



SINCE

1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



Earl H. Kiser

(1875-1936)

Boy on a Bike

Born in Dayton in 1875, the story goes that when he was a small boy, Earl Kiser's father brought him a bicycle. Presumably absent training wheels, Young Earl's early crashes and 'headers' into the lilac bush brought his mother no small sense of anxiety.

"He'll never learn to ride that thing," she told her husband, "and besides, he'll break his neck if he keeps on trying. (1)"

But Earl insisted, and his father agreed, that he should be given 'one more chance' — until Earl mastered the bike.

(1): *Dayton Daily News*, 8/22/1937 p.2.

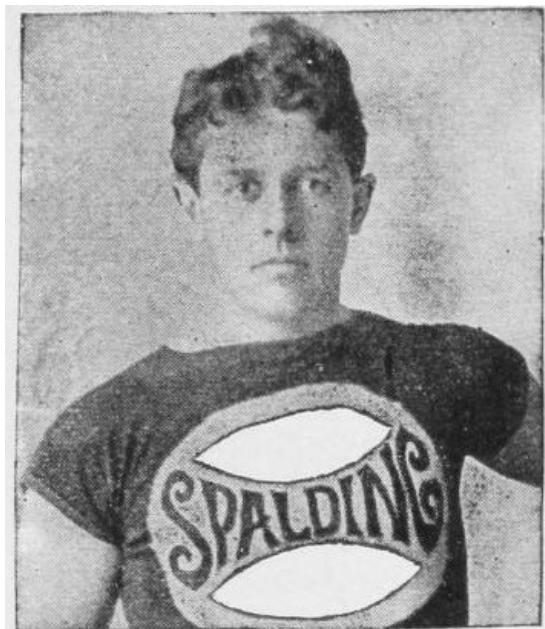


Photo (above): Earl Kiser as a young man, from *Spalding's Official Bicycle Guide for 1899*.



Photo: Earl Kiser's racing medal, courtesy [Smithsonian Institution](#), National Museum of American History.

The Little Dayton Demon

Standing 5'6" and weighing in at 155 pounds, Earl later became known as "The Little Dayton Demon". Racing for the Dayton Bicycle Club and later Stearns' "Yellow-Fellow Team", Earl Kiser held the ½ mile and the one mile world record, and competed in the 1900 World Championship in Paris.

The Associated Cycling Clubs of Philadelphia presented this half-mile championship gold medal to Kiser on August 7, 1897. Kiser's widow, Francine Holland, donated this medal to the National Museum of American History in 1991.

Changing Gears:

Sometime around 1900, Kiser announced that he would retire from cycle racing. But it wasn't long before his need for speed saw the 'Pocket Hercules' back on the track, driving a racecar this time.

This unassuming Daytonian was to defeat racing greats such as Barney Oldfield, Canadian Fred Loughhead, and C.S. Mertens of Holland.

Photo: *the Cleveland Leader*, 7/11/1905 pg. 9



As Fast as a Speeding Bullet:

The car that made Earl famous was built by Alexander Winton, who called it the 'Winton Bullet No.2', now housed in the Smithsonian Institution.

On an old dirt racetrack, at the dizzying speed of 68 miles an hour, Earl Kiser established a new world record for fastest mile.

But barely a year later, everything would change for Earl Kiser on a Cleveland racetrack August 12, 1905.

Article (below): *the Dayton Herald*, 8/12/1905 pg. 1

Race Track, Glenville, O., Aug. 12.—Earl Kiser's Winton Bullet just crashed through the fence near the half mile pole. Kiser is seriously injured. His left leg was torn off and the Bullet is a mass of flames.

Kiser was not satisfied at the manner in which the Winton Bullet worked before he made his second test of the car. The cylinders exploded irregularly and Kiser seemed worried. Nevertheless he took the car out for another trial. He had just turned off the back stretch when the spectators in the stands were horrified to see his car skid at the turn and crash into the fence. The rails and posts were scattered in all directions.

The accident occurred so suddenly that Kiser seemingly had no chance to control his machine. The gasoline and oil caught fire from the sparker and the car was immediately a mass of flames. Hundreds of spectators ran to the scene of the accident from the stands, dodging the other cars which were speeding around the track. An ambulance was called and Kiser taken to a hospital.

Kiser's left leg was taken off below the knee. Kiser was taken from under the car before the flames reached him. He remained conscious and exclaimed: "Oh, my God, my leg!"

The loss of his leg marked the end of Earl's racing career. Once recovered, Kiser became an auto dealer with a shop on East Second Street, and acted as a salesman for various auto accessory agencies.

Sometime in the mid 1920's, Kiser & his wife relocated to Miami Beach, Florida. Kiser found work in real estate development and became the owner of the Nautilus Hotel.

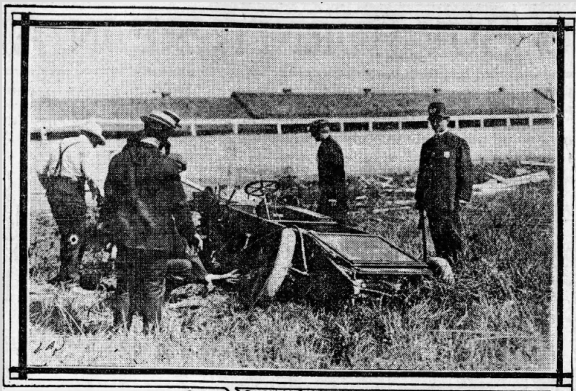


Photo: *the Plain Dealer*, 8/13/1905, pg. 1

Right: *the Dayton Herald*, 8/16/1905 pg. 9

AMPUTATED LEG TO BE BURIED HERE

**Earl Kiser Desires Severed
Member Interred in Local
Cemetery Where He Him-
self Will Rest.**

Earl Kiser's amputated leg will be shipped to Dayton, and interred in a local cemetery.

Undertaker Ziehm, of Cleveland, entered the office of Secretary Combs, of the Board of Health, of the Forest City, yesterday, and said: "I want a permit and removal certificate to bury Earl Kiser's leg in Dayton."

"That won't be necessary," said Combs. "No one is dead."

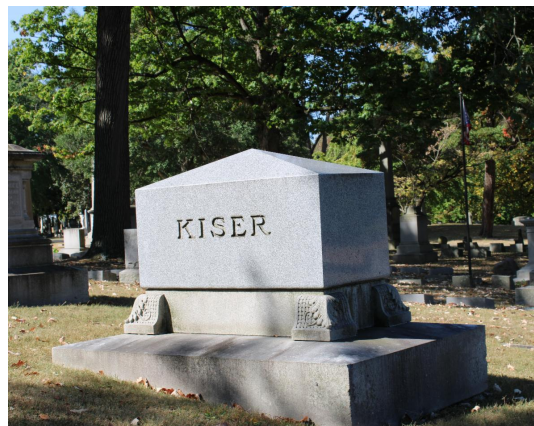
"But we want to send the leg to Dayton and bury it there," persisted Ziehm.

"Alright, do so," said Combs. "Send it by express and mark the box handle with care, that will be all that is necessary."

Combs says the leg will be buried in a cemetery in Dayton, and that Kiser's evident design is to have the missing member buried where he himself expects to rest when he dies.



Earl Kiser died in 1936 at the age of 60, and was returned to Dayton for burial in the family plot in section 101, lot 2487 at Woodland Cemetery (next to his left leg).



Upcoming Events!



History, Mystery, Murder & Mayhem

Whose deathbed confession solved the cold case of 18-year-old Christine Kett?
Did a serial killer really walk the streets of Dayton in 1905?
Who did Jacob Harvey escape prison to kill?
Learn about Woodland's brushes with the law in these true stories of History,
Mystery, Murder & Mayhem!

Upcoming Tours:

9/24 @ 6pm
9/25 @ 6pm

Click [here](#) to register!

Please Note:

This tour takes approx. 2 hours, and is sometimes described as "strenuous"; young children or elderly persons may struggle with the terrain. 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.

This tour relates actual accounts of murders that took place in Dayton. Content may not be appropriate for all audiences—participant discretion is advised.



Woodland Historic Tour:

Founded in 1841, Woodland is one of the oldest rural cemeteries in the United States.

Explore the grounds and visit the final resting place of the Wright Brothers, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Erma Bombeck, James Ritty, the Stanley Family, the Mead Family, George Newcom and many other famous and infamous Daytonians.

Upcoming Tours:

9/23 @ 5:30pm
9/26 @ 6pm

Click [here](#) to register!



Dayton Walk of Fame Tour:

Dayton's Walk of Fame was created in 1996 as part of the City of Dayton's Bicentennial Celebration. Many of those inducted into the walk are resting peacefully at Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum. Some of the featured inductees include Rev. DeSoto E. Bass, Dr. August F. Foerste, E. E. Barney, Jacob O. Joyce, John A. McMahon, Katherine Kennedy Brown, Charlotte Reeve Conover, Lewis Gunckel and many more.

Upcoming Tours:

9/26 @ 11am

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!

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.

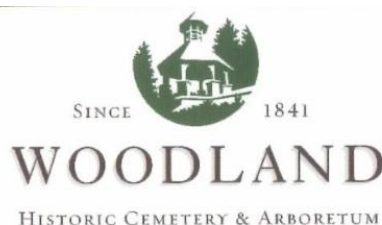
Register for a guided tour: visit the Woodland Cemetery website! Learn about fascinating Daytonians resting peacefully in one of America's oldest rural garden cemeteries!

Or check out our **virtual tours!** (if you really don't want to go outside)

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!



Committed to providing dignified and caring funeral services and burial options to families of all faiths since 1841.

Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum
118 Woodland Ave.
Dayton, OH 45409
woodlandcemetery.org

Beautiful. Timeless. Still Available...



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

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

Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum | 118 Woodland Ave. | Dayton, OH 45409 US

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