# Patrolman William Satter – Cincinnati Police Department



Badge:  233
Age:  42
Served:  Almost 20 years
May 7, 1887 to April 28, 1907

**OFFICER**

Bill was born on December 17, 1863 in Cincinnati to Francis “Frank” and Mary (Shear) Satters. We know nothing of his childhood.

At 19, during 1883, he married Lizzie. Together, they had two children. We know neither the last name of Lizzie nor the names of the children.

By the time he was 21, during 1885, he was working as a teamster and living at 257 Colerain Avenue. He continued working as a

teamster, driver, and motorman and by 1887 was living at Carlisle and Baymiller Avenues.

On March 31, 1886, after a few decades of perceived corruption under the nearly absolute power of various mayors, Cincinnati's entire police force of 400 men was disbanded and, on April 1, 1886, a non-partisan Police Commission began a multi-year task of rebuilding a Police Department with men that met educational, intellectual, physical, medical, and psychological standards. On April 26, 1887, five men of good reputation nominated Bill for the position of Patrolman. He was approved and on May 7th took his oath of office.

We believe he was initially assigned to the 2nd District (Hammond Street) and during 1888 he was transferred to the 5th District (Oliver and Linn Streets). We further believe that he was assigned to the 3rd District (Bremen Street Station) in 1893.

By then, his marriage was falling apart, especially when he discovered that Lizzie had been previously married and separated without benefit of divorce. They divorced in July 1894. While she received no alimony, it seems that she did get custody of the children and we found no record of them since.

Patrolman Satters was transferred from the 3rd District to the 1st District (9th Street) on July 2, 1895. Then, a couple of months later, he was transferred back to the 5th District. Almost immediately, while walking on West 5th Street, he saw two suspicious youths and took them in for questioning. Not long after, the owner of a saloon on West 6th Street reported a burglary which was quickly attributed to the youths. During July 1898, while on patrol, he saw a gasoline fire in a residence at 1514 Moore Street and, without regard to his own safety, ran

into the home, grabbed the materials that were aflame, and threw them out of a window to the ground. When firefighters arrived, they found themselves no longer needed.

Patrolman Satters married Ida Cordes on November 26, 1903 and they lived at 204 E. Liberty Street.

By 1905, he was in the 4th District (754 West Fifth Street). He and another patrolman investigated a stabbing under the Southern Railroad bridge. They tracked the would-be murderers to their rooms on Court Street.

By 1907, Patrolman and Mrs. Satters were living at 1153 Poplar Street. He was considered an excellent and fearless officer. He was also a member, at least up to 1891, of the Street Railroaders, a mutual aid society.

**MURDERER**

Philip J. Schwartz was born in Germany about 1865. During 1867 he immigrated to the United States, presumably with his family, two years later. It was believed that he served in the United States Army in the Philippines.

It is apparent that mental disease was a common defect in his family. When he was 20, his father showed symptoms of insanity and committed suicide by drowning. At 22, Schwartz suffered a severe fever, due to which some people thought he had become somewhat insane. His sister was insane and committed suicide while committed to an insane asylum. His uncle, Fred Schwartz was committed to the Lakeland Insane Asylum. In 1893, at 27 years of age, he walked into the Louisville Mayor’s office and demanded an appointment to the Louisville Police Force. When turned down, he pulled a revolver, was arrested, and committed

to the Lakeland Asylum; from which he soon escaped, apparently to Cincinnati, leaving a wife and child in Louisville.

Schwartz married Anna K. Duhlmeier during 1896 in Cincinnati and had two children by her. He abandoned her in 1900. During December 1903, Anna filed for divorce.

Schwartz was a tall, powerful man who always carried around with him a lot of cash and was reputed to be connected with the West End Gang. By 1907, he was living in Shantytown, a collection of houseboats and shacks at the bottom of Burns Street. He was feared by Shantytown residents and known as the "Duke of Shantytown."

During a recent flood, Schwartz's houseboat sank. Mrs. Lacey invited him into her home for meals. But when her son, Newton, asked him to help financially with meals, he refused, and their relationship deteriorated. Schwartz began threatening Newton and escalated to pointing a revolver at Lacey. Lacey began to seriously fear for his life.

**INCIDENT**

During the morning of April 28, 1907 at 7 a.m., Patrolman Satters left District Four stationhouse on Fifth Street having completed his tour of duty on the night shift. While he waited for a streetcar at Sixth and Stone Streets, Newton Lacey excitedly ran up to him begging for his protection. Schwartz had followed him from Shantytown all the way up to Sixth Street.

Patrolman Satters began to walk across the street toward Schwartz and called to him, "I want to speak to you." When they were about twenty feet apart, Schwartz pulled a fully loaded .38 caliber revolver and began firing at and striking the officer.

Patrolman Satters absorbed two rounds and was knocked to the ground. He pulled his own Department-adopted .32 caliber Colt New Police revolver loaded with five rounds in accordance with regulations and returned fire. While the officer was on the ground, they emptied their revolvers at each other.

Four of Patrolman Satters's shots took effect, as did three of Schwartz's. Patrolman Satters was shot in the left breast, just above the heart, and through the left lung. Another round entered the right chest and went through the lung. Another lodged in his right arm. Laying on the streetcar tracks in the roadway, Patrolman Satters was too weak to reload.

One-armed Railroad Detective Dave Martin, a resident of Stone Street, ran to the officer's aid. Patrolman Satters gasped, "I'm done for. Take my gun and kill him if you can." Martin took the gun and pulled the trigger six times while aimed at Schwartz, but it was empty.

Schwartz staggered to the curb and fell. He sustained a wound to his cheek and jaw, two wounds to a thigh, and one in the ankle. He crawled across the sidewalk to the doorsteps at 757 W. Sixth Street, sat down on a doorstep, and calmly reloaded.

Patrolman Satters told James Evans, a Sixth Street resident, to call the police and Evans ran to a business and called.

Meanwhile, Detective Martin ran to the 4th District stationhouse at 475 W. Fifth Street. Patrols 1 and 4 responded and Sergeant King, Patrolman Coleman, and Patrolman William Bond ran to him from the district station. The officers and a resident, W. C. Taylor, courageously rushed and overwhelmed Schwartz.

Patrolman Satters and Schwartz were rushed to the Cincinnati Hospital on Patrol 4 and Patrol 1, respectively.

Police Chief Millikin responded to the hospital, interrogated

Schwartz, and interviewed Patrolman Satters.

Mrs. Satters responded to the hospital and stayed by her husband's side.  Doctors gave him no chance of survival.

**DEATH**

Patrolman Satters, after hours of intense pain, died the next day on April 29, 1907 at 2:30 p.m. The bullet that entered his right chest was determined to have caused his death. It penetrated his lung, liver, and kidney and lodged in his spine.

Patrolman Satters was survived by his wife, Ida (Cordes) Satters, and presumably his two children. His funeral was held at 2 p.m. on May 1, 1907, from his residence. A large contingent of police was present, including Company F of the Police Battalion, under the command of Night Chief Samuel Corbin, and Smittie's Band. Pallbearers included Sergeant Charles Packer, Detectives Lou Bell and Joe Schaefer, and Patrolman Joe Foster. He was buried in Spring Grove Cemetery.

**JUSTICE**

Schwartz was charged with Shooting to Kill and his first appearance in court was scheduled for April 29, 1907. Still admitted in the hospital, the case was continued to May 3, 1907. He was ordered held without bond until then.

As soon as Patrolman Satters died, Chief Millikin filed for a charge of Murder in the First Degree. The Grand Jury took up the case on May 8th.  An announcement was made on May 10th that he was indicted for First-Degree Murder.

On May 11, 1907, Schwartz pleaded not guilty at his arraignment.

His trial was set for May 30th. He was prosecuted by County Prosecutors Rulison, Sawyer, and Rose, and defended by William M. Beinhart and H. O. Kapp. The trial was presided over by Judge D. D. Woodmansee.

On June 4, 1907, while experts examined Schwartz and determined that he was not insane, the record of his family's insanities came out and he was permitted to plead to Second Degree Murder and sentenced to life.

Six years after going to prison "for life," during July 1913, Schwartz filed papers with the State Pardon Board for relief. Having been turned down in October 1913, the Board revisited the case on June 12, 1914. He was turned down again, but apparently transferred at some point to the Lima State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

**EPILOGUE**

Immediately after the shooting, Municipal Prosecutor Oppenheimer blamed the whole affair on the legal carrying of concealed firearms and indiscriminate sale of firearms by dealers.

It is probable that if Patrolman Satters had been armed with a .38 Special revolver rather than the .32 caliber, Schwartz would have died. Patrolman Satters might have lived depending on when in the gunfight he sustained the terminal wound. After this incident, Cincinnati Police were equipped with .38 Special revolvers for the next seven decades.

Detective Joseph Schaefer, friend of and pallbearer for Patrolman Satters, married his widow during January 1908 and made their home on Glenway Avenue.

Ida (Cordes) (Satters) Schaefer died after a long illness on March 2, 1920, almost 13 years after Patrolman Satters. She was buried next to Patrolman Satters in Spring Grove Cemetery.

Schwartz died two years later, on July 22, 1920, in the Lima State Hospital from Chronic Myocarditis and Pulmonary Tuberculosis and is buried somewhere in Cincinnati.

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

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