

A Timeline of Celebrated African Americans at Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum

Part II

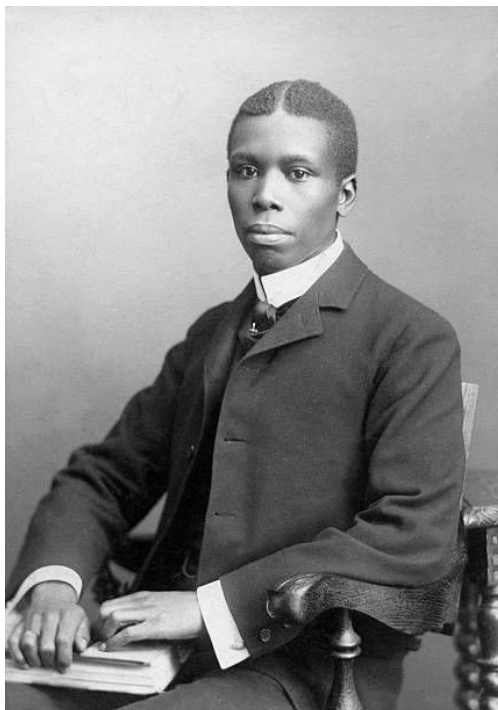
Each year in February we celebrate Black History Month by introducing you to men and women of color who made their mark in Dayton's history. This year, we present a selected timeline of Dayton's Black History honoring those who are resting peacefully at Woodland.

What is Black History Month?

Black History Month was first proposed by black educators and the Black United Students at Kent State University in February 1969. The first celebration of Black History Month took place at Kent State a year later, from January 2 to February 28, 1970.

Six years later, Black History Month was being celebrated all across the country in educational institutions, centers of Black culture and community centers, both great and small, when President Gerald Ford recognized Black History Month in 1976, during the celebration of the United States Bicentennial. He urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history".

Source: Wikipedia



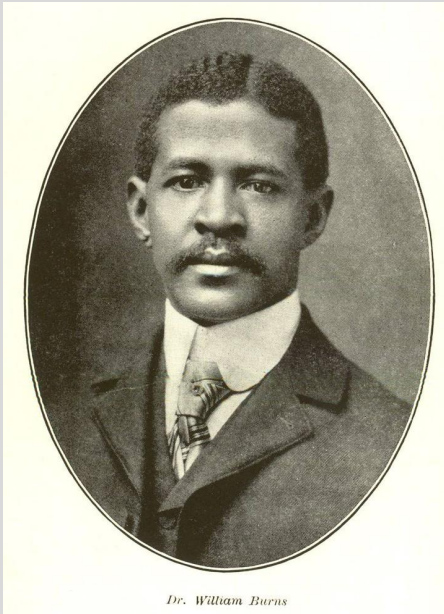
1872—Paul Laurence Dunbar is born. On June 16, 1891, he became Central High School's first black graduate and the first black student to graduate from any Dayton high school. He was the editor of the *Dayton Tattler*, the city's first black newspaper. Dunbar is considered by many



On December 13, 1890, Dunbar and an associate, Preston Finley, published the first issue of *Dayton Tattler*, a black-oriented weekly newspaper printed by Wright & Wright, Printers, owned by Orville and Wilbur Wright.

to be one of America's greatest black poets and writers. Paul Laurence Dunbar died of tuberculosis on February 9, 1906. He is located in Section 101 Lot 3465.

Dayton Tattler
Issue: December 27, 1890. Page: 1.
Photo credit: Dayton Metro Library



Dr. William Burns

1889—Dr. William “Bud” Burns becomes Dayton’s first black medical doctor. Dr. Burns was a close friend of Paul Laurence Dunbar and served as Dunbar’s physician. Dr. Burns was voted as a trustee of the Dayton Academy of Medicine in 1903 and 1904. He was also a Captain and an assistant surgeon in the Ohio National Guard. Dr. Burns died at the age of 32 from typhoid fever on November 19, 1905. He is located in Section 33 Lot 2233.



1900—James Parsons is born in Dayton. Parsons became the director of Dayton’s Duriron Research Laboratory where he supervised the nation’s only all black laboratory. He earned more than a half-dozen patents for processes he developed vital to the development of stainless steel. Mr. Parsons died on March 5, 1989. He is located in the Mausoleum in the Nativity room.



