaustion accompanied by the physical fatigue she felt from “continually squeezing every flipping ounce of lemon juice out of these endless bags of lemons that keep appearing on our doorstep.” Megan admitted her feelings of jealousy. She envied the “long afternoon walks, extra cuddle times with kids and pets, puzzles and wine, finished house projects, crafts and hobbies, complaints about boredom, and memory-making that others were experiencing.” At the same time, she “spent sleepless nights trying to steer around this potentially business-capsizing iceberg mentally.”

Then on May 1, nothing changed. The date to return to normal was TBD. Megan’s Facebook post on April 30 describes her reaction. “We still won’t be able to open our businesses fully to customers. And that is crushing. Emotionally. Professionally. Financially. We thought we were finishing the hardest race of our lives just to realize the finish line had moved out of sight.” Megan doesn’t know if her business will survive the damage. Still she writes that she knows she is not alone in this reality. With the resilience Megan is known for, she ends her post by saying, “With no way to know the landscape of our coming weeks, we will do what we know to do and what got our dream to reality in the first place. We’ll hustle, focus, and stay absolutely unrelenting in our lemonade making.”



Ashwin Narayan

## Ashwin Narayan

*Business owner:* Far Hills Avenue UPS Store

*New discovery:* One roll of outdoor vinyl yields

30 “WE ARE OPEN” banners

*Most significant concern:* Keeping his employees and customers safe. “I wear a large face shield all day long to let everyone coming into my store know that I care about them.”

As first reported in the Dayton Daily News, Ashwin noticed it was difficult to tell which businesses in the Oakwood Business district were open. “A lot of them, because they don’t have cars in front of them, people think they’re closed,” Ashwin said. He had a solution, and he wanted to help the local business owners who regularly use his store for many of their business needs. “I’m just giving back to all the customers that have used my store,” he said. The banner signs, 3 by 5 feet in size, say, “WE ARE OPEN.” It’s a small but beneficial tool for Oakwood businesses struggling to survive the

pandemic. Clearly visible from moving cars, he explains that the signs help people looking for food, supplies, or services to know what’s available.

Ashwin shared how much he appreciates his fellow Oakwood business owners, who are also some of his

most valued customers. “We work together, and we pool our resources for each other,” he explained. Then with some good-humored swagger, he revealed that the first masks his employees wore were gifted to him by Bahar of Bahar & Reza Couture. Flashing a wryly smile, he asked, “How many UPS employees wear masks made by a woman who designs dresses for empresses and first ladies?”



Carol Holm

### Carol Holm

*Profession:* attorney

*Household:* two adults

*Quarantine reading list:* The Pandemic Century by Honigsbaum, No Ordinary Time by Kearns Goodwin, Hitler's First Hundred Days by Fritzsche, 51 Imperfect Solutions by Sutton, and The Ghosts of Vesuvius by Pellegrino.

On March 7, Carol made her last visit to the county jail to see her seven criminal defendants. While she still had a statutory responsibility to go to court for her criminal clients, courtroom procedures changed dramatically. Only defendants entering pleas or facing sentencing could appear in court. Other defendants appeared by video from the jail. Lower bonded-out defendants were able to waive their appearance and allow their attorney to handle the matter. The number of persons permitted to be in the courtroom was strictly limited. Civil hearings are conducted by telephone and mediations held through Zoom.

Working from home proved too inefficient for Carol. After two weeks, she and her office partner had their office suite completely deep cleaned and carted back all their files. They divided their suite's workspace in half, and each observed the division. Carol met clients in a conference area across the hall and insisted that they wear face masks. She employed her son, laid off from the Auditor's office, to serve as her runner to the courts for filings. The pace of work slowed down as government offices and banks using skeleton staffing took longer to process documents. While frustrating at times, the slower pace had the side benefit of shorter hours.

Carol enjoyed her evening drives home. She noted that walkers, strollers, bicycles, and dogs made Ridgeway Ave. an uncommonly busy thoroughfare. “I saw parents playing horseshoes with their kids or basketball; fathers teaching them to fly drones or work in the yard; grade-schoolers roller skating and skateboarding.” Carol enjoyed one neighbor's band concert and delighted hearing Wee Haven staff members honk their horns as they held signs and drove past preschoolers' homes. Describing herself as sanguine about life and her future, Carol has found this time to be a period of reflection, renewal, and reassessment. She has written several friends letters to reassure them and provide them perspective. Not able to attend church, Carol and her son read from the Bible as well as materials received from Chabad. She feels gratitude for each day for what it brings.



Larry Bilderbach

### Larry Bilderback

*Profession:* retired engineer. Member of the Oakwood Historical Society Board with particular responsibility for property management and restoration

*Household:* two adults

*Greatest discovery:* “It's not a discovery, it's actually a confirmation that after 49 years of marriage to the same bride, I am still in love with her and enjoy being isolated from the outside world with her.”

Larry is a person perpetually in motion, according to his wife. He takes long, brisk walks twice a day and then spends long hours in his basement workshop crafting 18th-century style furniture and listening to soft jazz or sixties music. Sheltering-in-place isn't particularly challenging for him; he calls it his normal. On the other hand, Larry misses taking classes at UD. He claims Covid-19 has given him even more time to carve the claw-and-ball Chippendale style furniture pieces that his bride enjoys.



Finn Eggenberger

### Finn Kerner Eggenberger

*Profile:* 4-year-old preschooler

*Household:* two adults, three children under five

“In ‘Finntown’ there are playgrounds, schools, 100 banks, lots of Chucky Cheese restaurants, libraries with comic books and computers, ballet studios, movie theaters, 100 shoe stores, lots of Targets, and hospitals for fixing people. No one there has the coronavirus. People in Finntown play outside and see their friends.” When asked why no one has coronavirus in Finntown, he explains that it is because “they have a potion.”



### Donate to the Covid-19 Capture Oakwood History Fund, and Make a Difference

There will be many stories worth preserving, and the Society will need help archiving at the very time college students are looking, in a depressed economy, for summer employment. For this reason, the Society started a fund through the Dayton Foundation that will help support part-time work for Oakwood students to facilitate the project under the supervision of the Oakwood Historical Society. It will cost \$1500 to support a student for six weeks of part-time work. Every dollar donated provides meaningful work opportunities for students, preserves history, and is tax-deductible. If you would like to support this effort, go to oakwoodhistory.org and contribute through the Dayton Foundation link, or send a check to the Oakwood Historical Society at 1947 Far Hills Ave., Oakwood Ohio 45419.

### Compare Public Health Response to the 1918 Influenza to Covid-19 in 2020

The Oakwood Historical Society webpage carries a story written by Jon B. Eisenberg about how a small community in Healdsburg, California, responded to the 1918 influenza. The parallels between the then-and-now response to a public health crisis are noteworthy and show what can be learned from sharing history. Go to oakwoodhistory.org for the full story.



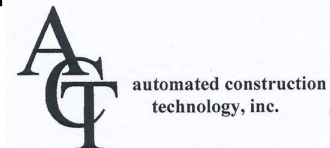
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“The Oakwood Store”



**THE OAKWOOD  
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