

THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY



ANNUAL REPORT 2013

The Oakwood Historical Society

2013 Officers and Board Members

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Lisa Kell

VICE PRESIDENT & SECRETARY

Debra Schenk

TREASURER

Harrison Stamm Gowdy

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Leah Konicki

Phyllis N. Miller, Advisor

Mackensie Wittmer



President's Message

Writing this letter is one of my last official acts as your president as I return to my other roles at the historical society. I've had the privilege to serve for two consecutive terms, which has considerably broadened my perspective on our community as seen through the lens of the society.

I am more convinced than ever that the historical society has an important role to play in the life of our community. We have a long-term perspective on our city, and how it has grown and developed. We bring that perspective to our newsletter, to our public programs, and in all the individual contacts we get from community members who call or email with questions that affect their own lives. We also attempt to incorporate the values and skills of the past into our children's programs while at the same time making the programs meaningful and fun. As we continue to reach out to the community, we are enjoying bringing together all ages of folks, whether they are adults, children or retirees, whether they are city or school officials or newly arrived from elsewhere.

I want to thank the members of the board for all their hard work and time, keeping our organization functioning well. In particular, I'd like to acknowledge two members who are leaving the board at this time. Martha Haley is ending her term on the board; she has offered to be available to guide a new editor through the steps of maintaining the excellent quality our newsletter has become known for. Also stepping off the board is Alex Heckman, who has served in several capacities, including as our membership organizer. We also appreciate his sharing of his expertise and experience when we run into new issues that need to be addressed. He will still be a consultant for us.

New board members are coming on board to fill out our roster and help us focus more on a new membership and fundraising drive to keep the historical society healthy. The new officers and board members are listed in this report; you will see Mark Risley has agreed to assume the presidency for next year. As a past president, he will keep things running smoothly for us.

The only blip on our radar is the budget, a summary of which is attached. The rental house next door has become empty, requiring maintenance to fix it up, not to mention the windstorm that caused seven huge trees to be removed from the yard. A substantial amount of our reserves will be spent before we rent the house and start receiving income.

Please read through this report and note the events and the people who have been involved in making things happen. Our community has truly had a positive impact on us, just as our organization has an impact on the community. Thank you—each of you—for your support. I look forward to seeing you at one of our new upcoming events as *together* we celebrate our 40th anniversary as an organization.

Linda Pearson, President

Archives, Acquisitions and History Committee

Harry Ebeling, Chair

The Archives, Acquisitions and History Committee is responsible for collecting, preserving, and displaying documents and other artifacts for Society and public use. This committee is also responsible for developing the Society collection policy, and with board review and approval, uses this policy as the guideline for collection development. It also maintains and staffs the Society resource library. This committee works closely with the Education Committee and the Facilities Management Committee.

We have had a good year acquiring significant and interesting items for the Homestead.

In a lucky swap, we took the opportunity to acquire a new (1910) upright piano donated by Centerville High school while, at the same time, we found a family who was looking for a piano for beginners and knew our current one would be perfect. Our “new” piano, which is now in the 1923 living room, is like the one Ethel used to play.

Another important addition to the Homestead were the portraits of Henry and Harriet (Shroyer) Long that came to us through the generous donation of Edgar Herrman’s daughter. They are a wonderful gift and complete the photo gallery of the families who have lived in the home.

A fun and interesting donation came to us from Carol Holm, a long-time society member and supporter. Her gift of a beautiful doll house made by her grandfather is amazing in its detail both inside and out. It is currently on display in the 1867 “music room,” but will have a permanent home upstairs in the children’s toy room.

The Olmsted Brothers 1910 map of west Oakwood and Hills and Dales Park is now framed and is on display in the museum. This rare map, which came to us last year through the generosity of John and MJ Gray, is the subject of new research with a report being prepared for publication next year.

Our committee is grateful to all these donors who have made this year an extra special one for the society and the Homestead.

Children’s Educational Programs

Linda Pearson and Lisa Kell, Co-Chairs

The Children’s Educational Programming Committee is responsible for the development of educational programs for primary and secondary grade school children. The programs include hands-on activities, lectures, and demonstrations and are intended to teach listeners and participants about Oakwood history in both the large and small contexts. This committee works closely with the Events and Programs and Archives and Acquisitions committees and, as directed by the OHS board, may also work with organizations/groups outside of OHS.

We had another busy year with children’s programs. Our winter program was held during winter break in February 2013. We used Log Cabins as our theme and built edible log cabins out of gingerbread logs. We also learned about log cabins in Oakwood, including the one the Longs

lived in on Park Road while they were building the farm house that is now home to the society. The programs were held in the morning at the Homestead with movies in the afternoon at Wright Memorial Library.

In April our Garden program began. We were able to grow a wider variety of crops due to the expansion of the garden by a Boy Scout Eagle project. This year we also experimented with field trips to see how other garden sites worked and tried selling seedlings at the new Oakwood Farmers Market. Feedback says one of the favorite activities was making food from our garden crops. The last garden session was at the end of October.

