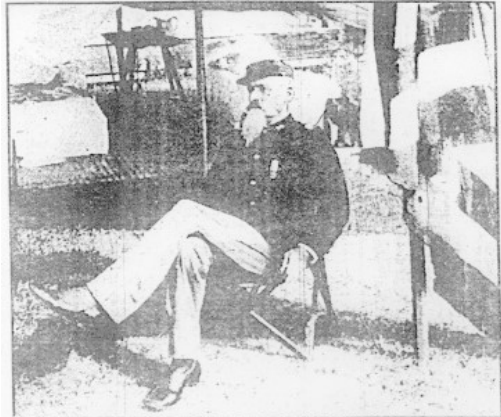


William George Moore

(30 Nov 1829 – 12 Jul 1898)

The Washington Post, September 13, 1879



William G. Moore, successor to Maj. Walker as chief of police in 1886, before his tent at Atlantic City when colonel of the Washington Light Infantry.

The Evening Star, January 18, 1888

Locals

Major William G. Moore who has been feeling unwell for several days is expected to be out when the weather is more favorable.

The Evening Star, July 22, 1892

Col. W.G. Moore and Capt. Allison Nailor of the Washington Light Infantry Corps are engaged on an expedition to Cape May, Atlantic City and Long Branch looking for a good site for the proposed summer encampment of the corps.

The Evening Star, August 15, 1892

A Warning to Col. Moore

Col. Wm. G. Moore is still at the head of the police department, and this morning when a Star reporter called he was sitting at his desk transacting business as usual. He did not appear badly frightened, nor was he nervous, notwithstanding the presence of a postal card on his death, on which was sketched what was intended to represent a skull and crossbones. On the postal was written:

"Sir: If President Harrison don't move you, I will.

Yours until death,

Member of the C.P.L.

Beware, your days are numbered." "True until death" were the words written about the skull and crossbones representation.

The postal was received Saturday afternoon, and the address on the postal was:

"Major Moore,

"Superintendent Washington Police Force

"City."

Col. Moore had nothing to say about the postal other than to ask if he looked like he was frightened.

The Evening Star, July 9, 1898

Major Moore's Illness

Condition Serious, With But Small Chance of Improvement

A Native of Washington, Once Private Secretary and Confidential

Friend of President Johnson

Major William G. Moore, superintendent of police, whose critical illness was mentioned in yesterday's Star, was no better today. It was stated at his residence this afternoon that the attending physicians had given the family but little hope. While the patient has been confined to his home less

than two weeks, he has really been ill for a much longer time. Major Moore's most intimate friends have believed for several months that he was much in need of a change, and some of them had prevailed upon him to go away from the city for rest and recreation. He went to Harper's Ferry early in the spring and the few days he spent on the mountain benefit him very much, but he returned home too soon. Since his return he has been on active duty, and although he was far from well, he did not give up until he was unable to leave his bed.

Last night he was delirious at times, and this morning his condition was extremely critical. He is completely prostrated, but the doctors hope he will rally before night. Should a change for the better occur within the next few hours there will be stronger hope of his recovery.

His Active Career

Maj. Moore was born in this city in 1829, and has been chief of police since 1886. His early education was acquired at the Rittenhouse Academy, he subsequently engaging in the newspaper profession. As a reporter of congressional debate he won considerable reputation. His accuracy, rapidity and style brought him into prominence.

In 1857 he accepted a position on the public works under Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs. In 1861 he enlisted as a private in the National Rifles, and while with his command, which was camped some miles from Washington, he was ordered to report to Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War, to act in the capacity of private secretary. Later on he was appointed adjutant general of volunteers, holding the rank of major, with the brevet rank of colonel.

In 1865 he was appointed private secretary to President Johnson, and the attachment which grew up between them was of the most intimate and lasting character. President Johnson commissioned him a paymaster in the army, and his first assignment to duty in such capacity was at Leavenworth, Kan. During this period he traveled throughout the entire southwest with mule team and on horseback. Several years after the close of the war he became a partner of ex-Gov. Alexander R. Shepherd, and afterward accepted a position in the National metropolitan Bank. In 1871 he was made commander of the Washington Light Infantry, and until a short time ago was colonel of the first regiment of the District National Guard.

