

Private Police Officer Martin J. O'Herron | Covington

Private Police Officer Martin J. O'Herron

Age: 47

OFFICER

Martin, the son of Irish immigrants, held jobs such as motorman and fireman in Covington.

Clearly, his heart was in law enforcement. He served two stints as a Covington Patrolman, each time being relieved due to political patronage. After his second termination, he became a Private Police Officer.

INCIDENT

On April 1, 1915, due to several roadhouse and apartment house robberies in the area, Officer O'Herron was assigned to the fashionable Wallace Woods area.

Just before 1 a.m., two men approached Officer O'Herron on Wallace Avenue between Madison Avenue and Scott Street. What transpired next is conjecture, but it seems likely that the two were armed and Officer O'Herron reached for or even pulled his revolver. What is known is that Mrs. W.C. Johnson of 3 Wallace Avenue was drawn to her window when she heard a scuffle and at least one shot fired – she thought two shots were fired – and she saw Officer O'Herron on the pavement and two men running toward the Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad yards. Joe Reusch of Wallace Avenue at Scott Street heard a shot and heard a man yell, "Hit him again!" He too

saw two men run east on Wallace Avenue.

Also drawn to the noise were William Miller, Covington Sewer Inspector; John Flerlage, a conductor on the Cincinnati, Newport and Covington (C. N. & C.) Railroad; and D. A. Webster, Night Superintendent of the C. N. & C. Railroad. They found Officer O'Herron about 1 a.m., laying on the pavement and shot in the center of his chest. His head and face had been pummeled and lacerated. His broken handled revolver was lying nearby and believed to have been used to beat him. Amazingly, though unconscious, he was still alive. They called for an automobile and transported him to Covington General Hospital.

DEATH

He died in the receiving ward with one .45 caliber revolver round through the heart.

Officer O'Herron was survived by his wife, Anna O'Herron (44); children, John F. O'Herron (23), Eugene O'Herron (23), Aubrey O'Herron (23), Mary E. O'Herron (16), and Robert O'Herron (10); and siblings, Thomas F. O'Herron, William O'Herron, George O'Herron, and Mary Callahan. His brothers served as his pallbearers with his former partner, former Patrolman John Cohen. Scores of persons paid their respects at his residence at 278 W. 5th Street on April 2, 1915. Many floral offerings were received there. The funeral services were held at St. Patrick Church at 9:30 a.m. with Reverend Father McCaffrey officiating. He was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Alexandria, KY.

INVESTIGATION

Covington Patrolmen Trenkamp and Colvin responded to the L&N Railroad yards immediately and saw two men running. They

ordered them to halt and, when they failed to do so, one of the patrolmen fired a warning shot which initiated a running gun battle all the way to the Licking River where the two made their escape. Covington Police were unable to track them.

Covington detectives worked all of that and the next day scouring the city and suburbs. Theories abounded. One was that two men that he had chased earlier during his tour had come back for revenge. Another was that the initial intent of the murderers was robbery. A third was that he might have recognized the two and they killed him to quiet him. In any case, their search was to no avail.

By April 8, 1915, with no suspects identified, Kentucky Governor James B. McCreary offered a \$500 reward the arrest of the murders. Mayor George Phillippe, at the meeting of the city Commissioners, then offered a resolution directing the city to offer another \$200. We can find no indication that the murderers were ever identified.

NOTE: Various sources report Officer O'Herron's name as "O'Hearne" and "O'Herran".

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.

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