



The Historian

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Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • December 2023

Vegetable Gardening with Elementary Students at the Historical Society

Summer 2023

By Linda Pearson

This year's Garden Program covered 14 weeks of the summer, including time for planting, growing, weeding, watering, and harvesting various vegetables in the garden behind the House Museum. Eleven students from grades 1 through 4 participated.



Approximately every two weeks, we held class in the summer kitchen adjacent to the garden, as well as in the garden itself. The summer kitchen serves as a large playhouse for recuperating from the hot weather, learning in a more classroom-like setting, and preparing snacks.

Our early picking crops this year were radishes and strawberries. Throughout the summer we had cucumbers, summer squash, a variety of leafy greens, chives, a variety of tomatoes, carrots, peppers, and herbs. Our peas and beets were eaten to the ground by rabbits and chipmunks, unfortunately.

Our last crops were not ready before classes ended this year. In mid-October we held a special potato session to dump the big grow bag and fish out all the potatoes.

We presented various special topics throughout the program. How to grow microgreens; how to sift compost; how red wiggler worms make compost; lessons about various types of pollinators, including bees, and how we attract them.

The final aspect of the program was to use fresh produce so the students could prepare snacks to be eaten at each class. Activities included making radish and butter sandwiches, microgreen sandwiches, fresh greens spread with hummus or cream cheese and then dotted with chopped-up fresh cucumbers and tomatoes, drying herbs and using a recipe to mix up an Italian seasoning to take home, and making pizza with the end-of-summer bounty.

A program with this much going on needs a staff to help the students learn all the hands-on aspects of gardening. We were fortunate to have great volunteer helpers ranging from grade 7 to college age to meet that need. We couldn't have done it without them!

Watch our website in the spring for announcements about next summer's classes.



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Board Meetings

Fourth Monday of each
month at 7:00 p.m.
1947 Far Hills Avenue
(The Homestead)

Welcome to Our New Board Members

We are very excited to introduce our three new Board members, who will begin their 2024-2025 terms in January.

Jill Brooks

Jill has only lived in Oakwood for one year, but she quickly jumped in with the Historical Society and is already a valuable resource and volunteer! She served as a docent at the Woodland Cemetery tour last month and is looking forward to getting involved with and promoting the education aspect of our mission. Her creative ideas and enthusiasm to get involved really shined through when she attended our October board meeting.

Prior to moving to Oakwood, Jill spent much of her life in Illinois. She has three grown children (two sons and a daughter) and seven grandchildren. She moved to Oakwood to be closer to some of these grandchildren.

Jill is retired from a career in education, including teaching and later serving as an elementary school principal. Since retiring, she's kept busy traveling—she's been to every continent except Antarctica!—and served as a docent for the Chicago Architectural Center. She was also the fundraising chairman for her local chapter of the League of Women Voters.

With her education background and passion for history, learning and teaching, Jill will be an excellent asset to the Board. Jill, thank you for joining us and sharing your time and talent!

Ann Febus

Ann has always had a passion for history, having taught history at Wright State University for many years. Since retiring, it seemed a logical next step to get better acquainted with the rich history our local community, and we are lucky that Ann has already been instrumental in the monumental task of reorganizing our Archives, working closely with Debra Edwards. Ann says she thinks she's actually learned more about Oakwood's rich history from the Archives than she's helped, but we doubt that's true!

Ann also enjoys volunteering with our events, such as the Holiday Home Tour and recent Woodland Cemetery Tour.

Ann's favorite Oakwood memory is of spring in Oakwood when her children were babies. Those first stroller walks as a proud new mother, right when the flowering trees and daffodils and tulips are in full bloom, are something she recalls every spring since then. And now, she lives just a few houses down from four of her grandchildren. Ann and her husband love being involved in their activities.

Ann, thank you for sharing your talents and your passion for Oakwood history with us. We are so excited to have you join the Board!



Sotheavy Jenkins

Sotheavy's passion for Oakwood began when she and her husband first found their Oakwood home. They were driving through Oakwood on their way to DLM and happened upon an Open House sign and thought, "why not?". They walked in and loved the house. It immediately felt like home and has been their home ever since.

Sotheavy is married to Jeremiah, our President-elect, and after seeing Jeremiah's enjoyment of his involvement with the Historical Society, she decided to jump in alongside him to support the community they both love, and we are grateful! Sotheavy has volunteered at several of our events, including the recent car show, and she has now jumped head-first into managing our social media presence.

Sotheavy and Jeremiah love to travel. They're planning on visiting all seven continents by 2025! They also began fostering dogs during the pandemic and fostered 13 dogs over two years. Despite being "foster failures" (they adopted one of their foster dogs), they'd love to continue rescuing animals.

Sotheavy, we are so excited to have you on board—thank you for sharing your talents with us!



News from the Homestead

The Oakwood Historical Society is proud to report that many improvements have been made to the property in 2023! Thanks to many volunteers, including Scouts, the Long-Romspert Homestead has a fresh, new look inside and out.

In early spring, two large trees on the front lawn of the Homestead were removed. The trees were significantly rotted inside and had been dropping limbs, which posed a threat to power lines and pedestrians. The front of the house is now more visible, and the area looks open and spacious. Many thanks to Sam Batman, who did the work at cost.

The most challenging project for the museum is still in progress: painting the structure and trim as well as repairing areas damaged by rain and other natural occurrences. American Painters finished the structure of the house in early September. They also painted the garage, making all of the outbuildings consistent. Both projects resulted in a fresh, new look. Close observation will reveal that the windows are not yet finished. These require skilled and patient crafts people; therefore, the Society is continuing to solicit bids for the tasks. If visitors count the number of windows in the museum, they will realize what a task they are! Visitors may also notice that the house is no longer yellow. Michele Oaks and Debra Edwards researched the history of the house so that the new color chosen could be as close to the color of 1920s stucco as possible.

The Oakwood Historical Society has a long and successful history of working with Scouts on a variety of projects. This season, the Scouts worked on building a trellis to hide the trash cans and building a concrete pad where the cans can sit. They also worked to clear some honeysuckle along the driveway and to remove some invasive ferns from the flowerbeds. Scouts also participated in the Attic Sale that the museum held on August 5th.

The inside of the Long-Romspert Homestead is startlingly different! Months of sorting and evaluating the Society's collection resulted in the decision to sell many items that were held in duplicate (or even greater number!) or that did not fit the 1860s or 1920s periods of the house's history. Fortunately, the advice of some professional dealers and collectors guided these choices. From them, we also discovered that we have a few very spectacular items which we will be able to display in the future. Many volunteers, including some Scouts, worked to price and display the items, to greet visitors, and to clean up afterward. It was a monumental task and worth the effort. Hopefully tours of the buildings will resume in the next year.

2023: The Year in Review

What a busy, productive and exciting year we had! We hope you enjoy this brief look back at our collective accomplishments.

Programs and Plans to Further Our Mission

Century Home Markers

Oakwood homeowners with a house that is at least 100 years old may apply for a bronze Century Home Marker. Along with the marker, they will also receive a written history of their home. It is a great source of income for us as well as a public token of pride in the community.

Historical Markers

To date, markers have been placed in front of the first library, City Hall, Kramer's Pleasure Garden, and the Schantz neighborhood. Forthcoming is one for Four Mile Tavern. The Rotary has donated much of the funding for these markers; it is exciting and fulfilling to have their support.

House Museum

We also have engaged in considerable work to preserve the House Museum. Under the expertise of Michele Oaks and with many hours of volunteer work, the house was painted along with the garage, and the house sign near the street. The house color is now as close to the original stucco color as possible.

Repairing and restoring the windows is a work in progress.

The cupola on the summer kitchen was also removed and rebuilt. The City of Oakwood replaced the cupola on the building. It was quite a task!

A couple of trees that were practically hollow were removed, allowing passersby to see the house more clearly.

Also in furtherance of our goals, we have worked on plans to reopen the Museum to tours. The plan is to create displays that change three to four times per year and focus on different aspects of Oakwood's history. We are also looking for opportunities to highlight some special things in our collection because everything cannot be displayed at once. We have been fortunate enough to receive some items that are treasures to us—the Mead family donated, for example, an oil portrait of Katherine Houk Talbott and one of Harry Mead. They are stunning. Barbara Horner, a descendant of Adam Schantz, Sr., gave us a photo that was used to make a clock for Adam's wife. It features Adam and Salome and their ten children. We are extremely grateful to these families for trusting us with these items!

Archives

Debra Edwards is leading the effort to make the Archives more professional so that articles are more adequately preserved. Wrapping items in acid-free paper and having items shelved according to archivist standards have been important guidelines. The Romsper family Bible is an example of a treasure for our city that is now in archival protection. Upgrading the filing system so that information is more easily found, especially when we receive requests for home histories, is a large part of the plan.

Awards

TOHS was the recipient of the 2023 Wick Wright Award. Dayton History nominated us; the Aviation Heritage alliance chose the winner. The award is a copy of the Wright Bicycle Shop created by a potter. Recognition of our efforts by those outside of Oakwood is greatly appreciated.

Thank you...

To Scouts for all of your help with events and projects.

To volunteers who contribute hundreds of hours per year to programs; they show up and do the heavy lifting and bring smiling faces!

To those that donate funding for all of this; many do it quietly and without fanfare.

To members for your support and interest in local history.

To Board Members and Committee Chairs—no sleeping on this job!

And to neighbors who watch out for us and support us – your goodwill and thoughtfulness is appreciated.

What is local history? It is community. All of these activities and plans reflect the Oakwood community's interest in its past and its institutions. Being a part of this is rewarding. And we can't wait to continue to make history with you in 2024!

Events

Wright-at-Home

Dayton History invited us to cooperate with them during this annual opening of the Wright home. TOHS organized outdoor activities, including book sales and outdoor tours of other significant homes of the area. While guests could not enter the homes of the Wrights' neighbors, they learned much about the people that built and lived in these homes.

The Far Hills Speaker Series

Organized by Donna Rosenbaum, and in partnership with Wright Memorial Public Library, we held three spring lectures and three in the autumn, highlighting topics ranging from revitalization of Huffman Prairie to the work accomplished in Oakwood on the Manhattan Project. These events are popular with both in-person and virtual (Zoom) attendees.

Oakwood 3rd Grade Field Trips

Every spring, we host the 3rd grade classes of Oakwood Schools for a visit to the House Museum. Children learn about life in the 1860s and 1920s, including participating in hands-on games from the period and learning about dress, transportation, and food.

Summer Gardening Program

Every summer, children learn to garden at the house museum; Linda Pearson has a well-established program so that children plant, harvest, eat, and even dry things that they have grown. Read more about this program on page 1 of this newsletter.

Classics on the Lawn Car Show

Mark Risley organized Classics on the Lawn, a show of vintage cars at the Homestead. We also sold a barbeque sandwich lunch for which Mike and Rose Morgan of Central Perc supplied fresh, homemade cookies. Tom Morrow cooked the barbeque pork.

Scarecrow Row

Carol Holm created TOHS's display, called Celebrating Under a Harvest Moon.

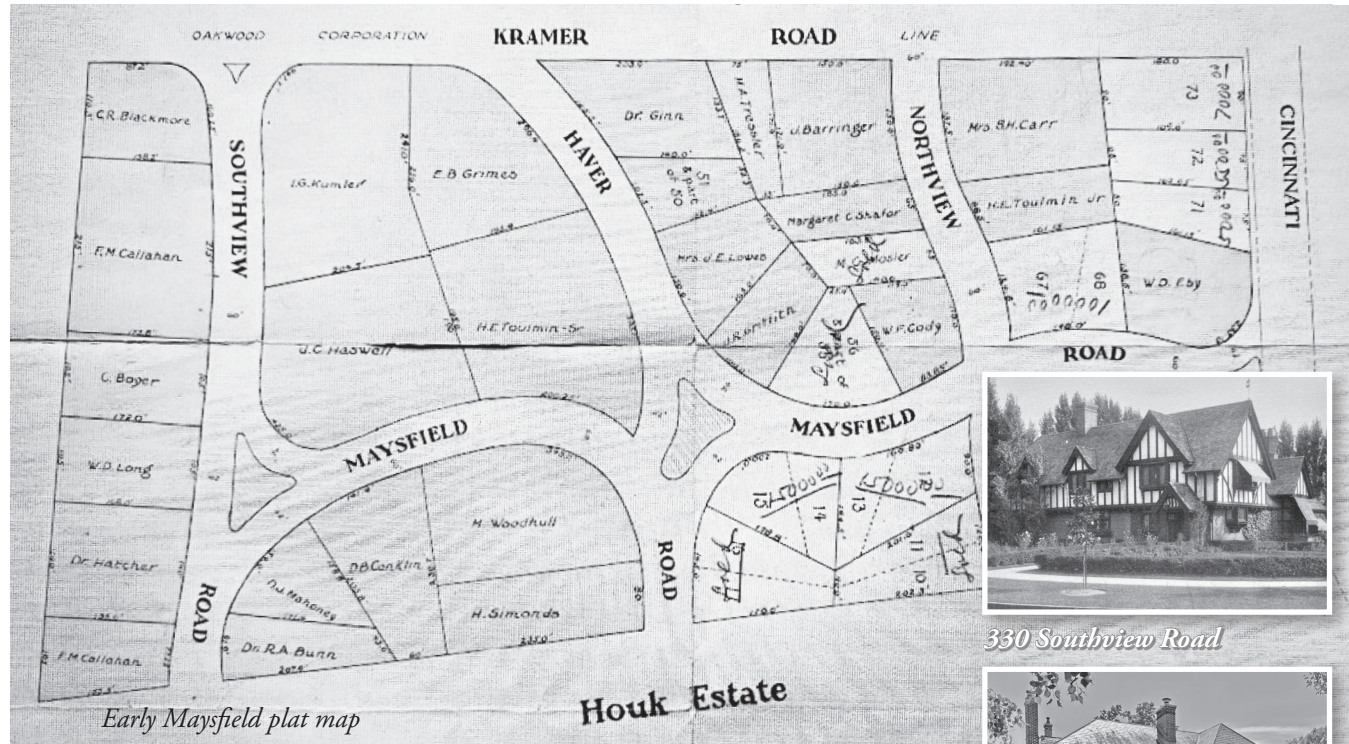
Fall Family Photo Shoot

Local photographer Betty Cochran created portraits of families and individuals in locations around the Homestead.

