



The Historian

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Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • August 2024

Dear Members and Friends of The Oakwood Historical Society,

As we find ourselves midway through the year, I am delighted to share some of the developments and plans we have in store for our organization. Our dedicated team has been working diligently on continuing and enhancing our activities to foster a deeper connection with our community's rich history.

Firstly, I am pleased to announce that we are actively recruiting new members and volunteers. Your involvement is crucial as we plan our events for the remainder of the year. From historical tours, educational workshops, and event planning, there are numerous opportunities to contribute and immerse yourself in the vibrant tapestry of our shared heritage.

In addition to the events, we are embarking on an ambitious project to update our beloved house museum. Our goal is to reimagine the narrative flow, ensuring that each visitor's experience is both engaging and enlightening. We are also excited to introduce the opportunity to host rotating exhibits, which will allow us to showcase a broader spectrum of stories and artifacts. This initiative is designed to keep our community engaged and offer fresh perspectives on our history.

Preserving our community's rich heritage is at the heart of everything we do. By fostering equitability, curiosity, and active involvement, we aim to cultivate a deeper appreciation and understanding of our past. Your participation and support are vital to achieving these goals.

Thank you for your continued dedication to The Oakwood Historical Society. Together, we can ensure that our history remains a source of pride and inspiration for generations to come.

Warm Regards,

Jeremiah Jenkins

President, The Oakwood Historical Society



American Institute of Building Design Visit The Oakwood Historical Society's Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum

Members of the Dayton Regional Chapter of the American Institute of Building Design visited The Oakwood Historical Society's Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum this past Saturday. A tour was given by society past presidents Linda Pearson and Mark Risley as the guests appreciated the historic methods and materials of the home and its outbuildings.

Located at 1947 Far Hills Ave., "The Homestead" is the headquarters of the society and is decorated in the style, furnishings and artifacts representing the periods from an 1860s farmhouse to a 1920s suburban home. It is open during special events or by appointment.



**Oakwood Historical Society
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House Museum Consultant

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Donna Rosenbaum
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Archives**

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Debra Edwards

Ann Febus

David Schmidt

Board Meetings

*Fourth Monday of each
Month at 7 p.m.*

*1947 Far Hills Ave.
(The Homestead)*

Treasurers Report

The Oakwood Historical Society is required by the Internal Revenue Service to file a Form 990 to maintain its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. This is due by the 20th of April each year; as such, the form was professionally completed and submitted by Far Hills Accounting.

The Society is so very grateful to all of its donors, members and sponsors who have generously provided the Society with funds to continue its mission. The Society thanks them for their generosity.

The Long-Romspert homestead was built in 1863 (when Lincoln was president!), and like all older homes it has many maintenance needs. This year the house was repainted, the two A/C units replaced, the garage doors repaired, basement lentils repaired and repainted.

Fortunately, the Society had the foresight to establish an endowment fund at the Dayton Foundation. As of December 31, 2023, the balance was \$276,736. The fund guidelines recommend that the Society access no more than 4% of the market value annually.

2023 Annual Financial Report

For the period January through December 2023
Prepared by Treasurer Debra Schenk (post audit)

Revenue

Donations	\$11,647
Membership Dues	5,617
Special Events Profits	22,426
Sponsorships	1,575
Merchandise Sales	<u>1,863</u>
Total Revenue	\$43,128

Expense

Utilities	\$6,899
Property Maintenance	4,546
Gardens and Grounds	10,160
Newsletter, Postage & Office	6,658
Insurance	5,293
Professional Fees	<u>709</u>
Total Expense	\$34,265

Net Income

Revenue minus Expense	\$8,863
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Capital Improvements

Painting and Repairs	\$24,608
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Transfer from Endowment

	\$10,000
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Net Cash

	-\$5,745
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Maintenance at the Homestead

As everyone who lives in Oakwood knows, old buildings require a lot of maintenance. The buildings at the historical society are no different, especially since the buildings range in age from 1860's to the most recent portions in the 1920's.

With a large house and four outbuildings on an acre of land, there is always something in need of attention.

When 1947 Far Hills was given to the Historical Society by Ethel Romspert in 1984, there was much that needed to be done. Water damage inside the second floor bedrooms. No bathroom on the first floor, the front yard had for years had so much honeysuckle growth that you couldn't see the house while walking to school on the sidewalk. Former president Ron Versic told the story that when walking to Smith School as a child, he had no idea there was a house back there! Over the first dozen years there was a huge maintenance effort, and then for a few years, there was a huge sigh of relief.

But of course there would be more to come. In the early 2000's the summer kitchen had to be totally rebuilt. In 2008, there was a push to have the house fully ready for interpretive tours in time for the Oakwood Centennial celebration. In 2019, the Carriage House was rebuilt, requiring a new cement floor, new roof, and replacing two thirds of the back of the building. In 2020, a boy scout Eagle project rebuilt the Spring House which had among other things been tilted by huge walnut tree roots trying to make their way down to the water running deep below. And now, in 2023 and 2024, the main house is again in need of skilled labor.

