



1947 Far Hills Avenue
Dayton, OH 45419

THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Issue 1

April 2011



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Spring Open House Set for April 17

Sunday, April 17, will bring a new program featuring a 1930s theme to the Long-Romspert Homestead on Far Hills Avenue! For this premiere event, the Oakwood Historical Society will proudly host Oakwood High School students who have made an intense study of the 1930s this year with their Academic Decathlon (Aca Dec) team. The team has won the highest honors at state competitions in its division for years and 2011 was no exception. Students from Aca Dec will be presenting the music and art of the era, including opportunities to hear and see examples of what life was like 80 years ago.

Join us on April 17th and immerse yourself in the 1930s! Learn how people in Oakwood, Dayton and across the nation creatively adapted their lifestyles to make ends meet during the Great Depression. Enjoy samples of budget-stretching foods popular at the time. Experience entertainment by the Aca Dec team and expand your knowledge of this important era of our American history.

The Open House is free, but in lieu of an admission fee please consider bringing a non-

**Open House to Feature
the 1930s with Academic
Decathlon Students**

perishable food item to the Homestead to be given to the local food bank and help those in need around us. As we remember the hard times of the 1930s, please also remember those in the community who are suffering hardship right now.

This event is open to all members of the community, young and old alike. Drop by any time between 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 17th, and join us in this special presentation!

OHS Committees

Please get involved . . .

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A Message from the President

After a successful year in 2010, your Oakwood Historical Society is looking forward to a busy 2011. Events and programs will be this year's focus with a few new twists added.

The Children's Programs will continue under the expert guidance of Linda Pearson and Lisa Kell. Such programs reach out to children and their families by providing a practical learning experience in performing the tasks of times gone by. These popular and well-attended programs give children a better understanding of the history and meanings behind those tasks.

For the past few years, the society opened the Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum on several Sundays in the warmer months. We will be revising the program schedule to provide for longer open-house hours several times a year that will also incorporate an event. Cooking demonstrations, a display of vintage automobiles on the grounds and an event highlighting antiques are several ideas that are being considered or already in the planning stages.

Watch for our 3rd Annual Wine Tasting in May. Hosted by the society as an "after event" to our community's That Day in May, this popular tasting event has been an informal way to unwind after the parade and family gathering.

Plans are also in the works for our traditional events such as the Founder's Day Dinner and Holidays at the Homestead. We are also continuing to provide lectures and presentations on historical topics of interest. Watch the newsletter, announcement mailings and local news outlets for information on all of the Oakwood Historical Society events and programs and don't forget to look at our website for all the latest information: www.oakwoodhistory.org.

"Historical" is defined as pertaining to significant events, people and places. It is also defined as "from another time." Oakwood is fortunate to be a well-preserved community with a significant past. The Oakwood Historical Society strives to maintain and provide an educational resource for that history.

—Mark W. Risley

Third Annual Wine Tasting on May 21st

The Oakwood Historical Society is continuing its annual tradition of offering adults a relaxing evening at the Homestead after a fun-filled day at That Day in May. Todd Templin from Dorothy Lane Market will be pouring both wine and select beers; Donna Howell and her associates, also from DLM, will be putting together a wonderful spread of fruit, crackers, and cheese. The beautiful grounds of the Homestead take care of the rest. We hope to see you all this year for our 3rd Annual Wine Tasting event.

When: Saturday, May 21st

Time: 4pm to 6pm with Todd Templin; linger afterwards to enjoy the Homestead

Place: The Long-Romspert Homestead, 1947 Far Hills Ave.

Cost: Advance: \$25 per person and \$45 per couple

At the door: \$30 per person and \$50 per couple

For more information about the event and purchasing tickets in advance, please contact Kjirsten Goeller, Programs/Events, at kjirsten.goeller@sinclair.edu or 298-1268.

OHS Announces 2011 Board

At their annual Founders' Day dinner, society members elected the 2011 board. Many board members are returning this year with a few changes to the line-up.

- Mark Risley, President and Grounds & Facilities chair
- Linda Pearson, Vice President and Education Committee co-chair
- Harrison Gowdy, Secretary
- Harry Ebeling, Treasurer and Archives & Acquisitions chair

Other board members are Lisa Kell, Education co-chair; Kjirsten Goeller, Events and Programs chair, Leah Konicki, Newsletter editor; Martha Haley, Newsletter; and Alex Heckman, Membership and House Tours chair. Rounding out the board and after a successful 2010 presidency, Mackensie Wittmer will serve the board as past president with a continued involvement in upcoming projects.

