

In Memory of Paul Laurence Dunbar

On this day, the 116th anniversary of the death of Paul Laurence Dunbar, we share with you how the monument to Dayton's poet and his final resting place came about.

The following articles are exact transcriptions from Dayton newspapers. Spelling, punctuation and typo mistakes that we would correct today have been left in their original state.

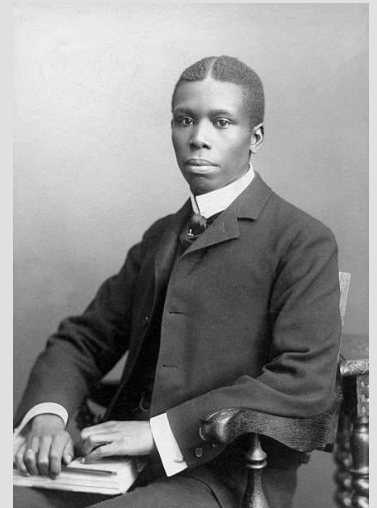
The Dayton Herald Monday, April 23, 1906

HELD SERVICES IN HONOR OF PAUL DUNBAR

Beautiful and impressive memorial services in memory of the late Paul Laurence Dunbar, the poet of the negro race, were held Sunday afternoon at Enterprise Hall, on West Third street, and largely attended by representative colored people.

The hall was suitably draped for the occasion. The stage front was covered with a mass of flowers, and in the center was a large portrait, draped in black, of the late bard.

The program was carried out under the direction of the Unique Study Club. George Hartsel presided. Addresses were made by George Bailey, Moses Jones, George Hartsel, C. D. Higgins and Miss Ina Sloan. The invocation was given by Rev. T. E. Woodson, and the blessing by Rev. Harper.



The Dayton Herald Saturday, April 28, 1906

Dr. Davis W. Clark, of Cincinnati, who instigated the movement to secure subscriptions to erect a monument over the grave of the late Paul Laurence Dunbar, the poet of the Negro race, was in Dayton Friday afternoon. Mr. Clark states that he is receiving encouragement in his work from all parts of the country and expects Dayton to do its share.

The Dayton Herald
Tuesday, October 9, 1906

PHILO MEMORIAL TO DUNBAR, POET
Bronze Tablet Will Be Erected at S.H.S. During Present Year.

The committee appointed last year by the Philomathean Literary Society of Steele High School to supervise the erection of a bronze tablet in the High School to the memory of Paul Laurence Dunbar, the negro poet laureate, who is an alumnus of the society, held a meeting Tuesday afternoon at the office of Robert Schenck, in the Arcade. Contributions will be solicited from the 500 alumni of the organization, and it is thought that a suitable memorial will be in place before the close of the present year.

The Dayton Herald
Saturday, December 29, 1906

Speaking of memorials, the fund for the erection of a monument to Paul Laurence Dunbar now exceeds the sum of \$400.

The Dayton Herald
Thursday, January 2, 1908

Dunbar's Grave.

Editor Herald:

Dear Sir: Whilst wandering through beautiful Woodland cemetery a day or two ago I saw the grave of Dayton's famous colored poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and I must confess that I was surprised – I should, perhaps rather say grieved – to note the utter lack of appreciation which we of Dayton have shown toward our world-renowned townsman in the matter of suitably perpetuating his memory.

After many months of talk and newspaper gossip regarding some great scheme of placing a monument or a block of stone with a bust of Dunbar and a verse of one of his poems thereon, all I saw was a simple mound with a simpler marker, the latter worth perhaps a dollar or two.

Now, Mr. Editor, with the wonderful McKinley monument fiasco still fresh in mind, may I earnestly ask whether this memorial in enduring stone to Paul Laurence Dunbar is to be a myth or an accomplished fact, and if the latter, when? Surely the Steele High School can join with the Dunbar Memorial Committee, together with other societies of either color in an earnest effort to get this thing started. Now that the financial flurry has largely subsided, and the new year looms up with promise of brighter things, why delay the collection of a few hundred dollars from among the many admirers of this gifted and great singer of his race.

Now, Mr. Editor, what do you individually and editorially think of this matter?
A WHITE LOVER OF DUNBAR'S POETRY.

It is a good idea and should be followed up. We are told the marker at the grave was placed there by the poet's mother, earned by washing and other menial work, and therefore sweeter and grander than a monument of gold – a tribute of eternal mother love. – Ed.

Interment Number	Name
27029	Dunbar, Paul Lawrence
Lot 3075 W 1/20 Sec. 111 Grave	
(Removed to 3465 Sect 101)	
Date of Burial Apr 16th 1906	Date of Death Feb 9th 1906
Age 33 yr 8 mo.	Place of Birth Dayton, O.

WOODLAND CEMETERY. E 99435-1



Paul Laurence Dunbar died on February 9, 1906. He was buried on April 16, 1906 originally in Section 111 Lot 3075 as seen on the diagram on the right. His grave site is colored in green.

The Dayton Herald
Saturday, January 4, 1908

LOT IS SELECTED BY THE DUNBAR COMMITTEE

The Paul Laurence Dunbar memorial committee met Saturday morning in Judge Dustin's office, in the Court House, to discuss matters relative to the purchasing of a new grave, and the erection of a monument in honor of the deceased-colored poet.

It was decided at the meeting that a proposition of Edward S. Wright, a colored lecturer and impersonator, to give entertainments over the country, and in England, on which occasions he would read the poems of Dunbar, be given consideration. Mr. Wright wished to work on a commission basis, the money to go to the Dunbar fund.

Owing to the fact that Dr. D.W. Clark, who resides in Boston, Mass., Judge Dustin was elected to the place of treasurer. During his recent campaign to collect funds, Dr. Clark secured \$600.

The committee gave J.H. Finley permission to collect funds from the colored people of the city. The committee decided to purchase a beautiful lot in Woodland Cemetery, near the lake, for the burial place of Dunbar's remains. Over this spot is where the monument will be erected. The lot will cost \$262.50.

Professor Nettleton, the chairman of committee on designs, announced Saturday morning that he was in favor of designs presented by Tiffany and Company, of New York.

Emmett Scott, private secretary to Booker T. Washington was selected as the chairman of the press committee. Captain Young, a well-known colored man, who was chairman of the press committee, has been sent to the Philippines by the Government.

Photo: Woodland Cemetery Lot Owner Card

Dustin, C.W. Trustee

Lot 3465, Section 101, Price: \$262.50, Date of Deed: February 8, 1908

NAME				
Dustin, C.W. Trustee				
LOT	SECTION	AREA	PRICE	DATE OF DEED
3465	101	350	\$262 50	Feby 8, 1908
REMARKS				
South fract ha lf,				
WOODLAND CEMETERY.				

The Dayton Herald
Saturday, April 11, 1908

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR MONUMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Saturday the Paul Lawrence Dunbar Monument Association held a meeting in Judge Dustin's office for the purpose of determining some matters in the interest of the mission and work of the association.

Among the matters considered was a proposition to arrange for a first-class entertainment in the near future and have Rev. Geo. Bundy, colored, an Episcopal clergyman, of Detroit, to deliver his famous lecture on "Paul Lawrence Dunbar."

Dr. Bundy is a magnificent orator and his coming would insure the success of the proposed entertainment.

A proposition, made by Edward S. Wright, colored, of Boston, who is perhaps the most popular reader of Dunbar's poems in American, was also considered.

The object of the Memorial Association is a worthy one and the name and memory of Dayton's most widely known literary man are entitled to such substantial recognition as would preserve both intact for generations to come.

The Dayton Herald
Saturday, May 22, 1909

WILL UNVEIL MONUMENT TO POET, JUNE 26

Exercises attending the unveiling of Paul Laurence Dunbar monument, in Woodland cemetery, will be held Saturday, June 26, one day before the anniversary of the negro poet's birth, June 27.

Such arrangements were completed at a meeting of the Dunbar Memorial Association, Saturday morning, at the court house.

The program for the occasion has been partially completed, and embraces an address by Prof. W. S. Scarborough, president of Wilberforce University, noted colored educator; Bishop David H. Moore, of the M. E. church; and Rev. Dr. Davis W. Clark, of Cincinnati.

Besides these addresses there will be several others and a number of musical selections.

The monument, to be erected over the resting place of Dunbar, has arrived in the city from Tiffany's, in New York. It is a giant marble block, supermounted by a bronze tablet, on which is placed a verse from the poet's favorite poem, "Death Song."

The tablet also carries an inscription biography of Dunbar.

The Dayton Herald
Thursday, June 3, 1909

Preparatory to the dedication, June 26, the Paul Laurence Dunbar monument was set in Woodland Cemetery, Wednesday.

The Dayton Herald
Saturday, June 5, 1909

WILL TRANSFER GRAVE OF PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

The remains of Paul Laurence Dunbar, the famous negro poet of Dayton, which have reposed for several years in an inconspicuous grave in the lower portion of Woodland cemetery, will be transferred to a beautiful spot on the summit of one of the hills in time for the ceremonies attending the unveiling of the monument June 26.

The new lot will be deeded over to Mrs. Dunbar, mother of the poet, who wishes to be buried beside her son.