The summer history sessions built on the Pioneering/Log Cabin theme we began in February. The main theme was using thread/string/rope for various activities, including making and marking neckerchiefs with embroidery floss, learning macramé and string games, and learning to lash poles together with ropes to make a tripod to hang a cooking pot, and a ladder. As usual we also made some yummy foods.

We are now busy planning activities for our winter program, which will be held between Christmas and New Year's Day. The theme will be New Year's celebrations. Watch for flyers to appear around the end of this month.

In all these programs, we are fortunate and always grateful to have the help of a number of adult and youth volunteers. In late May, four high school seniors spent their community service days with us. Their projects included cleaning out the summer kitchen, scrubbing down the wood burning stove, fixing the chicken wire around the garden fence, and helping prepare all the materials for the children's summer history program. And, with their help and many others, we can finally announce the wood burning stove was "christened" this fall with a short lighting and toasting event!

Events

Chair: Board Member by Event

The Special Events Committee is responsible for developing, organizing, and planning the slate of yearly events for Society members and the general public. This includes the two general membership meetings and the annual meeting. The chair works closely with the president of the Society.

In May, The Long-Romspert Homestead and its gardens provided the perfect setting for the society's "A Taste of Wine and Cheese" fundraising event. Guests enjoyed fine wines, ales and cheeses provided by Dorothy Lane Market as they toured the house, strolled the grounds or relaxed on the front porch with friends and neighbors. Hosted by Debra and Joe Schenk with Jacquie Housel and Howard Sizek, this event grows in popularity each year as a lovely evening following "That Day in May" activities and has become a traditional occasion for the society.

Hosted by Mark Risley, the third annual "Classics on the Lawn" car show in August proved to be successful as 24 of the area's best vintage automobiles festooned the grounds surrounding the Long-Romspert Homestead. Lunch by Oakwood's own Central Perc European Café provided an additional flair to this summer afternoon event which is becoming increasingly popular with Dayton area car collectors and aficionados.

The third annual fall photo shoot was organized by Linda Pearson and Lisa Kell in late September. Each year we get a few more participants. We are delighted to get all sorts of family and individual groupings, including those with pets. It is a win situation for everyone: a fund raiser for us that shows off our lovely grounds, as well as an opportunity for community members to update their portraits at a reasonable price.

The Holiday Open House is an annual event held in early December. The date this year is Sunday, December 8, and will once again be hosted by Linda Pearson and Lisa Kell. This event is a wonderful opportunity to show off our house museum decorated for the season and provide light refreshments and music as well as activities for the children. This year the theme is “toys from times gone by” with toys from our collection on display. We hope to use the wood burning stove to warm up the summer kitchen to give us more open space for children’s activities. Refreshments this year will feature popular cookies from the late 1800’s through the 1960’s, along with their recipes. When was the last time you had a gumdrop cookie?

Facilities and Grounds Committee

Mark Risley, Chair

The Facilities and Grounds Management Committee is responsible for the upkeep and repair of the Homestead buildings, both inside and out, any improvements/renovations to the buildings, and serves as the Society representative with tenants at both 1945 and 1947 Far Hills. This committee also promotes the involvement of the community in improvements to the Homestead and schedules use of the Homestead and summer kitchen for groups wishing to use it for assorted functions. This committee is also responsible for the docent program and for historically accurate landscape maintenance and improvements, using paid and/or volunteer help. This committee works closely with the president of the Society, the Special Events Committee and the Education Committee.

Maintaining the Long-Romspert Homestead and its surrounding structures and grounds proved fairly basic this year until September when the long-time tenants moved out of our rental house at 1945 Far Hills Avenue next to the Homestead. Exterior painting was required and completed by a professional contractor; interior painting was accomplished by society volunteers. The kitchen and bathrooms, also in need of repair, are being restored. A significant amount of honeysuckle bushes were removed as a well-managed Eagle Scout project which cleaned up the property considerably.

On Halloween night, high winds snapped off three large trees that then knocked over four more in the front yard of the rental property. After a cleanup of the fallen limbs by the City of Oakwood, a professional tree service removed the affected trees, as well as four more aging trees that threatened structures, phone lines and neighbor’s properties. The society allowed access by other tree services to our neighbors’ backyards through our property which resulted not only in good will, but establishing friendly acquaintances with several of our neighbors. The rental property now looks very clean and will soon be ready for new tenants.

Research and Outreach Committee

Harrison Stamm Gowdy, Mackensie Wittmer Co-Chairs

The Research and Outreach Committee is responsible for researching the history of Oakwood through primary sources, documenting the information and developing programs for the public. This committee works closely with other society committees as well as private citizens and other organizations in Oakwood and the Dayton area.

Our committee has once again had a great year. This year we learned so much from listening to Tom Morrow, your guest speaker at last year's Founders' Day. Tom had so much wonderful information to share that we asked him to speak a second time at Wright Memorial Library and we still left learning more and filling our notebooks with questions!

