

## William H. Wright ( - 29 Jun 1935)

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**Wright, William H.** Suddenly, on Saturday, June 29, 1935, William H. Wright, the beloved husband of Eva E. and father of William and Dorothy Wright. Funeral services at the W.W. Chambers Co. funeral home, 1400 Chapin st. n.w., on Tuesday, July 2, at 2 p.m. Relatives and friends are invited. Interment Congressional Cemetery.

*The Evening Star, June 29, 1935, p. 1*

### **Two Dead, 3 Hurt In Terrific Blast At Pepco Offices Fire Lieutenant Is Injured Also in Saving Trio Trapped Inside Crowd Jams Street As Flames Leap High Blast Occurs as Traffic Is at Peak. 13,000 Volts Add to Peril**

Two men are dead and two others near death as the result of a terrific explosion shortly after 8 o'clock this morning in the basement of the Potomac Electric Power Co. Office Building, Tenth and E streets. A fifth man is expected to survive.

Flames shot out of shattered windows as high as the second-floor fire escape on the old Ford Theater Building, next door on Tenth street.

The dead:

Thomas B. Sheppard, 35, 3054 Vista place, an electrician.

Fred L. Davis, 30, of Edmonston road, East Riverdale, Md.

The injured:

William H. Wright, 3124 North Pershing drive, Lyon Park, Va., critical condition from burns to the face, arms and body,

Floyd Bennett, colored, 31, 4226 Dix street northeast, critically burned about the body.

John William Foxwell, 52, 3940 Thirty-fourth street, Mount Rainier, Md., burns, not serious.

Lieut. J.C. Stein of No. 6 Engine Company suffered an injury to the knee while rescuing three men trapped in the basement.

### *Victims Brought Out*

The first firemen to arrive donning gas masks, brought out the three injured and the body of Davis, one of the dead men. All were rushed to Emergency Hospital, where Davis was pronounced dead. The firemen also found three other men groping through the smoke and led them to a grating where they escaped.

Sheppard, one of the men who lost their lives, had ben employed by the Potomac Electric Power Co. for many years, his widow said. He is survived by three children.

Mrs. Wright, wife of William W. Wright, one of the injured, said that her husband had a premonition of disaster today and almost decided not to go to work.

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### **Pepco Explosion Death Toll Three Four D.C. Agencies and Power Company Plan Probe of Fatal Blast**

The death toll from the explosion yesterday of a transformer in the basement of the Potomac Electric Power Co. building, Tenth and E streets, was increased to three late last night when William H. Wright died of injuries, as plans were made for an investigation into the cause of the blast by four District Government agencies and the power company.

A new transformer, placed in service but three hours earlier, exploded at 8:11 a.m., sending out a spray of oil that turned the vault into a blazing furnace and caused injuries to eight men who were standing nearby. Four others working in the basement had narrow escapes.

Thomas B. Sheppard, 35, 3054 Vista place, an electrician was instantly killed. Fred L. Davis, 30, of Edmondston road, East Riverdale, Md.; Wright, foreman of the power company boiler crew, and the three others were taken to Emergency Hospital, Davis died soon afterwards.

#### *Fourth May Not Live*

One of the others at the hospital, Floyd Bennett, 31, colored, of 4226 Dix street northeast, is in a critical condition from body burns and little hope is held for his recover. John William Foxwell, 52, of 3940 Thirty-fourth street, Mount Rainier, Md., is given an even chance for recovery.

Others injured but not requiring hospital treatment were: Frank W. Fasnacht, 23, 617 Eighth street northeast, eye injuries; Harry A. Salmon, 50, 321 K street northeast, burns; George S. Wolfe, 904 New York avenue, burns; and Lieut. J.C. Stein, of No. 6 engine company, who suffered a knee injury while rescuing three men trapped in the basement.

District and company officials alike were unable last night to account for the accident and a joint investigation will be made tomorrow by the coroner, Police, District Electrical Department, and a Public Utility Commission engineer, as well as by company officials.

#### *Transformer Vault Sealed*

After preliminary inspection yesterday of the transformer the vault was sealed by the company. Tomorrow the transformer is to be taken to pieces at the Benning power plant under the observation of engineers, in the hope of finding the cause of the mishap. Among those present will be Walter Kern, head of the District Electrical Department; J.S. Zebley, chief electrical inspector of the District; Coroner A. Magruder MacDonald, Fred A. Sager, chief engineer of the Public Utilities Commission, and police and company officials.

Sager said he believed from superficial examination that extreme heat must have been generate by some cause which forced oil out of the transformer and into the vault, where it was set ablaze.

The transformer contained between two or three barrels of oil. Officials said it had been tested before being