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for Special Collections  
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ **Woodlawn Cemetery Association Records, 1877-1996** ◀

MSS-112

**Size:** 1.25 linear feet

**Provenance:** Donated by Kirk Holdcroft, on behalf of Woodlawn Cemetery, 1995, 1999

**Access:** Open

**Collection Summary:** Collection contains correspondence, financial documents, minutes, and printed materials.

**Subject(s):** [Business and Commerce](#), [Social Life and Customs](#)

**Related Collections:**

**Processing Note:**

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**Completed by:** Barbara Floyd, July 30, 2010; revised and updated by Tamara Jones, December 2015

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**Historical Sketch**

Woodlawn Cemetery is an example of the rural cemetery movement that began in the America in the 1830s. Urban planners sought to move cemeteries to the outskirts of cities because older cemeteries located within the city limits had run out of space, and many believed they were offensive and a health hazard. Woodlawn, founded in 1876, was built three miles from downtown in what was a rural area at the time. The site had many natural attributes that made it a beautiful, contemplative place for a cemetery. It was located near the Ottawa River, but high enough from its banks to have adequate drainage. The 160-acre site was located in an area that is today bounded by Willys Parkway, Jackman Road, Central Avenue, and Hillcrest Avenue.

Modeled on the “landscape lawn plan” used at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Woodlawn had less individual plot ornamentation and stressed instead the beauty of the natural setting. Trees and flowers were the major ornamentation. The buildings, including the chapel, were designed in a Victorian style. The cemetery’s beauty attracted many from the city who came to see it as an urban park. As the city limits encroached, roads were built for cars, and a streetcar line connected the cemetery to the city.

The cemetery became the favored interment site for Toledo’s business class, with members of over 100 prominent families buried on the grounds today. Some built striking mausoleums, including the Libbey, Snyder, Chesbrough, Stanahan, Secor, and Berdan families. Others displayed beautiful and distinctive markers, including one for Irving Colburn, a granite replica of an easy chair (LeRoy McIntryre Ludwig), and a huge stone pyramid (John Gunkel). The latter was built to honor Gunkel’s place as founder of the Toledo Newsboys Association, and consisted of rocks from all over the world.

Despite many difficult years during the Depression and World War II, today Woodlawn Cemetery continues to be one of the best examples of the rural cemetery, even though it is now located in the middle of the city. The emphasis on natural beauty makes it an attractive place to escape the urban environment. In 1998, Woodlawn Cemetery was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and an historic marker erected by the Ohio Historical Society in 2002 notes its importance.

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**Scope and Content Note**

The Woodlawn Cemetery Association Records are arranged in four series.

**Series I, Correspondence (1877 to 1951)**, contains incoming and copies of outgoing correspondence of the cemetery's superintendent. The files are arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Much of it pertains to routine maintenance issues regarding the cemetery, as well as correspondence with the superintendents of other cemeteries. Some is with survivors regarding the sale and upkeep of cemetery plots.

**Series II, financial documents (1892 to 1984)**, consists mainly of invoices for goods and services provided to the cemetery. The bulk of the invoices are for 1913. Two folders contain scattered financial reports, and one folder consists of cancelled checks.

**Series III, minutes (1878 to 1986)**, include minutes of two organizations that oversaw the cemetery: the trustees (and its executive committee) and the lot owners. The trustee minutes record actions at quarterly meetings, including the election of officers, reports of the superintendent, and actions taken concerning the development and maintenance of the cemetery. Three folders contain scattered minutes of the executive committee of the trustees. Minutes of the lot owners record activities of this group that advised the trustees. The minutes mostly document the election of officers. Also included is one folder of presidents' annual reports and a file containing partial and incomplete trustees and lot owner minutes.

**Series IV, Printed Materials (1882-1996, n.d.)**, contains informational brochures and pamphlets about Woodlawn Cemetery, miscellaneous pages from sales catalogs of cemetery equipment, and a time book for laborers for 1913 (mostly blank). Several newspaper clippings are also included; these have been placed in a separate folder.

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**Folder List**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Item</b>
		<b>Series I. Correspondence</b>
1	1	Correspondence, A, 1889-1922
1	2	Correspondence, B, 1882-1923
1	3	Correspondence, C, 1882-1923
1	4	Correspondence, D, 1887-1950
1	5	Correspondence, E, 1889-1921
1	6	Correspondence, F, 1878-1923
1	7	Correspondence, G, 1882-1921
1	8	Correspondence, H, 1882-1923
1	9	Correspondence, I, 1915-1937
1	10	Correspondence, J, 1892-1920
1	11	Correspondence, K, 1892-1962
1	12	Correspondence, L, 1878-1949
1	13	Correspondence, M, 1882-1948
1	14	Correspondence, N, 1890-1922
1	15	Correspondence, O, 1889-1923
1	16	Correspondence, P, 1892-1921
1	17	Correspondence, R, 1879-1920
1	18	Correspondence, S, 1877-1924
1	19	Correspondence, T, 1891-1921
1	20	Correspondence, U, 1891
1	21	Correspondence, W, 1882-1951
		<b>Series II. Financial Records</b>
1	22	Cancelled Checks, 1913
1	23	Invoices, 1892-1893
1	24	Invoices, 1913 (folder 1)
1	25	Invoices, 1913 (folder 2)
1	26	Invoices, 1913 (folder 3)
1	27	Invoices, 1913 (folder 4)
1	28	Invoices, 1913 (folder 5)
1	29	Invoices, 1913 (folder 6)
1	30	Receipts, 1913, 1976, n.d.
1	31	Reports, 1913-1928
1	32	Reports, 1913-1984
		<b>Series III. Minutes</b>
1	33	Minutes, Executive Committee, 1938-1952
1	34	Minutes, Executive Committee, 1983-1984
1	35	Minutes, Executive Committee, 1985-1986

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1	36	Minutes, Lot Owners, 1925-1937
1	37	Minutes, Lot Owners, 1935-1985
1	38	Minutes, Partial, 1901-1986
1	39	Minutes, President's Reports, 1935-1945
1	40	Minutes, Trustees, 1878-1902
1	41	Minutes, Trustees, 1902-1925
1	42	Minutes, Trustees, 1925-1934
1	43	Minutes, Trustees, 1935-1944
1	44	Minutes, Trustees, 1945-1986
1	45	Minutes, Trustees, 1951-1984
		<b>Series IV. Printed Material</b>
1	46	Newspaper Clippings, 1940s-1990s, n.d.
2	1	Printed Material, 1882-1883, 1913
2	2	Printed Material, 1929, 1939, 1953, 1975-1976, 1993, 1996, n.d.
2	3	Printed Material, n.d.