



SINCE

1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



History Mystery Minute: #1

The Sinking of the Steamer

Longfellow

William and Mamie Aull thought a trip to New Orleans in the early spring of 1895 would be just the thing to soothe some of Mamie's health issues.

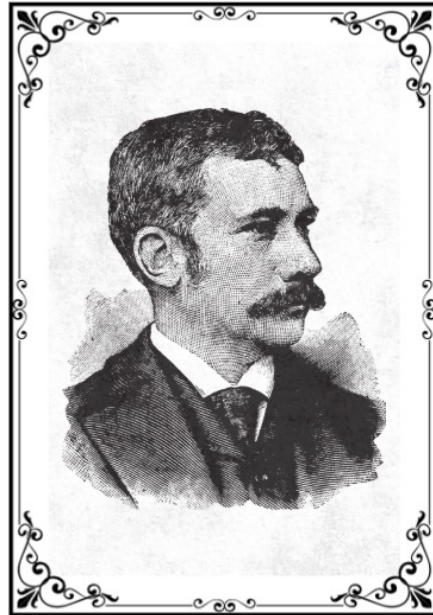
Like most husbands with the means, William wanted to make the journey as comfortable as possible for his ailing wife. In the 1890s, that meant to first journey from Dayton to Cincinnati, then book passage on a steamboat down the Ohio River to the Big Easy.

Even having their trip delayed due to fog wouldn't have bothered the Aulls too greatly—they had chosen a cabin on the *Longfellow*; “one of the best known and handsomest” boats on the river.

Planning to depart on the evening of March 7th, the captain of the *Longfellow* had decided that the fog over the river was too thick.

Below: *Longfellow**
(Green River, KY c.1895).
Courtesy of [Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library](#), Genealogy & Local History Department.

*Although this image is certainly a steamboat called '*Longfellow*', it is unclear whether or not it is specifically the *Longfellow* described in this story.

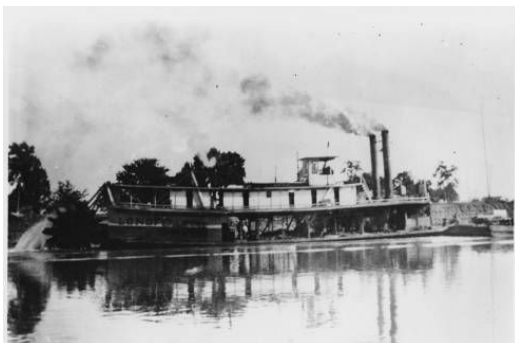


William J. Aull
(1857 - 1895)

At the time of his death, William Aull was 38 years old; a shining example of one of Dayton's energetic and successful young businessmen.

Highly respected around town, William Aull saved enough money to establish the Aull Brothers paper & box manufacturing company of which he was head.

Above: This is NOT William J. Aull. To the best of our knowledge here at *the Minute*, there are no photos of William or Mamie Aull.



The Longfellow

Built in 1876, this steamer began its career as the U.P. *Schenck*. In 1892, it was sold & enlarged—increasing the total length of the boat to 271 feet.

The steamer was re-christened the *Longfellow*, and carried passengers & cargo up and down the Ohio River for 19 years.

Between Cincinnati and Kentucky the Ohio River is crisscrossed by railway bridges.

To support the length of a big metal bridge intended to carry big metal trains, bridges use legs called 'piers'—creating an obstacle course for riverboats below.

Though the *Longfellow* was known to be a safe boat, riverboat captains considered it a difficult boat to handle —especially on a voyage like this one; in addition to passengers, the *Longfellow* carried 500 tons of farm equipment and a crew of workers to manage it.



Above: Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Bridge, Cincinnati c.1908. Courtesy of [Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library](#), Genealogy & Local History Department.

On the morning of March 8th, satisfied that the fog had cleared, the *Longfellow* enlisted the assistance of the towboat *Hercules Carrol* to guide it out of Cincinnati.



Mary 'Mamie' Aull
(1860 - 1895)

William and Mamie married on Christmas day, 1878. Together they had five children. Mamie Aull was 34 years old at the time of her death, and had been in poor health for some time.

When her body was found, about 50 feet from the Kentucky shore, it was her brother, Walter Wichgar, who identified his sister by her shoes.

Above: This is NOT Mamie Aull. To the best of our knowledge here at *the Minute*, there are no photos of William or Mamie Aull.

About 50 yards from the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad bridge, disaster struck.

In the words of Cleveland's [the Plain Dealer](#), published 3/9/1895:

"The accident was one of peculiar horror. It was daylight, the fog had disappeared, the great steamer, fearful of peril of passing the bridge piers, had been given the assistance of the powerful towboat *Hercules Carrol*. When almost upon the pier, the pilot found himself confronted with an alarming condition. The powerful cross currents, which no human foresight could have located, caught the long steamer like a toy and turned the bow away from the course he had given it. At the same time the smoke from the lowered chimney, which had been let down to allow the boat to pass under the bridges, was wholly obscuring his vision. The *Hercules Carrol* pilot being located almost behind the great steamer, was also unable to see the boat's position and more likely it was not strong enough to turn its course against the treacherous current. And so the fated *Longfellow* was carried like a helpless thing against the cruel, immovable pier and crushed into a wreck. So quick was the work of destruction that in five minutes not a vestige of the great steamer was visible except bits of wreckage floating on the river..."

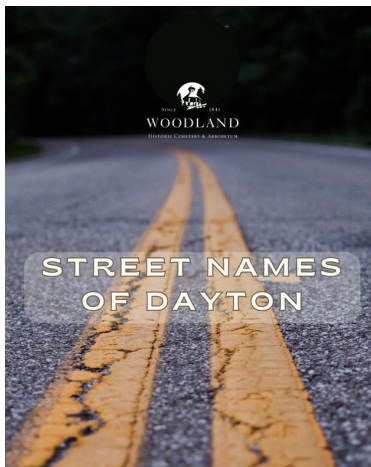
As the *Longfellow* was crushed against the bridge, William & Mamie Aull, along with many other passengers and crew, were thrown overboard into 40 feet of murky river water.

The Aulls and 10 others were killed in the accident. Mamie Aull's body was discovered relatively quickly; she was sent to Woodland and placed into the Receiving Vault until she could be reunited with William.

A coroner in Kentucky identified William Aull's body a month later, on April 10th, 1895. He too was returned to Woodland, where he and Mamie were buried together in section 58, lot 390.



Upcoming Events!



[Street Names of Dayton](#)



[Historic Lantern Tour](#)



[Almost Winter Bird Walk](#)

October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Don't get caught by surprise:

Please be sure to bring home all decor items that you wish to keep.

Key:

Dark Green = Weekly Clean Off
 Orange = Do Not Clean Off
 Soft Grey = At Woodland's Discretion

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.

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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 Cemetery and Arboretum

118 Woodland Ave.
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woodlandcemetery.org

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

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