

“Lest We Forget”: Disinterring the Memory of Savannah’s Earliest Police Fatalities

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On April 7, 1866, Savannah policeman James Foley heard the distinct sound of a police officer’s rattle coming from the direction of the Central Railroad Depot. Knowing his duty was to respond and offer assistance, Foley ran towards the noise. Upon arriving at the corner of West Broad and Liberty Streets, Foley witnessed policemen Edward McNichols and James Galoglay attempting to secure a pistol from an enraged man, George Grady. Within minutes, both McNichols and Foley lie dead. Their assailant was an off-duty Savannah cop.¹

Edward McNichols and James Foley are Savannah’s forgotten police officers. Although the Savannah Police Department has held an annual memorial for its fallen members since 1965, these two men remain missing from the roll call. Their names do not appear on the granite monument in front of the Police Headquarters as do fifty-two other law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty. Until now, their story has eluded historians of Savannah and its police department. Though the events surrounding these deaths were well published in the contemporary pages of the *Daily News and Herald*, few official records hint towards their sacrifice. The recent discovery of these tragic deaths demonstrates that profound moments in history can be forgotten. Written accounts of a city may overlook important figures, but diligent research has the potential to reveal these noteworthy events.

Prelude to the Incident

In 1865, Chief Robert Anderson reorganized the Savannah Police Department. As part of a force structure enhancement, new hires were sworn in beginning in October which continued through 1866. The recruits were required to pay a bond. Privates had to put up fifty dollars to secure a position. These bonds helped to ensure the policemen’s orderly conduct and prevent desertion from their posts.² James Foley was a recent Irish immigrant when he signed his oath of office on December 19, 1865.³ Edward G. McNichols immigrated from County Sligo, Ireland a decade earlier.⁴ McNichols served briefly in the 1st Georgia Infantry Regiment (Irish Jasper Greens) but spent most of the Civil War in hospitals due to sickness.⁵ After the war, he applied to the police department and was sworn in on February 7, 1866. McNichols paid his bond with

the assistance of Levi S. Hart, a Justice of the Peace.⁶ Along with McNichols and Foley, another recruit, James Bartley was appointed by Chief Anderson. All the men joining the police ranks were held firmly to their bond and most had someone trustworthy to vouch for their reputation.

The police department was not yet a modern professional organization and discipline amongst the ranks was a problem. Chief Anderson retained the fines imposed on policemen who were negligent in their duties. He used these funds to furnish the police barracks and buy equipment.⁷ Although Anderson may have been instilling much needed discipline, the beginnings of the department were disorderly. Ruffians and drunks found their way into the first years of the newly reorganized force.

During his brief stint in the department, James Bartley conducted himself so as not to bring questions to his character. On the surface he appeared to be one of the trustworthy recruits that would help build Savannah's police force. Chief Anderson later testified that Bartley was one of the most soldierly and well-disciplined of his policemen.⁸ However, he hid a violent past and his real identity. James Bartley's real name was George W. Grady. He kept up this facade, using several aliases throughout his months in the police force and even partway through his murder trial. Furthermore, he will be referred to as George Grady.

The Night of the Incident

On April 7, 1866, Policeman Grady reported to the police barracks on Habersham Street at six o'clock in the evening for his shift later that night. His instructions were to stay on the premises until his midnight shift which consisted of patrolling one of Savannah's residential wards. However, Grady left the confines of the barracks and met with two fellow off-duty policemen, Hope Farmer and Granville Bevell. The trio proceeded to visit several bars. Grady carelessly drank hard liquor, while his friends imbibed on softer drinks to avoid heavy intoxication. Their drinking spree ended at Mr. Neville's bar near the Central Railroad Depot. Grady got into a verbal argument with another patron. As Grady became agitated, he told others in the establishment that he was armed with a pistol and willing to use it. Around eleven pm, the owner forced the crowd out of his bar and onto the street corner of West Broad and Liberty Streets. Grady began brandishing his police-issued-pistol claiming he could kill anyone. This was enough for citizens in the area to demand that the nearby policeman do something about this threat to the public. Policeman Edward McNichols then attempted to calm Grady and secure the

pistol from the drunk and aggressive man. As Policeman James Galoglay joined into the tussle, Grady got his arm free and pointed the revolver directly at McNichols. His first shot pierced McNichols' chest. Grady then turned toward Galoglay and James Foley who was approaching the scene. His second shot grazed Policeman Galoglay and struck the hand of Foley. A third shot hit James Foley directly in his chest. Both severely wounded officers died immediately. Galoglay then tackled Grady and smashed his hand into the ground until he released his grip on the firearm. With the assailant subdued, Galoglay handed him off to fellow police officers. As Grady was being lifted, another pistol fell from his waistband. After he was escorted back to the barracks, Grady exclaimed, "he wished he had killed more of the damn sons of bitches."⁹

The Aftermath

Within moments, a large crowd gathered, including a *Daily News and Herald* reporter. A doctor was summoned to examine the fatally shot policemen. Before the bodies were removed to the police barracks, Edward's wife Mary Stafford McNichols came on the scene and collapsed in anguish.¹⁰ Edward G. McNichols and James Foley were laid to rest in the Catholic Cemetery on the 9th of April. Their funerals were paid for by the City of Savannah. McNichols was buried in family lot, B 82. Foley was buried in the Free Ground section.¹¹ Both men have no grave markers. Mary McNichols lived in Savannah as a widow with her cousin Richard Corish until her death in 1882.¹² Nothing is known about Foley's widow, Mary King.

George Grady was charged with the murder of James Foley and Edward McNichols by Judge Levi S. Hart.¹³ After petitioning the Chatham County Superior Court, Grady was allowed multiple continuations to gather character witnesses. For two years, Grady sat in the Savannah jail while court dates were delayed.¹⁴ In April 1868, Grady was put on trial. His defense team consisted of well-known Savannah attorney Julian Hartridge and Judge Henry Rootes Jackson.¹⁵ During the trial, Grady revealed his true persona. His past was the only thing that could explain his violent actions.

George W. Grady was born in Cass County, Georgia and after his parents' deaths was raised in Polk County, Tennessee by his uncle.¹⁶ When the Civil War broke out, Grady was in Ringgold, Georgia staying in the boarding house of a Mr. Anderson. Anderson and Grady got into an argument which resulted in Grady getting shot in the head. Most of the shot was removed by a doctor, but some pieces remained in his skull according to testimony by Grady.¹⁷ At the

same time, the 9th Georgia Infantry Regiment was marching through Ringgold on their way to Virginia. Grady joined the volunteer regiment and served with them in Lee's Army of Virginia. Grady was wounded twice during battles at Seven Pines and Murfreesboro.¹⁸ After his second injury, he left his regiment and never returned. According to Grady's court statement, he went on to volunteer for a Confederate Tennessee Calvary unit.¹⁹ However, Civil War records indicate that he deserted the Confederacy and signed an oath of allegiance to the United States after his capture at Chattanooga on September 27, 1864.²⁰ His status as a traitor in the eyes of the South's postwar white society is likely the cause for his identity change and alias after the war.

Grady claimed the shot in his head caused him to become a maniac anytime that he drank whiskey. Hartridge's arguments evoked sympathy for the prisoner and his closing remarks convinced the jury of Grady's temporary lapse of character. The jury found a verdict of manslaughter and asked for mercy from the court.²¹ During the sentencing on July 6, 1868, Judge W. B. Fleming disagreed. The judge scolded the prisoner for using his wounds as an excuse for his drunken behavior. He delivered Grady to the Georgia State Prison in Milledgeville for ten years of hard labor.²² Grady was put to work on the railroads under the ruthless convict lease system. He escaped confinement in May of 1869 and was apprehended two months later in Augusta. He attempted to escape the local jail in Augusta before being remanded to the State prison.²³ Grady later worked on the Georgia Airline Railroad. He was transferred to Capt. W.D. Grant's camp of the Cherokee Railroad Company, where he escaped again on November 12, 1872. Records do not clearly indicate if Grady was captured a second time and whether he started a new life after his prison experience.

Remembering Fallen Officers of the Savannah Police Department

The memorialization of fallen officers evolved slowly over the course of a century. Savannah's City Council authorized payment for police funerals as well as a stipend for the widows.²⁴ A burial lot in Laurel Grove Cemetery was laid aside for policemen who died in service to the city.²⁵ Ironically, the lot was numbered 911, a century before the establishment of a national emergency telephone system with the same number. There are three monuments in this lot. One marks the grave of Robert E. Read, who along with Samuel Bryson died on November 3, 1868 during a racially charged conflict at voting polls.²⁶ Until now, these two men have been considered the first Savannah Policemen to die in the line of duty. Although their

deaths were widely reported in 1868, the idea of a list of fallen Police Officers did not formulate for another century.

A granite marker inscribed with a list of fallen officers was placed in front of the Police Headquarters at the corner of Habersham Street and Oglethorpe Avenue in 1964. The Police Officers' Wives Association of Chatham County led efforts to commemorate fallen officers by placing a bronze statue of a policeman on top of the granite marker.²⁷ Mayor, J. Curtis Lewis inaugurated Savannah's Peace Officers Memorial Day in 1967.²⁸ At the national level, Congress approved a joint resolution to honor all of America's fallen police officers with an annual Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15, 1962. This day accompanied an official Police Week.²⁹

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, created in 1984, financed the construction of a national monument in Washington, D.C. That organization asked local departments from all over the nation to formally recommend fallen officers so that they could be remembered in the nation's capital. In 1989, under the direction of Chief David M. Gellatly, Captain Stephen J. Smith prepared the list of Savannah's Fallen Officers. The list was prepared using names from the monument at the police barracks as well as historic newspaper articles.³⁰ However, the well-hidden episode of Foley and McNichols' deaths did not present itself and the men remain forgotten. Their graves go unmarked, and their names unspoken. The monument on Habersham Street is inscribed with the names of Savannah and Chatham County law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty. Above these names, the phrase *Lest We Forget* charges the community with the responsibility to remember the sacrifice these officers and their families paid. This same honor will be extended to these newly discovered fallen officers; James Foley and Edward G. McNichols.

¹ The State of Georgia vs. George W. Grady, 14 (Chatham Co. Superior 1868), Criminal Witness Testimony Ledger, 1867, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia, GHS 5125, microfilm, Series 7, Item 3. The microfilm was mislabeled with a title 1867 when it includes 1867-1868. The name Galoglay is spelled numerous ways throughout the historical records, this article uses the spelling that matches his signature on official court records.

² Thomas Gamble, Jr., *A History of the City Government of Savannah, Ga., From 1791 - 1901* (Savannah, Georgia, 1900), 279, <https://www.savannahga.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1373/Gamble-History?bidId=>, accessed March 9, 2023. Gamble used the annual mayor reports and City Council meeting minutes which is likely the reason that the Foley and McNichols deaths of 1866 were overlooked as there is only a small reference to their coffins being paid for by the city. Gamble is the first historian to highlight the deaths of Bryson and Read in 1868, which led to them being mistakenly referred to as the first policemen killed in the line of duty.

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- ³ Georgia, U.S., Catholic Diocese of Savannah Cemetery Records, 1853-1975, James Foley, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61837/> > Funeral and Cemetery Registers > Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (Savannah) > Funeral Register, Mar 1866 – Feb 1870 > Image 4, accessed March 9, 2023. Also, City of Savannah, Clerk of Council, City Officers Bond Book, entry for December 19, 1865, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia, 5600CL-060 Volume 5, Savannah, Ga., U.S., Licenses and Bonds 1837 - 1909, James Foley, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9243/> > City Officers > Clerk of Council, City Officers Bond Books, 1858 – 1873 > Image 150, accessed March 9, 2023.
- ⁴ 1860 U.S. Federal Census, City of Savannah District 1, page 17, line 19, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667/> > Georgia > Chatham > Savannah District 1 > Image 18, accessed March 9, 2023.
- ⁵ Civil War Service Record of Edward G. McNichols, *Fold3.com*, <https://www.fold3.com/image/32022554?xid=1022>, accessed on March 9, 2023.
- ⁶ City of Savannah, Clerk of Council, Police Officer's Bond Book, entry for February 7, 1866, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia, 5600CL-050 Volume 3, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9243/> > City Police > Clerk of Council, Police Officers' Bond Books, 1854 – 1869 > Image 165, accessed on March 9, 2023.
- ⁷ "Inspection of the Police Force," *The Morning News* (Savannah), December 14, 1868, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on September 15, 2022.
- ⁸ "The Policemen Murder Case," *The Daily News Herald* (Savannah), June 20, 1868, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on September 15, 2022.
- ⁹ "The Policemen Murder Case," *The Daily News Herald*, June 20, 1868.
- ¹⁰ "Another Fatal Shooting Affray-Two Policemen Shot Dead-The Coroner's Inquest," *The Daily News and Herald* (Savannah), April 9, 1866, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on September 15, 2022.
- ¹¹ Edward C. Anderson, *Report of Edward C. Anderson, Mayor of the City of Savannah, For the Year Ending September 30, 1866, To Which is Added the Treasurer's Report* (Savannah: Georgia, C.E. O'Sullivan, 1866), 20, <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/savannahmayor/pdf/1866.pdf>, accessed March 9, 2023. Also, Georgia, U.S., Catholic Diocese of Savannah Cemetery Records, 1853-1975, James Foley and Edward G. McNichols, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61837/> > Funeral and Cemetery Registers > Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (Savannah) > Funeral Register, Mar 1866 – Feb 1870 > Image 4, accessed March 9, 2023.
- ¹² 1880 U.S. Federal Census, City of Savannah District 15, page 38, line 44, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/6742/> > Georgia > Chatham > Savannah > 015 > Image 38, accessed March 9, 2023.
- ¹³ "Granger, Alias Bartley Committed For Willful Murder," *The Daily News Herald* (Savannah), April 18, 1866, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on September 15, 2022.
- ¹⁴ Superior Court, Chatham County, Georgia, Superior Court Minutes, v25, 1862-1867, pg 343, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSYZ-93GK-1?i=286&cat=141528> > Image 490, accessed on March 9, 2023. Also, 5600PL-010, Savannah Jail Registers, Volume 4, 1862-1869, City of Savannah Municipal Archives.
- ¹⁵ Superior Court, Chatham County, Georgia, Superior Court Minutes, v26, 1867-1869, pg354, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008355983?cat=141528> > Image 211, accessed on March 9, 2023. Also, "The Policemen Murder Case," *The Daily News Herald*, June 20, 1868. In addition to practicing law in Savannah, Henry Rootes Jackson was influential in Georgia and national politics. He served as a General in the Confederate States Army, director of the Central Railroad and Banking Company, and president of the Georgia Historical Society,
- ¹⁶ "The Policemen Murder Case," *The Daily News Herald* (Savannah), June 22, 1868, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on September 15, 2022. Also, 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Polk County, District 4, page 76, line 16, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667/> > Tennessee > Polk > District 4 > Image 8, accessed March 9, 2023.
- ¹⁷ "The Policemen Murder Case," *The Daily News Herald* (Savannah), June 22, 1868.
- ¹⁸ Civil War Service Record of George W. Grady, *Fold3.com*, <https://www.fold3.com/image/35771651>, accessed on March 9, 2023. Also, "Prairie View, Texas," *The (Walker Co., Georgia) Messenger*, April 18, 1889 and June 13, 1889, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on March 9, 2023.
- ¹⁹ "The Policemen Murder Case," *The Daily News Herald* (Savannah), June 22, 1868.
- ²⁰ Civil War Service Record of George W. Grady, *Fold3.com*.

