Inspector of Police Clarence Eugene Karrick | Louisville and Nashville Railroad

Age: 56
Served: Almost 24 years
– April 1906 to 1908 – Latonia Police Department
– 1908 to 1920 – Covington Police Department
– 1920 to March 24, 1930 – Louisville and Nashville Railroad

OFFICER

Clarence was born on May 16, 1873 in Covington to Edward and Maria L. (Mann) Karrick. Clarence was nineteen when his father died, and he stayed home to take care of his mother. He worked as a laborer, probably from 1892 to 1904.

On April 24, 1904, during one of two mass conventions of the

Kenton County Republican Party, he was named as a delegate to the district and state conventions. Nine days later, on May 2nd, he was named fourth-class postmaster for Latonia. Two days after that, on May 4th, he married Sallie Carlton. He served as Postmaster at Main and Southern until April 12, 1906.

Published reports assert that about 1904 he was appointed Patrolman for the Covington Police Department and that he served as a Latonia Police Lieutenant for 10 years prior to that. We believe that it is more likely that he joined the Latonia Police Department about April 1906, when he resigned as Postmaster, and transitioned over to Covington when Latonia was annexed in 1908. He was still a Covington Patrolman in 1912 and had been promoted to Lieutenant by 1914. He retired from Covington during 1920.

Immediately after "retirement", the Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad appointed him Inspector of Police at the Cincinnati Terminals. All other accounts name him variously as "Detective," "Chief of Detectives," or "Superintendent." Regardless of his title, he was clearly in charge of the law enforcement arm of the L&N Railroad in the Greater Cincinnati region.

INCIDENT

During 1930, Inspector Karrick and other detectives had been investigating tramps carrying whiskey in five-gallon cans on freight trains. On the night of March 23, 1930, though he ordinarily did not participate in field operations, one of his men had taken off sick, so he took his place.

As best as can be determined with means available to

investigators, about 3 a.m. on the morning on March 24, 1930, in the Decoursey Railyards north of the Coleman Station between Decoursey Avenue and Spring Lake, Inspector Karrick found and engaged in a gun battle with a band of thugs believed to be members of a Newport, Kentucky gangster organization engaged in liquor running. During an exchange of gunfire, he fired four shots before someone came up from behind him and shot him in the head behind the left ear with a .38 caliber revolver. The bullet penetrated his brain and he died instantly.

FUNERAL

Inspector Karrick was survived by his wife of almost 26 years, Sallie (Carlton) Karrick, and children, William Karrick (24) and Dorthey Karrick (16). His funeral services were held on March 27, 1930 at the Latonia Christian Church and officiated by Rev. H.C. Runyan. He was Buried in Highland Cemetery.

INVESTIGATION

At 6 a.m. on March 24th, Freight Conductor J.A. Regan, found Inspector Karrick's body on the railroad tracks and his revolver next to him containing two live rounds and four spent shells. A police alarm was sounded.

Six men were arrested 140 miles south (by rail) of Covington in Livingston, Kentucky. There is no further account regarding the fate of those men in connection to the murder.

Kenton County Coroner Harry Donnelly ruled that the death was a murder, believed to be a result of a pistol duel with tramps.

Kenton County Sheriff John M. Besterman and L&N Railroad Police

collaborated on the investigation. Two days after the discovery of the body, on March 26th, they together reported that there were no clues in the case.

On March 27, 1930, Louisville Patrolman K. Wildt arrested Erley Sellers (19) of Alabama for possession of a .38 caliber revolver. The revolver had unfired rounds and fired casings in the cylinder. He denied having anything to do with the murder but was held on $15,000 bond while investigators tracked down his prior movements. There is no further account regarding Sellers in connection to the murder.

We further believe the killers have never been identified.

EPILOGUE

Sallie moved in with her daughter's family and died 40 years later, on May 27, 1970, at the age of 93. Dorothy survived her, along with three granddaughters and ten great-grandchildren.

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

© This narrative was revised on May 4, 2018 by Cincinnati Police Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer (Retired), Greater Cincinnati Police Museum Memorial Committee Chairman. All rights are reserved to him and the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum.