



The  
**Oakwood**  
Historical Society

# Annual Report 2015

*Make History With Us*

# The Oakwood Historical Society

## Annual Report

### 2015

Annual Meeting, November 11, 2015

2015 has proven to be another active and productive year here at The Oakwood Historical Society. I am ending a 2 year term as president, and, although my name has been on many society events and programs, it's only because I have been in this one position. This organization is administered by a full Board of Trustees that have masterfully managed, maintained and directed the society through its many functions, programs and events.

This year, we have been honored more than ever with a Board whose members have a "can do" attitude toward the goals and accomplishments of the society. n

Treasurer Carol Vinings and Assistant Treasurer Leigh Turben have managed our finances to ensure stability in that area. Carol is also establishing a Budget Plan for 2016.

As Business Manager, Linda Pearson has kept an overall view of the needs and requirements of the organization as well as managing inquiries and other concerns. Linda also organized and managed our annual Family Photo Shoot fundraiser in September which has become a well-received event at "The Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum". Along with Lisa Kell, Linda managed over 20 sessions for the "Children's Gardening Program" in which 18 local youths learned how to plant, nourish, harvest and prepare their own food from our Kitchen Garden behind the house. In addition to all of that, Linda helped organize several youth programs to the advantage of "The Homestead". She was able to form Senior High School Student Volunteer crew to clean "The Homestead" and clean-out the Carriage House and attracted a Boy Scout Eagle Scout Project to clean out and revamp an original coal bin at "The Homestead". Both the Carriage House and old coal bin can now be used effectively for storage.

Donna Rosenbaum Cooper stepped into the position of Secretary early in the year and documented the monthly meetings. She has also provided valuable input from her previous experiences with organizations such as ours. Going forth, Donna has offered to formulate a future marketing plan to help the society continue its growth into a modern, viable community asset.

Harrison Gowdy and Mackensie Wittmer have continued to manage and coordinate school programs and other projects. Their planning and participation on

behalf of the society in the “Wright at Home” event has helped establish it into a new Oakwood tradition. They were also essential in organizing the nominations for the 2015 Board. Mackensie has maintained the society’s Facebook and Twitter pages, as well. They will be moving off of the Board next year, but will continue to offer their expertise as active volunteers in society programs and tasks.

Harry Ebeling and Aaron Willhoite have managed our archives and helped with specific inquiries from citizens seeking information on Oakwood and Dayton history. Along with 2016 President Carol Holm, Harry has also provided legal advice where needed.

Carol also chaired our “A Taste of Wine and Cheese” event in May. This has become an Oakwood tradition that continues to grow in popularity.

David A. Schmidt has added an increased dimension to the Board as a researcher and writer. He has also participated in the Far Hills Speaker Series as a presenter. I, personally, know that David’s inquisitive research has involved trudging through woods along old railroad lines and exploring old trails and long abandoned shelter sites in Hills and Dales Park.

Besides Assistant Treasurer, Leigh Turben has worn several other hats, as well. As Membership Chair, she has ensured that our ranks have increased considerably. She was assisted by Barb Miller in this effort. Leigh has also worked with Wright Memorial Public Library to manage the aforementioned Far Hills Speaker Series, ensuring these presentations are interesting and attractive to a large number of attendees. This year, Leigh also collaborated with Woodland Cemetery on behalf of the society to present “Discover Woodland Days: A Walking Tour” historic walk which highlighted several Oakwood residents who are interred there.

Nicole Crawford has handled much of the publicity for our programs and events by establishing communications with media outlets and providing them with announcements and promotions for our many programs and events. She’s also assisted in the many events held by the society.

Phyllis Miller has also contributed her talents and expertise in keeping the classic appearance of interior of “The Homestead” as well as assisting in children’s programs.

Rounding out the full Board, members Karin Harris and Susan Marra have also provided support and input for our programs, events and organizational tasks.

Though not on the Board, Lisa Kell and her son, Zach, edit and publish our “Historian” newsletter, providing news and interesting articles to the membership. The feedback is always positive in regard to its content and layout.

Another important volunteer has been Joan Milligan who has served as Webmaster for our web site, [www.oakwoodhistory.org](http://www.oakwoodhistory.org). She is responsible for keeping it updated and giving it a colorful and professional appearance.

Gardener extraordinaire Jamie Sheehan continues to tend the flower gardens surrounding “The Homestead” to ensure its colorful appearance in the warmer months.

Programs and events have dominated the year’s activities. The previously mentioned Far Hills Speaker Series provided 6 programs of an historical nature which were informative, well-prepared and, often, entertaining. The topics ranged from the incredible geology of the area to Dayton’s rich contributions of inventions to the world.

The society teamed up with Dayton History to present the “Wright at Home” event. As they provided tours of the Wright home, “Hawthorn Hill”, the society provided a walking tour of the immediate area highlighting Orville Wright’s fascinating and famous neighbors from the worlds of invention and business. Who knew that one of them invented “Cheez-Its”?

As mentioned before, “A Taste of Wine and Cheese” has become the traditional adult occasion after the events of “That Day in May”. Every year, new ideas help keep this event fresh, interesting and refreshing in terms of Spring wines. Tours of “The Homestead” top off this event as 80 guests enjoyed the visual aspect of a home from another time.

In August, our 5<sup>th</sup> annual “Classics on the Lawn” car show and open house is an event that is gaining in popularity among local vintage and special interest car owners. From brass cars of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to sleek, modern exotics, the lawn of “The Homestead” is colorfully accented with the finest in local “rolling sculpture”. Last year, 25 rare and beautiful automobiles participated. This year, that number increased to 40. Again, visitors enjoyed the interior of the house, as well.

