

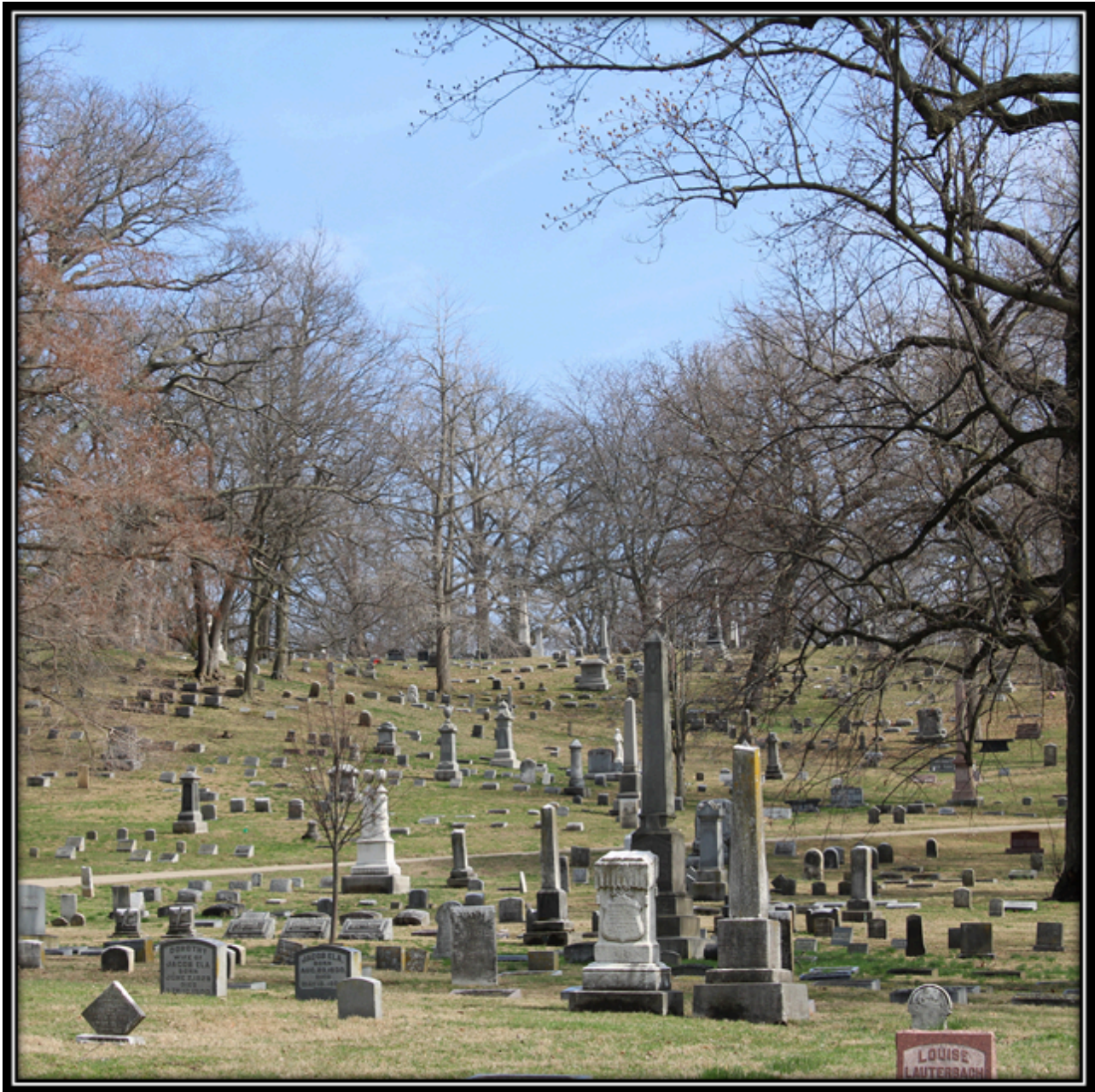


SINCE

1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



A Boy on a Bike

One day, when Earl Kiser was a small boy, his father brought a glamorous toy home from town. With one large wheel in front & one little wheel behind, this newfangled contraption was Kiser's first bicycle.

Without a helmet or training wheels¹, young Earl's repeated collisions with 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."²

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

Right: one of Earl Kiser's first-ever bicycles; ridden here by 13 year old David Brewer, who met & befriended Kiser when the Brewer family moved into the Kiser homestead. Photo published by the *Dayton Daily News*, 8/22/1937

[1] Bicycle helmets would not become standard equipment until the 1970s. Training wheels were introduced in 1949 by the Huffy bicycle company—which began as the Davis Sewing Machine Company, brought to Dayton by Woodland's own [George P. Huffman](#) in 1887.

[2] *Dayton Daily News*, 8/22/1937 p.2.



The Little Dayton Demon

On September 15, 1893, Kiser was awarded this gold medal (left) by the Darke County Agricultural Society. Throughout the 1890s, Kiser competed in bicycle races in many cities. 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.

In reference to his short, muscular physique and ability to secure exciting, come-from-behind victories on the track, Earl became known as "the Little Dayton Demon" in the pages of newspapers & magazines.

Left: Earl Kiser's Bicycle Racing Medal, 1893. Kiser's widow, Francine Holland, donated this medal to the National Museum of American History in 1991. Image courtesy of the [Smithsonian Institution, American History Museum](#).

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, with a little more horsepower this time.

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



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, Earl Kiser established a new world record for fastest mile—reaching a then-dizzying speed of 68 miles an hour.

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

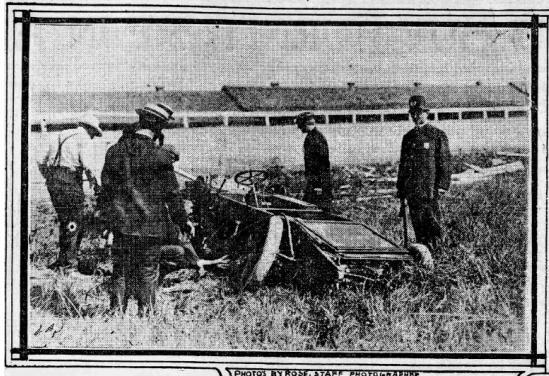


Photo: *the Plain Dealer*, 8/13/1905, pg. 1

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.

(BULLETIN.)

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!"

Above: *the Dayton Herald*, 8/12/1905 pg. 1

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."

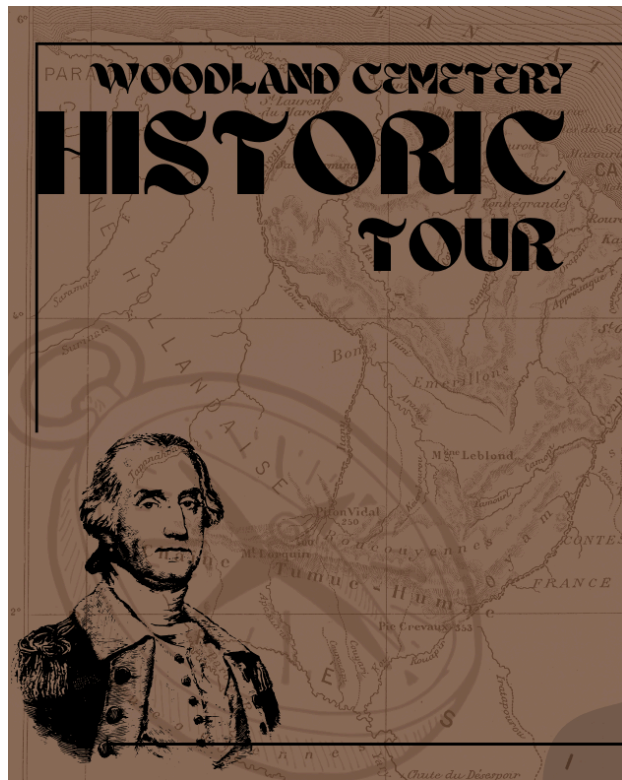
Combs says the leg will be buried in a cemetery in Dayton, and that Kiser's evident design is to have the missing member buried where he himself expects to rest when he dies.

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 (rejoining his left leg, just as he'd asked).

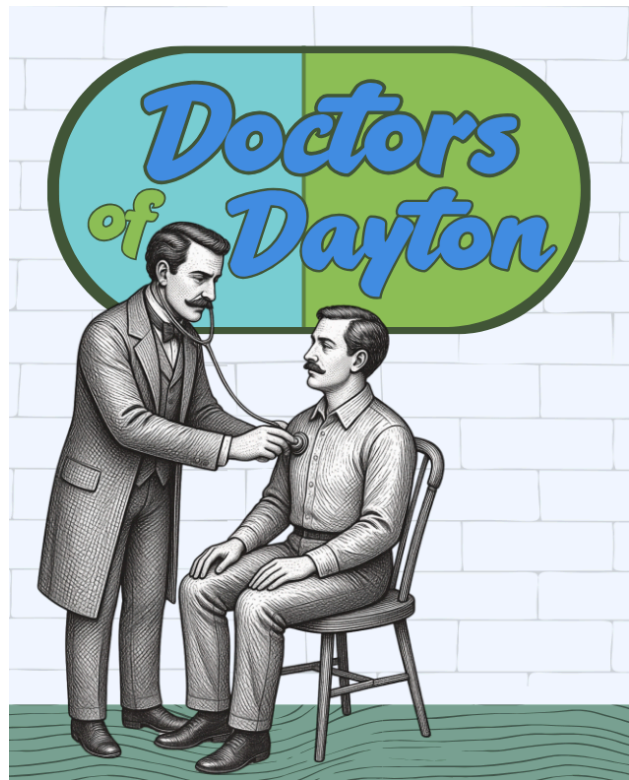


Above: *Dayton Daily News*, 9/27/1931

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For questions about pre-planning, funeral services,
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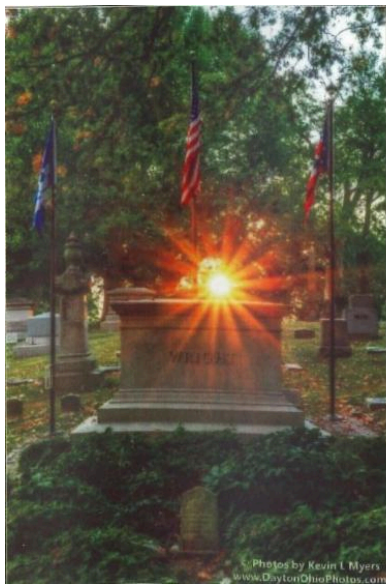
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