

Photo courtesy Richard Loader

Mystery Minute #1

Without a doubt, Woodland's most popular tour is History, Mystery, Murder & Mayhem. It's amazing how quickly these tours fill up; especially during the month of October, when tours are held later in the evening and visitors light their way with lanterns. This year, every single one of our Lantern Tours was sold out before September ended.

So with a nod to the spooky season, the Minute has dusted off the files of four unsolved (or unresolved) cases—about everyday Daytonians who once found themselves at the heart of a spine-chilling story and now rest at Woodland Cemetery. We'd like to invite our readers to put on their detective caps to see if they can untangle these Woodland Mysteries:



Jane Huxley had been born in Belfast, Ireland, and came to Dayton by way of Hamilton, Ohio. In June of 1898, she was 54 years old, living in a little house on Newcom Ave. in Dayton's East End (1).

Money had been tight for a while and it was only getting tighter. A mortgage on the house meant that the family often had to make interest payments as high as the monthly rent, and bills only kept coming (1).

Below: This is NOT the Huxleys' paint & wallpaper shop, but Bakers Hardware Store, on the southwest corner of Fifth & Jackson Streets. It was built in 1851. Undated photo by William Lutzenberger 1853-1941.

Harry Huxley, 25, knew his mother was worried about money. It had probably factored into his decision to leave his job painting and wallpapering in Troy, Ohio, to return to Dayton and take over his father's shop on Fifth Street (1).

Luckily, they shared a trade, so Harry was able to step in when Henry Huxley, for reasons unknown, abandoned the shop, his wife, and Dayton entirely to head for Jersey City, NJ about a month earlier (1).

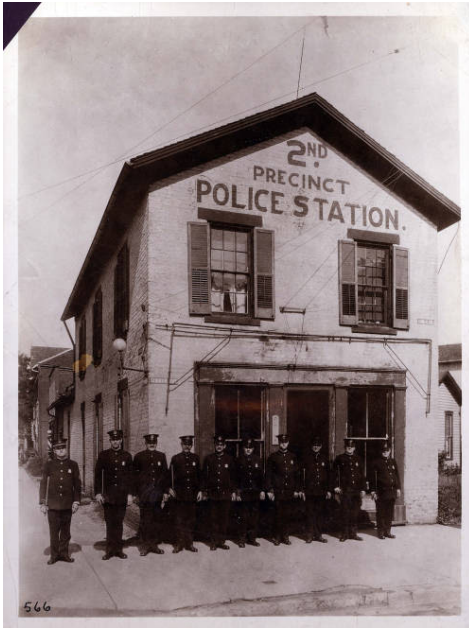
On June 9th, 1898, Harry closed up shop at noon, planning to head home to his mother's house for the lunch hour, as he did every day. That morning, Jane told him not to be surprised if she wasn't home when he got there (1).



Undoubtedly, the worst Harry expected as he neared home was a lackluster bachelor's meal. Reaching the door of the Newcom Ave. house, he realized something was wrong; the screen door was closed, but the door leading into the kitchen was wide open (1).



Inside, near the window, lay Jane Huxley in a pool of blood.



Above: The second precinct Police Station at Third St. & Linden Ave., abandoned in 1916. Undated photo by: William Lutzenberger 1853-1941

Unsure if she was alive or dead, Harry ran to fetch a Dr. McDonald. Word had spread quickly that something was happening on Newcom Ave., so it was not surprising that Coroner Hatcher & Det. 'Bud' Niedergall, accompanied by a Dayton Herald reporter (3), met Harry and Dr. McDonald at the scene (1).

Nobody had touched the body. Jane was pronounced dead, and the witnesses tried to make sense of the situation before them. Under a small mirror hanging on the wall, Jane's body lay reclining on her knees, with face and shoulders resting on the floor. In the enormous pool of blood spread around her body lay an old, wire-handled, serrated bread knife (1).

It looked like a suicide. Harry told detectives (and the Dayton Herald (3)) that his mother had been "despondent" due to their financial difficulties.

Without a doubt, it is extremely unusual for a 54 year old woman to commit suicide in such a way. Could it have been murder?

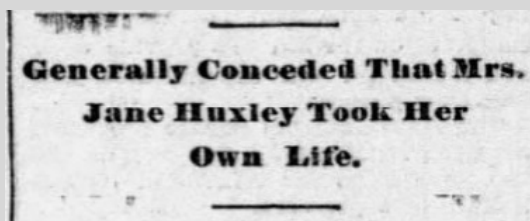
In the Dayton Herald article published on the day of Jane's death, we learn that investigators found some troubling evidence—perhaps Jane had not been home alone that day after all.

On the kitchen rug was a single bloody shoeprint, the size of a man's foot. Several more were found on the board walk (1) behind the house and leading into the yard (2).

Harry told detectives (and the Dayton Herald (3)) that although his father had left suddenly for New Jersey less than a month before, as far as he knew, there wasn't any trouble between his parents.

Could Henry Huxley have been much closer to Dayton than anyone knew? Or could the truth be altogether more sinister? A 54 year old woman home alone might be a vulnerable target for someone up to no good—especially one armed with a bread knife.

