



The Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society Museum

"Preserving the history of law enforcement in the Greater Cincinnati area"

The Roll Call Newsletter

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October 2017

Greetings!



On Aug. 16, 2017, on the 82nd anniversary of the murder of FBI Special Agent Nelson B. Klein, the Indiana Historical Society, in collaboration with the Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Louisville Field Offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, unveiled a bronze

plaque in honor of Special Agent Klein at a park in West College Corner, IN, about 100 feet from where he was murdered. Special Agents in Charge Angela Byers (Cincinnati) and W. Jay Abbott (Indianapolis) and Assistant Special Agent in Charge Jeff Coburn (Louisville) spoke of their individual offices' involvement in the death, investigation, prosecution, and conviction and execution of the killer, George W. Barrett. I was honored to present the keynote speech providing a brief history of the two men and their destinies. That speech is reprinted here:

Thank you SAC Byers, SAC Abbott, ASAC Coburn, and retired SA Plunkett and SAC Cornelius, and all involved in setting this ceremony up, for allowing the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum the honor of presenting the history of this good man and the evil man who cut short his life. Just the fact that I, a former local law enforcement officer, am giving this address, is a testament to the collaboration that exists between more than 160 law enforcement agencies in the Greater Cincinnati region. I dare say that it exists nowhere else in the U.S., or the world.

While I am giving this address, please note that I am not the expert on Special Agent Klein's death. That would be SA Plunkett; and if you want more information, please purchase his book, *The G-Man and the Diamond King*, available on Amazon and at the Police Museum.

Parking's on us!



Free and convenient parking is available for visitors to the Police Museum. Signs designating free parking spaces are posted in front of the museum.

Parking is limited to 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and a Police Museum parking permit is required.

Parking permits are available in the Museum Gift Shop.

Support your museum

Don't forget, you can support the museum every time you shop at Kroger or online through Amazon.



Kroger Community

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Register online [here](#).

Have your Kroger Plus card handy and be sure to set up your card for a Kroger Rewards Account.

When prompted to enter the name of the organization to receive awards, enter "Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society" or our NP number "82383."



Amazon Smile:

When you shop on Amazon, a portion of your purchase can now help support the work of GCPHS. Visit [here](#) and designate "Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society Inc." as your charity. Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of each purchase price back to GCPHS.

Reminder: You will need to visit these sites each year to designate the museum as the recipient of your contributions.

Fall Fundraiser offers fun-aplenty!



The Fall Fundraiser is

Nelson Klein was a good man and a Great American.

Born in New York in 1898, Nelson was about 19 when World War I broke out. He joined New York's fighting 69th National Guard, also known as the "Irish Brigade," and soon found himself in France fighting for Wild Bill Donovan in the famous Rainbow Division.

When he returned home, he furthered his education by taking correspondence courses in psychology, mechanical drafting, English, and commercial law, all courses which would lead him to be highly sought after as a federal investigator.

He first gained investigative experience in the private sector. In the midst of the Roaring 20's and Prohibition, Nelson joined the Bureau of Investigation in 1926.

Special Agent Klein already had a storied career when he transferred to the Cincinnati Office; including the chase of top criminals like John Dillinger and investigations like the Alice Berry Stoll kidnapping in Louisville. By 1935, he had served as the "Number One Man" - similar to the Assistant Special Agent in Charge - in three field offices, including Cincinnati.

Nelson Klein was a good man. Even his home in Northern Kentucky bespoke of a white picket fence.

George W. Barrett was the polar opposite of Agent Klein.

By all accounts, he was born to a decent family in a mountain cabin in Kentucky. His first arrest was for moonshine. And during this first arrest, Barrett, a juvenile at the time, pulled a gun on the officer who shot him. It was just a flesh wound, but indicative of things to come.

After a short time in jail, he became renowned in the area, participating in feuds and crime and murders until 1917 when he left for Cincinnati "until things cooled off." By then, he claimed he had killed five or six men.

In Cincinnati, he took a legitimate job as a streetcar conductor and made his real income fencing stolen jewelry. After building a flourishing diamond smuggling operation, he returned to Kentucky with a pocketful of diamonds.

Upon his return, he was involved in a gun duel

coming together. While many plans are still being finalized, you can mark your calendars for a night of fun and fellowship!

When: Friday, Nov. 3, 2017 from 6 - 11 p.m.

