



SINCE

1841

# WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



**Dale L. White Sr.**

Pioneering Pilot  
1899-1977

Dale L. White Sr. was Black pilot best known for his 1939 "Goodwill Flight" with navigator Chauncey Spencer, traveling from Chicago, Illinois to Washington, D.C. Their mission was to make the case for African Americans to be included in both civilian and military flight training.

Born in Louisiana in 1899, White moved to Chicago in 1930. In 1932, he enrolled at the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical University—the first accredited flight school in the Midwest which would admit black students and hire black instructors.

In August of 1933, White began flight training; receiving his license in June 1936. As a member of the Challenger Air Pilots Association (CAPA); a group organized by Chicago-area African American aviation enthusiasts, White was well-known in Chicago's Black aviation community.



Above Photo: 1930 Lincoln PT-K

1939	AIRCRAFT FLOWN				TIME		ELAPSED	REMARKS
	License No.	MAKE	ENGINE	Class	TAKE OFF	LANDING		
4/30	NC2570	Cub	Cont. 50	1	1	1	30	
5/6	NC37W	Lincoln	Page	2S	25	25	30	
5/7	NC37W	Lincoln	Page	2S	25	25	1 30	
5/8	NC37W	Lincoln	Page	2S	25	25	2 00	
5/8	NC37W	"	"	2S	25	25	20	
5/8	NC37W	"	"	2S	25	25	25	
5/11	NC37W	"	"	2S	25	25	1 05	
5/11	NC37W	"	"	2S	25	25	50	
5/11	NC37W	"	"	2S	25	25	2 00	
Signature of Pilot: <i>Dale White</i>							156 40	
								FROM TO No. Passengers
								REMARKS
								Harlem Airport Harlem Airport 0
								1 1 1 check
								1 1 2 2
								Chicago Auburn Ind 1 Force down in Avilla Ind for six hours broken gas. lines (2)
								Auburn Ind Fort Wayne Ind 1 off our course to get gas.
								Fort Wayne Ind Sherwood O. 1 Force down with broken crank shaft and nose plate.
								Sherwood O. Fremont O. 1 O.K.
								Fremont O. Cleveland O. 1 O.K.
								Cleveland O. Marysville W. Va. 1 O.K.
								Attested by

In the spring of 1939, CAPA and the Chicago Defender—one of the city's Black news publications, collaborated to organize a "Goodwill Flight" to Washington, D.C. Their main goal was to draw support for a change in legislation which would allow Black pilots to join the US Army Air Corps, as well as illustrate the inconsistency in how white and non-white pilots were treated. Dale White was chosen as pilot and Chauncey Spencer was selected as navigator.

Once CAPA was able to secure the rental of a Lincoln PT-K biplane, White and Spencer departed Chicago on May 8, 1939, for their 3,000 mile round trip. It wasn't an easy flight—on their first day, according to White's logbook, he and Spencer were "force(d) down in Avilla,

Indiana, for six hours due to broken gas lines.” Later the same day, White notes that they were “force(d) down with broken crank shaft and nose plate” in Sherwood, Ohio. White and Spencer landed on a farm belonging to the Miller family, who greeted the aviators warmly—Spencer and White were welcome guests at the local tavern until repairs were finished a few days later.

On May 11th, White notes in the “Remarks” section of his logbook; “Refused storage in Morgantown landed in Pittsburgh after dark.” Without lights on their aircraft, but not permitted to stay in Morgantown, White and Spencer were out of good options. Though it was dangerous, they decided to follow a Pennsylvania-Central Airlines transport flight to the Pittsburgh airport.

AIRCRAFT FLOWN						TIME		ELAPSED	
LICENSE NO.	MAKE	ENGINE	CLASS	TAKING OFF	LANDING	NO.	TIME	TIME	TIME
5/11	NC37W	Lincoln	5	25				56	40
5/12	NC37W	Lincoln	5	25				1	05
5/12	NC37W	11	14	11	11			2	10
5/13	NC37W	11	11	11	11			1	55
5/14	NC37W	11	11	11	11			1	10
5/14	NC37W	11	11	11	11			1	25
5/14	NC37W	11	11	11	11				40
5/15	NC37W	11	11	11	11			2	00
5/16	NC37W	11	11	11	11			2	05
Signature of Pilot: <i>Robert White</i>								170.00	
								Total Time Fwd	

FROM	TO	No. Passengers	REMARKS
Morgantown W. Va.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	1	Refused storage in Morgantown landed in Pittsburgh after dark
Pittsburgh, Pa.	Kylestown Pa.	1	O.K.
Kylestown Pa.	Altoona Pa.	1	O.K.
Altoona Pa.	Bennettfield	1	O.K.
Bennettfield, N.Y.	Camden Pa.	1	O.K.
Camden Pa.	Baltimore Md.	1	O.K.
Baltimore Md.	Washington D.C.	1	O.K.
Washington D.C.	Lynchburg Va.	1	O.K.
Lynchburg Va.	Lynchburg Va.	11	O.K.

