

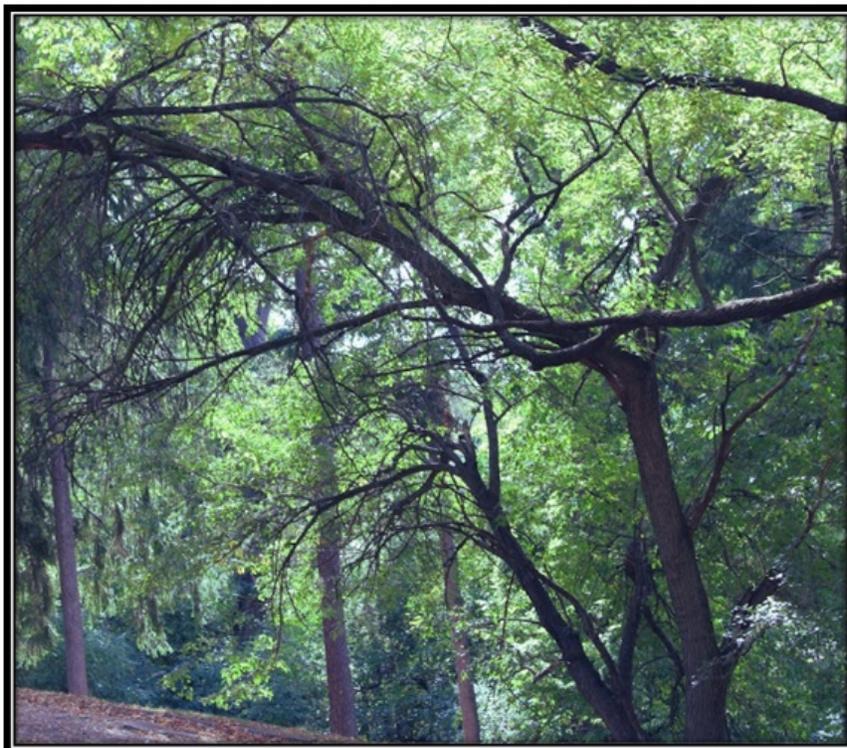


SINCE

1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM



Mystery Minute #4

When we last left the story of Lucien Soward, investigators were struggling to make sense of his brutal murder:

“[Soward’s] office was in confusion, the telephone having been torn from the wall; papers and documents were scattered about; money had been thrown to the four corners of the room and the steam heater had been ripped from the floor.”

“Attorney Soward’s face showed marks of a beating and his eyes were blackened. His shirt was saturated with blood and an examination of his body showed that he had been stabbed in the heart apparently with an average sized knife...”

“The assailant made his escape without leaving a clue except the broken blade of an ordinary pocket knife which had been plunged into the barrister’s heart.” (10)

Soon after news of Soward’s death became public, friends of the murdered man volunteered their theories to police. Half were convinced that the crime had something to do with Lucien Soward’s difficulties with money. Others were just as certain that Soward, known to have made enemies of some clients, had angered the wrong person. (2)



The Reibold building in 1921 was a bustling place. On a Monday afternoon, most of the shops and offices were open for business—with so many potential witnesses, how was it possible for Soward’s killer to commit the crime and escape unnoticed?

An unnamed young man told police that he’d heard a scream a few minutes before the body was discovered. This man was not familiar with the Reibold building, however, so believed the scream had come from a nearby dentist’s office. No doubt relieved that he wasn’t in the Reibold building for any dental work, the man had thought little more of the scream he’d heard. (2)

Searching for witnesses to the crime, investigators began interviewing occupants of the offices neighboring Soward’s. Detectives were surprised to learn that many of them had been called to help pull Soward and an unhappy client apart when a quarrel escalated.

