

# Officer William Henry Schmudde | Cincinnati Police Department

Age: 41

Served: 9 years

July 19, 1886 to July 28, 1895

## OFFICER

William was born on July 2, 1854 to German immigrant Wilhelm H. Schmudde, Sr. and Cincinnati Henrietta (Meyer) Schmudde in Newark, New Jersey. At eighteen, William moved to 62 Bremen (now Republic) Street and started working as an apprentice safe maker. William, Sr. died the next year from Dropsy, so his mother moved in with him on Bremen. They moved to different residences over the next few years until 1886 when they moved to 26 Allison Street.

William joined the Cincinnati Police Department on July 19, 1886, having been approved as a Patrolman on July 6<sup>th</sup>; one of the first officers approved by the newly empaneled non-partisan police commission.

He married Amelia Gamhausen on May 18, 1888 and William's mother moved in with his sister. William grew a family.

Patrolman Schmudde ran a beat from the Bremen (Republic) Street station for years. He also served two terms as President of the Police Benevolent Association.

His brother-in-law, Henry Lachtrop, was the City Infirmary Director and member of the Sanitary Police.

By July 1895, Patrolman Schmutde, his wife, and four children were living at 165 Loth Street (now the 2200 block of Loth Street near Thill Street). The Cincinnati Enquirer exclaimed that no officer was better known than him.

## **INCIDENT**

On July 15, 1895, while patrolling a beat in the 9<sup>th</sup> District, Patrolman Schmutde was getting off a streetcar when he smashed his right leg. He did not consider the injury as being serious at the time. However, his leg began to swell.

He asked to be relieved of duty, but was denied by his supervisor, so he came in to walk his beat. Sergeant Keidel later explained that he was told by another officer and that he was led to believe that it was Patrolman Schmutde's wife who was sick and he told the other officer to explain to Patrolman Schmutde that he should personally speak to the sergeant to explain why he should be off. The next day, Patrolman Schmutde did explain and Sergeant Keidel gruffly told him, "If you are sick, you had better go home." His tone was sufficiently gruff that Patrol Schmutde continued working.

He was then transferred to the 8<sup>th</sup> District. In the recent past, Patrolmen Rakel and Nealis had been transferred to the 8<sup>th</sup> District and subsequently died. Officer Schmutde was heard to say, "Well, I guess I'm going up there to die. Rakel and Nealis died after going to the hill and I feel as though my fate will be the same."

As his health deteriorated, the family called Coroner Haerr, the family's physician, to tend to him. Coroner Haerr called in Assistant Police Surgeon French for a consult. Patrolman

Schmudde died at his home at 5 p.m. on July 28, 1895, thirteen days from the original injury, from Septic Lymphangitis.

Patrolman Schmudde was survived by his wife, Amelia (Gamhausen) Schmudde; children, Clifford George Schmudde (5), William H. Schmudde (5), Elsie Emily Schmudde (4), and Edna Schmudde (1); mother, Henrietta (Meyer) Schmudde; and sister, Anna Schmudde.

The Benevolent Association met on the morning of July 29, 1895 to plan his funeral.

His funeral was held on July 30, 1895. He was a member of the Police Department's 4<sup>th</sup> Company and they served as honor guards. He was buried at Walnut Hills Cemetery.

## **EPILOGUE**

On July 30, 1895, Chief Phillip Deitsch's called Sergeant August Keidel to account for not allowing Patrolman Schmudde to take off sick. The reason was apparently satisfactory. Sergeant Keidel was not reprimanded and retired as a Police Lieutenant in 1926.

Three years after her husband's death, Mrs. Schmudde contracted Cholera and died, orphaning her four children. At ages five to eight, they were all sent to the German Protestant Orphan Asylum on Highland Avenue. By 1910, the boys had jobs and the girls lived with other families; Elsie as a maid and Edna as a servant. They all lived into their sixties and seventies, but only Clifford married.

We believe Patrolman Schmudde has three great-grandchildren, seven GG-grandchildren, and five GGG-grandchildren who survive him today.

If you know of information, artifacts, archives, or images regarding this officer or incident, please contact the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum at [Memorial@Police-Museum.org](mailto:Memorial@Police-Museum.org).

*© The on-duty nature of this officer's death was rediscovered during mid-2019 by Cincinnati Homicide Detective Edward W. Zieverink III (Retired) Greater Cincinnati Police Museum Historian. He and Cincinnati Police Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer (Retired), Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society Vice President, researched and created this narrative on October 23, 2019. All rights are reserved to them and the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum.*