High Rank in Masonic Circles

Maj. Moore has attained to the highest position of rank and honor in Masonic circles of the District of Columbia, and as a citizen no one is more highly esteemed than he.

He is the son of William Walker Moore, who was a native of Somerset, Md. His father was one time editor of the National Intelligencer, and afterward accepted the secretary-ship of the Metropolitan Railroad Company, which position he held until the time of his death, in December 1886.

Major Moore married Miss Mary Gideon Rose, a daughter of Dr. Benjamin F. Rose of Virginia. They have two children, Jacob G. Moore and Mrs. M.J. Smoot.

Moore. On Tuesday, July 12, 1898, Major William George Moore, Superintendent of Metropolitan Police in the 69th year of his age. Funeral Thursday the 14th instant from the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States
Commandery of the District of Columbia
City of Washington, July 13, 1898

The death of Companion Brevet Colonel William George Moore, late U.S. Volunteers in this City, on the 12th instant, is announced to the Commandery.

Funeral services, at which the attendance of Companions is requested, will be held at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, on Thursday, 14th instant, at 2:30 o'clock p.m. The Insignia of the Order will be worn, as required by the Constitution.

By command of Colonel John M. Harlan, U.S.F., Commander
W.P. Huxford, Recorder.

The Evening Star, July 12, 1898, p. 10

Death of Col. Moore
Superintendent of Police Passed Away This Morning
His Long and Useful Life
Prominent in the History of City and Country
Funeral Arrangements

Colonel William G. Moore, major, and superintendent of the police department of the District, died this morning at his home, 1710 L street northwest. Surrounded by his immediate family, but unable to recognize any one of the faithful and loving watchers, the gallant soldier and capable executive officer, who for years has devoted all his life's efforts in providing for the safety of the people now mourning his loss, gradually sank, until at 6:25 o'clock he breathed his last. The end was not unexpected, but the grief was none the less keenly felt.

Major Moore had been unconscious for some time prior to his death. It was known as early as Saturday night last that the case was one that passed beyond all human aid. The family and many friends who anxiously inquired for some reassuring news as to the condition of the ill chief were prepared for the worst. Yesterday morning it was not thought Major Moore would survive the day. As evening approached, however, he seemed to breathe more easily than for many hours past, and a slight flicker of hope was ignited in the breasts of the loving relatives at his bedside. After nightfall the major gradually grew worse. Everything that love could suggest was done to relieve his last hours.

Weary from their constant vigil, some of the family had fallen asleep early in the evening, but there were at the dying man's bedside to the last his devoted wife, his daughter, Mrs. Mary J. Smoot, and Detective Rhodes, who had served with the chief for many years, and who had been Major Moore's aid practically throughout the latter years of his term as head of the police department.

With the first faint streaks of a cloudy and dismal dawn this little group, which had steadfastly watched his every movement, saw that the end was indeed near. Although unconscious, it could be seen that a great struggle between life and death was waging in the old warrior's breast. His iron constitution yielded most reluctantly to the ravages of dread disease, fighting every advance made upon the vitality that was fast failing. It was with the utmost effort that Major Moore at last caught his breath. Just before the icy hand of the grim destroyer finally descended, however, to claim the loving husband and devoted father, he seemed to be easier, and expired at last with no sign of pain. Jovial and cheery in life, Major Moore's countenance in death was one of repose and divine contentment.

The Funeral

Complete arrangements for the funeral have not been concluded. The services will take place from the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church on Thursday afternoon at 2 or 3 o'clock, and the interment will be at Congressional cemetery. Rev. Dr. Wallace Radcliffe will officiate both at the church and at the necropolis. The funeral procession promises to be one of the most notable ever seen in the capital city. There will be a military escort, consisting of the entire strength of the Washington Light Infantry Corps, of which Col. Moore was president. The police department will march with their beloved chief to his last resting place, and it is expected that the Knights Templar will also turn out in full force. The deceased

was a Mason of high degree, and a large representation from the various lodges and commanderies will be present at the obsequies. Before he became unconscious, but realizing that the end was near, Major Moore, in his last request, expressed the wish that the Washington Light Infantry should be his especial funeral escort.

