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Five Veteran Police

All that Remain of 150 Men in Service 35 Yars Ago

Anniversary of Organization

This Day in 1861 the Metropolitan Department Was Perfected, and the

Survivors Have Gone Through Many Raids Upon Lawless Places –

The Force Increased as Needs Required – All Promoted in

Recognition of Their Work

Thirty-five years ago today the Metropolitan Police Department, of Washington, was organized with a total membership of 150 men, including the Superintendent, Sergeants, roundsmen, and privates. Of that number only five are in service today. They are Lieut. John F. Kelly, in command of the Sixth Precinct; Lieut. Vernon, in command of the Fourth Precinct; Lieut. James W. Gessford, in command of the Eighth Precinct; Sergeant Godwin Pierce, detailed for duty at the District Building, and Private August Brown, stationed at the Aqueduct Bridge, Georgetown. These five officers have been in continuous service during all these years, and have seen the department grow to its present size. Each one has a record that has won him favor and distinction. They have grown gray in service, but in the discharge of their respective duties are as zealous and ambitious as in their youth.

William B. Webb, who died very recdently, was the first Superintendent of the department.

The First Increase

In 1867 it was found necessary to increase the number of men, as the force was too small to meet the requirements. Seventy men then were added, and the department was practically reorganized. At the beginning there were no Lieutenants, the Sergeants doing the work now devolved upon the Lieutenants. In the place of Sergeants there were roundsmen. Today each precinct is commanded by a Lieutenant, and has three Sergeants. The force has been increased to the total number of about 500, and still there is urgent demand for more men for street duty.

The five veterans relate thrilling stories of the pioneer days of the department, and each is entitled to all the honors bestowed upon him.

Their first years of duty covered the was period, and each day was full of excitement. Since the close of the war there have been occasions when the greatest bravery was required of policemen.

Broke Up Desperate Places

In the days when Bloodfield, Hell's Bottom, and other sections of the city were infested with the most desperate characters those who are now veterans were called upon to aid in suppressing the lawlessness there. That they now hold high positions in the department attests to the fact that they were faithful and fearless.

There are many others in the service today who shared with the original five in the credit of purifying the districts where criminals menaced the lives of law-abiding citizens. It is with great modesty that any of the deeds of daring are referred to by the old-timers.

Lieuts. Kelly, Vernon, and Gessford, Sergt. Pierce, and Officer Brown are receiving the congratulations of their comrades upon the occasion of the thirty-fifth anniversary of their enlistment in the service of the District, and the wish is expressed by all that they may see many more years of continued usefulness, health, and prosperity.