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- ²¹ Superior Court, Chatham County, Georgia, Superior Court Minutes, v26, 1867-1869, pg358, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008355983?cat=141528> > Image 213, accessed on March 9, 2023. Also, "The Policemen Murder Case," *The Daily News Herald*, June 22, 1868.
- ²² "Superior Court," *The Daily News Herald* (Savannah), July 7, 1868, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on March 9, 2023. Also, Superior Court, Chatham County, Georgia, Superior Court Minutes, v26, 1867-1869, pg367, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008355983?cat=141528> > Image 217, accessed on March 9, 2023.
- ²³ Georgia, U.S., Central Register of Convicts, 1817-1976, George W. Grady, *Ancestry.com*, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3056/> > Central Register of Convicts, 1817-1868, A-Z > Image 110-111, accessed March 9, 2023. Also, "A Row - A Policeman Fired Upon in the Discharge of Duty," *The Weekly Constitutionalist* (Augusta, Georgia), July 7, 1869, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on September 15, 2022.
- ²⁴ City of Savannah, Treasurer's Cash Book, v19, entry for November 27, 1868, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia, 5600CT-410 Volume 19, pg26.
- ²⁵ "Council Proceedings," *The Savannah Georgian*, November 19, 1854, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/> accessed on September 15, 2022.
- ²⁶ Edward C. Anderson, *Report of Edward C. Anderson, Mayor of the City of Savannah, For the Year Ending September 30, 1869, To Which is Added the Treasurer's Report* (Savannah: Georgia, Chas. E. O'Sullivan Printer, 1869), 28, <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/savannahmayor/pdf/1869.pdf>, accessed March 9, 2023.
- ²⁷ "Bronze Statue Will Honor Savannah's Police Heroes," *Savannah Morning News*, February 19, 1965, pg10B, Bull Street Library, Savannah, Georgia, Newspaper Collection, microfilm, reel Savannah Morning News – February 1965.
- ²⁸ "Memorial for Peace Officers," *Savannah Morning News*, May 31, 1967, pg4A, Bull Street Library, Savannah, Georgia, Newspaper Collection, microfilm, reel Savannah Morning News – May 1967.
- ²⁹ John F. Kennedy, "Proclamation 3466—Police Week and Peace Officers Memorial Day, 1962," The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-3466-police-week-and-peace-officers-memorial-day-1962>, accessed March 9, 2023.
- ³⁰ Stephen J. Smith Collection on the Savannah Police Department, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia, GHS 1944, 2 boxes.