We also continued to update our understanding of Oakwood's early beginnings. Our *Town of Oakwood* walking tour brought to light many things but there is still more to uncover and, through Dayton History's new online photo archive, we were able to view additional photos of Oakwood properties that are not in our collections. We hope to continue rewriting the *Town of Oakwood* walking tour and using some of these wonderful new photos. If you would like to see more yourself go to Dayton History's website, click on the Photo Archive link, and enter the keyword Oakwood.

It was also a year for elaborating on Oakwood's story with the 1913 Flood. As the Miami Valley celebrated The Flood's Centennial we too at The Oakwood Historical Society wanted to share our collections and tales. It was fun telling stories of determination as Oakwood citizens reached out to the hardest hit areas of the Miami Valley and opened their hearts, homes, and pocketbooks.

The society also participated in the 100th anniversary commemoration of the Great Flood being represented on the steering committee by past president Mark Risley. This committee included many historical societies, libraries, universities and communities from Piqua down the Great Miami River Basin to Hamilton. The society loaned three of its original, large 1913 flood photographs to an exhibit at the Dayton Art Institute. Their condition was so good that they were the only three original prints in the exhibit. Mark also prepared an 80-minute presentation titled "The Great Flood of 1913" that was given twice at Wright Library and once for the Riverside Historical Society; it was the keynote presentation for the University of Dayton Lifelong Learning Institute summer session. (Mark also gave "The Classic Architecture of Oakwood" presentation for UDLLI, as well.)

This year we debuted a new educational program called a StoryWalk®. Selections from the poetry book, *A Stick is an Excellent Thing* by Marilyn Singer, were staked and placed around Houk Stream. Participants enjoyed an easy nature hike arriving at six poetry stations along the route. At each station displayed the poem and an accompanying nature play activity. The program opened on Labor Day 2013 with 200 attendees. It ran through September as a self-guided activity. The historical society would like to thank the City of Oakwood and Wright Memorial Public Library for its support on the project.

Our committee continued to preserve Oakwood's history by documenting and researching the history of our community resources. This year, we approached the library staff with a proposal to nominate its building to the National Register of Historic Places. (The National Register is America's official list of cultural resources worth preservation.) The Oakwood library system celebrated its 100th year in 2013 and its listing seemed a fitting way to celebrate! Leah Konicki prepared the nomination that was presented and approved by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office in October. The National Park's Service will make the listing official in January 2014.

Finally, last year the city of Oakwood asked us to examine old city records. So this fall, we started sorting and reviewing these records finding some treasures that we will be sharing soon. The city had already generously provided us an excellent archives center in the basement of the city building and now has transferred these records to us.

As you can tell from this summary, research and outreach happen with the efforts of many individuals and not to be overlooked is Joan Milligan who along with Mackensie ensure the latest stories and information are always on the website. And, in looking for more ways to share our research, Jacquie Housel and Linda Pearson must be given credit with the addition of our very own blog! Over the summer, Jacquie arranged another Miami University intern for us. Olivia Harrison was finishing her sophomore year with an interest in Public History. As part of her internship, Olivia was to research and blog on different items within our collection. Sarah Pearson, Linda's daughter, just graduated with her history degree and is continuing the blog entries. These ladies are doing a great job allowing us to bring Oakwood's history to you all the time. If you haven't visited our website recently, we think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Our committee and everyone on the board are preparing for an extra special new year as we celebrate 40 years as The Oakwood Historical Society. It will be a special year for our members and the community as we extend this invitation: ***Make History with Us!***

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Thru Oct. 31st

REVENUES:

Rent	9,600.00
Dues	3,437.00
Donations	1,919.07
Book Sales	400.00
Yard Sales	309.00
Children's programs	3,565.40
Fundraisers	2,618.00
Annual meeting	100.00
Memorials	<u>655.00</u>
Total Revenue	22,603.47

EXPENSES:

Electricity - DP&L	879.59
Water	877.10
Phone - AT&T	430.56
Gas - VEDO	1,519.00
Insurance	3,511.00
Yard/Grass/snow removal	1,140.00
Driveway	754.00
Garden Maintenance	1,379.00
Security	370.61
City Tax	12.00
Sales Tax	6.62
Printing	830.86
Postage	408.95
TDIM Parade	48.96
Repairs	415.30
Furnace	33.34
Office Supplies	28.28
Advertising	90.00
Dues	150.00
RE Tax 1945	4,845.54
RE Tax 1947	73.97
Rental Prop. maint	2,224.17
Other services	360.00
Flood books	190.40
Wine Tasting	175.58
Other purchases	748.53
Children's programs	<u>1,630.61</u>
Total Expense	23,133.97
Net Revenue/Expense	(530.50)

2014 Slate of Officers and Board Members

Mark Risley

PRESIDENT

Harrison Stamm Gowdy

VICE PRESIDENT

Debra Schenk

TREASURER

Leigh Turben

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Skippi Cross

SECRETARY

Linda Pearson

BUSINESS MANAGER

Nicole Crawford

Harry Ebeling

Carol Holm

Jacqueline Housel

Lisa Kell

Leah Konicki

Susan Marra

Susan McChensey

Phyllis N. Miller

Mackensie Wittmer