Where: Take 5 Bar & Grill, 6957 Harrison Ave.

What: Get together with old friends and make new ones while enjoying the food and drinks at Take 5, a favorite West side establishment.

Raffle prizes: A Kimber Micro 9 handgun (\$10 per chance) and a vacation on Fripp Island (\$5 per chance) plus many more.



Email gcpmevents@gmail.com for more information, to donate prizes or volunteer!

It's never too early to start your holiday shopping



Do you have law enforcement members or enthusiasts on your holiday shopping list?

Make plans to visit the museum gift shop. We have books, memorabilia and many more items perfect for gift-giving. We're open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday during museum hours - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. All

With his brother-in-law where he lost an eye. Then he quarreled with his 73-year-old mother and shot her to death. When his sister tried to intervene, he killed her.

With a body count of almost 10, he left Kentucky again and did not return until he had paid off all the witnesses to his murders. He was tried twice in 1931 for the murders of his mother and sister; both without a conviction. Then the district attorney who brought the charges against him was assassinated - possibly set up by Barrett - and he left Kentucky for good.

Then, Barrett became an interstate car thief; stealing cars, changing the serial numbers, and selling them across the country - all the way to California... which brought him to the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Special Agent Klein.

Agent Klein, Aug. 16, 1935, had enough to arrest Barrett and telephoned the Hamilton Chief of Police and asked that Barrett be detained as agents were on their way to arrest him. Someone sitting at the station house overheard a conversation and went to Barrett to tell him. Barrett replied, "Guess I'll go over to College Corner and get my gun. I ain't been carrying it lately."

When Agents Klein and Donald McGovern arrived in Hamilton and found Barrett had fled, Klein knew where he would go - here, to his brother's home. They drove here followed minutes behind by Butler County Sheriff John Schumacher and Deputy Sheriff Charles Walke.

When Barrett got to the farm, he parked his car, walked into his brother's home, opened a dresser drawer, and retrieved a long-barreled revolver. His sister-in-law asked him what he was doing and he replied, "Oh, I'm goin' to attend to a matter." He walked back to his car and saw another car approaching him.

Agent Klein got out of that car and said, "Just a minute, Barrett! We're federal officers..." Before he finished, Barrett ran up an alley with the officers in pursuit. Barrett turned and, using a tree as cover, began shooting at Agent Klein. Agent Klein stumbled and fell.

While on the ground and as Barrett continued to shoot him, Agent Klein pulled his automatic and shot Barrett in the knee. Barrett shot his final two shots into Klein's all but lifeless figure as

proceeds benefit the museum and historical society.

Too busy to get to the gift shop in person? Order online [here](#).

McGovern shot him in his other knee. Barrett took aim at McGovern and pulled the trigger, but his revolver was empty. Agent Klein was struck with all six rounds in the chest and arms. Sheriff Schumacher and Deputy Walke arrived minutes later at 6:15 p.m.

Agent Klein and Barrett were rushed to Fort Hamilton Hospital. Barrett bragged at the hospital, "I beat him to the draw! Sure I shot him while he lay on the ground. It isn't the first time I've killed a man." And it wasn't. By now, he'd killed at least 11.

Agent Klein left a wife, Catherine Klein (37), and three children; Nelson Klein, Jr. (8), Richard C. Klein (6), and Barbara Ann Klein (3). He was buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Southgate, Kentucky. Nelson Jr. would later join the FBI and die in a car crash in 1969. Barbara also joined the FBI in a civilian capacity.

Barrett was treated at Fort Hamilton Hospital and released as a paraplegic on Aug. 21, 1935. After several weeks of recuperating, Barrett was taken by automobile to Indianapolis to stand trial for Agent Klein's murder.

During the first week of December 1935, a jury returned a guilty verdict in near record time. Barrett was the first person to receive the death penalty under a recent federal law that made it a capital offense to kill an FBI agent. On March 24, 1936, at 12:01 a.m., seven months after the murder, Barrett was carried into the yard of the Marion County (Indianapolis) jail and hanged - the first official execution in the county in 49 years.

Good always wins out over evil. Unfortunately, in this case, we lost a very good man before the evil one.

If there are any other questions you want to ask or if there is something you'd like to see in a future issue, please contact me [here](#).

Thank you for your continued support.

Lt. Steve Kramer, RET

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Greater Cincinnati Police Museum

308 Reading Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45202
(513)300-3664
Open Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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