Col. Moore married Miss Mary G. Rose, daughter of Dr. Benjamin Rose of Virginia. The widow and a son, Jacob G. Moore of the War Department, and a daughter, Mrs. Smoot, survive him. His two brothers, Gales Moore and Alexander Moore, were at the home this morning and will assist in arranging for the funeral.

Fight for Life

Major Moore's condition had been considered serious for a week past. His absence from duty was at first caused by an attack of malaria and stomach trouble, and it was not thought any serious illness would result. The major had been continuously at work for several years, however, and the first symptoms of disease were quickly followed by a general break-down in his health. The complication became worse when it was discovered last Saturday that an abscess of the liver had formed.

Dr. Percy Hickling, Major Moore's family physician, then determined to call in Dr. W.W. Johnston. This was done and after a consultation it was decided that the only possible chance of saving the patient's life was to perform an operation, in the hope of locating and removing the abscess. Accordingly Saturday evening the operation was performed. There were no beneficial results, and the gallant soldier and police chief gradually grew worse.

Throughout Sunday he continued in a semi-comatose condition, those present at his bedside noticing a gradual weakening and loss of vitality. Sunday night and throughout yesterday Major Moore continued to grow worse and worse. His mind gradually became a blank; and by yesterday noon he could not recognize a member of his family. Dr. Hickling was at the house twice yesterday, but frankly said that the sick man had passed beyond all earthly assistance and that his death was a matter of but a very few hours. All that could be done was to make the last lingering hours as comfortable as possible. The delightful, cool weather, the many facilities at command and the anxious, willing and tender hands ready to administer to his every want made this an easy matter.

Long and Busy Life.

The announcement of the serious illness of Colonel William G. Moore was received with sincere regret by the general public and his death is mourned by all classes. No man identified with the interests of the national capital was more widely or prominently known. Born in this city in the year 1829, like his father before him, he has been identified with its social and business affairs since boyhood. In early life he was a companion to be sought after and a leader among his associates, among whom were Arthur P. Gorman, Samuel E. Wheatley, William B. Webb, Charles C. Duncanson and others who are now prominent in political and business circles. He was his mother's boy, fond of his home and laudable pastimes. His early education was acquired at the Rittenhouse Academy, he subsequently engaging in newspaper work, where he won considerable reputation as a reporter of congressional debates. In this line he was known for his accuracy, rapidity and style.

In the year 1857, at the instance of General Montgomery C. Meigs, young Moore accepted a position on the public works, where his talents and ability were readily appreciated.

In 1861 he enlisted as a private in the old National Rifles, which went into camp some miles out from Washington, where he received orders to report to the Secretary of War, the late Simon Cameron, to act in the capacity of his private secretary. The order making the detail read:

"Colonel Stone will direct Mr. William G. Moore of Captain Smead's company of District volunteers to report in person to the Secretary of War without delay.

(Signed) Simon Cameron. June 1, 1861"

With that military incentive which was hereditary, Colonel Moore soon became anxious to return to his command, but the Secretary found his services too valuable to be dispensed with, and the young officer was required to remain and attend to his correspondence.

In the course of events young Moore was appointed adjutant general of volunteers, holding the rank of major with brevet rank of colonel. So diligent was he in disposing of the many important duties with which he was charged in those stirring times that he was kept continually prominent before the great men of the day.

In 1865 Colonel Moore for a brief time acted as secretary to President Lincoln and later on became private secretary to President Johnson, and the attachment which grew up between the two was like that of father and son. The President relied upon his suggestions, and he was intimate with the household at the White House.

Before leaving the Executive Mansion, President Johnson, commissioned Colonel Moore a paymaster in the army, and his assignments carried him through Kansas and the Indian territory, where he became an interesting and popular official with the rank and file of the army. Nothing afforded him more pleasure in his later years than to refer to his experiences while serving in this capacity, where he was compelled to travel by muleback and often swim flooded streams in order to reach the rendezvous.

In 1870 he became a business partner with ex-Governor Alexander R. Shepherd, and although the partnership was afterward dissolved, they remained up to the time of his death, close and intimate friends.