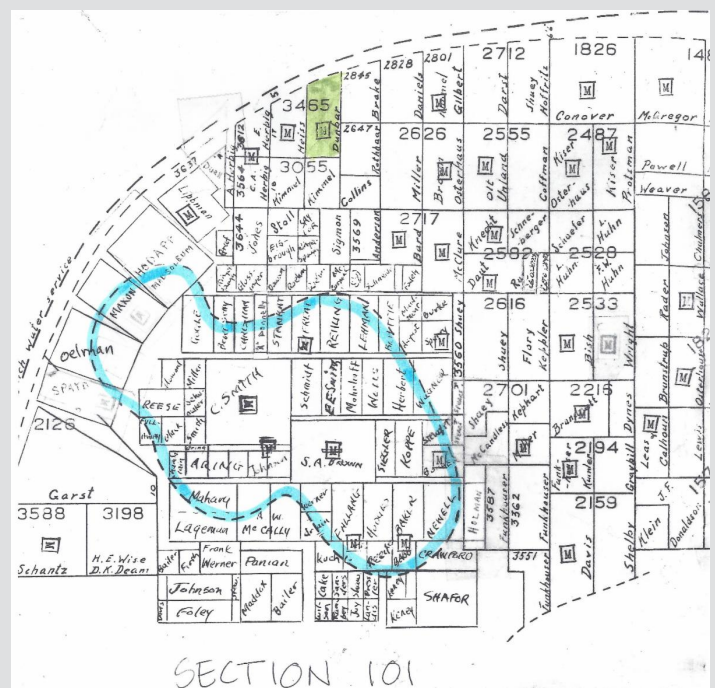


PHOTO: Map of Section 101 at Woodland Cemetery
Highlighted in blue is where a pond was originally located in the section.
Highlighted in green is the final resting place of both Paul Laurence Dunbar and his mother, Matilda.

The Dayton Herald
Wednesday, June 23, 1909

WORKED FOR THE INTERESTS OF HIS RACE, DID DUNBAR, WHO POETIZED WHILE ELEVATOR BOY

The monument to Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the noted negro poet, will be unveiled Saturday. For the convenience of those who are intimately acquainted with the poet the following sketch has been specially written for The Herald by Francis J. Poston, a lifelong friend, a newspaperman and a member of the poet's race.

(By Francis J. Poston)

When all is done and in the oozing clay,
Ye lay this cast-off hull of mine away,
Pray not for me, for after long despair,
The quiet of the grave will be a prayer.

Within the home of Matilda and Joshua Dunbar, residing then on Howard-st., June 27, 1872, a bright youngster who was destined to write the above, first saw the light of day.

Little did the citizens outside their neighbors realize or even feel interested in the fact. What cared the people about a son's being born unto Matilda Dunbar, a washerwoman, and Joshua Dunbar, a plasterer – both ex-slaves, but with hearts of loving kindness sympathy and honesty, and honest toilers who lived and supported themselves by the "sweat of their brow." When Joshua Dunbar, like herald of old announced "Unto us a son is born," Matilda Dunbar, the devoted wife and mother felt happy in all her distress. She had presented to the world a poet. This was none other than Paul Laurence Dunbar, the poet laureate of the Negro race, known throughout the literary world as the equal of Dumas of France and Pushkin of Russia.

Born amidst poverty, his success adds greatness to the man, and yet he possessed the richness that ambitious ones crave – a poet's mind; born among the common people, he was later called to associate, in his literary work, among kings of the literary world; yet he ne'er forgot his people, his race or his aim, which was the elevation of the black race, accomplished through song and story.

Paul Laurence Dunbar attributed his success to his beloved mother, who was ever watchful to the needs of "my son Paul," who was ever ready to encourage him when he seemed discouraged, who was ever ready to tell him to ask God for success and that he would not turn his back in the hour of trouble. These teachings Dunbar ne'er forgot, and the world knows how often his dear old sweet mother and her honest Christian doctrine tided the struggling poet through many a tempestuous sea.

The poet's mother loved to be near when there was reading, and being a favorite slave child she was allowed to read to; e'en then it seemed as though her young soul went into exquisite pleasure when she heard poetry; while her husband loved to hear great deeds of history. On the maternal and paternal side of the poet, the chief characteristic which evidenced itself was determination, as was evidenced in the fact of their learning to read and write through their own efforts. It was thus the union of these thoughts transferred to Paul that adds the affirmative to the query, "Are poets born?"

Quiet, unassuming sensitive and possessing a pleasing personality, Paul Dunbar was composed of the qualities of honesty, race pride, extraordinary intelligence, and last, but not least the courage of his convictions. He was a genius and e'en at the age of seven years his poems the result of his youthful mind, found their way into the press. Ofttimes when Paul had a leisure hour as a youngster (before he had to carry the washin' to the "white folks"), he would be in deep meditation, then suddenly express his thoughts in poetic form. Then fancy free with a smile would read them to his dear mother.

Dunbar and his mother were one and inseparable. With his poor old mother as applied to Paul, it was "Where you lead me I will follow." She followed him from the time he worked as elevator conductor in the Callahan Bank building for three dollars a week; she followed him in his struggles to get money to publish "Oak and Ivy," and when into the court house, where he served as court messenger under Judge Dustin.

Paul Dunbar's life and hardships should be an incentive for all. His gentle manners, his love for his mother, his ability to meet any emergency, song and story, teach a lesson of life and love.

This woman, an exceptional mother, Matilda (Malinda), whom the son speaks of in "When Malinda Sings," followed "My son Paul" throughout the country in his travels, yea even to Europe; but on this occasion not in person, and when it came time in later years for Paul Laurence Dunbar to say the prayer his mother taught him for the last time, "Now I lay Me Down to Sleep," the curtain dropped, the "chapter ended" – Matilda Dunbar had followed the poet "from the cradle to the grave." Aye, shall follow Paul e'en beyond the gates of Paradise when all is done."

