Acting Police Chief Henry Frederick Brinkmeyer | Middletown Police Department

Age: 64
Served: 39 years
May 10, 1900 to October 29, 1939

OFFICER

Henry was born July 18, 1875 in Ohio to German immigrant farmers William and Charlotte Brinkmeyer.

Henry joined the Middletown Police Department as a patrolman on May 10, 1900. Six months later, on November 28, 1900, he married Katherine Brady in Butler County. By 1917, he had been promoted up the ranks to Police Chief and served as such until at least April 14, 1918.

Chief Brinkmeyer joined the United States military during World War I. During his tour he served as a Lieutenant Junior Grade in Public Works at the Hampton Roads Naval Base during 1918.

He returned to Middletown and to the Department as Police Chief before January 1919.

We do not know what other venture he pursued, but by April 1920 Chief Brinkmeyer had tendered his resignation and continued as Acting Police Chief until he was succeeded by Police Chief Frank Byrd on July 4, 1920. Whatever the reason for his departure, by January 1925 he had returned to the Department as a Patrolman.

On November 13, 1925 he was promoted again to Assistant Chief of Police and Night Captain. He was Acting Chief on November 23, 1932, when Middletown City Manager L. A. Waldner appointed him to represent Middletown on the Cincinnati Regional Crime Commission. Indeed, several times the position of Police Chief went vacant and Assistant Chief Brinkmeyer was appointed to act as Chief until it was filled. He was acting in that capacity in October 1939.

He intended to retire seven months later, after forty years of service to his country and community, during May 1940.

INCIDENT

Acting Chief Brinkmeyer was returning from a disturbance call on October 29, 1939 when a taxi driver, Dan Buchanan, offered him a ride to the Middletown police station. The taxi was driven east on Central Avenue when Claude Rhea (27), driving a vehicle east on Clinton Street, collided with the taxi at 2:20 a.m., pushing the taxi through the window of the Ulrich Dry Cleaning Company. Acting Chief Brinkmeyer was seriously injured with a crushed chest and skull fracture and was rushed to the Middletown Hospital.

DEATH

Acting Chief Brinkmeyer died from the fractured skull at 5 p.m.

Acting Chief Brinkmeyer was survived by his wife of almost 39 years, Katherine Brinkmeyer, and children, Helen Brinkmeyer (37) and Robert Brinkmeyer (34). His funeral services were held on November 1, 1930 at St. Paul's church and officiated by Reverend H. H. Jung, Reverend R. Johnson, and Reverend F.A. Stiles. The church was filled to capacity. Attendees included a squad of Dayton Police officers and officers from many other agencies in the Miami Valley. He was buried in Woodside Cemetery on November 1, 1939.

JUSTICE

Claude Rhea (27), originally of Harlan, Kentucky, was charged in the accident and indicted by the Butler County Grand Jury on January 6, 1940 for Involuntary Manslaughter. We do not know the outcome of his trial.

If you know of any information, artifacts, archives, or images regarding this officer or incident, please contact the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum at Memorial@Police-Museum.org.

© This narrative was revised October 18, 2020 by Cincinnati Police Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer (Retired), Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society President, with some information provided by Cincinnati Police Homicide Detective Edward W. Zieverink III (Retired), Greater Cincinnati Police Museum Curator, and Cincinnati Police Sergeant David R. Turner, Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society Volunteer. All rights are reserved to them and the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum.