



SINCE 1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



Mystery Minute #4

On October 10th, 1921, a man named William Hendrix (sometimes 'Hendricks') had an appointment at 1:30 in the afternoon to meet with his attorney, Lucien Soward.

When Hendrix arrived at Soward's office on the eleventh floor of downtown Dayton's Reibold building, he was stunned to find Soward dead. Clearly the victim of a violent attack, 45 year old Lucien Soward was discovered lying face down in a pool of blood and ink. Beside his body was the broken blade of an ordinary pocketknife.

Investigators determined that the murder must have occurred between 1 and 1:15

that afternoon, but found little else in the way of clues. What had happened inside Lucien Soward's office that day?



Above: Reibold building ca 1930s, located at the corner of West 4th & Main St., Dayton Ohio. Photo courtesy: [Dayton Vistas](#).

The Reibold building was named for its developer, Louis Napoleon Reibold.

The Peters, Burns, and Pretzinger firm (who built Woodland's main entrance) and Charles Insko Williams (resting in section 36, lot 1530) are credited as its architects.

In 1934, it became the first building in Dayton to install escalators (8).

Used for government offices since the 1970s, during its heyday the Reibold building was home to a variety of businesses; including lawyers, a variety of doctors, insurance companies, and even beauty salons.

According to his colleagues, Lucien Soward had earned a reputation for driving a hard bargain in his business dealings (2). He was an athletic man who didn't like to back down from a fight (2) (3).

Over Soward's 20+ year career practicing law in Dayton, his attitude had turned some former clients into enemies (1). At least a few of those people had threatened him.

Plenty of people had a bone to pick with Lucien Soward, but who had killed him? Why had they done it?

How could something like this happen in one of the busiest buildings in town without anybody noticing?

An autopsy performed by Coroner E.E. Kimmell revealed that Soward's wounds were consistent with the knife blade found beside his body.



The blade had been broken off of "an ordinary pocket knife" and was no more than 4 inches long (sources vary (2)(3)).

The unknown assailant had stabbed Soward at least seven times; five wounds were noted on his right arm, an additional stab wound was found below Soward's right shoulderblade. The final blow, landing just above his heart, had pierced the aortic arch and caused Soward's death (2). A wound in Soward's skull was attributed to a large inkwell usually kept on the attorney's desk.

Used as a weapon, the heavy glass inkwell could certainly cause such an injury. If it had been thrown, maybe at Soward, it would explain the ink smeared across Soward's face and hands, not to mention splattered over the rest of the crime scene (1).



Above: Officials search Lucian Soward's office at 1163 Reibold building.
Photo courtesy of the *Dayton Daily News*, 10/11/1921 pg. 1

It was clear to investigators that an intense struggle had broken out inside Soward's office.

"A heavy iron radiator had been torn from the floor; the telephone had been torn from the desk; papers were scattered everywhere; chairs were overturned and the glass doors in bookcases were shattered. (2)"

What really happened that day on the eleventh floor? Who else had been in Lucian Soward's office on October 10th? How had the murderer managed to escape without a trace?

Join us next week as we learn about the suspects and evidence to see if we can shed some light on this 100 year old cold case...

Lucien Soward was buried at Woodland Cemetery on October 13th, 1921. His grave can be located in section 14, lot 3227, just off the Lookout path.



Sources:

1. The *Dayton Herald*, 10/10/1921 pg. 1
2. The *Dayton Herald*, 10/11/1921 pg. 1 & 8:

3. Dayton Daily News, 10/11/1921 pg. 1 & 2
4. Dayton Daily News, 10/12/1921 pg. 1 & 2
5. The Dayton Herald, 10/14/1921 pg. 1
6. The Dayton Herald, 12/19/1921 pg. 2
7. Dayton Daily News, 10/11/1922 pg. 17
8. Andrew Walsh (07/10/2024). History of the Reibold Building in Three Phases; Dayton Vistas

Upcoming Events!



Street Names of Dayton:

If you've ever driven through Woodland Cemetery you may have noticed that many of the monuments have the names of many of the streets in Dayton.

On this tour, we'll introduce you to the men and women whose streets bear their name and how they contributed to the history of Dayton.

Meet at the Eichelberger Plaza at the main gates of the cemetery. Parking is available both inside and outside the gates.

Please wear comfortable walking shoes and bring a water bottle if needed. Tours will launch rain or shine, except in the event of thunder or lightning.

Upcoming Tours:

11/16 @ 11 am

Click [here](#) to register!



Military Tribute Tour:

This guided tour through Woodland honors our fallen and military service heroes from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam War.

Meet at the Eichelberger Plaza at the main gates of the cemetery. Parking is available both inside and outside the gates.

Please wear comfortable walking shoes and bring a water bottle if needed. Tours will launch rain or shine, except in the event of thunder or lightning.

Upcoming Tours:

11/11 @ 11 am

Click [here](#) to register!

Support Woodland:

Woodland is proud to remain an active part of the Dayton community as a popular place to walk, relax and enjoy.

We invite you to contribute to the Woodland Arboretum Foundation to ensure that

what's meaningful to you today, continues tomorrow! Your gift makes an immediate impact on the horticulture, arboriculture, and restoration efforts needed to maintain one of Dayton's most historic and beautiful outdoor museums.

Thank you for your generous support of Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum.

[DONATE ONLINE!](#)

Come Visit Us!



Office Hours:

Monday-Friday
8am-5pm

If you need help finding where someone is buried, need directions to a particular area, or have questions about pre-planning or funeral services, Woodland's Staff is here to assist you!

Volunteer opportunities

Woodland is seeking volunteers to give presentations to community groups on subjects such as local history, notable biographies, and trees.

Not into public speaking? Consider getting involved with our horticulture team, or assisting with special events & research projects.

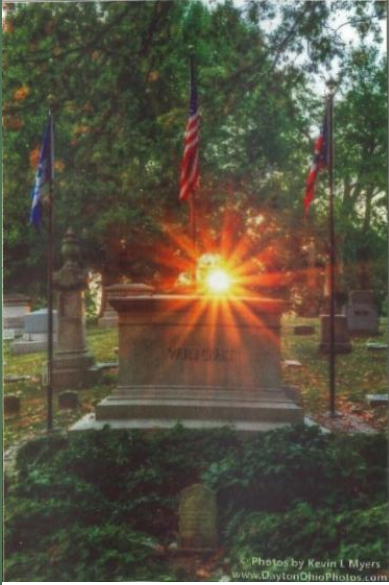
*If there is something you'd like to see here at Woodland please reach out to us & suggest it!

Tours & More:

We welcome walkers, runners, and wanderers -- leashed dogs & school groups.

Register for a guided tour visit the Woodland Cemetery website! Learn about fascinating Daytonians resting peacefully in one of America's oldest rural garden cemeteries! Or check out our virtual tours! (if you really don't want to go outside)





Photos by Kevin L. Myers
www.DaytonOhioPhotos.com



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WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM

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Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum

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Discover the men and women who made it great in Dayton on a guided walking or bus tour. Self-guided tours are available on our mobile app.

For information call 937-228-3221 or e-mail info@woodlandcemetery.org

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