(CONTINUED TOMORROW.)

The Dayton Herald
Thursday, June 24, 1909

WORKED FOR THE INTERESTS OF HIS RACE, DID DUNBAR, WHO POETIZED WHILE ELEVATOR BOY

The monument to Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the noted negro poet, will be unveiled Saturday. For the convenience of those who are not intimately acquainted with the poet the following sketch has been specially written for The Herald by Francis J. Poston, a lifelong friend a newspaperman and a member of the poet's race. The first installment appeared in Wednesday's Herald. This is the concluding instalment. By Francis J. Poston.

To know Paul Dunbar was but to love him, though, like others, he was not perfect. Yet in years oft did he think of those he loved. But the half has only been told. Should one not have had the pleasure of associating with Paul Dunbar, a fortune was lost, for stored within his great mind were treasures of thought which he gave to his friends as free as the widow's mite. But to read his stories and dwell with him in the "Sum of Life" and "Ode to Ethiopia," and "The Party" brings one into closer communion with Dunbar and the Soul of a race which has been bowed down with the weight of centuries of ignorance.

To visit the beautiful home of Dunbar and gaze upon the things sacred to him once, now revered by his mother, one cannot feel but being in the dead poet's presence; and while Matilda Dunbar (Malinda) tells you of "My son Paul," how sweet the strains of "When Malinda Sings" come to your ear. In the cosy den where Paul Dunbar "loafed," and in his library where Dunbar "worked," treasures of years of literary work, autographs of the most noted men of the world, treasured articles from Europe and the Orient meet the visitor's gaze, and once again you feel as though you are with Dunbar. As he lived, so he died – a Christian, as his mother taught him, being a member of Eaker-St. A.M.E. church.

Poet Dunbar graduated from the High school with honors in 1891 and wrote the class poem. While in Judge Dustin's office and the Calahan building during the interval of rings on his elevator, in 1893 he produced his first book, "Oak and Ivy." Later during the year he secured employment as a hotel waiter near the World's Fair grounds, and still later the late Frederick Douglass, minister to Hayti, gave him a position in the Haytian building. Here his love for the great negro statesman began. Here brought the acquaintance of Dunbar and Joseph Douglass, the great violinist and grandson of Dunbar's statesman benefactor. Many times these leading lights traveled together, and the public had an opportunity to see and hear pure negroes.

His greatest benefactor was Dr. Tobev, of Toledo, and the man from whom nothing but death could part. His success in being introduced to the public came through Wm. Dean Howells, who, according to the statement of a brother, lived in Dayton about the time of W. Collier, of Collier's Weekly. Howell's brother lived in Washington, D.C., and was employed in the Government Printing Office.

While in England Paul Dunbar was commanded to appear before the queen. Dunbar sought the American ambassador, who encouraged the poet and persuaded him as a matter of courtesy to "answer summons." Through England, Switzerland, Italy and other European countries the poet met with success and failures the latter through his manager.

On many occasions when the boy would steal away and go at the old "swimmin' hole," Dunbar would saunter there, but would never go in, as he feared being "ducked" or else couldn't swim but would sit on the bank and write poems on the boys in "de creek."

While in High school, Paul Dunbar was one of the brightest pupils and was particularly fond of literature, English and grammar. He was editor of the High School Times and a member of the Philomathean Society, a literary society of Steele High school. He was loved by teachers, scholars and all. His life was pure and simple. He loved intelligence. He realized he was akin to nature and loved nature better than herself.

No poet of modern age associated and conversed or appeared before more prominent people than Dunbar. No poet's words were set to music more than Dunbar's. S. Coleridge Taylor, the Anglo-African compositor, has set many of the Dayton boy's poems to his special compositions in "Hiawatha." "All I Want Is My Chicken" needs but be sung and the same will spell Dunbar and W. Marion Cook. The former play by Williams and Walker. "In Dahomey" was written by Paul Dunbar and W. Marion Cook, and several others.

June 27, 1896, Harper's Weekly contained the article by Wm. Dean Howells, which was a review of the poet's work. This made Dunbar famous throughout the world. Just think, too, it was the twenty-fourth birthday of the youngster born in the humble dwelling on Howard-st.

When in England, Dunbar, who was now famous, was entertained by royalty. The greatest club of all England, the Savage Club, also entertained the Dayton boy; while Mrs. and Mrs. Henry M. Stanley entertained him at tea. During his trip abroad Dunbar met Hon. Stewart L. Woodford, then minister to the Court of St. James, and a warm personal friendship sprung up between them. Through Mr. Woodford and the late Col. Bob Ingersoll. Dunbar was appointed assistant librarian in the United States Congressional library from New York. This was about 1897.

In 1899 Dunbar and his dear mother moved to Denver for the poet's health, which was then failing. Receiving a message from the class of 1900 of Steele High school to be the attraction for their entertainment, he returned to his city, but then his friends realized too well his fight was lost, for death, the grim reaper, was hovering high.

