



SINCE

1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



Mystery Minute #3

"When a marble slab or granite shaft marks the last resting place of George C. Hughes, the fugitive forger from San Jose, Cal., it will surmount the grave of him known as Edward Ernest Weber, whose death occurred in this city Wednesday last, and whose burial took place in Woodland Cemetery Friday. The closing chapter in the truthful history of the fugitive will then be inscribed in stone, and neither the grave nor the records will further shield and perpetuate a

deception and falsehood. Such, it is believed, is the true story that follows as the sequel to wrong doing, the flight of George C. Hughes and his subsequent residence in this city under the name of Edward Ernest Weber, ending in his death and burial under that name... — San Francisco Chronicle, May 26 1899 p.4



The Atlas Hotel

Our story begins in 1896; when a man who called himself Edward Ernest Weber sought employment at the Hotel Atlas, which once stood at the corners of Third & Ludlow in the heart of downtown Dayton.

“Although penniless and an applicant for any kind of work obtainable...there was an air of refinement and cultivation about the man that suggested his fitness for a different and higher vocation.” (San

Francisco Chronicle, May 26 1899)

The mysterious stranger was hired as a hall man—a job we might compare to a valet or usher today. Weber kept his head down, and his mouth shut. Colleagues remembered that he was unwilling; sometimes downright evasive, when asked about his past life.

“In the meantime Weber attended to his duties, and in course of time was advanced to the position of assistant steward, and held that position until about eighteen months ago, when, on account of his ill health and changes in his deportment, he lost the place...”
(Chronicle, 1899)

Above: "Atlas Hotel" from Dayton Postcard Collection, courtesy [Dayton Metro Library](#)

Unbeknownst to all involved, Weber's time was already running short. Sometime previously, he had contracted tuberculosis, and the bacteria was steadily destroying his lungs.

When Weber was dismissed from the hotel, he lost contact with most, but not all of his former coworkers. There was no cure for his consumption, and it became apparent that Weber was doomed.

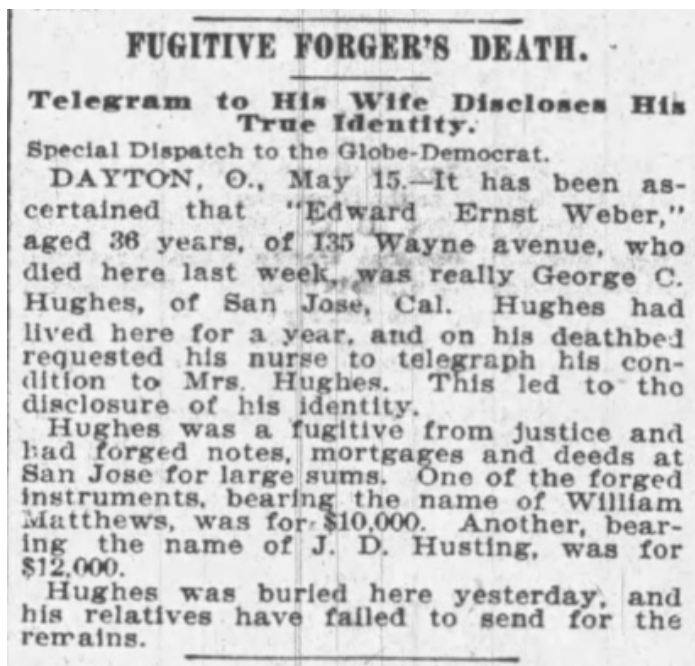
“Weber's list of acquaintances included a young lady, whose kindly interest in his welfare became the more tender and self-sacrificing when he most needed assistance and care. He became domiciled at a boarding-house on Wayne avenue, this city, where, except in the interval of two months spent in a hospital, he remained until his death, the young lady constantly looking after his comfort until the end...true to his career of deception, carefully guarded his past life from the woman who had been his friend in the hour of greatest need.” (Chronicle, 1899)



Shortly before he died, Weber asked his friend to make sure a Mrs. Hughes, in San Jose, California, was made aware of his death. Having no reason to mistrust her seriously ill friend, the anonymous young lady promised to do so. She stayed at Weber's bedside, offering prayers and comfort until the very end.

"...and when the end came provided from her scanty means the funds whereby the man was given Christian burial." (Chronicle 1899)

An Identity Revealed:



Above: St. Louis Globe-Democrat 5/16/1899 p.3

It is sometime after Weber's anonymous friend sent that promised telegram to California that our story takes a surprising turn:

As it turned out, Edward E. Weber was none other than fugitive forger George C. Hughes—a former real estate agent and notary in San Jose, sought by law enforcement on the west coast.

