

PUBLIC HISTORY PRACTICUM:
A LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF THE BURLINGTON, VT. POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUZANNE KING AND PETER SHOEMAKER

The following is Part II of research into the history of the Burlington Police Department, primarily through oral interviews and the examination of archival documents. The remaining segments of the essay will be published in subsequent issues.

**THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S
CONTROL OF THE AMBULANCE
SERVICE**

The Burlington Police Department not only provided crime prevention and peacekeeping services to the city but also a free ambulance service. Transporting injured people from the scene of an accident was a logical outgrowth of duties the police already performed. The police usually transported people from the scene of an accident to their home where they would be cared for by family members or a doctor. Only in very serious cases or in death were people taken directly to a hospital.

Until 1912, everyone, whether a criminal or an injured citizen, was transported by the police in a horse drawn buggy. This rig served as a combination paddywagon, patrol wagon, and ambulance. In 1912, the city authorized the purchase of an automobile for the Police Department. A perceived need for improved transportation of injured persons was not a major factor leading to this decision, but the injured certainly benefitted from the more rapid form of transportation.

The first automobile served as a combination ambulance and patrol car. Although by 1930, the Department had two motorcycles and two additional scout cars,

only one vehicle was designated to transport injured persons. In 1923, a new combination ambulance and patrol car was purchased to replace the original vehicle. As Burlington developed, the ambulance service placed a burden on the Police Department. Lack of sufficient manpower had always been a serious problem for the Department, and in order for the police to offer efficient ambulance service, at least one man was kept from his beat each shift and another on call.

As early as 1927, the Police Department provided 89 ambulance rides. By present day standards this is a minute amount of service. In the 1920s, however, few people relied upon public services, such as an ambulance, as we do today. Families and doctors tended to care for their relatives and patients at their home, decreasing the need for an ambulance.

Over the next thirty years or so, the City replaced the patrol car/ambulance vehicle on the average of once every ten years. In 1940, the Police Chief in his annual report, suggested that the Department begin charging \$5 per ambulance ride. Although he argued that the costs of transportation and manpower were rising, no charge was instituted at that time.

In November of 1961, discussion

began between the Police Department and City officials regarding the transfer of the ambulance service to the Fire Department. The Police Department argued that traffic hazards resulted from garaging the ambulance at the Police Station on Church Street and that patrolman must be pulled from their Church Street beats to go on ambulance runs. The Chief felt the patrolmen would be more effective on their beats if they were not responsible for ambulance duty as well. No one thought these changes would be made until June 1962 when the new city budget was to be approved.

Unfortunately, the Department experienced an emergency manpower shortage in December 1961 and January 1962. This shortage was caused by a scandal concerning theft among some members of the force. The full acts of this case will be discussed shortly. One immediate ramification was the forced resignation of seven men from the department. Also the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), called in for evaluation of the Department, recommended less foot patrols and a greater reliance upon patrol cars. It was again recognized that the staffing of the Ambulance by the Police created an increased strain on the Department's resources.

Due to this personnel shortage, in April, 1962 Mayor Dow declared that a state of emergency existed in the Police Department. In cooperation with the Police Commissioner, the Mayor, and the Board of Finance, ambulance service was transferred to the Fire Department on Monday, April 9, 1962. Even though the Police Department controlled the ambulance service in Burlington for 60 years, it could never expect to incorporate this service into the department unless proper funding was

available. Rising technology and increased training were the first steps leading to the expected professionalism of rescue and ambulance services of present day. Police Officers could no longer be expected to man ambulances as part of their duties. Increased medical technology called for even greater specialization by those who staff the ambulance service.

THE EMERGENCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

At the turn of the twentieth century, police officers were much the same as those of the mid-nineteenth century in terms of their duties and responsibilities. But as the new century ushered in social, technological and industrial advances, it was evident that the Burlington Police Department would have to adapt to these changes. This may not have occurred as quickly as some would have liked but there were factors in Burlington hindered such progress.

The concept of professionalism provides a framework for the various ideas that were proposed for the improvement of the Burlington Police Department. According to the dominant school of thought, professional status consists of three basic dimensions: professional knowledge, professional autonomy, and the service ideal. A profession is characterized by a complex and esoteric body of knowledge, capable of being codified and applied to social problems. Professionals are experts who have mastered that knowledge through intensive training. The development of a professional police force in Burlington, or any city's Police Department, may seem to have been inevitable, but one must realize that this process continues even today.

The idea that policing was a "calling", a life-long career, did not begin

to emerge until the very late nineteenth century. By the same token, the idea of a police science, an abstract body of knowledge related to police work, was also extremely slow in developing. The outward forms of professional autonomy: professional associations, journals, etc. did not fully appear until the twentieth century. Also the notion that the police should be committed to an abstract ideal of public service, rather than narrow political service, was also slow in developing.

