

**AASLH Leadership in History Awards**  
**The Lakewood History Project**  
**Summary**

The Lakewood Historical Society partnered with Grant Elementary School to create a successful ongoing educational program for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade children. Each year, the students in Nadine Bluemel's Discovery Class create a documentary on an aspect of Lakewood history with the guidance of Mazie Adams, Executive Director of the Lakewood Historical Society. The students study primary and secondary source material, conduct oral history interviews and explore the appropriate historic sites. The students write a script, create a documentary by editing audio clips, interviews, photographs, narration and music using iMovie, and then premiere the finished documentary to family, school officials and the public. Two of the documentaries are available for public viewing and future generations through the society's website.

Over the years, the students expanded their understanding of the community in which they live. They learned about everyday life in different Lakewood neighborhoods and the impact of immigration, religious communities, schools, industry, business districts and transportation on community development. They made lasting connections across generations, learning about history through the experiences and stories of their elders. The project sparked renewed interest in local history among the participating adults, members of the society and the general public. All were impressed by the work of the students and the society.

The Lakewood Historical Society furthered its mission to preserve and interpret the history of our community through this innovative and effective program. The society inspired a new generation of history learners and raised awareness in the general public about our programs and mission.

## **AASLH Leadership in History Awards The Lakewood History Project**

The Lakewood History Project inspires children to learn about the history of their community and then to share it with others. The students study primary and secondary source material including maps, books, pamphlets and advertisements; search the internet; conduct oral history interviews; work individually, in small groups and as a class; explore the appropriate area of Lakewood on foot; and acquire and select historic photographs. Using all of this material, the students create a documentary movie. The students created three documentaries: The Heart of Lakewood, The Templar Automobile and Birdtown.

**The Heart of Lakewood:** The main cross-roads in Lakewood, the Detroit-Warren intersection is rich in history. The students learned about the businesses, schools and municipal operations that were within walking distance from their own school and studied how land use in that area changed over time.

**Templar: The Superfine Small Car:** The Templar automobile was manufactured in Lakewood during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The students conducted an oral history with the daughter of a Templar employee and worked with Templar expert and collector David Buehler, who shared original documents, car parts, advertisements and a ride in a restored Templar auto.

**Birdtown: Lakewood's Oldest Neighborhood:** The National Carbon Company developed the Birdtown area as a neighborhood for their predominantly Eastern European immigrant workers. The students conducted oral histories of five residents of the area, the ward councilperson, and a member of the City of Lakewood planning department.

The students shared their work with the public in a variety of ways. The documentaries were shown in school to audiences that included the school superintendent, oral history interviewees, parents, research partners and school board members. The students presented the documentaries at city council meetings and to over 1,500 people at the Come Home to Lakewood House Tour. One student wrote an article about the project for the local newspaper and the Birdtown documentary will be incorporated into the school wide history curriculum of Harrison Elementary, the Birdtown neighborhood school.

The Lakewood History Project meets the majority of the Lakewood City Schools Standards—Courses of Study and the State of Ohio Curriculum Benchmarks for Grade 2 and 3 Social Studies. The project utilizes various forms of technology, including AlphaSmarts for note taking and a SmartBoard in the classroom to view and edit photographs, the script and the movie. All students coordinate music, audio clips, interviews, photographs and narration using iMovie. Two of the three completed documentaries are available for viewing on the internet at [www.lakewoodhistory.org](http://www.lakewoodhistory.org). Additional equipment required for the project include a BrailleWriter, a Sony CyberShot 8.1 and a Sony MiniDV Camcorder.

This very successful partnership continues with a focus on Cowan Pottery in 2007-2008 and a revisit to the Detroit-Warren intersection in 2008-2009 (to include a Ohio Historic Marker project). The Lakewood Historical Society and Grant Elementary School look forward to many more documentaries to come.