

# JOHN BONFIELD'S LIFE IS ENDED.

## Veteran Police Officer Passes Away at His Home in Prairie Avenue.

### RECORD ON THE FORCE.

#### Effective Duty Performed in the Anarchist Case and Street Car Riots.

### FUNERAL SERVICES FRIDAY.

Ex-Police Inspector John Bonfield is dead. As a police officer of the City of Chicago his reputation was as wide as the land. He was the head of the city's order forces on many occasions, but his fame rests chiefly in the fact that he was Chief of the police platoon which fought anarchy in Haymarket square in May, 1886, an inceptive movement which finally ended in the strangling of the red enemies of society.

John Bonfield was a disciplinarian, but one of the kind which wins for himself the respect and liking of subordinates. The public believed that in him the law had a safeguard, and the police acknowledged that in him they had a leader.

He was born in the Town of Bathurst, N. B., in 1836. When he was a child the family came to Chicago, reaching here in 1843.

In 1858 Mr. Bonfield accepted a position as engineer on the Chicago and Alton railroad, a position he held for some years. Severing his connection with the railroad, he engaged in mercantile pursuits until he was appointed by President Grant Customs Collector, which office he held until Mayor Monroe Heath offered him a position in the Police department. From this time on, in the nature of his varied duties and the force with which they were carried out, Bonfield's name became famous as a protector of the public peace.

#### As a Detective.

John Bonfield went to the Twenty-second Street Police Station, as a detective, or "plain clothes man," in 1878. There he "traveled beat" with Joseph Leonard, an old-time detective now stricken with paralysis. Under Mayor Harrison Detective Bonfield was appointed a Lieutenant and sent to the Twelfth Street Station. It was at this time that his personal relations with the elder Carter H. Harrison became intimate. Bonfield was a Republican. He never, so his brother says, voted any other ticket, except when he cast his ballot for Harrison for Mayor.

It was while at the Twelfth Street Station that Austin J. Doyle, afterward Chief of Police; John P. Barrett, Superintendent of Fire Alarm Telegraph; and Lieutenant Bonfield became interested in a system of police patrol with the patrol box and wagon accompaniments. They were the originators of the idea.

Mayor Harrison approved of the patrol system and the first wagon was sent to Twelfth street, where Lieutenant Barrett was stationed. George W. Hubbard, Chief of Police under Mayor John A. Roche, was the first wagon driver.

The stable was across the street from the station, and it became the lot of Lieutenant Bonfield to be criticised because he spent more time in the stable than in the station. He was one of the three fathers of the police patrol box system which is now in use all over the world.

From the Twelfth Street Station Bonfield went to the Central Station with the rank of Captain. From there he went to Desplaines Street Station as Inspector of Police.

#### Goes to Desplaines.

In the first part of his service there the street railroad riots occurred. Bonfield has been praised and condemned for his course in this matter, but, as his brother, Police Lieutenant James H. Bonfield, said yesterday: "The praise came from the many and the men who knew; the condemnation from the few, and the men who did not know." Bonfield suppressed riotous proceedings in that strike and effectually killed the movement.

The "Black Road" or McCormick Reaper strike took place during Inspector Bonfield's term of service at Desplaines Street Station. It was while this labor disturbance

the Mollie Mott gang at Twenty-second street and Wentworth avenue, when Detective William Thorpe so distinguished himself by his bravery.

#### Daring as an Engineer.

John Bonfield had been in Chicago for fifty years, having come here when a boy. In his early career he was a locomotive engineer on the Chicago and Alton railroad. At that time an incident occurred that illustrated the firm and aggressive character of the man.

"The war of the rebellion was going on and three trains stood on the Alton tracks in Chicago loaded with soldiers for the South. Bonfield overheard the other two engineers, who did not know him, say they would reach East St. Louis in about a week if he led the way.

"Bonfield's section was the first to leave, and when it left it was a wild train. Bonfield opened the throttle, tied down the safety valve, and compelled the fireman to shovel coal incessantly into the furnace.

"Well, the result was that John Bonfield landed his soldiers in East St. Louis, and, returning, met the other sections of the train at Bloomington. John A. Cooper of this city was the conductor in charge of Bonfield's section of the train."



JOHN BONFIELD.

was at its height that the Police Inspector came to the conclusion that there was not only a band of Anarchists—a fact patent to the public—but that there was an armed band ready to work systematically. Bonfield arrived at this conclusion by the fact that sixteen men he ordered arrested were found to have in their possession sixteen revolvers of a peculiar make, all bought at the same place.

When the Anarchists met at the Haymarket square in 1886 Bonfield had his men in readiness at the Desplaines Street Station. With Captain Ward, his immediate official junior, he led his police platoons to the place where the Anarchist orators were expending their verbal venom on the police. The bomb was thrown, and the rest is history.

Inspector Bonfield left the department under Mayor John A. Roche. It is said there is nothing on record to show whether John Bonfield resigned or was discharged. His resignation was asked for, but, saying he had no reason for tendering his resignation, the matter went by default.

Inspector Bonfield, after severing his connection with the Police department, started a private detective bureau. To use his own words: "I did not like the things that clients expected me and my men to do; they were not open and above board, so I quit."

John Bonfield died at an early hour yesterday morning at his residence, 3122 Prairie avenue. His death was due to Bright's disease. He was conscious to the last, and simply gave expression to the hope that his family might be with him when he died. His wife and daughters were at his bedside. The funeral will be held on Friday at 2 o'clock, from the family residence. The deceased, besides his immediate family, is survived by three brothers—James H., a Lieutenant of Police at Woodlawn Station; Martin Bonfield of the South Park police force, and Michael Bonfield. Mrs. Catherine Cowan, a sister, also survives.

#### Old Comrade Talks.

Ex-Police Inspector John E. Fitzpatrick said:

"John Bonfield was one of the most efficient policemen who ever served on the Chicago force. He was a man of dauntless courage, aggressive, and of the most incorruptible honesty.

"The daring exploits of John Bonfield as detective and officer of the Chicago Police department," said Mr. Fitzpatrick, "are matters of municipal history that will make him long remembered. He ordered the advance of police on the mob that threw the deadly bomb at the Haymarket riot, where seven policemen were killed, and he was the man who was most instrumental in bringing the perpetrators of that crime to justice. He had charge of the men who arrested