

## SPECIAL 175th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The town of Dayton, Ohio, in 1840, boasted a population of 6,000. The travel accommodations were managed by stagecoach service, and merchants and manufacturers received and delivered goods by way of canal boats from Dayton to Cincinnati.

In a small booklet, authored by Robert W. Steele, and published on the occasion of the Cemetery's Triennial Meeting in February 1875, he wrote the following: "In 1840 a movement was made to establish a rural cemetery where every possible safeguard should be thrown around the resting place of the dead. Mr. John Van Cleve took the initiative in the movement ..."

The first graveyard was established at the northeast corner of Third and Main Streets, land donated by Daniel Cooper. A few years later, it was evident that the town was growing more rapidly than had been anticipated. Mr. Cooper once again donated land on the south side of Fifth Street between Ludlow and Wilkinson, for a new cemetery. In less than thirty years, its burial space was diminishing. Mr. Van Cleve took on the task to find a large area at a reasonable price to avoid another miscalculation. About a mile south of town, Augustus George had a large tract of land that had not yet been cleared of timber and was criss-crossed by steep hills and ravines, that he was willing to sell; forty acres in all, at sixty dollars per acre.

Van Cleve calculated that he would need fifty subscribers who were willing to invest one hundred dollars each, to form an organization, purchase the property, and still have money in the bank for labor and materials. Van Cleve himself would see to the surveying, the platting, and the preparation of necessary business records. He would also author the Articles of Association.

The first official written record of proceedings of the cemetery are as follows: Fifty subscribers having been obtained to the Articles of Association for the government, management and regulation of The Woodland Cemetery Association of Dayton, and said Articles thereby becoming valid and binding upon each of the said subscribers, and the Association having been thereby legally constituted, according to the provisions of the said Articles, notice was given to the subscribers to meet at the office of the Firemen's Insurance Company in Dayton, on Thursday evening, February 18, 1841, for the election of the officers of the Association.

Thirty-one subscribers attended the meeting and the following men were elected as Officers: Trustees: Job Haines, James Perrine, Edward Davies, J. D. Phillips and John Van Cleve; Robert C. Schenck, Secretary; David Z. Pierce, Treasurer.

On February 27, 1841, John Van Cleve was elected President of the Association. A deed to the George property was received in April and work began on May 17, 1841. The preparation of the ground was, in the beginning, arduous, as the work was accomplished by means of axes, crosscut and buck saws, picks and shovels, mauls and wedges, gangs of laborers and powerful animals.



ENTRANCE TO WOODLAND CEMETERY.



Augustus George died on April 13, 1852 at the age of 62. He is located in Section 57 Lot 145.

*Woodland Cemetery is proud to partner with the following organizations: The National Aviation Heritage Area; The Aviation Trail, Inc.; Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Park and ThinkTV.*



# Woodland Wire

The initial projects in 1841 were: clear the brush and timber in the areas chosen for initial sale, build a fence to enclose the grounds, and build a sexton's house.

The Woodland Charter was passed by the Ohio General Assembly on February 28, 1842 and adopted by the Association on April 10, 1842. Woodland Trustees gave public notice that the cemetery would be open for the sale of burial lots on June 7, 1843.

On June 21, 1843, a ceremony was held to officially dedicate the cemetery. The opening prayer was given by the Reverend James Barnes of the First Presbyterian Church; an address was delivered by Reverend J. W Hall of the Third Street Presbyterian Church; the dedication and closing prayer were given by Reverend Ethan Allen of the Episcopal Church.

“Unfinished work” was the subject of an entry into the ledgers on February 17, 1844. It was noted that “it will be proper to construct a receiving vault within the cemetery. No arrangements have been made for that purpose.”

However it seems that arrangements were made or the construction was completed for mention of it was made in the Minutes of the regular Triennial Meeting of February 17, 1847, when the expense of \$471.63½ appeared for Receiving Vault. Built in the “theme of Thebes and Karnac.” It was built to receive caskets, that, for whatever reason, could not be interred immediately. It was most frequently used during the severe winter months when the ground was frozen as to prohibit digging.

On May 22, 1849, 19-year old William Munday died of cholera. By June 13, Dayton had an epidemic on its hands. It is estimated that 225 deaths occurred and of those 225, 53 were interred in Woodland.

In 1850, the Trustees desired to enclose the cemetery with a stone fence. The stones were to be “not less than six inches nor more than eight inches thick, to be not less than three feet wide, with parallel sides, and not to be less than nine feet long on both sides.” By 1861, the project “was found to be impractical and hard to procure.” It was once said that “it did look pretty good on paper.”

John Van Cleve died on September 6, 1858 and had served as Woodland’s first President for 17 years. Robert W. Steele was then elected as President and he continued the work that had been begun by Van Cleve. Both men had the same interest in education and horticulture, and the same pride in the care of Woodland.

Additional land was secured in the 1850s from the heirs of Augustus George as well as from Nathaniel Hart extending the boundaries of the cemetery to Wyoming Street.