Despite the rhetoric of professionalism, Police Department's have not developed along lines similar to the acknowledged professions of law, medicine, and education. Rather, police service has evolved along bureaucratic lines. The most professional departments have been those in which the rank-and-file officer is subject to the tightest internal supervision. Improvements made by the BPD towards professionalizing themselves can be divided into two fields. The first demand for professionalism translates into improved training and more education for police officers. The second, an improvement and adaptation of the technology available to the department.

Careerism among police officers was the first minimal step towards professionalism. In the late nineteenth century, police work was essentially a form of casual labor. Political appointees filled departments with little expectation that they would serve out the rest of their lives in that position. There were neither formal entrance requirements to screen out the unfit nor was there any attempt to provide the recruit with any formal training for police work.

Previously mentioned in this paper were the many steps that the Burlington Police Department took to professionalize

the force. A career could be made out of police work in Burlington at the turn of the century because the city started to pay police officers a set salary and give them benefits comparable with other jobs. By 1902, a pay scale of an officer looked like this: one to two years service meant \$50 a month, men with three to four years service were paid \$55 and men with service over five years were paid \$60. Also, because these men were employees of the City, they were eligible for a pension.

City politics and its effects were taken out of the Burlington Police Department when appointments were no longer made directly by the Mayor, but from a list of qualified candidates selected by the Board of Police Examiners. With the subsequent creation of the Police Commission, the Police Department gained even more autonomy, allowing for the recruitment of men (and later women) who were willing to devote themselves to a life-long career in the law enforcement community. These men were now judged by their actions and the performance of their duty, not by their political actions.

The BPD was fortunate that it was able to acquire much of the technologically advanced equipment that was available to the police departments in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet, the BPD was slow to develop in many of the other areas mentioned above that would have led to a higher level of professionalism. These areas included training and internal supervision, which were not addressed until the 50s and 60s respectively.

With the Depression of the 1930s, all levels of government, from city to federal, were financially strained to the point of breaking. This depressed time also hit the Burlington Police Department.

Budget cuts curtailed the hiring of new officers to replace exiting officers. This is evidenced by the Chief's Report of 1933. This report indicated a shortage of men due to the fact that officers were leaving the force and their positions were not being refilled. The budget of the department between 1928 and 1933 decreased from \$65,000 to \$46,000, a drop of nearly one third. This hurt the BPD in developing as a professional institution because the budgets barely covered the payroll.

Fortunately Burlington only saw a population increase of less than 5,000 persons during the period between 1920-40(U.S. Census figures respectively for these years were 22,779 and 27,686). A new strain put on the Police Department came in the form of traffic accidents. In 1927, the Police Department increased the size of the traffic squad because of the rising number of vehicles in Burlington. The Chief listed a few traffic regulations in his report of 1927 and the following year he requested that traffic signals be installed on a few of the busier corners. Still there was no great regulation until 1939 when Chief Regan, implementing an act passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Aiken, created a police court to levy fines for traffic and parking violations. The fines would be \$1 for the first offense, \$2 for second offense and \$5 for a person's third offense in one year. This court was open 24 hours a day and the officer in charge acted as judge.

In the period between 1936-38, the Police Department was able to acquire new uniforms and a third auto. The most productive acquisition was a 10-watt two-way radio with which to equip the scout cars so that they could communicate directly with headquarters located on Church Street(Moved from City hall on

May 24, 1927). This new equipment allowed for quicker and surer response by the department so as to increase the efficiency in apprehending alleged offenders. During this period, a phone recording system was installed to record all incoming and outgoing calls to provide efficient record keeping. Record keeping was also started at this time for all felonies and major misdemeanors committed in Chittenden County since January 1, 1925.

The Burlington Police Department's integration into a national network associated with the FBI began in 1938. During this time period, the FBI wanted to try to fingerprint all citizens of the United States to help identify offenders. Although this did not occur, the BPD had in its possession equipment that would allow for photographing and fingerprinting of all offenders. A copy of these prints were sent to the Vermont State Bureau as well as the Department of Justice in Washington.

Another bureau established by the Burlington Police Department, along with the Bureau of Identification, was the Bureau of Investigation. There were three full time members of this Bureau: a Chief inspector, and two inspectors for field work. The responsibilities of the Bureau included cases requiring extended investigation referred to it by the uniformed division. The inspectors would determine if a case was of criminal or civil status, attend court, keep accurate records, and investigate applicants for various types of licenses granted by the Board of Aldermen. This bureau was replaced approximately fifteen years later by the detective division. Soon the Police Department began to establish a new goal of crime prevention.

In their report of 1940, the Police

Commission stated its objectives for crime prevention and the benefits it could bring: "...crime prevention has been and will continue to be the first requisite of the police department. Although at this time, we cannot show an appreciable decrease in our problem, we feel, however that an advancement has been made in obtaining a more friendly relationship between the police, parents and youths." The programs that were started included a police council system which acted as a rehabilitation program for first time offenders under sixteen years old.

