



SINCE

1841

WOODLAND

HISTORIC CEMETERY & ARBORETUM

Dave Watson

Friend of Woodland

Written by Angie Hoschouer

As the Development and Marketing Manager at Woodland, I encounter a great many people during programs, presentations, tours and events at Woodland and in the community. All have questions about Woodland and its history and are happy when I tell them stories of the residents who rest in peace.

I met Dave Watson in 2019 during the first year that Woodland offered a Headstone Cleaning Class. Dave was one of those shy guys who sat back and listened, and took in all of the information that was offered. He participated in cleaning headstones with the class. He didn't rush. He followed the necessary steps to remove all of the lichen and moss and other growth on the long forgotten grave markers.

Winter came and a quiet peace fell over the cemetery. By March 2020, the world was beginning to shut down due to Covid-19 and all of the cemetery's plans for an event and tour season vanished. We encouraged people to come and visit the cemetery using our 200+ acres as a way to socially distance themselves from others yet get out in the sun and fresh air and enjoy the peaceful surroundings of Woodland.

I would often take advantage of this during my workday and go out for a brief walk or drive through the cemetery. On several occasions I would encounter Dave sitting on the grass in front of a family of headstones and he would be scraping and brushing off settled dirt and biological growth and then washing and rinsing the stones with the utmost of care.

I would stop and chat with him for a few moments and he would show me his work and the new picks and scrapers he had found that worked well on some of the intricate stone carvings and lettering. He would then tell me what he knew of the family he was working on and by the time he was done cleaning the husband and wife and sometimes their children's headstones, he could tell you their whole family history. See, Dave just doesn't come and clean a headstone and leave, he finds out who the people are and what their story is. He gets to know the people.



In September 2021, Woodland offered another Headstone Cleaning Class and Dave signed up to take it. I asked him why he wanted to take it again and he said he just wanted to make sure he was doing everything properly and wanted to spend more time learning about resetting loose stones. Once again, Dave was very attentive in class and when the class was set loose to clean stones, Dave chose a small family plot with four headstones.

In a recent Facebook story, Dave posted a before and after photo and a brief bio on the patriarch of the family. I asked him why he bothers to look up the story of the people he has cleaned their stone for and he responded, "Everyone has a story, some well-known, some known only to God."

"Charles H. Wetz, the father of Webster and Willie, and the husband of Carrie, was who I cleaned and brought back from obscurity," said Dave. "Mr. Wetz was actually born in 1857 but never had a birth certificate, and was able to have one verified from his parents listing him as born in Dayton, Ohio, as a young man, and records showed this the rest of his life. Charles was an assembler of machinery at NCR, but was more known to friends and other Daytonians as the organist at Christ Episcopal Church for over 25 years. He also was a music teacher and well known for the many students he taught to play that musical instrument. His life centered around his two sons, both of whom he survived, as well as his wife, and he spent the last 14 years of his life with his niece at his residence listed at 701 Alberta Street."

Charles died on July 18, 1938 at the age of 80 at his home from arteriosclerosis, as indicated on his death certificate. He is located with his wife Carrie, an infant child, and two sons Webster B. and William J. in Section 69 Lot 434.

Learn more about Dave and his story through James Brown's interview on WHIO Ch. 7 "Making a Difference" program.

[Click here for Dave's "Making a Difference" story.](#)



Charles H. Wetz
BEFORE



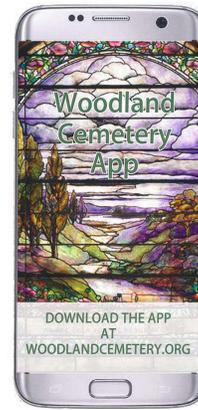
Charles H. Wetz
AFTER

There is still space available in the May 7th Headstone Cleaning Class. For more information and to register for the class [click here](#).

As Spring comes upon us, you can take your own walking tour at the cemetery or a virtual tour from the comfort of your couch by visiting our website at: woodlandcemetery.org/tours.

From your phone you will be prompted to download our app. Take one of 12 walking tours we have available for your enjoyment at the cemetery. If you are on your desktop, laptop or tablet, you can take the tour right from the tour page. We will be adding more tours so come back often to learn about the men and women who made it Great in Dayton.

[Download the mobile app for your phone by clicking here.](#)



Memories of a loved one should last for generations.

Using our app, you can:

- Navigate to your relative or friend's grave using our GPS-based system
- Share stories about your family
- Upload photos and video
- Share memories with your family on Facebook

Your loved one's memorial page is automatically created when you make cemetery arrangements with our office. You may also share and upload information by using our burial database via our website (woodlandcemetery.org). (please contact our office if you need assistance)



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.

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\$531.98

Total Donation to Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum

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