



SINCE 1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



Happy (belated) Birthday Katharine & Orville Wright!

Did you know that Woodland Cemetery is part of the Aviation Trail? Established in 1981 to promote and preserve Dayton's aviation heritage; the Aviation Trail is a non-profit in partnership with the National Parks Service. As the final resting place of the Wright family, Woodland is proud to be part of the story of Dayton's role in the development of flight.

August 19th is National Aviation Day. It was created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who chose Orville Wright's birthday to officially honor the development of aviation in 1939. Coincidentally, Orville and his sister Katharine were born in the same room—on the same date—three years apart. Though we don't tend to hear as much about the Wright Sister, Orville and Wilbur would have had trouble soaring as high as they did without her.

To celebrate National Aviation Day, let's wish a happy birthday to some of Woodland's most famous siblings; Orville and Katharine Wright.



Above: Katharine Wright at about age 36. This 1910 photograph is attributed to [Jane Reece](#). Courtesy of Wright State University Libraries; [Wright Brothers Collection](#).

Katharine Wright Haskell

(1874-1929)

The youngest of the Wright siblings, Katharine was the only surviving daughter of Milton and Susan Wright. When Susan died of tuberculosis in 1889, Katharine was just one month shy of fifteen years old. The loss of her mother was devastating. In the wake of their mother's death, Katharine, Orville, and Wilbur became practically inseparable—they called her 'Swes', a German nickname for 'little sister'.

Katharine was intellectually curious and did well in school, excelling in Latin and Greek. Unlike her brothers, she struggled with math. The only Wright sibling to earn a college degree, Katharine graduated from Oberlin College in 1898. Back in Dayton, she became Latin and history teacher at Steele High School.

Outgoing and self-assured, Katharine made friends easily. Her natural ability to chat comfortably with just about anyone would go on to be invaluable when her much shyer brothers began demonstrating their flying machines to the rich and famous in Europe.

Orville Wright

(1871-1948)

More impulsive and optimistic than his older brother, Wilbur, Orville Wright showed an early interest in math and science—though he was not remembered as a great student. Mischievous both in and out of the classroom, Orville's classmates described him as a shy prankster. Orville also played the mandolin, though it doesn't seem like his siblings were big fans of his musical endeavors. In a letter to her father (ca. 1900), Katharine wrote;

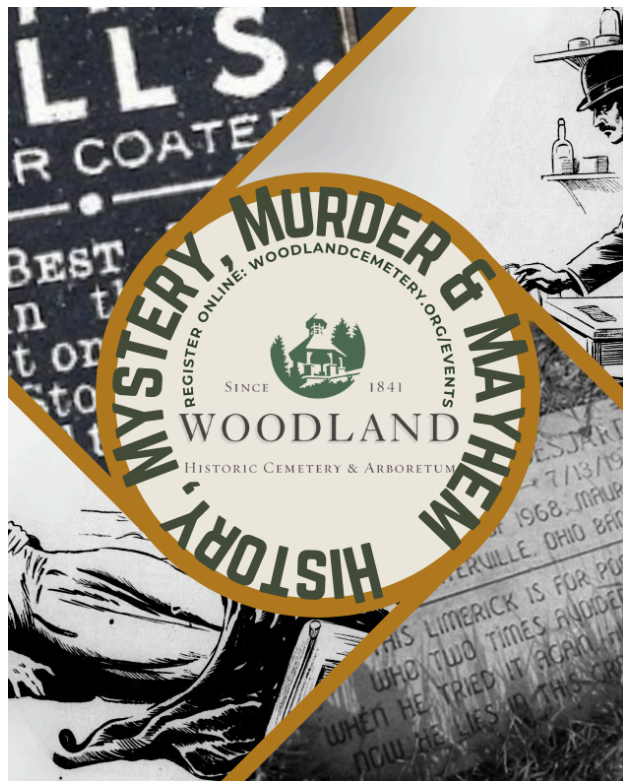
"Orv has begun lessons on his mandolin and we are getting even with the neighborhood for the noise they have made on pianos. He sits around and picks that thing until I can hardly stay in the house."

When Orville was about seven, his father brought home a present from his travels; a toy helicopter. Wilbur and Orville were entranced. When the paper and cork toy finally broke, the boys became determined to make themselves another one—and a lifetime fascination with the possibilities of flight began.

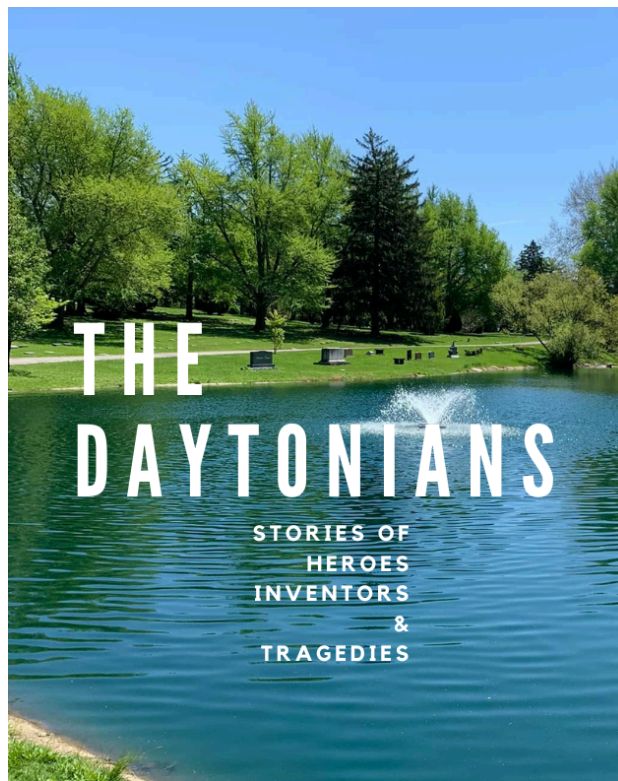


Above: Orville Wright, also aged about 36. This 1907 photograph is attributed to Hollinger of New York.

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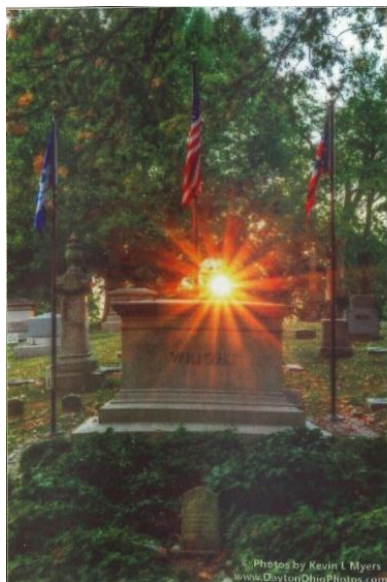
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Woodland Arboretum Foundation



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