Later the Dunbar family returned to the Capitol City, and often the writer had occasion to visit him. It was here Mrs. Alice Ruth Moore, the poet's wife and a lady of talent and culture, showed great talent as an authoress and musician.

Not remaining in Washington long, the poet returned to Dayton, where he first saw the light of day, and in the home, later at 218 North Summit-st., the speaker in the fall of 1904 had occasion to visit him and took the now famous Paul Laurence Dunbar out driving in closed cab. On this occasion Paul Dunbar seemed to know and realize the sands of time were flowing fast, for during the drive he said: "I am riding

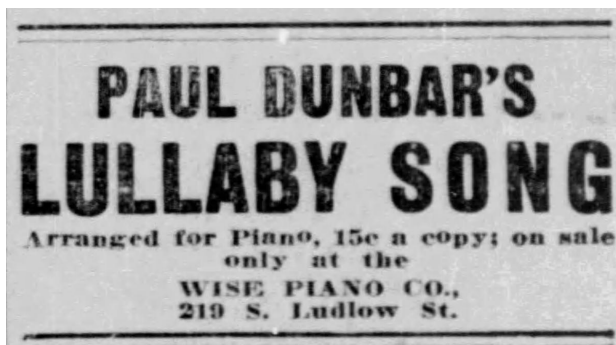
in a cab now, but God knows whether I'll be riding in the same or a hearse next year." That was the last time his companion saw him alive.

On February 10, 1906, Paul Laurence Dunbar left for the Great Beyond, leaving a dear old companion, his mother, of this city; two half brothers, William and Robert Murphy, of Chicago, and an aunt, Mrs. Robert E. Burton, of 1608 East Fifth-st., this city. Yea! in addition thousands of admirers and lovers of the poet.

The home of Dunbar should be made a shrine, the teachers should bring the children for one gaze into Paul Dunbar's library. And how his very soul could feel satisfaction could he know there was a children's party on the lawn! The name of Dunbar should be as sacred to the negro as George Washington is the American nation.

The negroes of Washington, D.C., reverence the name of Douglass and Dunbar. Yea! have even bought the home of the "Sage of Anacostia" for the pilgrimage of their race. Let Dayton do the same to Paul Dunbar, who built his own monument to the Negro race, for whom he touched the hearts of the world though song and story. The one sweet singer of the race who carried the burden of a race on his shoulders, faithfully, uncomplainingly, with pride, devotion and success. And even in his home town, e'en tho' he is silent in the grave, he rests among his friends. His sweet sentiment in the "Death Song," even though it is the "End of the Chapter," "When All is Done." Paul Dunbar is entitled to this, his own poem:

"Let me settle when my shouldahs draps dey load,
High enough to heah de noises in de road,
For I think the las' long res'
G'wine to soothe may sperrit bes,
Ef I's layin' 'mong de tings I's allus knowed."



**The Dayton Herald
Thursday, June 24, 1909**

The annual meeting of the Philharmonic Society will be held Friday evening at the Third-st. Presbyterian church chapel at 8 o'clock. Officers will be elected and matters of much importance discussed. There will also be a rehearsal of the three songs of Paul Laurence Dunbar, which have been set to music by Professor Blumenschein. These songs are to be sung Saturday afternoon. Every member is urged to be present.

Photo Above: Advertisement from The Dayton Herald, Thursday, June 24, 1909.
Photo Below, Right: Matilda Dunbar at the gravesite of "my son Paul."

**The Dayton Herald
Saturday, June 26, 1909
Page 1**

MONUMENT TO DUNBAR, POET, IS UNVEILED
Noted Colored Educators and White Celebrities Gather at Dead Bard's Grave.

This is Dunbar day in Dayton. At 3:30 p. m. today at Woodland cemetery the Dunbar monument was unveiled.

After invocation led by Dr. G. A. Funkhouser, came addresses by Dr. W. S. Scarborough, president of Wilberforce university; Professor E. W. B. Curry, a popular colored educator, of Urbana, and Dr. Davis W. Clark, of Cincinnati. The program includes the planting of a willow tree and the presentation of a deed for the lot to the poet's mother. The feature of the occasion will be the music under the direction of Professor Bloomenschein, who has set verses of the dead poet to scores to be rendered by the Philharmonic society.



The committee having the affair in charge was composed of:

Judge C. W. Dustin, chairman; Mrs. Frank Conover, Dr. G. A. Funkhouser, Ezra M. Kuhns, Professor J. W. Carr, Mrs. Ada Dodd Poince, Rev. Elmer Willis Seri, Charles W. Higgins, Edward W. Deaton, Moses H. Jones, Mrs. W. P. Callahan, Mrs. Joseph R. Gebhart, Professor Charles B. Nettleton, J. B. Siders, Professor Edward J. Brown, Miss Sallie B. Stutsman.

Dr. Clark came to Dayton to attend the funeral of the poet and then suggested a monument and has ever since been working for it. Dr. Clarke is the son of one of the most eminent of Methodist bishops and authors and is himself one of the most prominent men in his church. He is well known here in his long service as presiding elder and as one of the foremost writers of his day. The following article entitled, "Paul Lawrence Dunbar: Laurel-Decked," is from the master pen of Dr. Davis W. Clark, one of the speakers of the day.

