

Newton's First Police Chief Dies in the Line of Duty



Chief John D. Kinney

1878 – November 29, 1934

John D. Kinney was born in 1878 in Sparta, New Jersey

On Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1934, Chief John D. Kinney was on patrol when he discovered Maurice Boyer soliciting money from pedestrians on Spring Street. When Chief Kinney went to place him under arrest, Boyer ran down an alley and a foot pursuit ensued. Boyer was eventually caught by Chief Kinney and taken into custody.

While being escorted to the county jail, Boyer attempted to shake himself free from the custody of Chief Kinney, who would not allow his prisoner to escape his custody. Chief Kinney held onto Boyer for a few more feet and then suddenly collapsed to the ground in the County Park. Sussex County Under Sheriff Clarence Teets witnessed the incident and took Boyer to the county jail. Chief Kinney died before medical assistance could be summoned. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Chief Kinney's funeral services were held at the Christ Episcopal Church in Newton and he is buried in the Newton Cemetery on Lawnwood Avenue in Newton. Chief Kinney was survived by his wife of 34 years, Nellie, his daughter, Helen, his brother, Edward, and his nephew, James Washer. He was 56 years old at the time of his death.

Chief Kinney was a member of the Newton Police Department for 10 years. In 1931, he was promoted to the position of Chief of Police, making him the first of the Department. Chief Kinney was a member of the Police Chief's Association, Sussex County Peace Officers Association, Policemen's Benevolent Association, and a member of the Newton Fire Department's No. 3 Hose Company. He was the first Police Officer to die in the line of duty for the Newton Police Department.

End of Watch: November 29, 1934
