

## Joseph G. Shelton

(5 Mar 1829 – 24 Oct 1907)

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**Shelton.** On Thursday, October 24, 1907 at 2:10 a.m., Joseph G. Shelton in the 79th year of his age. Funeral from his late residence, 406 12th street southeast, Saturday, October 26 at 2 p.m. Relatives and friends invited.

*The Washington Post, October 2, 1907, p. 2*

### **Lincoln's Guard Stricken**

Joseph Shelton, Formerly Attached to N. Shelton, John R. b. - d. 28 Mar 1922 yrs. mos. days R 64 S 312 Shelton. Tuesday, March 28, 1922, at 3:30 a.m., at his residence, 757 6th st. s.e., John R. Shelton, beloved husband of Barbara Shelton. Funeral from his late residence, Thursday, March 30, at 2 p.m.

**Shelton.** Special convention of Syracusians Lodge, No. 10, Knights of Pythias, at Pythian Temple, Wednesday, March 29, 1922, at 8 p.m., to arrange for the funeral of Knight John R. Shelton, H.G. Annis, C.C.

Attest: S.M. Pearson, K. of S.

*The Washington Post, October 2, 1907, p. 2*

### **Lincoln's Guard Stricken**

#### **Joseph Shelton, Formerly Attached to the White House, Suffers Stroke**

Joseph Shelton, a retired policeman, who served as an escort to President Lincoln on the night he was shot at Ford's Theater, and who helped to carry the wounded President to the house where he died, is critically ill at his home, 406 Twelfth street southeast, following a stroke of paralysis last Saturday.

Mr. Shelton was conversing with his daughter, Miss Sarah E. Shelton, with whom he lives, when he was stricken. He fell to the floor and remained unconscious until revived by a physician.

Mr. Shelton, during Lincoln's administration, was detailed at the White House, and acted as the martyred President's bodyguard on many occasions.

*The Evening Star, October 25, 1907*

### **Joseph G. Shelton Dead**

#### **Veteran Policeman and Native Washingtonian**

Arrangements were completed today for the funeral of Joseph G. Shelton, a veteran policeman, whose death was announced in The Star, yesterday. The services will be held at the family home, 406 12th street southeast, at 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon, and the interment will be at Congressional cemetery. It is said former associates of deceased will act as pallbearers.

Joseph G. Shelton resided in Washington since his birth here, March 5, 1829, and was identified with nearly every movement for the advancement of the interests in general and East Washington in particular. Appointed a policeman October 18, 1861, soon after the old auxiliary guard had been merged into the first metropolitan police force, he performed the duty of a patrolman in the exciting and trying period of the Civil War. He had many thrilling experiences with deserters, bounty jumpers and desperate characters who flocked to Washington during the war period.

There was a saying among the policemen in those days of the fire and smoke of war that there was on any average one murder a day in this city. The policemen were therefore required to perform heroic

service. It is said Mr. Shelton was one of the officers who responded to the call of Patrolman Clements when he arrested single-handedly nearly an entire company of Zouaves near the Capitol in 1862. Many of the intoxicated Zouaves were taken to the old central guardhouse on Louisiana avenue, between 9th and 10th streets, and there put through the "ducking" process. It is explained that the drunken men were placed in small cells and the hose turned on them, deluging them with water until they were sober enough to be released.

#### *On the Pension Roll*

Mr. Shelton served as a policeman until April 15, 1887, before the era of call boxes and patrol wagons, when owing to physical disability, he was placed on the pension roll of the department. He also retained his membership in the Police Relief Association. He was also stationed at the White House during the Civil War, and was frequently detailed as a bodyguard to President Lincoln. His sagacity and bravery won for him high esteem about the city and among the police force where he had many friends. He was on terms of personal friendship with Mr. Lincoln as the result of his position at the Executive Mansion, and was also acquainted with many other famous men of that day.

He was stricken with paralysis about three weeks ago without warning while he was conversing with his daughter, Miss Sarah E. Shelton, and fell to the floor. Several times since the attack it was feared he would die, but on each occasion of an apparent relapse he seemed to rally. He gradually lost strength, however, and the end came at ten minutes past 2 o'clock yesterday morning.

*The Evening Star, October 2, 1907*

#### **With Lincoln When He Died**

#### **Veteran Policeman Nearing Portal of Death**

#### **Was at Ford's Theater as Escort**

#### **When President Was Assassinated -- His Record**

Suddenly stricken with paralysis, Joseph Shelton, a veteran policeman, lies at the point of death at his home, 406 12th street southeast. Last night his demise was expected at any moment, and today the attending physicians hold out no hope for his recovery. Mr. Shelton served as an escort and accompanied President Lincoln to Ford's Theater the night he was shot and helped to carry the wounded President to the house on the opposite side of the street, where he died.

Mr. Shelton was conversing with his daughter, Miss Sarah E. Shelton, when the attack of paralysis came, and fell to the floor. He remained unconscious until a physician arrived and applied restoratives. It was said this afternoon that his death is momentarily expected.

Mr. Shelton is a life-long citizen of the District of Columbia. He was born here March 5, 1829, and was appointed a member of the metropolitan police force October 18, 1861, soon after its organization. He performed duty as a guardian of the peace until April 15, 1887, when he was retired on a pension owing to physical disability. He is still on the pension roll and besides is a member of the police relief association.

For several years of the exciting period of the civil war Mr. Shelton was stationed at the White House and was on terms of personal friendship with President Lincoln, it is said. He was frequently detailed as Mr. Lincoln's bodyguard because of his bravery and sagacity.

His service on the Washington police force was at a period before the telephone and patrol system had come into use. For a number of years it was necessary to drag obstreperous prisoners from the outlying sections of the city to the old central guard house on Louisiana avenue between 9th and 10th streets.

During the civil war Policeman Shelton had a number of trying experiences with deserters, bounty jumpers and other hard characters that flocked to this city. He is regarded as one of the few remaining landmarks of the old police force of nearly half a century ago.