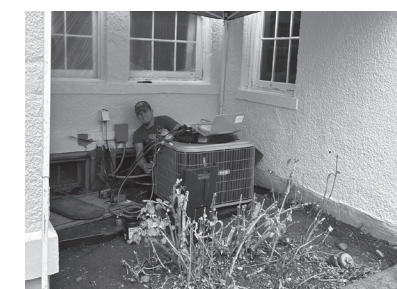
You may have noticed that the house got a new color and new paint last fall. It had been a good 20 years for that last paint job. It is now cream colored instead of the former yellow color.



Research showed that the house was originally creamy white, and this is a return to that color.



You may also have noticed that the windows are looking a bit wonky. We got deep into the window project then our painter and restorer broke his shoulder. Now we are working windows a few at a time. A generous donation was made to restore two windows on an upstairs back bedroom in honor of the woman who was a boarder there for a number of years.



This year we have several projects that are not easily visible to the casual observer, but still important to the integrity of the estate. We restored the basement windows and lintels, and repaired cracks in the foundation. We also replaced our two air conditioning units, which finally gave up the ghost (and all their freon) this past fall. Their 20+ year life was a good one, but newer and better things are coming. Our fingers are crossed that the furnaces still have some good years ahead of them. The garage door frame, which was over 100 years old, has been replaced with new termite-free wood and is now waiting for paint.

Many other projects are in the planning stages. We will continue to update you as we continue this major undertaking. As we go along, if we have good information for others going through the same issues, we will post some of our tips.



With You, Our Future is Bright!

It is with great excitement that we announce the upcoming 50th anniversary of the inception of The Oakwood Historical Society (TOHS). We are currently in the planning stages for a September 14, 2024, celebration.

On August 29, 1974, after the incredible investment of an amazing group of Oakwood individuals, approval was granted for our incorporation and 501(c)3 record. Those founding members have now gone before us, but their desire to share the heritage and history of Oakwood still lives on through the numerous individuals who serve(d) as board members, TOHS members, and individual volunteers who are too numerous to count. The legacy continues!

The history of the City of Oakwood can be covered in many stories, but the one we will focus on here is of the Longs and Romsperts. Our house museum, the Long-Romspert Homestead at 1945 Far Hills, has watched Oakwood grow from a farming community in Van Buren Township to a failed town in 1872, to a growing suburb, then to a prosperous city.

The name Long-Romspert Homestead is the official name of our museum. It is a common convention to name houses after their owners. Our house was built by Henry and Harriet Long, passed on to their daughter, Laura Long-Romspert, then to her son Harry Romspert and his wife Ethel. Henry Long was born in Maryland and came here with his father, Peter, in 1828. Peter Long purchased a quarter section on what is now Southern Blvd., and his house still stands at the corner of Laurelwood Rd. Henry was one of 13 children, and in 1856 he set out to start his own family by purchasing a quarter section (160 acres) and built a log cabin on what is now Park Rd. Henry's wife was Harriett Shroyer. Her family-owned premier farmlands in Oakwood, and around 1856 Henry and Harriett moved farther south towards the Shroyer farm and started building what would become our house museum. At first, the Longs thought they would farm like Harriett's family, but they soon realized their acreage was at the end of a Wisconsin



Glacier moraine and that the land was almost all gravel close to the surface. As luck would have it, the location along the Lebanon Turnpike (State Route 48) was ideal for a new type of business—a gravel quarry.

Much transformation has happened over the years since Long-Romspert Homestead was built and TOHS came into existence, but the most significant, for us, has been the gift of the Long-Romspert home. Our current headquarters. It was built during the Civil War, and in 1985 was generously left to The Oakwood Historical Society by Ethel Romspert. This gift opened the door for TOHS to start doing tours, events, presentations, and the list goes on.

As we all know, the last several years created much change for everyone including The Oakwood Historical Society. The last 2½ years we have slowly started things back up with our children's garden program, fall family photos, a significant overall of the archives (with more Oakwood history uncovered), and most significantly giving our exterior a fresh look with what we believe to be the original stucco color from the 1920's when a significant addition was done and the brick was covered in stucco.

As we ponder our next 50 years our goal is to increase our traffic through museum tours (COMING VERY SOON), restoration of our windows (with possible preservation classes), increased events and programs, and most importantly getting more of YOU, the amazing citizens of Oakwood, involved in this wonderful, history filled city we call home.



Classics on the Lawn Returns in August

Save the date of Sunday, August 18, 2024 for The Oakwood Historical Society's "Classics on the Lawn" Car Show and Open House. Fifty classic, vintage, exotic and special interest automobiles will be on exhibit on the



grounds of The Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum at 1947 Far Hills Ave. from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. A lunch will also be available and house will be open with docent guided tours.



One of Oakwood's most iconic landmarks, "The Homestead" is the headquarters of The Oakwood Historical Society and is decorated in the style, furnishings and artifacts representing the periods from an 1860s farmhouse to a 1920s suburban home.

Due to limited parking, guests are encouraged to use side street parking or enjoy a Summer walk or bike ride to "The Homestead".



Member and Volunteer Opportunities

Thank you for your membership and interest in The Oakwood Historical Society. Do you have a neighbor or friend with an interest in history? For its size and location, Dayton and its neighbor Oakwood are incredibly rich in the history that often has affected the whole World.

