

Detective Landon Jethro Osborn, Sr. | Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad



Age: 66

Served: 27 years

After 1900 to 1917 – Dayton Police Department

1917 to September 19, 1932 – Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad

Officer

Landon was born April 10 or September 13, 1866 in Westboro, Clinton County, Ohio to Jacob and Wealthy Ann (Brown) Osborn. His great-grandparents were two of the first inhabitants of Hamilton County and he could trace his paternal lineage back to New Jersey a century before the American Revolution.

Little is known about him until September 24, 1895 when he was residing at 304 Elm Street and married Mary J. Lotz. During 1900, they were the proprietors of a laundry at 532 Findlay

Street and had two children. By 1905 they had three children and were living in Dayton, Kentucky. During 1910, he was driving a laundry wagon.

Landon joined the Dayton Police Department, probably after 1910. As a Patrolman, he had some success in clearing up box car thefts. During 1917 he was appointed as a Detective for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad.

By August 1932, Detective Osborn and his wife were empty nesters living at 532 W. 5th Street in Dayton. The last of his four children, Landon J. Osborn, Jr., had just gotten married on July 27th. By then, he had served in law enforcement for more than 15 years.

INCIDENT

On September 18, 1932, Detective Osborn was working at the railroad yards and terminal near Fourth and John Streets in Cincinnati.

Police District 4 reported that at 11:45 p.m. he was walking west on Fourth Street, legally crossing John Street, when he was struck by a Ford Coupe traveling at 40 miles per hour. The driver of which accelerated as he left the scene. Patrol No. 4 responded and transported Detective Osborn to General Hospital, arriving at 12:02 a.m.

DEATH

He died at 3:40 a.m., September 19, 1932 of a crushed chest.

His funeral was from his residence on September 21, 1932 at 2

p.m. He is buried at Evergreen Cemetery.

INVESTIGATION

James H. Stewart (23), of 517 West Fifth Street, drove the hit-skip vehicle, a rental. In the car with him were three other men, including James Meeks, also of 517 West Fifth Street, a boy named Harrisons, and another male. It is likely all were intoxicated, and certain that Stewart was.

After crashing the first rental into Detective Osborn, they rented another. They then drove to Georgetown, Kentucky where he crashed again, this time flipping the car over. In this accident, Meeks's leg was broken and he was driven to St. Joseph Hospital by a concerned citizen. Stewart rented a third automobile and drove home.

Jessie Howard, also of 517 West Fifth Street, visited Meeks in the hospital and Meeks confided that Stewart was driving during the hit-skip. Howard, working more or less as a confidential informant, notified Cincinnati Police detectives and Stewart was brought in for questioning. He confessed saying, "I saw him, and I blew my horn. He got hit, but I did not know he died." The detective filed a manslaughter charge against Stewart.

JUSTICE

Stewart was held to the grand jury by Municipal Judge Thomas J. Elliott on October 24, 1932. Stewart was named in a True Bill by the Grand Jury on November 4, 1932. He later pleaded guilty to a charge of Manslaughter. Judge Nelson Schwab sentenced him to the Ohio Reformatory on December 13, 1932. It was Stewart's first offense, therefore he had to be sentenced to the

reformatory. We do not know how long Stewart served.

EPILOGUE

Mary died 28 years later, on January 14, 1960. She is buried with her husband, Detective Osborn.

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

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