

Earl Hazen Burdine

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Earl Hazen Burdine, 84

Member of Montgomery's First Police Force Dies

By Richard Pearson

Earl Hazen Burdine, 84 a member of Montgomery County's original six-man police force who served 25 years before retiring as an inspector in 1947, died of a heart ailment June 21 in his home in Takoma Park.

The original force, consisting of five privates and a chief, went on duty July 4, 1922. Before that time, law enforcement was under the supervision of a county sheriff.

In an interview with *The Post* in 1981, Mr. Burdine, one of the original privates, said that when the six men reported for duty they were issued a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, a .38 Smith & Wesson handgun, a blackjack, a "law book," and a uniform that "looked like a Mexican general's." (The chief, Charles Cooley, was given a Model T Ford instead of the motorcycle.)

Montgomery County was divided into beats. Mr. Burdine's included everything north of Gaithersburg, and he was "responsible for everything from barking dogs to murder," he recalled.

Mr. Burdine said that the major crimes committed in Montgomery County in those days consisted of domestic violence, theft of farm animals and public drunkenness. He also reported that he spent time chasing speeders on Rte. 28, and trying, with little success, to catch rum-runners. His busiest hours were weekend evenings in Rockville, after farmers who had come to town to buy their goods would start drinking. "There was excitement, fights, and arguments. I loved it," he told a *Post* reporter.

Mr. Burdine rose in rank through the years, becoming a sergeant in 1925, a lieutenant in 1941, a captain in 1943, and an inspector in July 1946. He retired a year later, and was the last of the original six to serve on active duty with the force.

During his years on the force, he helped organize the Montgomery County Police Association in the late 1920s, and served eight terms as its president.

From 1948 to 1968, he was chief of the guards at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory in White Oak, Md.

Mr. Burdine was born in Washington and reared in Takoma Park. In addition to patrolling Montgomery County, he ranged farther afield with the U.S. Army. He took part in the Mexican border campaign and served with the Army in France during World War I. He also served in the D.C. National Guard until retiring in 1919.

He was a past captain of the Takoma Park Fire Department, and had been a member of the VFW and the American Legion.

Survivors include his wife, the former Rose Emily Skinner of Takoma Park; a daughter, Earlene Rose Miller of Potomac; four sons, Montgomery County Police Sgt. Earl H. Burdine, Jr. of Gaithersburg, Eugene Burdine III of Takoma Park, Richard Clark Burdine of Charlottesville, and Michael Burdine of North Hollywood, Calif.; 15 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.