The society is always looking for new members and volunteers who can help preserve our local history. Members and volunteers can help maintain The Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum, serve as docents and tour guides for events, assist in researching the historical aspects of the Oakwood/Dayton area and participate in

educational and informative programs. The society is looking for input from members of all backgrounds and experiences.

If you know of someone who may be interested, please have them contact info@oakwoodhistory.org.

New Clocks in the Homestead

August 20, 2023, turned out to be an important day for The Oakwood Historical Society. It was the day of the Classics on the Lawn, and the front lawn was a showroom for beautifully restored vehicles.

My assignment that day was inside the House Museum giving mini tours and answering any questions from guests. It was interesting to meet a gentleman who had been a former caretaker of the house and grounds for a period. He swore that he had many long, night conversations with Laura Romspert during the time of his employment. There were adults who remembered coming to the House Museum when they were in the Oakwood schools and were now bringing their children to see it.



However, the most fortuitous meeting that day was with Earl Harlamert and Tim Gitzinger who were eating their lunches in the 1920's kitchen. Earl kindly asked me why we had a "Made in Japan" 1950's clock on the wall in the dining room. He followed up that question with another one "Would the Historical Society be interested in a donation of a period appropriate clock?"

It turns out that Earl not only collects cars (he had a 1958 Chevrolet outside on the lawn), but he is the current vice president and former president of Buckeye Chapter 23 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors. I brought Debra Edwards into the conversation at this point because I felt it was a special opportunity for the Historical Society and wanted her input.

I contacted Earl afterwards and asked for more information about the club and the steps it follows for approving donations. He stated that any club

member can bring a proposal for donation to the board who then investigates the request and "deems" whether the recipients are worthy. Then a description of the request is sent out to the members who can respond. After his request on behalf of the Oakwood Historical Society was communicated, there were two noteworthy responses.

Consequently, the House Museum had two clocks donated by two different members. A Seth Thomas schoolhouse clock made in the 1920's in Connecticut, which takes the place of the Japanese made clock in the dining room. It was donated by Tim Gitzinger, an Oakwood resident. Tim's father was a long-time member of the clock club, and the clock was donated in his memory. It now hangs in the 1920's dining room and is ticking!



The other clock that was donated is in the 1860's side of the house. It is a Made in Dayton clock from approximately 1843. It is a 30-hour woodworks clock, which means that it has a wooden movement. It was donated anonymously by an Oakwood resident who wanted it to be given to the Oakwood Historical Society. This beautiful clock now perches on the mantel in the 1860's side of the house opposite the portrait of Katherine Houk Talbott.

The Oakwood Historical Society is thankful to Buckeye Chapter 23 for facilitating these two generous donations of period appropriate clocks.



Far Hills Speaker Series Begins its Fall Session

The dates for the Speaker Series for this fall are now available. These events are held in conjunction with the Wright Memorial Public Library (WMPL). The lectures are on Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. in the WPML Community Room.

Victory in the Pacific: Stories of Local Veterans and Their Role in WWII
presented by local author Ken Serey
Sunday, September 15 at 2:00 pm

As we lose World War II veterans at a strikingly rapid rate their stories become ever more precious. Ken will share the firsthand accounts as told to him from the Pacific Theater veterans- their stories of endurance, survival, courage, and sacrifice made in the name of our country and our freedom as they bravely served in the Pacific. Ken will share stories that might have gone undocumented but now are documented and can be shared for generations to come.

Oakwood Notables in Woodland Cemetery
presented by David Schmidt
Sunday, October 20 at 2:00 pm

Lucky Eddie: The Life, Times and Family of Dayton US Congressman Edward G. Breen
presented by Edward Breen
Sunday, November 17 at 2:00 pm

Schedule Your Fall Family Photo Sessions at our House Museum

Need pictures for your holiday cards? A \$135 donation to the Oakwood Historical Society will get you a 20 minute session with Mark's Photo and Video LLC.



All photos will be lightly edited, and available to download from the photographer's website.

Want physical copies? Simply take your photos to a photo printing store or an online site and make as many copies as you want!

For more information and to reserve a session, visit our website at oakwoodhistory.org

If you have questions, please reach out to Linda Pearson at lpearson@oakwoodhistory.org.





THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1947 Far Hills Avenue
Dayton, OH 45419

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL

The Oakwood Historical Society Membership Form

Membership Categories *(Please check one)*

- Individual\$25.00
- Family\$35.00
- Business\$50.00
- Bronze\$75.00
- Silver\$100.00
- Gold\$200.00

Date _____

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Spouse/Partner _____

Business/Organization (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail Address _____

Receive a \$5 Discount *(Check if applicable)*

- Student
- Senior
- Active Military

Please make Checks Payable to:

The Oakwood Historical Society

Mail Checks to: 1947 Far Hills Ave., Dayton, OH 45419

To Pay via Credit Card: Visit www.OakwoodHistory.org and click "Get Involved", and then "Join"

The information that you submit will be used only by the Oakwood Historical Society and will not be given or sold to outside parties.