

Francis F. McCathran

(19 Feb 1841 – 13 Mar 1907)

McCathran. On Wednesday, March 13, 1907 at 2 a.m., Capt. Francis F. McCathran, beloved husband of Mary Elizabeth McCathran in his 66th year. Funeral from his late residence, 511 10th street southeast on Friday, March 15 at 2 p.m. Friends and relatives invited to attend.

The Evening Star, February 25, 1907, p. 12

Capt. McCathran Ill

Attacked by Vertigo Soon After Reaching His Office



Soon after reaching the fifth precinct station house this morning for the day's duties Capt. McCathran of the fifth precinct suffered another attack of vertigo similar to that which he had several months ago. He was removed to his home in a stretcher in the patrol wagon of the fifth precinct, and was attended by Dr. Edmund Barry, police surgeon. The latter stated that while the attack was serious he did not think it would be fatal.

Capt. McCathran has not been feeling as well as usual for the past few days and Dr. Barry has been called in several times. This morning, however, he felt able to attend to his police duties and left his home, 511 10th street southeast, about 7:30 o'clock. Upon reaching the station he greeted the men there and stepped into his office, but soon after called for help and fell to the floor. William Dyer, night station clerk, and Lieut. Anderson heard the calls and responded quickly. They found the captain on the floor of his office suffering severely. He was quickly transferred to a bed and Dr. Barry was called.

It is the theory of the physician that the extra exertion required to walk on the streets, through the snow, is accountable for the attack which Capt. McCathran suffered.

The Evening Star, February 26, 1907, p. 3

Condition Is Grave

Capt. McCathran of Police Department Very Seriously Ill

Grave fears are entertained for Capt. F.F. McCathran of the fifth precinct, as the result of the second attack of vertigo which he suffered in his office in the station house yesterday morning, as stated in The Star. Although he was unconscious for some time after the attack, he partially recovered yesterday afternoon, and has been resting comfortably since that time. The attack seems to have robbed him of his powers of speech. Whenever friends or members of his family approach him he smiles a recognition, but seems unable to say anything.

The attack has affected Capt. McCathran's right side. Dr. Barry, the police surgeon, is attending him.

When the news of Capt. McCathran's illness became known in police circles yesterday there was a general expression of regret, and many messages of inquiry were sent to the fifth precinct station.

The Evening Star, March 11, 1907, p. 2

Condition Is Critical

Capt. McCathran of Police Department Near Death's Door

Capt. Francis F. McCathran, commander of the fifth police precinct, is in a critical condition. Reports received at police headquarters from his home, 511 10th street southeast, this afternoon indicated that the veteran policeman has but a few hours to live. His present illness followed a cerebral hemorrhage which he suffered last fall, a second attack occurring about two weeks ago. Mrs. McCathran and her five children have been at the bedside of the patient for more than twenty-four hours, expecting each moment would be his last.

The Evening Star, March 13, 1907, p. 8

Tribute to the Dead

Official Order Issued Announcing Capt. McCathran's Decease

In an order issued today by Maj. Sylvester, the announcement of the death of Capt. Francis F. McCathran is made, with an expression of profound sorrow. The order reads:

"Throughout his thirty-eight years service in the police department he was held in high esteem by his associates and had the confidence of the public. He was modest, intelligent and courageous, and his career was marked by many acts of kindness as well as firm devotion to official duty."

"Aside from embodying the many good qualities which characterize a fair-minded officer and reputable citizen, he enjoyed the further distinction of having rendered his country service during the civil war."

It is ordered that Inspector Cross and Acting Capt. Anderson are to have charge of the detail to escort the remains to the cemetery.

The Evening Star, March 13, 1907, p. 16

Capt. McCathran Dead

Police Officer Succumbs to Cerebral Hemorrhage

Had Been Ill Since Last Fall, Ailment Resulting in Paralysis --

Native of Washington

Capt. Francis F. McCathran, who was one of the oldest members of the police force, died at his home, 511 10th street southeast at 2 o'clock a.m. today. His death was due to a cerebral hemorrhage. Last fall Capt. McCathran suffered a hemorrhage while passing along 7th street southeast, in front of the Eastern market, and had to be removed to his home. It was thought at that time he could not recover, but he rallied and was afterward able to return to duty. Shortly after he was able to be about he suffered a second slight attack, and two weeks ago he suffered another attack, paralysis resulting, and his condition became such that physicians were unable at any time to offer his family any hope for his recovery.

Funeral Arrangements

Arrangements have been made for the funeral to take place at 2 o'clock Friday afternoon from the family home. The Rev. E.H. Lamar, pastor of the Wilson Memorial Church, will officiate and the interment will be at Congressional cemetery. The pall bearers are to be selected from the three branches of the Masonic order with which the deceased had been connected, and a detail of members of the police force will accompany the body to the cemetery. Maj. Sylvester, superintendent of police, issued a general order this afternoon announcing the death of Capt. McCathran and directing that the detail be made to escort the body to the cemetery.

Born In This City

Capt. McCathran was born in this city the 19th of February 1841, his parents occupying the house adjoining the family home on 10th street at the time of his birth. He learned the blacksmith trade and opened a shop at Upper Marlboro, Md., before the breaking out of the war. His Maryland neighbors did not prove congenial at that time, and he returned to the city in time to respond to President Lincoln's call for volunteers. At the close of three months of service he received an appointment in the navy yard, remaining there until May 21, 1868, when he accepted a position on the police force. Eight years after he received the appointment as a private on the force he received a promotion, and in 1891 he was advanced to the rank of lieutenant and placed in charge of a precinct. In 1892 he was transferred from the fifth precinct to headquarters, succeeding Inspector Swindels as chief of the detective bureau. Although this transfer was in the nature of a promotion, McCathran did not seek it, nor did he want it, and he was elated when he was subsequently returned to the fifth precinct, where he had done duty for so many years.

During most of the time he served as a member of the police force he was stationed in the fifth precinct. He served as lieutenant of the ninth precinct for a short time, and he also did duty in the first and seventh precincts. For several years he was a mounted sergeant in Anacostia, and his beat extended throughout the territory east of the city. He became well acquainted with the residents of that part of the county and made a host of friends there. When he was placed in charge of the fifth precinct he retained that part of the county within the confines of his precinct, and seldom a week passed that he did not drive over the roads and see his old friends.

Wife and Five Children Survive

Capt. McCathran was a son of the late James R. McCathran, who was a foreman in the navy yard for a great many years. In 1862 Capt. McCathran and Miss Elizabeth Kelley were married, and his wife and five children survive him. The children are James K., William D. and Frank B. McCathran, Mrs. Effie F. Kendrick and Miss Bessie McCathran.

The deceased was a member of Washington Commandery, K.T.; Naval Chapter, R.A.M.; Naval Lodge, F.A.A.M., and of Martha Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star. He was also a member of Farragut Post, No. 10, G.A.R., and was a communicant at Wilson Memorial M.E. Church. He was a member of the Order of the Golden Cross.

Maj. Sylvester said today that many persons had been to see him regarding the selection of the successor to Capt. McCathran, some calling before the death occurred. Such haste, he said, he considered very much out of place. He says he has determined upon the successor and that at the appropriate time he will announce the changes that are to be made.

The Evening Star, March 15, 1907, p. 10

Funeral of Capt. McCathran

Remains of Police Official Interred This Afternoon

Many friends of the late Capt. McCathran, who was in command of the fifth precinct police station for a number of years, attended the funeral, from his late residence, 211 10th street southeast, at 2 o'clock this afternoon. Major Sylvester, Inspector Cross, Acting Capt. Anderson and other officials of the police department were among those present. Numerous floral tributes gave evidence of the high esteem in which Capt. McCathran was held by his associates and others.

The ceremonies were conducted by Rev. E.H. Lamar, pastor of Wilson Memorial Church. Representatives of the various organizations with which the deceased had been connected were in attendance. They included Washington Commandery, K.T.; Naval Chapter, R.A.M.; Naval Lodge, F.A.A.M.; Martha Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star; Farragut Post, G.A.R., and the Order of the Golden Cross. Upon conclusion of the services at the house the remains were escorted to Congressional

cemetery by a detail of policemen, where members of the orders with which the deceased had been connected had charge of the ceremonies.