After going out of business Colonel Moore accepted a position in the National Metropolitan Bank, where he remained until he was appointed superintendent of the District police in 1886. During all this period he was a conspicuous officer and an acknowledged authority in military matters, being made commander of the Washington Light Infantry Corps in 1871 and colonel of the 1st Regiment of District Militia at the time of its organization a few years ago.

Superintendent of Police

In accepting the office of superintendent of police Colonel Moore took the step reluctantly. It was a case where the office sought the man, his earlier training particularly fitting him to deal with the many questions requiring extreme delicacy and diplomacy.

Upon assuming the office of superintendent of police he at once proceeded to bring about a thorough organization of the force. His military training and quick decision enabled him to master the situation and bring the force at one period to a high level. He was not only respected by all of his subordinates, but he was beloved by them, and the pleasant smile and gentle word which he had for one and all at any time will be sorely missed.

With respect to the poor and humble he was his own worst enemy, often giving from his private means on the mere representation of poverty, he fearing to injure the feelings of an applicant should he investigate the truthfulness of his statement too closely.

In the performance of duty he was fearless and courageous at all times, exhibiting a high order of judgment and discretion and an honesty of purpose in every act. Under his administration, it was his endeavor to dispose of the more unpleasant features attending the work of the police without discrimination as to creed or color, his constant idea being that business should be conducted on a high moral plane. Though not an experienced man in the detention of criminals, his selections for the work displayed marked judgment, the force under him being recognized by the various departments throughout the country as a most efficient one.

During the inaugural ceremonies he gave the entire work his personal attention, and on each occasion they were attended by thousands of participants without unpleasant incident or loss to persons and property.

Prior to the visit of Coxey's army, when all kinds of rumors were circulated as to the magnitude of the movement, Colonel Moore was the first to counsel moderation in everything. When called to the Executive Mansion, where he was consulted by the President of the United States, he gave expression to views contrary to those of others when he said, "Mr. President, I believe a course of moderation should be pursued," to which the President replied, "So do I." and the peaceful solution of the entire question at that time gave emphasis to his excellent judgment.

Colonel Moore's life was full of experiences which space will not permit to narrate at this time. He was an educated, Christian gentleman. His strong heart and iron frame were made to give way by a dread disease which could not be controlled by his physicians.

Major Moore was president and colonel of the Washington Light Infantry Corps, being one of its organizers and most enthusiastic members. The news of the financial straits in which the corps found itself when the application for receiver was recently filed caused him much worry, and if he could have willed it so he would have lived to see the famous and historic old association out of its difficulties.

The major was prominent in the military affairs of the capital before his acceptance of the superintendency of the police department. For some years after this, even, he continued active in such matters. He was a veteran of the National Rifles, and at the meetings of this old association he was the life and spirit of the occasion. A ready wit brimful of anecdotes that never failed of appreciation and possessed with a remarkable memory, he could recite indicants long since forgotten by his colleagues, but all the more enjoyably brought to mind from the fluent tongue of Major Moore.

As a member of the Masonic fraternity he was elevated to all the principal honors, being twice commander of Washington Commandery, No. 1.

When a youth, he was a recognized athlete, an experienced swimmer and acknowledged ball player and perfectly at home in a boat upon the river. As private secretary to President Johnson he accompanied that gentleman on his famous tour, which has gone down in history as "The swing around the circle," and his wonderful memory enabled him to disclose in later years memorable events and incidents which occurred in those times, and much of the history which has been contributed to the public concerning the late President Johnson and the events immediately following the war was from his wonderful store of knowledge upon the subject.

Lost a Friend.

The men in the ranks of the police department deeply appreciate the loss of Major Moore. Said a well-known private to a reporter for The Star this morning:

"All the boys realize that they have lost their best friend in the department. The major was gruff at times, but it was all over in a minute, and he was the same kind old gentleman as before. We all loved him and appreciate the many good turns he has done for us. In Major Moore we knew the kind of man we had over us and we did our best for him. Naturally the men are very anxious to learn who will be his successor. It will be many years before his memory fades from us."

The feeling is universal among the men who were thrown in contact with the major and who most willingly and heartily obeyed his every command.

To the caller at his office Major Moore always had a word of hearty greeting, and not one of his friends was allowed to depart but in a good humor at some droll story or anecdote.

