



SINCE

1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



Who Two Times Avoided the Police...

On July 11th, 2012, a group of Centerville and Washington Township residents came together to place a memorial on the grave of Maurice Desjardins, which had gone unmarked for more than 40 years. In addition to the dates of his birth and death, it included this memorable epitaph:



*In the summer of 1968, Maurice robbed
The same Centerville, Ohio bank three times.*

*This limerick is for poor Maurice
who two times avoided the police.
When he tried it again, his greed did him in
now he lies in this grave, rest in peace.*

Maurice Desjardins was a 39-year-old French Canadian. He had a wife and 4 kids back home in Montreal and had come to the Dayton area to do electrical work on a construction site for Armco Steel in Middletown.

Though he pretended to be well off, acting like an easy spender in order to impress his landlady and her 19 year old daughter, the truth was that Maurice's habit of betting on horses at places like the Lebanon Raceway or River Downs had left him in a bit of a financial bind. Seven years earlier, back in Quebec, he had tried to remedy the same problem by stealing \$1,000 from a small bank. Getting caught for that had earned him a year in prison and estrangement from most of his family and friends.

Then again, Maurice thought, maybe he'd have better luck at the small Centerville branch of the First National Bank of Middletown.

Success! On April 30th, 1968, Maurice got away with a paper sack containing more than \$10,000 in cash. So he did it again. On June 17th, Desjardins stole a further \$7,900 from the same bank in the same way—even starting with the same teller.

At this point, most of us would begin to wonder if we might be pushing our luck. But not Maurice.

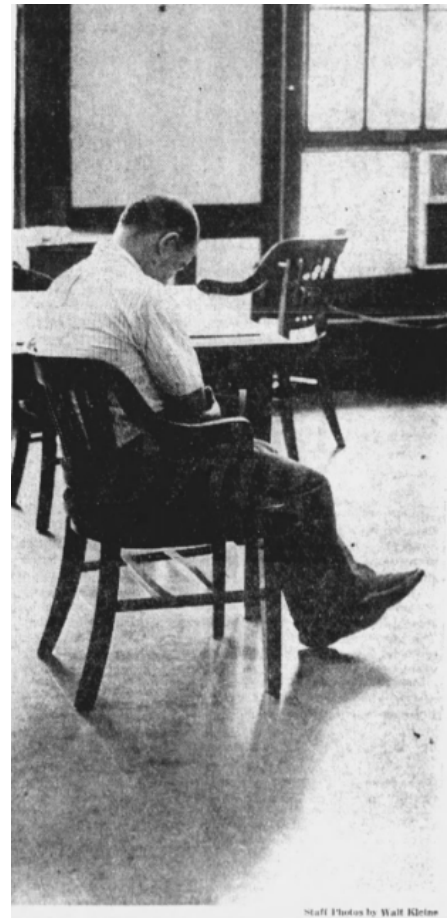
On July 11th, he returned to the Centerville bank for a third time. This time, it all went wrong. The bank's newly hired armed guard complicated Desjardins' getaway, resulting in a parking lot shootout that attracted a lot of curious bystanders. Just as Maurice began to believe that he could simply fade into the crowd, a couple of F.B.I. agents tapped him on the shoulder.

While in custody of the US Marshalls, Maurice made it clear how he felt. When asked if he had an attorney, he answered;

"I don't want. I'm just guilty. I robbed those three banks and no use for an attorney. I'm guilty."

Desjardins died by his own hand in the Montgomery County Jail before his trial could begin.

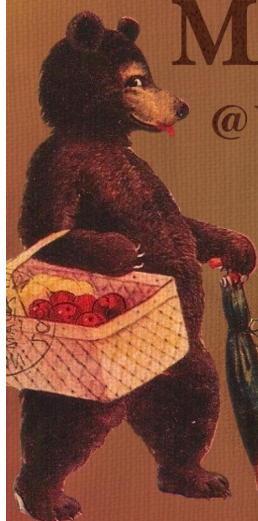
Because his family could not or would not have his body transported back to Canada, an attorney ultimately authorized Maurice Desjardins' burial at Woodland Cemetery. For the next 44 years, his grave along the fenceline in section 202 would remain unmarked.



Above: Maurice Desjardins sits quietly before arraignment. Photo published by the Journal Herald, 7/12/1968

Upcoming Tours & Events:

HARVEST MARKET



@ Woodland Cemetery

LOCAL ARTISTS
ARTISANS
BAKED GOODS
VINTAGE
LIVE MUSIC
AND MORE!



SATURDAY NOV 7 12-4 PM

New! Woodland Harvest Market

Join us for a cozy afternoon on Saturday, November 7th from 12pm-4pm at Woodland for our Harvest Market! Featuring local artists, businesses, food & live music! Come enjoy a number of vendors on our beautiful grounds.

Celebrate the fall season with home-made baked goods, local artwork & textiles, and a curated selection of vintage items from the Dayton area & beyond. Appreciate the autumn foliage with the sound of local musicians in your ear and a warm beverage in hand, have some lunch from a local food truck, and participate in a community art project.

[Click here to learn more!](#)

[Click here to explore our full calendar of events!](#)



Office Hours

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

Contact Us!

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

[Request an Appointment](#)

(Non-urgent) general questions:

[Contact Us](#)

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For 184 years, Woodland has been a place of remembrance, reflection, and beauty.

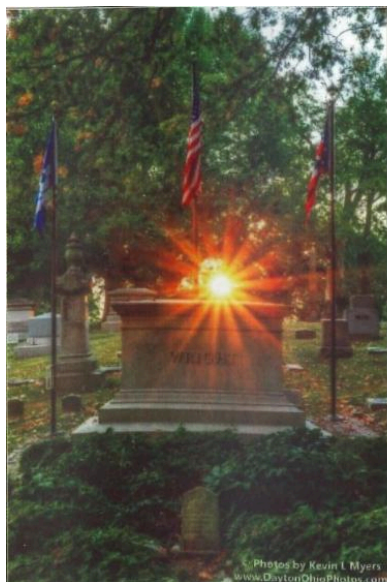
Your donation to the Woodland Arboretum Foundation supports landscape care, tree preservation, historic restoration, and our commitment to keeping Woodland a welcoming sanctuary for all.

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Thank you for supporting Woodland's mission.

With gratitude,

Woodland Arboretum Foundation



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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
118 Woodland Ave.
Dayton, OH 45409
woodlandcemetery.org

Beautiful. Timeless. Still Available...



Discover the men and women who made it great in Dayton on a guided walking or bus tour. Self-guided tours are available on our mobile app.

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

Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum | [Visit our website!](http://woodlandcemetery.org)

Woodland Cemetery & Arboretum | 118 Woodland Ave. | Dayton, OH 45409 US

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