Last year Mackensie Wittmer formed a crew to gather and transport old blueprints donated by the City to “The Homestead”. In August, Linda Pearson and I catalogued these drawings and, in September, sold them at a booth at Oakwood’s “Farmer’s Market”. We were able to raise \$180 from the sale.

Also in September, we received a call from the family of local architect Joseph Hirsch who had passed away earlier in the year. They wanted to donate his blueprints and drawings to an archive for study and conservation. It took four full afternoons to carefully remove over 1,000 blueprints, drawings and documents from the home at Spirea and Schantz. Additionally, plans were found from other prominent area architects Ellason Smith and Louis Lott, with, at least, one blueprint dating back 100 years. A crew of Board Members was organized to help move the collection to “The Homestead”. Obviously, this collection is way beyond our capabilities, so it is being turned over to Wright State University Archives and Collections department who are excited to receive it. In a project estimated to take

about two years, they will catalogue and digitalize the collection for future study by students and historians.

The “Annual Family Photo Shoot” in October attracted many families and individuals (some with pets) to have their photographs professionally taken by photographer Betty Cochran. These photos are perfect for holiday cards or wall portraits and this program, too, has become a tradition for those wanting a visual history of their families.

“Discover Woodland Days: A Walking Tour” was new for us this year and established in partnership with Dayton’s historic Woodland Cemetery. Several society members acted as the reincarnates of former Oakwood residents interred at Woodland and presented the stories of their lives. With around 175 attendees, the cemetery has requested a repeat of this event annually.

Yours truly served as Grounds and Facilities chair, ensuring “The Homestead” is properly maintained in a manner to provide a venue for our events, programs and private tours in a museum setting. Additionally, besides two Far Hills Speaker Series presentations, I also gave 17 other outreach programs all in the name of The Oakwood Historical Society. Most (12) were presented for The University of Dayton Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, but also for the Centerville / Washington Twp. Historical Society, Riverside Historical Society, Southminster Presbyterian Church, The Arabic Club and Dayton History at Carillon Park.

“Holidays at the Homestead” is the perfect way to close out the year and enjoy “The Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum” in decorations for the season. This is also a society tradition which garners positive responses from all who attend.

The proceeds from the sale of the property at 1945 Far Hills in 2014 have been placed in a trust with the Dayton Foundation. Disbursements from this fund will allow for the financial stability of The Oakwood Historical Society for some time to come. Membership dues, donations and the sale of printed materials also go a long way to ensure “The Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum” is properly maintained as one of Oakwood’s premier landmarks along Far Hills Ave.

The efforts and contributions of The Oakwood Historical Society in collecting and maintaining the history of Oakwood have made it a well-established community and regional asset. The many successes of 2015 have paved a golden path for the future of the society to go forth into 2016.

None of this is possible without the support of the membership, community and many volunteers who embrace the mission, events and programs of an organization with which past, current and future Boards have been entrusted. For this, we are truly grateful. Thank you!

Mark W. Risley

## The 2015 Board of Trustees:

### **Executive Board**

President: Mark W. Risley

Vice President: Open

Treasurer: Carol Vinings

Assistant Treasurer: Leigh Turben

Business Manager: Linda Pearson

Secretary: Donna Rosenbaum Cooper

### **At-Large Board Members:**

Nicole Crawford

Harry Ebeling

Harrison Gowdy

Karin Harris

Carol Holm

Susan Marra

Phyllis Miller

David Schmidt

Aaron Willhoite

Mackensie Wittmer

## The 2016 Board of Trustees:

### **Executive Board:**

President: Carol Holm

Vice President: Brian Mettling

Treasurer: Carol Vinings

Assistant Treasurer: Leigh Turben

Business Manager: Linda Pearson

Secretary: Donna Rosenbaum Cooper

### **At-Large Board Members:**

Nicole Crawford

Harry Ebeling

Mark W. Risley

Phyllis Miller

David Schmidt

*A very special “Thank You” to our youth volunteers in 2015...*

**Eagle Scout Project Participants (Coal Bin Renovation):**

Robbie Keller, Ben Keller, Jared Dunn, Caleb Dunn, Andrew Toussaint, Logan Connally, Will Arcola, Sam Sidhu and Peter Salisbury.

**Senior High Volunteer Project Participants (Homestead Cleaning and Carriage House Clean-Out):**

Jackson Higgins, Logan Shafer, Christina Huelsman, Noah Wagner, Nathan Erbe and Cameron Mackintosh.

**Upcoming Events for 2016:**

May 21: “A Taste of Wine and Cheese” Wine Tasting and Open House.

August 21: “Classics on the Lawn” Car Show and Open House.

December : “Holidays at the Homestead” Open House.

**2016 Far Hills Speaker Series:**

January 10: “The Craftsman Home” with Mark W. Risley.

February 21: “The Old Barn Club and the Golden Age of Hills and Dales Park” with David A. Schmidt.

March 13: “Charles F. Kettering Research Laboratory; Ridgeleigh Terrace, Yellow Springs and Beyond” with Chuck Johnson.

April 17: “The *Other* Assassination Attempt: Fanny Seward and the Night of Horrors” with Trudy Krisher.

May 15: “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Normandy Farm: The Story of Richard H. Grant, Sr.” with Jerry Strange.

September 11: “Looking Towards the Future of Dayton as a River City” with Representatives of the Ohio's Great Corridor Association, Leslie King of UD Rivers Institute and Amy Dingle of Five Rivers MetroParks.

October 16: “Following Famous Footsteps: A Century of Noteworthy Visitors to Hawthorn Hill” with Alex Heckman of Dayton History.

November 6: “The Classic Architecture of Oakwood” with Mark W. Risley.

For updates, visit us at:

**WWW.OAKWOODHISTORY.ORG**