Major Moore had an exciting experience at his office one day during the famous Pollard-Breckinridge case. The principals in the scandal had met at the major's, when a wordy conflict ensued and Miss Pollard drew forth a revolver and attempted to shoot the silver-tongued Kentuckian. Major Moore quickly jumped between the two irate persons and wrenched the loaded pistol from Madeline's hand, at the same time giving her a good piece of advice that she has probably not forgotten to this day.

Meeting of the Light Infantry

There will be a meeting of members, ex-members and honorary members of the Washington Light Infantry at the armory this evening to take action in regard to attending the funeral of Major Moore. Major Moore was a member of the Infantry for thirty-seven years being its commander when it was a company, a battalion and a regiment.

Words of Praise

"'Billy' Moore, as he was affectionately called by those who knew him well," said Mr. E.G. Davis, the District collector of taxes, "and I were close friends for at least forty years, I having known him ever since I came to Washington. He was a most lovable man, impulsive at times, perhaps, but never knowingly or intentionally doing anyone, no matter how humble, an injury. His was the kindest of hearts, and his death will be long and deeply mourned. As an official he was in my opinion a most valued one, and his place will be hard to fill. He was a man of real ability, of much tact, and yet most modest. As a Mason, he will be most kindly remembered, too, for he was eminent in the order, and his loss there as well as elsewhere will be a severe one."

"I cannot say too much of Major Moore," remarked Mr. Matthew Trimble, the assessor of the District, "and no one more deeply mourns him. Indeed, he was beloved by all who knew him, and his popularity was due to that lovable trait in his character which made him a friend to everyone. He made an excellent chief of police, and much of the progress of the force in recent years was due to his efforts in its behalf."

The District Commissioners directed Capt. Austin to visit the family and learn their wishes as to the funeral, but Capt. Austin stated this afternoon that, while the family had decided that the funeral shall be held at the New York Avenue Church at 3 o'clock Thursday afternoon, the interment to be made at the Congressional cemetery, they were undecided as to whether there shall be other than a very quiet, simple funeral, attended by no other than a detail of police officers. These matters will be decided between now and tomorrow morning. All flags on the police stations were half-mast upon Maj. Moore's death becoming known, as well as that upon the District building. Chief Parris of the fire department also ordered that flags on the houses of the fire-department be displayed at half mast.

His Successor

The Commissioners announced today that they will not consider the matter of Maj. Moore's successor until after his funeral. It is expected that there will be many applicants for the position, but the man who is most frequently mentioned in connection with the place is Mr. Richard Sylvester, , the chief clerk of the police department. He is regarded as one most competent to succeed Maj. Moore, as one thoroughly familiar, because of his long connection with the District police force, with all the duties and requirements of the position, and it is believed that his selection would meet with general approval.

The Evening Star, Wednesday, July 13, 1898, p. 1

The Moore Obsequies

Dead Chief of Police to Be Buried at Congressional Cemetery

Funeral Services at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church -- Military and Masonic Honors

The funeral of Colonel William G. Moore, major and superintendent of the metropolitan police, will take place tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock from the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, and the interment will be at Congressional cemetery. The dead chief will be buried with military and Masonic honors. The services at the grave will be in charge of Washington Commandery, Knights Templar, while Captain Miller's company of the Washington Light Infantry will fire a salute of three volleys at the close of the civil ceremonies.

The honorary pallbearers have been selected and will be as follows: District Commissioner John B. Wight, who is in immediate control of the police department; Mr. E.G. Davis, the District tax collector;

Mr. Richard Sylvester, chief clerk of the police department; Mr. Allison Nailor and Mr. Harrison Dingman of the Washington Light Infantry, Messrs. G.H.B. White, W.P. Young and John Harrower. The active pallbearers will come from the members of the police force. The selections have not yet been made, but it is understood that the pallbearers will probably be the sergeants of the police force, one from each precinct. An escort of 128 men from the police force, in command of Captain Austin and four lieutenants, will form at Major Moore's late residence, 1710 L street northwest \, marching with the body to the church, and afterward joining in the funeral procession to Congressional cemetery.

A committee of the Union Soldiers' Alliance, of which Major Moore was a member, has been especially appointed to attend the funeral, and it is expected that a large representation will be present. The committee appointed by President Harrower consists of Dr. Frank T. Howe, Judge Chas. C. Cole, Col. U.S. Worthington and Henry E. Alvord.

