

OSWALD-RUBY CLOUD

**Curry Dogged
By Controversy**

Police Chief Jesse B. Curry—in whose city the 35th president was slain, in whose police station the assassin was murdered—steps down Friday.

Unfortunately, this is how he will be remembered — this quiet man of soft manner and stormy circumstance.

History will record him as chief of police of Dallas, as of Nov. 23, 1963.

His friends will remember him as:

"An optimist," describes a long-time police reporter. "In every dark cloud he could see only the silver lining."

"He is humble and yet in his way a forthright and forceful man," a clergyman once said.

"Jesse Curry is so openly honest that—well just being openly honest has sometimes gotten him into trouble," said a veteran newsman.

"Unassuming... non-pretentious... very frank."

Jesse Curry came to Dallas from the little town of Hamilton, the son of a policeman who became a preacher.

FOOTBALL HERO

He was a husky football hero at Dallas Crozier Tech — an all-district tackle on the team that went to the state finals in '33.

He once studied to be an optometrist—he worked in the cleaning and pressing business. But he became a policeman.

On May 31, 1936, he donned his first uniform. He was among a class of 41 rookies just graduated from police school. Also in the group was Charles Batchelor, who would become his successor.

They say he was a good officer.

There was the time in 1939 when a car containing suspects in a shooting case crashed into his motorcycle. His back injured, a finger broken, he still held the occupants of the car at the scene until help arrived.

It was one of several motorcycle collisions in which he narrowly escaped serious injury or death.

And Jesse Curry still is remembered as the husky young fellow who used his own money to buy tobacco for wins in the city jail.

UP THROUGH RANKS

Traffic, radio patrol, jailer, radio dispatcher, motorcycle officer, accident investigator, detective and departmental instructor—he rose through the ranks.

Following an 11-month interruption in 1942 for transport pilot training in the U.S. Air Corps, he became Lt. Curry, head of the solo motorcycle division of the department.

In 1946 he was a captain and headed the department's training school. He became assistant chief to Chief Carl F. Hansson in 1953.

After Chief Hansson's resignation, on Jan. 20, 1960, Jesse Curry became Dallas' 18th police chief.

Controversy and crisis plagued him.

First there was the storm over whether more than one policeman should ride in a patrol car. Then came desegregation of the city schools in 1961 and more slings and arrows came his way.

Then on Nov. 23, 1963, mild-mannered Jesse Curry became a focal point around which swirled a whirlwind of scorn and ridicule.

The situation was compounded two days later when Lee Harvey Oswald fell before the revolver of Jack Ruby in the basement of the Dallas Police Station.

Although he had little to say publicly concerning the blame for it all, he claimed critics were unjustified in placing the responsibility for President Kennedy's assassination on the Dallas department.

NO EXCUSES

However, in an openly honest way, he contended there was no justification for Oswald's slaying while in the custody of his department.

Controversy continued to follow him in the form of traffic ticket scandals — then an announcement that the Dallas department would be audited by the National Association of Chiefs of Police.

And there was the health problem. Doctors repeatedly warned him of his high blood pressure and urged him to slow his pace.

Yet it still was not unusual for him to be found cruising the

streets late at night listening to the police radio.

Friday he cleans off the desk which for years contained a framed prayer.

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference."

The quiet man has stepped down.