Above Photos: Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum NASM 9A12585-49-50 & NASM 9A12585-51-52

Though White and Spencer may have been total strangers to the Miller family in Ohio, where they were treated kindly, or to the people in West Virginia, where they were turned away, the “Goodwill Flight” and its crew were well known to the African American community in New York City. During their May 13th stop in the Big Apple, White and Spencer were invited to attend famous boxer Joe Louis’s 25th birthday party at the Mingo Club.

The next day, White and Spencer landed in Washington, DC. They attended scheduled meetings with Senators James Slattery and Everett Dirksen—but a chance meeting with then-Senator Harry S. Truman might have been more impactful than anybody expected. Upon meeting White and Spencer, Truman reportedly told them, “If you guys had the guts to fly this thing to Washington, I’ve got guts enough to see you get what you are asking.” True to his word, Truman went on to help pass legislation allowing African Americans to participate in the Civilian Pilot Training Program, and integrated the armed services by Presidential Order in 1948.



Above Photo: National Air and Space Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution NASM 9A12445



White and Spencer took the scenic route home to Chicago; they stopped by Spencer's hometown of Lynchburg, Virginia, then made a special pass over Sherwood, Ohio, to say hi to their new friends, the Millers. Finally, White and Spencer returned to Chicago as heroes.

Later the same month, White was chosen to drop a wreath on the grave of aviator Bessie Coleman, located in Lincoln Cemetery, Chicago.

During the rest of 1939, White made numerous flights in and around Chicago. In August of that year, CAPA broadened its scope to become the National Negro Airman's Association of America

(NAAA), with Dale White elected as Vice President of the Association.

In 1940, White became an aircraft mechanic at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. Racism made the application process difficult—White received conflicting information about how to apply for and accept work at Wright-Patterson. Dale L. White Sr. continued to fly until June 1941, when his wife requested that he stop. White retired in 1971 and died at the age of 78 in 1977.



Dale L. White Sr. is laid to rest in section 305 lot 1 at Woodland Cemetery.



# Upcoming Events!



This is a great time to see our year-round residents, winter visitors like Dark-eyed Juncos, and early spring migrants like blackbirds, and maybe even Eastern Phoebe and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. The walk is slow-paced, and mostly stays on the road surface, but sometimes does venture "off-trail" into the grass.

All ages welcome. Dress appropriately for the weather and wear a good pair of walking shoes!

Your nature guide will be Amanda Lawson, an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist.

Meet at the Eichelberger Plaza at the main gates of the cemetery. For reservations please click [HERE](#)

Above Photo: Kenneth Cole Schneider for Travis Audubon



Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum and SICSA Pet Adoption and Wellness Center invite you to one of our most unique events: Woof Walk!

This is a free event for all dogs and their owners but reservations are required.

Tours will depart at 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Bring your sociable dog to the cemetery for a historic tour through the beautiful grounds of Woodland. SICSA will be on site with information about their organization, how you can get involved and make a difference in a pet's life! Make a donation to SICSA (cash only) and receive a raffle ticket for a fabulous pet prize!

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. Please bring materials to clean up after your dog. Tours will launch rain or shine, except in the event of thunder or lightning.

For reservations please click [HERE](#)



## 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](mailto:ashimp@woodlandcemetery.org)

## Come Visit Us!



### 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!

## Office Hours:

Monday-Friday  
8am-5pm

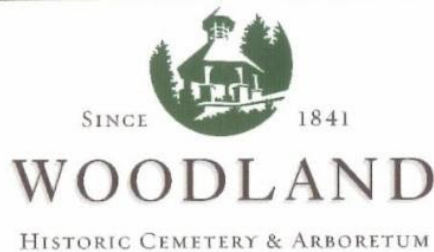
If you need help finding where someone is buried, need directions to a particular area, or have questions about pre-planning or funeral services, Woodland's Staff is here to assist you!

## 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)

# DONATE ONLINE!



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](http://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](mailto:info@woodlandcemetery.org)

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