Services at the House

The services at the house will be very simple. Dr. Radcliffe will offer prayer and then the march to the church will be made. Here the body will be met by the entire Washington Light Infantry Corps, in uniform; the National Guard Band and a large representation from Washington and other commanderies of Knights Templar. The Temper's will ride in carriages. Maj. Moore was a member of Almas Temple of the Mystic Shrine, and a number of officers of this lodge will be present.

Dr. Radcliffe will conduct the services at the church and will probably make a short address. The Masonic ceremonies at the grave will be performed by Associate Prelate Albion Paris and Eminent Commander C.D. Caldwell, assisted by Past Eminent Commanders E.G. Davis, Harrison Dingman, D.G. Dixon, H.K. Simpson, Alex. H. Holt, G.H. Walker and T.P Morgan. The funeral arrangements are in charge of Undertaker Joseph Gawler.

The flags on the station houses and fire engine houses, as well as on the District building and the Washington Light Infantry Armory , are still flying at half mast in respect to the memory of Maj. Moore.

Humane Society Takes Action

A special meeting of the executive committee of the Washington Humane Society was held today to give expression to the deep sense of loss felt by the society in the death of Maj. Moore. The president, Mr. A.S. Pratt, proposed the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted, setting forth: "The Washington Humane Society sincerely mourns the loss of William G. Moore, superintendent of police, one of its most valued friends, who was ever in hearty sympathy with the aim and work of the society; whose ear was ever open to the cry of distress, and his ready help extended to our officers and agents when his aid was asked to bring relief to suffering child or animal or to visit punishment upon those inflicting or responsible for such suffering.

"The society, knowing how largely it is dependent upon those who execute the law for the success of its work, realizes its great loss in the death of our honored and faithful superintendent of police."

It was ordered that a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of the deceased.

The Evening Star, Wednesday, July 13, 1898

In Memory of Col. Moore

Special Meeting of W.L.I. to Arrange for Funeral

A special meeting of the members of the Washington Light Infantry was held last night at the armory to take suitable action on the death of their late president, Col. William G. Moore. Major Burton R. Ross called the meeting to order, stating the sad circumstances under which the call has been made. He paid a tribute to the memory of Col. Moore, who, he said, had been prominently connected with the corps

for many years, and whose last request, almost, was that he should be buried under an escort from the organization.

Lieutenant A.A. Birney was appointed chairman of a committee to draft suitable resolutions and a committee on floral tribute was also appointed. It was decided that as far as possible the corps shall march at the funeral in their white uniforms, those not being fully equipped with this style of dress to form separate companies uniformed in regular army style. The National Guard Brigade Band under the direction of Mr. Donald McLeod will march with the funeral procession. At the grave a salute of three rounds will be fired over the last resting place of the dead soldier, and taps will be sounded by the buglers.

A general invitation will be extended to all ex-members and veterans of the corps to join in this last homage to their dead leader. There will be another meeting of the corps tonight, when the resolutions to be drafted will be adopted and the final arrangements for the military escort made.

The Evening Star, October 12, 1898

Memorial to Maj. Moore

An alabaster bust of the late Col. William G. Moore, who at the time of his death was major and superintendent of police, was placed in Capt. Austin's room at police headquarters today, where it will remain for a short time previous to its presentation to the family of the deceased. The money with which the bust was purchased was contributed by the various members of the force, and every one connected with the department, from Maj. Sylvester to private, gave something. The work was executed by Mr. Ford E. Leimer, a sculptor of this city, and is regarded as remarkably life-like.

The committee having the matter in charge comprised Capt. Austin, chairman, and the seven lieutenants. Lieut. Hollinberger managed the details.

Forman, Stephen M., A Guide to Civil War Washington, Washington, DC: Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1995. Moore, a War Department clerk, attended the inquest of Booth aboard the USS Montauk. The purpose of the inquest was to have Booth's body positively identified. Historians have noted that witnesses had different opinions about Booth's body. India-ink initials tattooed on his hand as a boy and a surgical scar on the back of his neck served as positive identifiers. To this day, there is controversy surrounding the positive identification of Lincoln's assassin.