Patrolman Lawrence Morris Klump, Jr. | Cincinnati Police Department



Age: 40
Served: 9¾ years
December 31, 1913, to August 11, 1923

OFFICER

Larry was born July 30, 1883, in Cincinnati to a German father, Lawrence Morris Klump, Sr., and Indiana-born mother, Pauline (Hoffmeier) Klump.

Larry married Anna Scharf, whose father was also from Germany. Less than a year later, their first child, Lawrence Klump III, was born. By 1910, they had two more children, Lillian Sophia and Gertrude Klump and they were living on Ohio Avenue. Larry was working as a blacksmith in a wagon shop.

On December 31, 1913, pursuant to a petition by four men of good

reputation, Larry was appointed to the position of Substitute Patrolman in the Cincinnati Police Department. Less than a year later, on December 24, 1914, he was promoted to Patrolman.

By 1917, his family of five was living at 3156 Bishop Street.

He had a relatively uneventful career, aside from injuries in 1915 and 1919 while making arrests. Patrolman Klump had no disciplinary issues in almost ten years. His entire career was spent in District Four, and it was said that he knew every nook and cranny of the district.

MURDERER

We know very little about John L. Hunter, other than his claims of name, age, and previous residence. He claimed that he was 24 in 1923, had lived in Chattanooga, Tennessee most of his life until about January 1923, and was living at 413 Central Avenue in Cincinnati. A 1923 Chattanooga directory indicated that he lived at 1603 Washington Street and was employed by the Crane Enamel Company. Law enforcement at the time was unable to ascertain any criminal record.

We also know very little about his time in Cincinnati, except that on the night of August 10, 1923, he was with associates in the West End and that at 1 a.m. the next morning he returned home, retrieved his revolver, and went to 704 West Fifth Street.

INCIDENT

During early morning of August 11, 1923, there were only five patrolmen on duty in District Four, an area that had previously been patrolled by sixteen. Just before 3 a.m., Patrolman Klump

was running his beat alone when he approached a group of boisterous men in front of James Garrett's Soft Drink Parlor at 704 West Fifth Street. At his order, all but Hunter dispersed. Hunter lied, said he lived above the store, ran into a dark hallway, and began to ascend a stairway. He then taunted, "There is no policeman who can make me go to bed!" Patrolman Klump entered the hallway and Hunter yelled, "Don't come up here!" As he began to ascend the stairs, Hunter pulled his revolver and shot him in the face.

Garrett heard the shot and retrieved his own pistol. He then heard five more shots. Garrett came out of his store and saw Patrolman Klump roll over onto his back and then he was still. He never had a chance to pull his revolver.

Hunter leapt over the body, ran out of the hallway and down Cutter Street. Garrett chased him, firing five shots at him, one of which took effect beneath Hunter's right knee.

Auto Patrolmen Theodore Huber and Fred Robertson responded and, hoping he was still alive, rushed Patrolman Klump to General Hospital. They noticed Patrolman Klump had also been kicked in the face by Hunter.

Hunter continued east on Third Street to Broadway and over the Central Bridge. By the time he got across, after telephone calls were made, Newport Patrolmen Schuster, Shields, and Mahoney confronted him at the other end with their pistols drawn. Hunter gave up. He had already disposed of his pistol, probably into the river.

Hunter was brought back across the bridge where he was surrendered to Detectives Withrow Grannan and Robert Kennedy. His first question was, "Is he dead?"

DEATH

Patrolman Klump was pronounced dead on arrival at General Hospital from multiple gunshot wounds to the head and body. He became the sixth patrolman from the Fourth District to be killed in the line of duty. The district became known as “Death Valley” to Police Department personnel.

He was predeceased by his mother, Pauline Klump, and siblings, Karl Klump, Joseph R. Klump, Joseph R. Klump, Maria Fredericka Klump, R. Henry Klump, and Florentine Sophie Klump. Patrolman Klump was survived by his wife of 16 years, Anna Sophia (Scharf) Klump; children, Lawrence Klump (16), Lillian Klump (14), and Gertrude Klump (12); father, Lawrence M. Klump, Sr.; and siblings, Charles B. Klump, Alexius Jacob Klump, and Anthony M. Klump. His services were at St. George’s Church on Calhoun Street, and he was buried in St. Mary’s Cemetery on August 14, 1923.

INVESTIGATION

In his cell, wearing clothing stained with Patrolman Klump’s blood, Hunter explained a bullet hole over Patrolman Klump’s eye as occurring accidentally while Klump was grabbing at his legs. He was unable to explain the five bullets to Patrolman Klump’s back. He gave a detailed, albeit not necessarily accurate, confession.

JUSTICE

On August 13, 1923, Hunter appeared for arraignment with his assigned attorney, Franklin Krehbiel. Judge W. Meredith Yeatman continued the case until August 16th at the request of the

attorney. After he returned to his cell, Hunter told Sergeant Marsh that he wanted to plead guilty, saying “I’m due for the death chair and I’m satisfied. Let’s get it over with.”

But, on the 16th, he pleaded “Not Guilty.” Judge Yeatman bound the case over to the Grand Jury and within minutes the Grand Jury returned indictments for First Degree Murder. He was then arraigned before the Common Pleas Court Judge John A. Caldwell, and he retained the services of former Judge A. C. Fricke.

His jury trial began on September 7, 1923, in front of Judge Fred L. Hoffman. Empaneling a jury took days, until September 12, 1923, mostly because of reticence to find someone guilty with a penalty of death. It was the first case in Ohio after a statute was passed requiring the death penalty for a finding of guilty without mercy. Hunter added former Hamilton County Prosecutor Louis H. Capelle to his team. The case went to the jury two days later. They returned a verdict of guilty, but with a recommendation for mercy and he was sentenced to life in prison.

Almost immediately upon arrival at the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus he showed symptoms of tuberculosis. He died there at 10:10 a.m. on August 7, 1924, of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. On August 9, 1924, his body was turned over to the Ohio Medical College. His death certificate was signed by Dr. Willis A. Whitman on August 11, 1924 – one year to the day from when Hunter murdered Patrolman Klump.

EPILOGUE

Anna Sophia (Scharf) Klump died on July 4, 1954 at the age of 70. Patrolman and Mrs. Klump left three children and at least five grandchildren. We believe 7 great grandchildren, 7 great-

great grandchildren, and at least four great-great-great grandchildren are alive today.

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

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