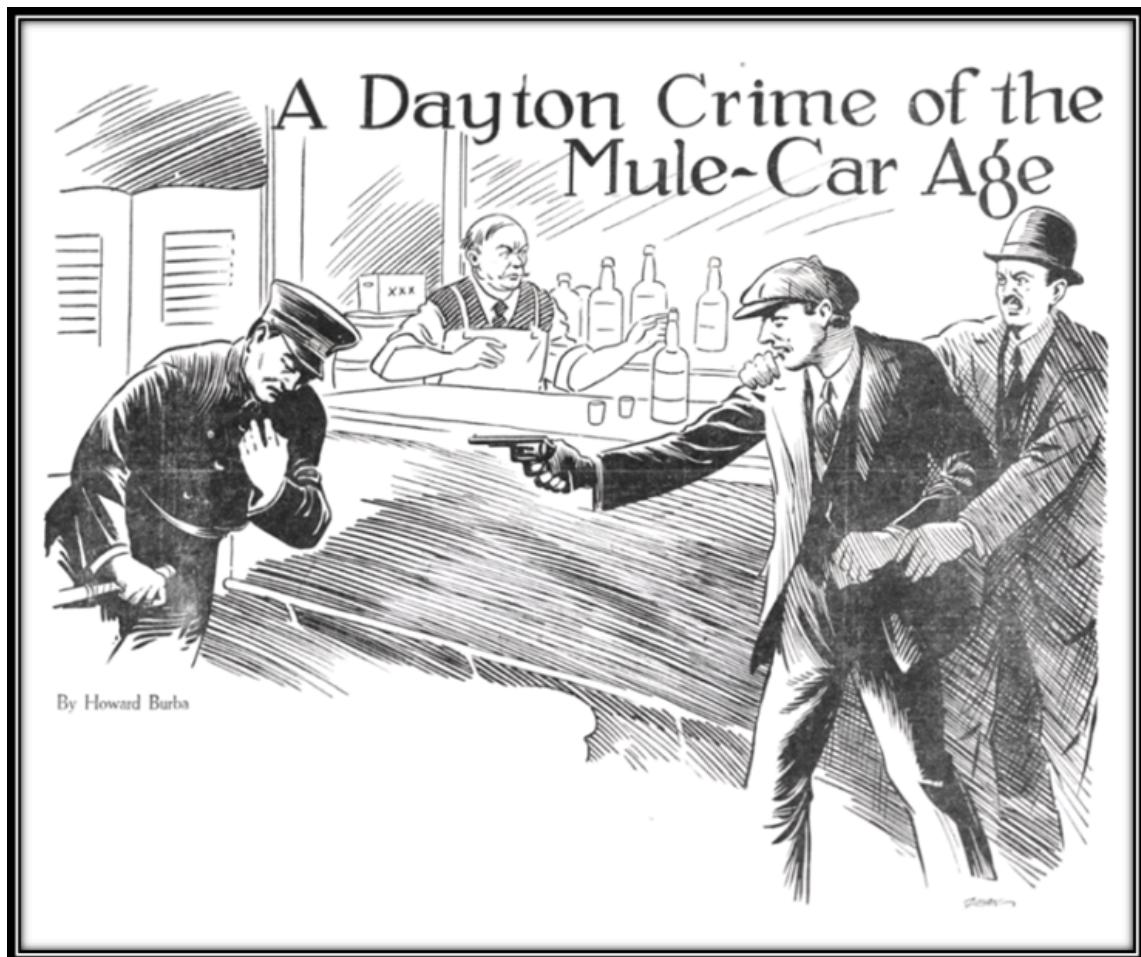




WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



By Howard Burba

Above illustration published by the Dayton Daily News, 7/7/1929

Shot in the Line of Duty

146 years ago today, the first Dayton police officer to be killed in the line of duty was buried at Woodland Cemetery.

Patrolman Lee Lynam was a respected member of the Dayton police department who had been on the job for about five years. On the morning of January 17th, 1880, he stopped a local troublemaker named Johnny Francis (aged 22) on suspicion of carrying a concealed weapon. Finding no weapons in the young man's pockets, Lynam sent Francis on his way with a warning to stay out of trouble.



Lee Lynam
(1839 - 1880)

For unknown reasons, Officer Lynam's grave remained unmarked for many years. In 1999, the local

Only hours later, Officer Lynam met a man named George Jackson at a saloon on East Third Street to talk about an unrelated case.

FOP purchased a headstone for him.

Lee Lynam & much of his family rest in section 31, lot 1983 at Woodland Cemetery.

