



WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Rather than laboriously carving an entire biography into a person's headstone, a whole library of symbols are used to quickly communicate complex ideas about who a person was—what they did, what they believed, and what they loved.

Crossed Swords

The crossed swords are a symbol of the United States Army, and are often seen on military grave markers, particularly those of officers. Traditionally, crossed swords were used to indicate that the deceased died in battle.

Both are true of Capt. David K. Curtis, a Civil War soldier who died at the battle of Missionary Ridge in Chattanooga, TN at the age of 23.



Three Theological Virtues

It should be noted that defining virtuous ways of being is not limited to any one system of belief—while the seven virtues are often associated with Christianity, they are by no means exclusive to it.

Alongside the four cardinal virtues of temperance, prudence, fortitude, and justice, the three theological virtues may be spotted in the backgrounds of various paintings; blessing someone, informing the viewer, or generally classing up the joint. Like saints, these ladies—and they are almost exclusively portrayed as ladies—are best identified by the accessories they hold or lounge upon.

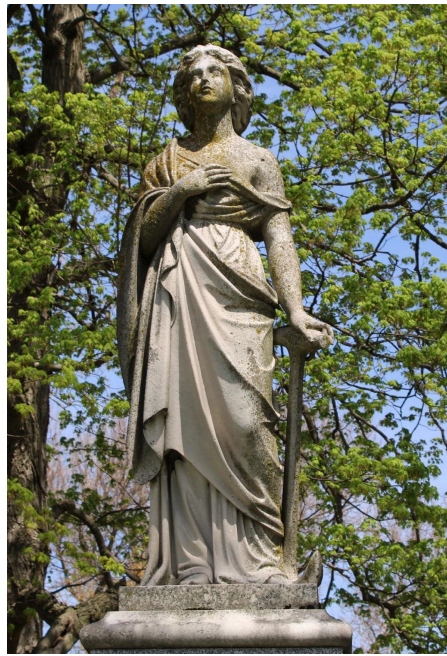


Faith

"Faith is the mother of courage, of the ability to go on loving in the face of adversity, of the capacity to forgive, to be forgiven, to begin anew, of the confidence that even though so much is amiss in our world, God's love still holds sway and will have the final word."*

When personified in art, Faith is most often depicted holding a cross.

Sometimes, she stands at a baptismal font and holds an



Hope

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -***

Though often winged when seen in an art gallery, Hope rarely wears feathers in the context of funerary art, probably so she isn't mistaken for an angel.

Wherever she is, Hope brings her trademark anchor as a reminder that hope is the anchor of the soul.



Charity

*"The practice of charity brings us to act toward ourselves and others out of love alone, precisely because each person has the dignity of a beloved child of God.***"*

Charity is traditionally portrayed while nursing an infant.

For propriety's sake, the Victorian Era took to depicting Charity in the process of revealing a breast,

oil-burning lamp, candle, or chalice.

Of all seven virtues, she is the one most frequently spotted at Woodland.

with or without the baby in tow.

* - Rev. Donald Meisel, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, MN (10/20/1994)

** - Emily Dickinson (1891)

*** - Will King, "What is Virtue?" (11/29/2012)

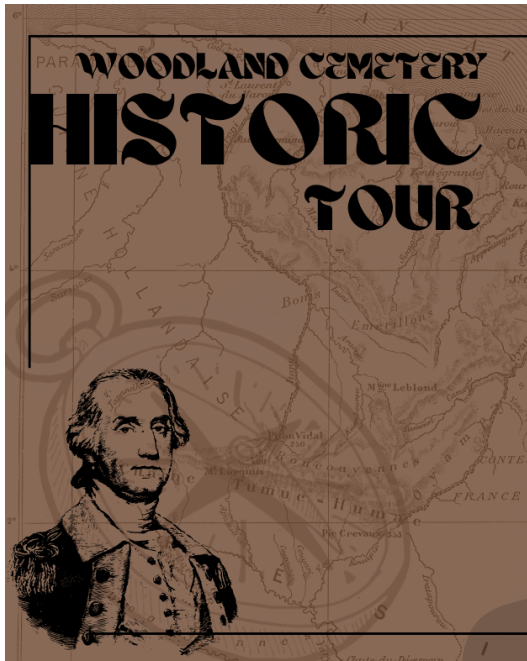


Broken Column

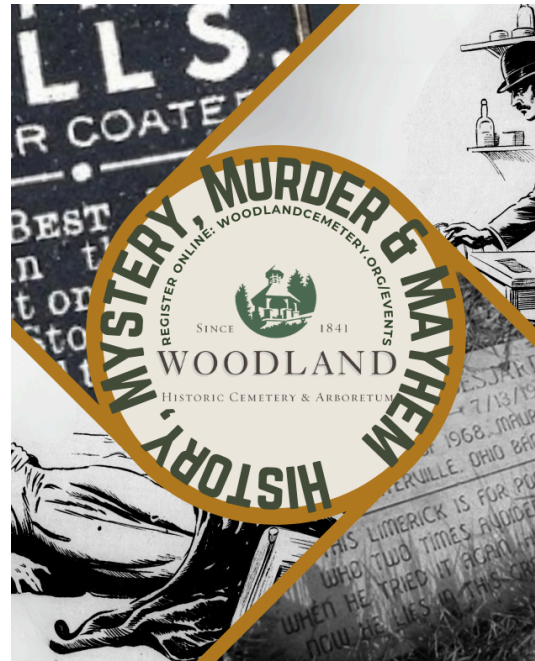
A broken column symbolizes a person's break with life or a life cut short. Typically, it is found on memorials for people who died unexpectedly or at a young age, though some sources say that it represents the loss of the head of the family.

We weren't able to find enough information about [William Ewing](#) to determine exactly why the broken column was chosen for his grave marker, but it is a beautiful example of the symbol.

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Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 8a - 5p
Closed Saturday & Sunday

Contact Us!

For questions about pre-planning, funeral services, or memorial design:

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(Non-urgent) general questions:

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With gratitude,

Woodland Arboretum Foundation





SINCE 1841

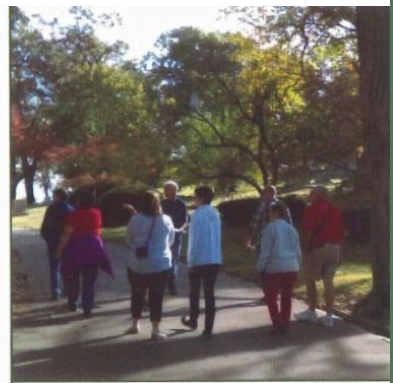
WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM

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

Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum
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Dayton, OH 45409
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