Paul Lawrence Dunbar was another emancipator of his race. He set it free from the imputation that the crudities and vulgarities of the minstrel stage are the best products of which it is capable. Indeed he proved these alien to the true spirit of the race, which is really one of gentle delicacy and not one of blare and guffaw. He has faithfully reflected in his verse the warm hopefulness and quaint philosophy of cabin, field and hearthside. He has skillfully, and in a captivating way, mirrored the beauty of paternal, conjugal and filial love. He was loyal to his race. Like a prophet he felt himself identified with his people. He suffered and rejoiced as they suffered and rejoiced. He never sought to erase racial peculiarities from what he wrote. Fame and comparative wealth did not turn his head or cause him to forget or be ashamed of his lowly kindred. On the contrary, he stood for them, incarnating as he did their hopes and fears. So he could write, almost imperiously.

Hear me pleading now,
Who bearest unashamed upon my brow
The long kiss of the loving tropic sun.

There is something fairly majestic in his mental vision of the progress of his people from the abyss of servitude to the heights of enfranchised and educated manhood as he writes.

Slow moves the pageant of a climbing race.

The temporary arrests of this moving pageant were to him only new assurances that it would finally reach the goal:

Heed not the darkness around you, dull and deep.
The clouds grow thickest when the summit's nigh.

This splendid, unerring fidelity to his blood is a substantial contribution to the power which will ultimately give his class a stable position at home and abroad. He is himself, in the ultimate analysis, as William Dean Howells suggests, evidence of the unity of the human race which does not think or feel black in one and white in another, but human in all. Robert Ingersoll, in a letter to Dr. H. A. Tobey, said that William dean Howells was thought to have done a great service for Dunbar in his well-known affirmation that he was the first black man to feel the life of the negro aesthetically, and to express it lyrically. But Mr. Ingersoll went on to say that it was an open question whether Mr. Howells had not done Dunbar an actual disservice, for he stumbled over his pure and polished verses, full of philosophic thought and lifted to general view only his dialect ditty. Dunbar himself deprecated the common indifference to his thoughtful work when he said in his verse, The Poet,

He voiced the world's absorbing beat

But ah! the world is turned to praise
A jingle in a broken tongue.

Here also is incidental evidence that he rated his own work correctly. In his poem entitled "Misapprehension," he deprecates the habitual quest of the humorous in his lines.

Out of my heart one day I wrote a song.
With my heart's blood imbued,
Instinct with passion tremulously strong.
With grief subdued,
Breathing a fortitude
Pain bought
And one who claimed much love for what I wrought,
Read and considered it,
And spoke:
"Ah, brother, 'tis well writ,

But where's the joke?"

In Prometheus he pictures the god as stealing heaven's sacred fires to light the vestal flames of poesy – but affirms:

"Twas all in vain that ill Prometheus fared,
The fire has been returned to heaven again –

We have no voice so mellow, sweet and strong
As that which broke from Shelly's golden throat.

We tinkle where old poets used to storm.
We lack their substance tho' we keep their form,
We strum our banjo strings and them lyres – "

Two excerpts illustrate his opposite styles of serious and chaste composition, his literary English, on one hand and his serio-comic dialect verse on the other. Together they indicate his strong religious temperament in general and his fervent faith in immortality in particular:

When all is done say not my day is o'er,
And that through night, I seek a dimmer shore,
Say rather that my morn had just begun:
I greet a dawn and not a setting sun,
When all is done.

In the other he describes himself as a lorn lover approaching the cabin home of his lady. The door stands ajar and the hearth-fire shines through. But he hesitates and trembles on the very brink of bliss until he hears her glad voice within, speaking its welcome:

Howdy, honey, howdy! won't you step right in?

With a species of naïve audacity he turns the scene and pictures the approach of his soul to heaven, timorous and shrinking.

At de gate of heaven, we'en do storm of life is pas'.
Spec' I'll be a stan'in, twell de de Mastah say at las'.
"Hyeaeh he stan' all wearq, but he winned his fight wid sin.
Howdy, honey, howdy! won't you step right in?"

Thus at every point Dunbar betrays his close sympathetic observation of nature and human nature. Nothing escaped him – nothing was deemed too insignificant to be woven into the fabric of his song. These various treasures of long mental notation glint like jewels in his lines. He was also an alert and appreciative listener. No odd phrase or unique conception eluded him. His mind was absorbent of everything in his path that was "worth while." A gentle and genial spirit, he kept moving among his fellows, taking toil from them when they were least aware of it. In the reservoir of a retentive memory all he had collected and conned, were kept safe and solvent. On occasion, and almost automatically, the cerebral reservoir discharged its treasure, either in passionate torrents or in ididescent jets of fancy, but always sanely, lucidly, and with charming verbal melody – the rhythm of his race – making in all an altogether wholesome and joyous criticism of life.