From behind the bar, Mason (or 'Mace') Crable watched as Johnny Francis walked in. Passing Officer Lynam, Johnny Francis stood at the other end of the bar, about 10 feet away.



Mason Crable
(1842 - 1916)

A Civil War veteran, "Mace" Crable later became a carpenter.

He died at the age of 73, and is buried in section 30, lot 2489 at Woodland Cemetery.

Crable would later testify that George Jackson, who was standing behind Officer Lynam, turned to Francis and invited him to share a drink. Accepting, Francis walked over to Jackson—closing the distance between himself and Officer Lynam, who was leaning against the counter nearby.

Coming within two feet of George Jackson and Officer Lynam, Johnny Francis quickly pulled a revolver from his pocket, aimed it at the patrolman, and fired. Turning around at the sound of the shot, Crable saw Francis with the revolver still aimed and smoking.

Officer Lynam exclaimed "I'm shot!" and, grabbing his club, started after Francis, who had fled to the saloon's back room.

Reaching the swinging doors that divided the two rooms, Lee Lynam staggered and fell heavily to the floor, where he was quickly overcome by blood loss.

Johnny Francis surrendered immediately and was taken into custody by the Dayton police.

It should come as no surprise that when the case came to trial, finding an open minded jury was difficult. Fearing that their client had already been judged in the court of public opinion, Francis' attorneys—including Robert Nevin—successfully argued in favor of a change of venue. The trial was moved to Butler county, where the prosecution, led by David Houk, methodically laid out their case for first degree murder.



Robert M. Nevin



David A. Houk

Above photo from History of Ohio: the Rise and Progress of an American State (1915).

Above portrait published by the Dayton Daily News, 7/9/1904.

George Jackson, Mason Crabel, and Dr. Henry Jewett (who assisted the coroner in the postmortem examination of Lee Lynam's body) were called as witnesses. Their stories were clear and consistent. The prosecution's hopes were high that the case would be ruled in their favor.

To their surprise and the Dayton police's outrage, John Francis was not convicted of first degree murder, but the lesser charge of manslaughter and sentenced to 12 years[1] in the state penitentiary.

After his release, Francis returned to Dayton as a roadhouse operator. He died of consumption (tuberculosis) at St. Elizabeth hospital in Dayton at the age of 40. Unlike many of the other important figures in this story, Johnny Francis is buried at Calvary cemetery in Dayton, Ohio.

[1] The Dayton Herald, 2/28/1884

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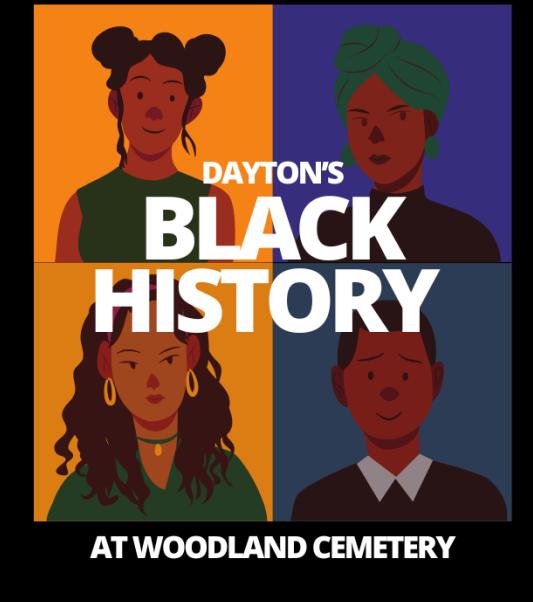
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Woodland is seeking volunteers to give presentations to community groups on subjects such as local history, notable biographies, and trees.

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!

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Monday-Friday
8am-5pm

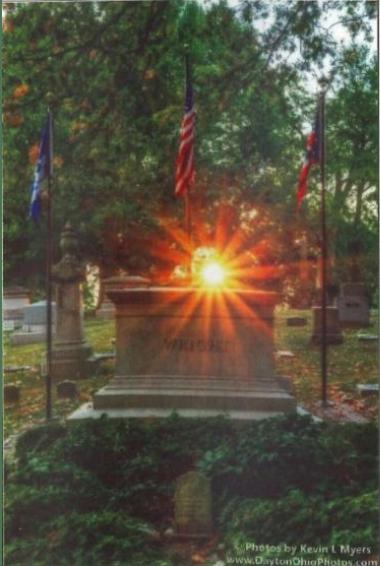
If you need help finding where someone is buried, need directions to a particular area, or have questions about pre-planning or funeral services, Woodland's Staff is here to assist you!

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)



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