City Watchman John Davis| City of Cincinnati

> *Three 19th Century sources describe Watchman Davis in minimal detail. One asserts the year of his death, but not the month. One identifies the probable murderer. Only one gives us his first name of "John". The one which gives us the year of his death, misses by six years the year of Watchman Stoddard's death and misspells Stoddard's name, so we discount it's accuracy. After extensive and ongoing research, what we are left with is the following:*

Watchman Davis was described as "an old and faithful officer," One morning he did not return from his patrol. For several days a search ensued, but he was not found. Then, some boys accidentally came across his decomposed remains in high weeds in the Twelfth Street Burying Ground (now Washington Park) at 12th and Race Streets.

Investigators determined he had been shot and his body was thrown over the fence. He and most Night Watchmen were unarmed at the time of his murder. He was the first law enforcement officer killed in the line of duty in the tri-state region.

A $1000 reward (about $31,250 in 2015 dollars) was offered for the identification, arrest, and conviction of his murderer, but no one ever came forward to collect.

During the early 19th Century, two brothers named Smythe and Walter Maythes made names for themselves with thefts, burglaries, assaults, imprisonments, escapes and more crimes. Smythe Maythes was mostly known for his interstate crimes and

escapes. Judge Lynch of Kentucky found a way to prevent his escape when he tried him and hanged him on the same day for the killing of a peddler. Walter Maythes was mostly known for his violence and stayed closer to home. He was involved in several shootings; including having been shot himself on multiple occasions.

Over the years, Walter Maythes boasted in such a way as to leave little doubt that he had murdered Watchman Davis. Years later, he became engaged in a dispute with a man named Fouche Gould at the Paul Pry Saloon on the north side of Sixth Street between Plum and Elm Streets. Maythes went after Gould with a knife and Gould pulled a revolver and shot him dead.

No one was ever charged with Watchman Davis's murder. Fouche was found innocent of criminal homicide.

If you have information, artifacts, archives, or images regarding this officer or incident, please contact the Greater Cincinnati incinnati Police Museum at memorial@police-museum.org.

This narrative was revised on December 27, 2010 by Cincinnati Police Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer, Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society President, with research material provided by Joyce Meyer, Price Hill Historical Society. All rights are reserved to them and the Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society.