Samuel Forrer, an engineer and canal expert, was hired to lay out roads and survey the new ground. Adolph Strauch, a highly regarded landscape gardener was hired to assist Mr. Forrer in regard to improvements to the new area. Mr. Strauch applied his expertise by highlighting unusual features of the topography, by making use of the natural flora as scenic backdrops, arranging lots in such a manner as to be easily accessible and complementary to the whole. This was a drastic departure from the early regimen of church burial grounds and was the forerunner of the landscaped, garden-style cemetery movement.



The first interment was that of Allen Cullum, a native of Butler County, on July 11, 1843. He is located in Section 77 Lot 83.



By 1867, the grounds of Woodland Cemetery had attracted many visitors. It was *the* place to go for a Sunday stroll. There were beautifully landscaped areas: flowers, and ferns, and great iron urns filled with exotic plants, and wire and wrought iron benches on which to rest and contemplate. The popularity of Woodland led many people to take advantage of the open hospitality offered. So, in 1867, this entry appeared in the Minute Book: “Complaints having been made of the large number of persons visiting the cemetery on Sundays. And the disorder, and injury to flowers and shrubbery resulting there from, it was, on motion, Resolved: No person excepting Lot Owners and their families, and those attending funerals, be admitted to the grounds on Sunday, and that tickets be provided and furnished to Lot Owners on application to the Superintendent at the gate.”

How long this restriction was in force is not clear. There are passes in the historical records bearing the date of August 16, 1926.

As you can imagine, 175 years of continuous service has take its toll on this venerable institution and the resources required for maintaining this beautiful destination are significant. We ask that you please join us in supporting the restoration and preservation of our historic Dayton treasure, Historic Woodland Chapel, so that future generations can enjoy the beauty and history of Woodland for another 175 years.

The Historic Woodland Chapel was originally completed in 1887. The building contract was let on November 8, 1886. The designers were Peters, Burns and Pretzinger Architects of Dayton. The price mentioned on October 9, 1894 was \$7,920 and there were six different subcontractors involved.

The size of the original building was less than it is now. The Chapel extended only to the point where the sanctuary widens and the back wall was at that point. The winter use of the Chapel was enhanced through the addition of steam heat radiators in 1896. The steam was piped underground into the Chapel from a wood fired boiler in the basement of the office.

In 1898, the Chapel was enlarged to its present size and a basement was included which became the receiving vault replacing the old subterranean vault, built in 1847 by James Wuichet and located in cemetery section 62. After chapel services, the receiving vault was accessed through the use of a hand-operated elevator which can still be seen in front of the alter. The casket usually rested on a bier which was in fact the elevator raised to a convenient height. At the conclusion of the service, the casket was lowered into the basement by using the elevator and then it was stored until removed for its burial or final disposition.

In 1904, Henry C. Lowe of Dayton provided \$10,000 to fund a memorial in honor of his daughter Marianna who had died in September 1903. "Miss Marianna Lowe had been in failing health for some time and went to Colorado in quest of improved health at Colorado Springs. She was 26 years of age. Her mother died when she was quite young and she was a close companion of her father." Tiffany Studios of New York was hired to redesign the interior of the Chapel. A Tiffany window was purchased by the Cemetery Board of Trustees at a cost of \$1,050. The Tiffany window was installed by Heinke & Bowen, who were operatives of Tiffany Studios of New York, owned by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The new stained glass window featured a pastoral scene in the arts and crafts style. Additionally installed were a row of eight Tiffany stained glass windows on the east and west sides of the Chapel which are paired with Byzantine columns and sunburst mosaic arched transoms. Tiffany also installed a hand-cut tile floor, frescoed wall surfaces and ornate lighting sconces. A copy of an original invoice was found in the Woodland archives to confirm the Tiffany re-designs.

The Historic Chapel was used for services until 1969 when the present Woodland Mausoleum was opened with its beautiful modern Chapel. From this time until 1991, the structure was used very little and became a storage facility. The Chapel, Front Gates and Administration building were placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings in 1979. In 1991, the Historic Chapel and Administration Office underwent a renovation and the Chapel was converted into a more functional condition with the addition of carpeting and new lighting fixtures. It was determined that the new space could be used to house the counselors and some administration activities such as the counseling of families in need of cemetery and/or mausoleum spaces and memorial stones and urns. The Historic Chapel provided a quiet, dignified retreat for persons to discuss their needs with their counselors.

Today, the Historic Chapel houses six staff members including Family Service Representatives, Memorial Design Administrator and Development Manager. The Historic Chapel is open six days a week during business hours. Guests and visitors are encouraged to stop by and visit the Historic Chapel, take photos of the Tiffany windows and décor and learn more about the history of Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum.



Historic Chapel with trumpet vines. ca. 1898



Undated photo of the Chapel interior with the north wall Tiffany window, hydraulic lift and Tiffany frescoes.

# 2015 Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum - The Year in Photos



*Beautiful, Timeless and Still Available...*