1912—Joseph M. Shaw, a skilled tailor from South Carolina, leaves his day job as a train servant and opens Shaw Cleaners in west Dayton. He was able to send his son, Joseph W. Shaw, to college at Howard University and Ohio State University. Joseph W. returned to Dayton and led the family business. Joseph then sent his son, Joseph W. Shaw II to college and he returned to the family business as did his son Dayton City Commissioner Christopher Shaw. Joseph M. Shaw was born January 18, 1882 in South Carolina and died March 10, 1948. He is located in Section 126 Lot 24. Joseph W. Shaw was born August 7, 1912 and died November 8, 2002. He is located in Section 83 Lot 1830.



1918—The West Side Day Nursery opens in a house on Fifth Street as a free nursery for working mothers. In 1958, the nursery was renamed The Melissa Bess Day Care Center to honor it’s longtime director Melissa Bess. ‘Mama Bess,’ as she was known, was born in Paris, Kentucky and came to Dayton as a teenager. She attended Wilberforce University where she studied nursing, child care and child psychiatry. She retired from the center at age 75 after giving 43 years of service. Melissa Bess was born December 14, 1886 and died November 29, 1965 at the age of 78. She is located in Section 123 Lot 273.



1919—Jazz musician Mitchell 'Booty' Wood is born in Dayton. He learned to play trombone and after graduating high school, he played jazz in local clubs then joined the Lionel Hampton Band. He also played with Count Bassie and Duke Ellington. After years on the road he came back to Dayton to teach jazz at Dunbar High School and Central State University. Mitchell Wood died on June 10, 1987. He is located in Section 300 Lot 40.

LeROY COX, Pharmacist

346 West Fifth Street

Prescriptions Carefully Compounded
Drugs, Sundries, Cigars and Candies
Pure Syrups used in our Soda

Phone Orders delivered to any part of City

Bell Phone 3983

Home Phone 12478

1920—Cox Drugstore, located at 842 W. Fifth Street, is opened by Dr. LeRoy Cox, Dayton's first black licensed pharmacist. Dr. Cox was a Dayton pharmacist for 42 years. While Cox Pharmacy no longer exists today, it was located at the corner of Mound and Fifth Street. LeRoy Cox was born in Camden, Arkansas and died in Dayton on July 14, 1949 at the age of 67. He is located in Section 102 Lot 3600 in an unmarked grave.

The above ad is from the *Dayton Herald* dated April 20, 1910. Dr. Cox opens his first pharmacy on West Fifth Street east of the Great Miami River before moving to 842 West Fifth Street in what would be the Wright Dunbar District today.

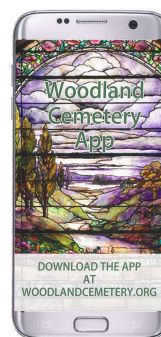
This series of Celebrated African Americans will run each Sunday in February. You can learn more about these and other African Americans in our Black History tour located on our website or on our mobile app. Click on the links in the next section to view them all.

Sources for the timeline: Dayton Daily News, The Dayton Journal Herald, Preservation Dayton, and Dayton's African American Heritage, by Margaret E. Peters, a project of the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center.

You can take your own walking tour at the cemetery or a virtual tour from the comfort of your couch by visiting our website at: woodlandcemetery.org/tours.

From your phone you will be prompted to download our app. Take one of 12 walking tours we have available for your enjoyment at the cemetery. If you are on your desktop, laptop or tablet, you can take the tour right from the tour page. We will be adding more tours so come back often to learn about the men and women who made it Great in Dayton.

[Download the mobile app for your phone by clicking here.](#)



Memories of a loved one should last for generations.

Using our app, you can:

- Navigate to your relative or friend's grave using our GPS-based system
- Share stories about your family
- Upload photos and video
- Share memories with your family on Facebook

Your loved one's memorial page is automatically created when you make cemetery arrangements with our office. You may also share and upload information by using our burial database via our website (woodlandcemetery.org). (please contact our office if you need assistance)



THANK YOU for supporting us through our 180th Anniversary!

We hope you will continue to support the Woodland Arboretum Foundation as we move through 2022. Support of the Chapel restoration and preservation project is our most critical need as you will soon see the outside of the Chapel and Administration Building receiving new sandstone pieces and eroding and disintegrating elements replaced. Once the stonework is complete, the beloved Tiffany windows will return and be put back in place. The Tiffany mosaic floor will be restored and the beautiful interior woodwork will also receive a facelift. We are hopeful to open the doors to the public once again in late 2022.

Please consider making a first time donation or an annual donation to the Chapel Fund. Donate on our secure website by clicking below or click on the check to receive a donation form to mail in.

**Click Here
Donate Now**



Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum | [Visit our website!](#)