The tropical wealth of Paul Lawrence Dunbar's genius proved itself in the variety of its expression. He was not limited in the avenues of his approach to the reading world. Many doors were open before him. For example, he had a dignified and ambitious verse in which he expressed himself with an almost classic precision. Then comes his hap-hazard, but melodious lyric of smile and laughter which will preserve forever the sunny optimism of the negro, while at the same time, it keeps as if in a cabinet, the odd phrase of his "broken tongue" which will sometime be as much of a verbal curio as the Shropshire and cockney preserved in Dickens. We have just had an illustration of the musical possibilities of Dunbar's verse when in the hands of a master of the score, like Professor Blumenschein, and when rendered by trained voices, like those of the Philharmonic society.

It is not generally known, however, that Dunbar was also a serious prose writer, and that a judicious critic has pronounced him a "master of the difficult art of writing a long novel of sustained interest." His "Uncalled," for example, shows beyond question that he knew how to lay out a plot, to evolve his central hero and keep minor characters in relation, play the comic against the serious, and preserve the balance of the whole. Had his life been spared it is not improbable that his fiction would have stood in relation to

his verse, as the novels of Walter Scott do to his poems. He also essayed to be a dramatist. He wrote at least one short play, which is still in manuscript. His last strong wish was to see it put upon the stage. He said to a friend, "How I long for the night which shall be 'first night' for my dramatic effort." He expressed more interest in it than in his fiction or verse.

William Dean Howells, Edmund Clarence Stedman, Eugene Field, James Whitcomb Riley, James Lane Allen, and Robert Ingersoll is the jury which named Paul Lawrence Dunbar poet laureate of the negro race. But when all is said, his true distinction lies in the fact that he interpreted the particular to the universal; the Negro to the whole human race. He also demonstrated by his own genius that the negro also belongs to the divine family on earth in spite of all prejudiced denial. He easily molded the white man's language into the modes of thought of the black man, and vice versa; thus showing that they are interchangeable. So the community of genius is illustrated and proven. The accident of his seniority as the poet of his race would alone insure him a permanent place. He is the first among ten million. Again, he did not inherit, he originated. His race had nothing to transmit in the way of literary or poetic instinct or training. That this young negro should take up what has heretofore been the white man's own distinctive art, and excel and surpass in it, is the marvel of the hour. The Caucasian's wealth of literary inheritance and training of several millenniums seemed to give him no advantage over the meagerly furnished and heavily handicapped son of Ham. Right worthily is Paul Lawrence Dunbar laurel-decked.



PHOTO ABOVE: The Dayton Herald. Saturday, June 26, 1909.

PHOTO RIGHT: The grave site of Paul Laurence Dunbar today.

The Dayton Herald
Saturday, June 26, 1909

DUNBAR MEMORIAL

THE MONUMENT OF PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR



"Burry me beneath de willow,
So I kain hear its song."

Such was the poetic wish of Paul Laurence Dunbar as expressed in the inspiration of his "Death Song." At the unveiling of his monument at Woodland cemetery this afternoon a willow tree was planted by his grave.

Nothing could be more fitting than the honor that has at last been shown this native genius of Dayton, who ranks as the most distinguished bard of the colored race. Prominent men from other parts of the country have done themselves honor in being present on this occasion and participating in the exercises. Paul Laurence Dunbar belonged alone to no one race, nation, state or city. He was the pride and delight of the whole human race.

Dayton has produced many eminent men, notably Generals Wood, Schenck, Anderson and other heroes in war; and is noted for such Captains of industry as Patterson, Barney and others. But they were not such international characters as the colored poet who was known of all men in all climes where the English language is spoken or where civilization has found its way. Although their genius pursued quite different lines, the name of the Wright brothers is the only one of any Dayton family that is better known the world over than that of Dunbar. Both names now are immortalized in history, the one with the classics of English literature and the other with the greatest invention of the century. Up to the time of the success of the Wright aeroplane, Dunbar was the best known of any one who had ever lived in Dayton.

Dunbar's work contributed not alone to this fame but also to the intellectual standing of his race. Born of parents who had been slaves and were without means to help him, he became an author that attracted the admiration of the highest critics in this country and the crowned heads of Europe. He has preserved the Negro dialect for posterity. His verses need no praise on this memorial occasion. Their merit has been as well established as that of any classic. Dunbar's poetry speaks more for him than can be told in any eulogy or story of his short but eventful life. He left an inheritance for his race in that it could never be claimed that such intellectual productions could possibly come from an inferior being.

Dunbar was born, reared and died in Dayton. He did his great work here. Verses that he wrote in an elevator and in his humble home were read in palaces and found in every library. But he still lives the world over and will continue to live like Homer, Horace and all who have sung so sweetly of their fellow countrymen. Inventions may change all of the material devices in existence but the works of Dunbar will be handed down to other ages as he left them. He was an honor to the world of letters as well as to his race and native city and he deserves more than can be put in bronze or marble.

The Dayton Herald
Saturday, July 10, 1909

SHAUCK NAMED

A. B. Shauck has been placed on the Paul Laurence Dunbar scholarship fund commission, raised at the suggestion of Edward Everett Hale, in memory of the colored poet. The appointment is quite an honor, as such men as James Whitcomb Riley, William Dean Howells and Brand Whitlock are on the commission.