Doris Reynolds, working at the Primrose Patch beauty parlor across the hall from Soward’s office, told police that she’d heard a heated argument that Monday—but had ignored it because it wasn’t out of the ordinary to hear shouting coming from the lawyer’s office. (2)

Above: Miss Doris Reynolds, proprietor of the Primrose Patch beauty parlor. Reported hearing an argument in the attorney’s office on the day of the murder. Published by the Dayton Daily News, 10/11/1921 pg. 1



Above: Artist's sketch of Lucien Soward's office, noting position of doors and objects within the room. Published by the Dayton Herald, 10/11/1921 pg. 2

With this information and evidence from the crime scene, Inspector Yendes came up with a theory. He believed that Lucien Soward and his murderer had begun arguing, maybe about the cost of the attorney's bill, and the fight escalated when the visitor picked up Soward's inkwell and threw it at him. Due to Soward's athleticism and what he'd learned about the attorney's personality, Prosecutor Haveth Mau thought it was likely that Soward had jumped up to defend himself; or may have even begun the argument. Unfortunately for Soward, by the time he had come around the desk to face his attacker, the assailant had pulled out his pocket knife and opened the blade. (3)



Yendes & Mau didn't believe the crime was premeditated. Though the number of wounds on Soward's body indicated that the attacker was very strong or extremely angry; investigators felt that someone who had gone to Lucien Soward's office intending to kill him would have been armed with a more suitable weapon than an ordinary pocket knife.

Investigators believed the general disarray of the room and specifically Soward's ransacked desk suggested that the assailant hadn't left right away. Nobody could say for sure what the murderer had been looking for, but investigators were sure the intruder had spent some time rummaging around Lucien Soward's office.

Above (right): Prosecutor Haveth E. Mau. Published by the Dayton Daily News, 2/9/1925



William Hendrix explained to the Dayton Daily News that because he and Soward were closely acquainted, Hendrix usually walked through the waiting room and straight into Soward's office if the door was open (3). On October 10th, that was exactly what he'd done:

"I walked towards the door, but before I had gone far I saw the lower portion of the body of a man lying on the floor. In a glance I saw the office had been turned topsy-turvy by what apparently had been a terrific struggle. (3)"

Police continued to interrogate William Hendrix, but he didn't have much else to add. He hadn't seen anybody else in Soward's office, and had no motive to kill his attorney.

The first suspect to be arrested was James Kimbro, who had met with Lucien Soward earlier that Monday. Kimbro had hired Soward to represent him in a case due to be presented in court on October

13th. Kimbro maintained his innocence, telling officers that after their meeting, he had gone to work. The Dayton Tire Store on Main street verified this—Kimbro had definitely been at work during the time of the murder. With an airtight alibi; police released James Kimbro the same day (3).

Soon after news of Soward's death was made public, a rumor began to spread that a 'bloody man' had been seen in the area. Police did investigate several bloody men who had been out and about near Dayton, but none of these individuals developed into a viable suspect, and investigators eventually dismissed the 'bloody man' theory.

Above: Inspector S.E. Yendes. Published by the Dayton Herald, 7/10/1930 pg. 30

As the years went by, Soward's case grew colder:

"The murder happened in one of the largest office buildings of the city. It occurred at a time when hundreds of people were passing on the streets below and the offices of the building were occupied by practically all their tenants.

Yet, the slayer escaped and at 1:30 o'clock Tuesday afternoon had been at liberty for just one year.

Police detectives admitted from the first that they were baffled by the crime, despite the apparent ease with which clews might have been obtained from one or more of the hundreds within close proximity to the crime, which was declared one of the most brutal in the history of the city.

One or two suspects were nabbed on the day of the murder but they were released almost at once.

Suspicion pointed to two other men at times but detectives after investigation admitted that they could not link them with the killing.

And detectives Wednesday said they are as far from a solution of the crime as ever.

With the murderer at large for one year, it seems probable that he will still be free this time next year."

—Dayton Daily News, 10/11/1922 pg. 17

"One year ago Tuesday afternoon at two minutes of 1 o'clock Lucien Soward, attorney, walked jauntily across Fourth street, entered the Reibold building, and took the elevator to his offices on the eleventh floor.

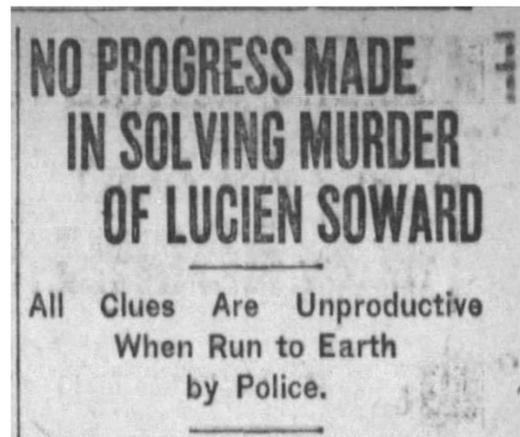
Fifteen minutes later, his body, with several knife wounds [and blunt force injury to his skull], was found in the disordered office. The discovery was made by W. Hendrix, guard at the Dayton State hospital and client of Soward.

Today [one year later,] the police are apparently as far from a solution of the murder as they were the day it happened.

All clues have been run down. The blood-stained, broken knife found on the floor of the office is being held at headquarters in the hope that someday its owner will be found.

Practically all of the scores of clients whose business was handled by Soward have been questioned time and again and in most cases exonerated."

—The Dayton Herald, 10/11/1922 pg. 16



Above: Headline, Dayton Herald, 12/19/1921 pg. 2



Lucien Soward was buried at Woodland Cemetery on October 13th, 1921. His grave can be located in section 14, lot 3227, just off the Lookout path.

Grace Soward was remarried to Thomas H. Horobin in 1927. Upon her death in 1966, she was buried next to Lucien.

Prosecutor Haveth E. Mau also rests at Woodland; he died in 1972, and was buried in section 200, lot 36.

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Sources:

1. The Dayton Herald, 10/10/1921 pg. 1
2. The Dayton Herald, 10/11/1921 pg. 1 & 8:
3. Dayton Daily News, 10/11/1921 pg. 1 & 2
4. Dayton Daily News, 10/12/1921 pg. 1 & 2
5. The Dayton Herald, 10/14/1921 pg. 1
6. The Dayton Herald, 12/19/1921 pg. 2
7. Dayton Daily News, 10/11/1922 pg. 17
8. History of the Reibold Building in Three Phases; Dayton Vistas. Andrew Walsh (07/10/2024).
9. The Dayton Herald, 10/11/1922 pg. 16
10. The Cincinnati Enquirer, 10/11/1921 pg. 1

Upcoming Events!



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 thunder or lightning.

Upcoming Tours:

11/11 @ 11 am

Click [here](#) to register!



Fall Bird Walk:

We'll finish our bird walks for the year looking for year-round residents, and winter birds like White-throated Sparrow and Brown Creeper.

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.

The tour will meet at the Eichelberger Plaza at the main gates of the cemetery.

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

Upcoming Tours:

11/16 @ 9 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

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.

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday
8am-5pm

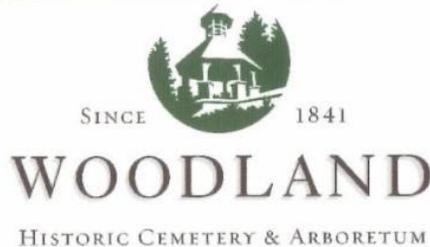
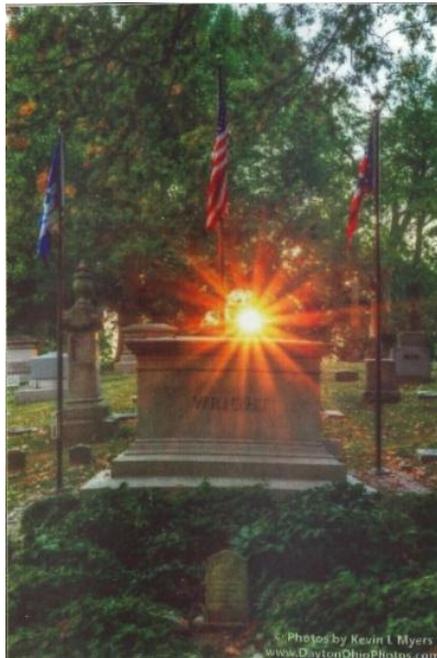
If you need help finding where someone is buried, need directions to a particular area, or have questions about pre-planning or funeral services, Woodland's Staff is here to assist you!

*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)



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!](#)

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