By the next day, the Herald reported that though the bloody footprints still puzzled detectives, "[the footprints] may have been made by someone who stepped in the blood surrounding the body, after the deed was committed, and then left the house. (4)"



In the shock and commotion, could Harry himself—or anyone else in the kitchen of the little house on Newcom Ave.—have accidentally made the footprints themselves with a careless misstep?

Above: Published by the Dayton Herald, 6/11/1898, pg. 2



Is Harry Huxley a reliable witness? Almost all of the background information available about the case is from his interview with a the Dayton Herald reporter on the day Jane died.

Can we trust him? As the paper reports, Harry told his story “without a quaver in his voice or a tear in his eye.” (1)

It was reported that Coroner Hatcher would hold an inquest the next week (4), but no record of such an inquest was ever published.

And here, the trail goes cold.

What do you think really happened that day on Newcom Ave.? Will we ever really know?



Jane Huxley would be buried at Woodland Cemetery within the week; on June 11th, 1898, in section 111 lot 3009.

34 years later, Harry Huxley too would be interred at Woodland, in the State Hospital lot.

Both of their graves are, to the best of our knowledge, unmarked.

Sources:

1. The Dayton Herald, 6/9/1898, pg. 2
2. The Journal News, 6/11/1898 pg. 4
3. Because this is 1898.
4. The Dayton Herald, 6/10/1898 pg. 2

Upcoming Events!



Before I Die Festival

We invite our readers (or anyone they know who might be interested) to join Woodland Cemetery, Routsong Funeral Home, and Dodd's Memorials this October 25th & 26th.

Learn about a variety of topics—including estate planning, options for cemetery and funeral home pre-planning, hospice care, and navigating grief—in a straightforward and relaxed setting.

To learn more, click the link below:

Before I Die Ohio



Fall Bird Walk:

Your tour guide, Jason Antonick, will take you on a slow-paced walk through the grounds to identify different bird species. Whether you are looking for Wrens, Warblers or a beautiful Northern Flicker, bring your binoculars, take a stroll and search our beautiful grounds.

Jason Antonick, started birding over 40 years ago as a kid taking summer classes at the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery. One of his first programs was a birding class at Englewood MetroPark.

Please remember to check the weather and wear a good pair of walking shoes. Do not forget your camera or binoculars!

Upcoming Tours:

10/12 @ 9 am

Click [here](#) to register!

Tree Tour:

With over 3000 trees and 165 native species, Woodland Cemetery is accredited as a Level II Arboretum.

We have 25 species of Oak trees and have 10 current or former State Champion Trees.

Join tour guide Kay Linden as he gives you an enlightening tour of the Arboretum at Woodland Cemetery.

Meet at the Eichelberger Plaza at the main gates of the cemetery. Parking is available inside the gates. Please wear comfortable walking shoes and bring a water bottle if needed. Tours will launch rain or shine, except in the event of thunder or lightning.

Upcoming Tours:

10/09 @ 10 am

Click [here](#) to register!



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Upcoming Tours:

DONATE ONLINE!

Come Visit Us!



Wow! All tickets for this October's History Mystery Murder and Mayhem Lantern Tours have been sold out!

Missed it? Never fear, Lantern Tours will return!

Support Woodland:

Woodland is proud to remain an active part of the Dayton community as a popular place

to walk, relax and enjoy.

We invite you to contribute to the Woodland Arboretum Foundation to ensure that what's meaningful to you today, continues tomorrow! Your gift makes an immediate impact on the horticulture, arboriculture, and restoration efforts needed to maintain one of Dayton's most historic and beautiful outdoor museums.

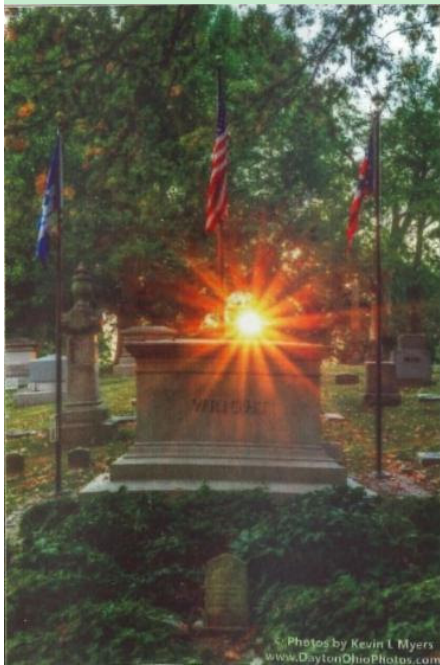
Thank you for your generous support of Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum.

Come Visit Us!

Office Hours:

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



Photos by Kevin L. Myers
www.DaytonOhioPhotos.com



SINCE 1841

WOODLAND

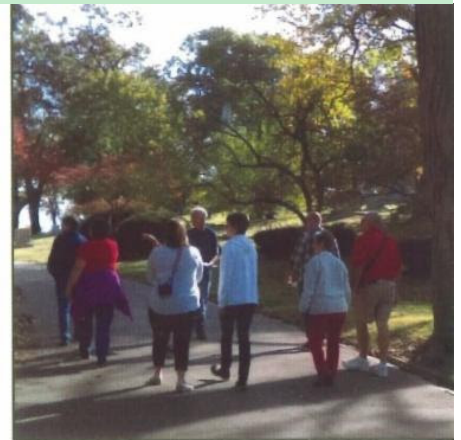
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Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum

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

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