The Dayton Herald
Saturday, September 11, 1909

NOTORIOUS BAXTER STREET TO BE CAST FROM HISTORY

Next week will mark the opening of Dunbar-av. on the West Side, where the Colored Y.M.C.A. boys are bending every effort to make the celebration one of interest and profit.

The avenue, named after the poet, has shaken off the filthy garments of Baxter-st. and has put on working clothes, presenting to the public a new order of things. Much has been done to improve the little street and where filth and disorder once reigned cleanliness and beauty are supreme.

Thanks to the interest of Cyrus Baldwin, Jr., business opportunities such as have never before been afforded colored people are now open. Excellent hotel accommodations, newly-equipped boarding houses, up-to-date laundries for private wash women, broom manufacturing, well-equipped lodge rooms, and dormitories for young men and boys are some of the changes.

Some of the saloons also are going and a grocery and confectionary shop, a quick-order restaurant and clothing store have sprung up in their stead.

The little Baptist church on corner is doing splendid work under Rev. Anderson. The Holloway Home for orphan children on another is doing greater work still, while yet on another corner the Y.M.C.A. boys have their cottage and are exerting a strong influence upon the order of things.

Next week, on September 16, 17 and 18, the street will put on holiday attire and be as bright as day. Friends who are interested will wire the street and the Dayton Lighting Company turn on the power.

Everyone is invited and promised a profitable time.

**The Dayton Herald
Saturday, September 18, 1909**

EZRA M. KUHNS PRAISES COLORED PEOPLE FOR THEIR ADVANCEMENT

Basing many of his remarks upon his personal acquaintance with Paul Laurence Dunbar in honor of whom Baxter-st. was altered to Dunbar-av., Ezra M. Kuhns, Republican candidate for Mayor, gave the feature talk at the celebration of the avenue's opening Friday night.

"From what came from Paul Laurence Dunbar's pen and from the life he lived, together with the example set by his ambitions, both the colored and the white man can and should learn a lesson worth remembering. The perseverance of this man of race and his determination to attain a certain perfection makes the name of this avenue well worth keeping clean.

"Considering the comparatively few years which have seen the yoke lifted from the shoulder of the colored race, we can but recognize the industrial and patriotic strides taken by this race as a wonderful mark of true and good citizenship. On the battle field, or wherever the call has been to duty to be performed, he has not been found wanting; even fighting for his own freedom nearly fifty years ago.

"Keep the name of Dunbar-av. such that it will be a striking lesson by recalling the one of your race who among many others proved that honest, hard labor makes the possibilities of life worth while."

Under the glare of the lights, reflected by vari-colored bunting and American flags, the celebration of the opening of the new thoroughfare is being celebrated and will come to a close this evening. The gathering Saturday night will be addressed by several well known colored men of local and foreign prominence. Then Baxter-st. will be no more, but out of its chaos Dunbar-av. will run free and untrammelled of crime or shame.

Other speakers Friday night were Philo G. Burnham, City Solicitor; Attorney Wade Buyden and Dr. J. G. Robinson. All were well received.

An interesting feature of the Friday night program was the drilling of maids and pages of the Knights of Tabor under direction of W. E. Officer.

PHOTO: Dayton Daily News. Wednesday, December 7, 1960.

NOTE: Ezra Kuhns was born March 20, 1872, just a few months before Paul Laurence Dunbar. They were classmates at Central High School. He was a lawyer; worked at NCR for 39 years; and was secretary-treasurer at the Miami Conservancy for 37 years.



We hope you have enjoyed reading these articles giving us a timeline of the burial of Paul Laurence Dunbar and the placing of his monument.

Please join [Woodland Cemetery](#), [Paul Laurence Dunbar House Historic Site](#) and other organizations as we celebrate #Dunbar150 throughout the next year.

You can view a poem or story each day at [Paul Laurence Dunbar 2022](#) or connect to [DailyDunbar on Facebook](#).



Please consider making a gift to the Woodland Arboretum Foundation **in memory of Paul Laurence Dunbar**. All gifts of \$150.00 or more received February 9th through June 27th will receive a Woodland ceramic coaster set. You can make a donation on our secure website or by check using the link and/or form below. Please indicate that your gift is **In memory of Paul Laurence Dunbar**.



THANK YOU for supporting us through our 180th Anniversary!



We hope you will continue to support the Woodland Arboretum Foundation as we move through 2022. Support of the Chapel restoration and preservation project is our most critical need as you will soon see the outside of the Chapel and Administration Building receiving new sandstone pieces and eroding and disintegrating elements replaced. Once the stonework is complete, the beloved Tiffany windows will return and be put back in place. The Tiffany mosaic floor will be restored and the beautiful interior woodwork will also receive a facelift. We are hopeful to open the doors to the public once again in late 2022.

Please consider making a first time donation or an annual donation to the Chapel Fund. Donate on our secure website by clicking below or click on the check to receive a donation form to mail in.

**Click Here
Donate Now**



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