"A death notice in a San Jose paper, copied from an Ohio exchange, announcing the death of George C. Hughes of consumption at Dayton, Ohio, on May 10, was the first information that has been obtained of the whereabouts of the enterprising individual who disappeared quietly one morning in April, 1894, from the pretty little city of Roses, leaving many victims of his fraudulent manipulations, from whom he filched about \$11,000."

(The Evening Times May 13 1899 p.2)

“On April 14, 1894, while he was absent from the city supposedly on a visit to a neighboring town it was discovered that the signatures on a document filed by him with the county recorder, purporting to be a release of a mortgage were forgeries. Publication of the facts in the case caused many of his patrons and their lawyers to make a search of their own accounts. The result was a revelation...” (Evening Times, 1899)

Hughes fled, the authorities hot on his trail. They tracked him up and down California, all the way to Oregon, but the clever criminal had slipped away to Dayton. Here, using the name Edward Weber, Hughes hid from justice until disease caught up with him. Though he had stolen thousands, he died penniless, fully dependent on the kindness of a friend who never knew his true name.

Though she had cared for him, buried him, and lined his grave with evergreens, Weber's compassionate friend chose to remain anonymous once his true identity was discovered. Her identity is still unknown.

Edward E. Weber, aka George C. Hughes, died May 10th, 1899 at the age of 28. He is buried in section 111, lot 3009. His grave is unmarked.



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



Military Tribute Tour:

This guided tour through Woodland honors our fallen and military service heroes from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam War.

Meet at the Eichelberger Plaza at the main gates of the cemetery. Parking is available both inside and outside 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



Street Names of Dayton:

If you've ever driven through Woodland Cemetery you may have noticed that many of the monuments have the names of many of the streets in Dayton.

On this tour, we'll introduce you to the men and women whose streets bear their name and how they contributed to the history of Dayton.

Meet at the Eichelberger Plaza at the main

thunder or lightning.

Upcoming Tours:

11/11 @ 11 am

Click [here](#) to register!

gates of the cemetery. Parking is available both inside and outside 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:

11/16 @ 11 am

Click [here](#) to register!

Share Your Story With Us!



Here at Woodland, we love to share stories of those who rest within our grounds.

It is most often thanks to family members or newspaper articles that those stories reach us, which allows us to include their loved ones in features like this.

Does your relative have a story we should be telling? Let us know by sending an email to ashimp@woodlandcemetery.org

DONATE ONLINE!

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 services, Woodland's Staff is here to assist you!

Volunteer opportunities

Woodland is seeking volunteers to give presentations to community groups on subjects such as local history, notable biographies, and trees.

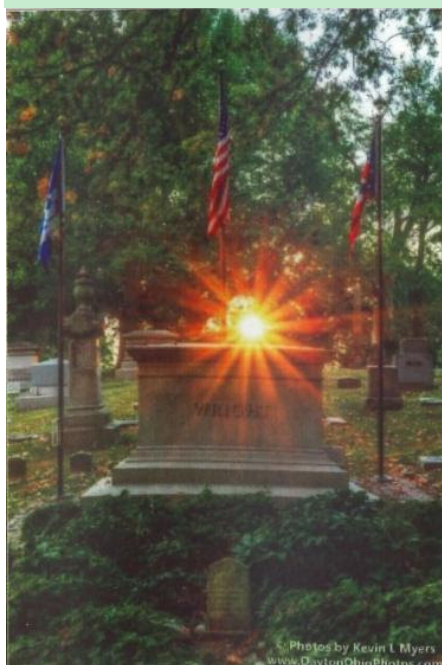
Not into public speaking? Consider getting involved with our horticulture team, or assisting with special events & research projects.

*If there is something you'd like to see here at Woodland please reach out to us & suggest it!

Tours & More:

We welcome walkers, runners, and wanderers -- leashed dogs & school groups.

Register for a guided tour: visit the Woodland Cemetery website! Learn about fascinating Daytonians resting peacefully in one of America's oldest rural garden cemeteries! Or check out our [virtual tours](#)! (if you really don't want to go outside)



Photos by Kevin L. Myers
www.DaytonOhioPhotos.com



SINCE 1841

WOODLAND

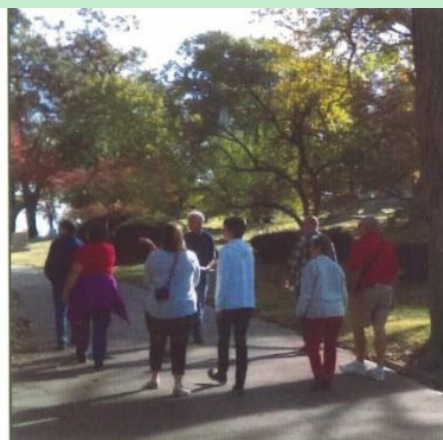
HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM

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

Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum

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