2011 OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Linda Pearson
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Harrison Stamm Gowdy
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Harry Ebeling
Treasurer

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Kjirsten Goeller

Martha Haley

Alex Heckman

Leah Konicki

Mackensie Wittmer

ADVISOR

Phyllis N. Miller

Committee Reports

Children's Garden Program

Plans are underway to start a second garden in the summer of 2012. We will watch the sun this summer to help decide the siting of the second garden and do preliminary work to get the new garden area into shape. Next year we will be able to offer two programs with different techniques and crops in each area.

Committee Reports

Children's Garden Programs continued

In the existing garden space, we will be adding a long, narrow raised bed along the one side of the fence so we can grow a few root vegetables. This will allow us to add potatoes and carrots. We are also considering growing herbs in pots on the west side of the garden fence.

The dates for the garden program are March 27, May 1 and 22, June 19, July 17, August 21, September 18, and October 16. These dates are all Sunday afternoons with most sessions an hour long. We will be advertising only to the in-house mailing list to avoid over filling the program.

Children's Historical Programs

We are still working on our plans for the summer programs. The dates are set for the last two weeks of June. The theme will be the 1930s, the decade that opened the modern age. We have many options and are presently trying to narrow our focus. We will do some cooking as well as something with feed sacks, and quilting. We would like to introduce radio serial shows and perhaps a Shirley Temple or other 1930's movie. We also want to do a project that will appeal to the boys.

230 Haver Road: 2011 DPVA Designers Show House

This year the Dayton Philharmonic Volunteer Association (DPVA) will decorate and landscape the home at 230 Haver Road as its 2011 Designers' Show House & Gardens as a fundraiser to benefit Miami Valley school children. (Visit www.dpva.org for information about open-house hours, tickets, and events.)

In support of the DPVA's efforts, the Oakwood Historical Society provided the architectural and social history of this home and its first family. Much more could be written about the King, Simonds, and Thresher families, their contributions, and ties that bind in our community. For readers interested in doing further research, may this overview be a beginning.

The home at 230 Haver Road was built by Mr. and Mrs. Robert N. King (Harriet) for their daughter and her husband, Herbert Roland Simonds and Margaret King Simonds. In a personal history, Margaret cites the Great Dayton Flood of 1913 as the reason her parents and her family moved to Oakwood from their downtown homes. Her parents built the home called Five Porches at 218 Haver and her home at 230 Haver concurrently. The Simonds lived in 230 Haver from 1914 to 1970 at the time of her death.

The home at 230 Haver sits in the Maysfield Plat. This land was once a land patent (payment for military service) to Jesse Hunt and sold many times over, acquiring the name Maysfield and passing ownership until Dr. Harry A. Hatcher platted the land in 1912, the same year the land was annexed into the City of Oakwood.

Designed by Dayton native architect Albert Pretzinger, the home was built in 1914 in the French Eclectic style with strong Colonial Revival influences. The most dominating feature of the French Eclectic style is its hip roof that is both tall and steeply pitched, creating multi-level eaves. The house is symmetrical and formal with a beautiful Colonial Revival influenced entry porch. Massive paired chimneys and a set of shed-roofed dormers further accent the house's dramatic roofline.

Herbert Roland (H.R.) Simonds inherited the knife manufacturing firm Simonds and Son Co. from his father. Later called Simonds-Worden-White, the company operated on River St., which was a major hub of Dayton manufacturing at the turn of the century and is the present day location of Riverview Park across the river from Sinclair Community College. Early in his career, he was appointed director at the Dayton National Bank (later Winters) where he was the youngest bank director at that time. H.R. loved golf and played often. He was a board member of the Dayton Golf Club (now the Dayton Country Club) as early as 1904 – a good 10 years before he moved
(continued on page 6)

The Craftsman Home

The "Craftsman" house, another popular architectural style in Oakwood, is associated with the American Arts and Crafts Period (1900-1929). "Revealed construction" is the primary feature of the Craftsman Style, which means the construction components of the home become its decorative features. Exposed rafter tails and knee-brace roof brackets under the overhangs are examples of revealed construction. Usually, these support structures are hidden under soffits or within the confines of the house, but on Craftsman homes, they are given artistic details and become architectural accents of the design.

The American Arts and Crafts Period celebrated a "return to nature" aspect that is reflected in Craftsman homes. Natural stone is often used in foundations, porch columns and chimneys along with colors from nature and accent designs that are "simple, but not plain." On the interior, the use of patterned woods such as quarter-sawn oak bring the outdoors inside in door and window trims, built-in cabinets and inglenook benches. Mission Style furniture with its "simple, but not plain" design complements Craftsman homes.

As with other styles, Oakwood has many well-preserved examples of Craftsman homes. The design is generally applied to foursquare and bungalow type houses, but can be found on some of Oakwood's larger homes, as well. Recently, a heightened appreciation of the Craftsman Style has prompted a revival and many new homes are being constructed in this uniquely American design. *—Mark Risley*



Examples of Craftsman-influenced houses found in Oakwood. On the left, a substantial Louis Lott-designed bungalow exhibits stone columns and chimney. On the right, roof brackets and other detailing exemplify the Craftsman style.