Woodland Cemetery Tour

For the first time, TOHS offered a tour of Woodland Cemetery; Debra Edwards was inspired to create this tour a few years ago when she discovered that the graves of William Dixon and his wife Elizabeth, founding residents of Oakwood, were in decay. The tour focused on the gravesites of people significant in Oakwood's history. David Schmidt also worked on the histories and educational information for the tour. With vivid fall foliage and blue skies, the day was perfect and people enjoyed the hike as well as snacks in the Lookout Tower at the end of the tour.

All of these activities and events fulfill the mission of TOHs, but there are other ways we share history with the community.



330 Southview Road



318 Southview Road



525 Maysfield Road



218 Haver Road



447 Kramer Road

The Holiday Home Tour 2023 – Spectacular!

On December 2, a crisp sunny Saturday, The Oakwood Historical Society hosted its 5th annual Holiday Home Tour. As in years past, the tickets sold-out in a matter of days. Those 225 lucky people who purchased tickets were treated to five stunning homes.

The Historical Society differentiates its holiday tour by focusing not only on the beauty and architecture of the homes, but by delving into the history of the area, homes on the tour, and the early homeowners—all outlined and described in the tour booklet. Guests delighted in learning about the history of Oakwood through the trained docents who greeted and led them through each home.

The tour began at 330 Southview Road, a magnificent Tudor home built c1914, where guests came to check-in and obtain their tour booklet. The tour proceeded to 318 Southview, a stately classic Georgian Revival Home built c1929. The grand and memorable entranceway features eight arched doors serving as gateways to other areas of the house.

The next stop was 525 Maysfield Road, a breathtaking Neoclassical home built c1923, easily recognizable by the two massive side porches and four towering columns on the east facing side. The elegant foyer with black and white marble floor, circular staircase and crystal chandelier has been impressing guests for over 100 years.

On to 218 Haver Road to see the iconic French Eclectic home, often referred to as Five Porches, built c1913. An amazing and very unique feature of this home is the Aeolian pipe organ, which was installed by the original homeowner, where the 1,200 pipes which run from the basement into the second story can be seen from the living room.

The final home on the tour was a Colonial Revival home at 447 Kramer Road, built c1913 on land that was originally part of the Kramer Pleasure Gardens and next to the Dayton Golf Club. Guests entered through a lovely

foyer with a unique stairwell that winds up to the second floor. The heart of this home is a bright and airy living room with a wall of windows on the west side which lead to a back terrace and a spectacular view of the rolling hills of the golf club.

Guests returned to 330 Southview for a reception with light refreshments, a book and gift sale featuring the history of Oakwood and Dayton, and a history table where they could learn more about the history of this area, and maybe even about their own Oakwood homes.

This splendid event would not have been possible without the warm and gracious homeowners who opened their doors for all to enjoy. The Oakwood Historical Society is forever grateful for their generosity. As an all-volunteer organization, The Historical Society could not present events like this without the talent and time of its valuable and amazing volunteers.

If you were unable to attend and wish to learn more about the history of these homes, copies of the tour booklet can be found in our store website at www.OakwoodHistory.org.

Far Hills Speakers Series Returns in 2024... Please Save These Dates!

2024 plans are well underway for our ever-popular Far Hills Speaker Series, in partnership with Wright Memorial Public Library. Please save the date for these upcoming presentations. Each lecture will take place at Wright Memorial Public Library at 2:00 p.m. on the designated day. Please watch our website for further details.

January 28, 2024

Andrew Lloyd
Oakwood's Unsung Hero: Joe Desch, Codebreaker

February 18, 2024

Doug Gabriel, President, Mound Science and Energy Museum Association (MSEMA)
Beyond the Playhouse: Mound Labs Mission in Space

March 17, 2024

Mark Risley
The 1913 Flood from Oakwood's Perspective

April 21, 2024

Nenita Lapitan, Aullwood Manager of Volunteer and Rental Services
Marie Aull, Aullwood History, New Missions, Native Plants, and Songbirds



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1947 Far Hills Avenue
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The Oakwood Historical Society Membership Form

Membership Categories *(Please check one)*

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