Committee Reports

Children's Historical Programs continued

We are still considering whether we might be able to offer programs to junior high school students this year. Programs for this age group would have a new model to meet more sophisticated interests. We have some students graduating from our elementary age programs who have indicated an interest in continuing with us.

Grounds and Facilities

The ice storm brought down many limbs on both properties, but there was no damage to structures or grounds. The majority of limbs were easily cut into lengths of 6' or less; however, the help of tree experts was needed to bring down some limbs.

Work was done recently on the furnace, disposal and water heater so the major components of the house should be in good working order for a while. I will be thoroughly draining the water heater in the 1920's section of the Homestead several times over the next few weeks to help correct some minor issues.

Society to Repeat Popular Architectural Program

Back by popular demand, Wright Library and the Oakwood Historical Society will partner to offer "The Classic Architecture of Oakwood Homes" on Sunday, April 10th, at 2:00 PM in the library meeting room. The program will be presented by Oakwood Historical Society President Mark Risley. Oakwood is fortunate to have many well-preserved examples of early 20th century architecture in its tree-lined neighborhoods. This program will explore the exteriors of those houses, their remarkable artistic details and some of the historical stories associated with several of the homes.

"This is the third edition of the program. Both the first and second sessions were well-attended", said Margaret Peters, Reference Services Coordinator. "This program has generated a lot of interest in the community." Advance registration is required and is limited to the first 65 people. Contact Wright Library's Reference Department at (937) 294-7171 to register beginning Friday, March 25th. Mark your calendars and enjoy a Sunday afternoon at Wright Library.

230 Haver Road (from page 5)

to Oakwood. He was on the board of the Dayton Golf Club when the organization purchased the 90-acre Kramer Winery property where the course stands today. He died at the age of 82 at his Haver Road home and is buried in Woodland Cemetery. After his death, his company was purchased by H.H. Porter Co.

Mrs. H.R. Simonds (Margaret King) was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1880 to Robert N. and Harriet King. She attended private schools in Dayton and finishing school in Boston. She studied piano in Boston and New York and played the cello. She traveled frequently with her grandfather, Ebenezer Thresher, a partner in Dayton Car Works that later became Barney & Smith Car Company. She had a great love of horses, having a pony and cart as a child and saddle horse after learning to ride. She loved fishing. She was a charter member and the 2nd serving president of The Junior League of Dayton. (1922-1923). She served as the only female board member of the Dayton Art Institute and Miami Valley Hospital. She was active in the United Fund and the Needlework Guild. She ran a milk dispensary during the Great Depression.

She and her family (King) were influential in the early funding and directorship of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. She served as president during two seasons, 1937-1939. The year she was executive vice president in 1939-1940, her brother was president and her sister-in-law was first vice president. She then served on the Honorary Council and then another term on the board. Her husband, H.R., served for two years until his death in 1956. Margaret was an Honorary President at the time of her death in 1970.

230 Haver Road



H.R. and Margaret had two children; a daughter named Harriet and a son named Alvan W. Simonds. Harriet married Mr. Robert Nelson Carr of Gates Mills, Ohio. Alvan died in 1934 while attending Brown University due to complications from appendicitis surgery. Margaret Simonds died at age 90 in her Haver Road home. At the time of her death, she had a cook, a part-time driver and gardener, a night nurse, and a companion named Sally who appears to have been a general caretaker. In her elder years, Margaret had broken a hip and required constant supervision.

Everyday life in and around 230 Haver Road would have served as a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city, yet close enough to enjoy all the modern conveniences and attractions of the city. An electric streetcar carried Oakwood residents to the turnaround at Five Points. Residents on Haver Road could easily ride the streetcar into the city for shopping, church, and events. However, as some of the wealthiest families in the area, it is likely they also had cars and drivers.

Family life would have been one of leisure. The Simonds were members of the Dayton Golf Club (early Dayton Country Club). The Simonds' children would have taken riding lessons at the King Tullis Riding School near the golf club. They would have explored Hills & Dales Park. They would have enjoyed Runnymede Playhouse on the Talbott family's property for dances, dinners and bridge matches.

The family and live-in help at 230 Haver Road would have enjoyed the development of shops and restaurants along Park Avenue in Oakwood. By the early 1920s, a shopping district had emerged along Park Avenue providing basic goods and services to area residents. In 1923, a Kroger Grocery & Baking Company opened at 20 Park Avenue as well as another grocer, druggist, and plumber. The next year, the Oakwood Village Library opened at 45 Park Avenue (present day The Little Exchange). Many tenants only lasted a few years, but there was always a variety of groceries, soda fountains, and restaurants. —Mackensie Wittmer

**THE OAKWOOD
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