The goal of this program was to try to spot potential troublemakers at a young age and steer them on the "right path". The other two programs included the Boy Scouts and a Bicycle Club that gave classes on safety, showed sports movies, etc. These gave youths a chance to experience productive activities. All these programs were manned by police officers who volunteered their time outside of their regular duties.

This was the first time that the Police Department mentioned a concentration in the prevention of crime directly, rather than reacting after the offence had already been committed. The report also included a desire, by the Mayor, to send some officers to a police school conducted by the FBI so that they could receive formal training. The goal of this police training was to obtain the standards of a profession which could be recognized by the public. Some of the subjects the department thought important were: ordinances, powers of arrest, how to conduct interviews, firearms, blood identification, and the mechanics of arrest. Although no officers were sent at this time, the department realized there would have to be a training program implemented at

some future time.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING OFFICERS

When Chief Arthur Carron joined the BPD in 1940 there was still no formal training of officers. An officer would be "broken in" with a six-week tour with a qualified police officer. The purpose of this training was to have the senior officer show the rookie the basics; after that officers would learn on the job, by trial and error. After twelve years, Chief Carron was promoted to the Detective Bureau, where once again his training consisted of learning techniques from a more qualified, experienced policeman. Formal, structured training was received when he was designated to go to the FBI Academy in 1956.

Chief Carron was not the first officer from the B.P.D. to attend this Academy. In 1941, Chief Russell, then a Captain, attended the Academy in Washington, D.C. and another officer attended in 1949. These two men started a twelve-week police school in 1950 with the knowledge they gained at the FBI Academy for all uniformed police officers. After that, training came into affect piecemeal. To begin with, the Department started formal firearms training and then this developed into the other areas mentioned above. The FBI was brought for training sessions with the whole department. The situation remained this way until the late 1960s when the Vermont Training Council was developed.

The Vermont Training Council developed a Vermont Police Academy which was taught primarily by State Police Officers. There had been attempts at advanced training in the years prior to 1968, but this was the first comprehensive, concentrated initiative in Vermont for

training police officers. The Academy was located, and still is, in Pittsford, Vermont. But even as recent as 1971, when Chief Kevin Scully joined the force, orientation was still loosely run because the department size was still small enough to allow for personal interaction. The first month of training consisted of reading all of the documents that were important: city ordinances, state statutes and departmental rules and regulations. A rookie would then spend a month or so working the beat on the street and learning from the more experienced officers. Then it was onto the Academy for six weeks of training and then back to Burlington. If an officer showed true dedication they could attend the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia for three months of intense training.

Presently, most officers receive a 14-week training period from the Vermont Academy (compared with the six-weeks of training of the 1970s). The subject matter studied includes Vermont State Law, Constitutional Law, and patrol procedures. Over the years, a continual improvement of the Academy creates an environment that produces officers better equipped for the rigorous duties of police work. There are many opportunities for officers to improve the quality of their education and training in order to better serve the community. One such officer was Charles Guyette, who attended a special course at UCLA dealing with Delinquency Control; for many years he was assigned to the Juvenile Services Bureau.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Burlington Police Department was a loosely run department relying on the outdated mode of beat officers. It was this lax control of the rank and file that contributed to a major scandal for the department in the early 1960s. The

scandal helped define the problems inside the department and created an environment for improvement.

SCANDAL

The 1960s were years of great change for police departments around the nation. Rising crime rates and changing social conditions contributed to the need for increased training, specialization and reorganization within departments. In addition, technological improvements allowed for rapid modernization of equipment. The BPD began to professionalize itself along with other departments around the nation. One event, however, set Burlington's Police Department apart from those of other cities and spurred a reorganization. This was the "Scandal of 1961".

On December 21, 1961, two patrolmen, Adams and Malloy, were arrested by detectives from their own department on charges of breaking and entering and burglarizing local businesses while on duty. From November 19 to December 21, the two men burglarized a total of ten businesses from which they netted about \$1,000 in cash and merchandise. In statements following their arrest, both men claimed they knew from the beginning they would be caught. Each man had different motives for attempting the burglaries. One needed the extra money, as his take-home pay was \$66.47 per week. As a twenty-six year old father of four and a recent divorcee, he was in debt. Pay had always been a problem for police officers; moonlighting was in fact an accepted reality to most officers, particularly if they had families. Former Chief Robert Abare stated that with a wife and two children he, too, had to moonlight in order to make ends meet.

The other arrested officer partook in

the burglaries strictly for the excitement. An eight year veteran of the force, he claimed he did not need the money. Both men were assigned to the late shift, 12:00am-8:00am, in the downtown area. After 1:00 am, when the bars closed and few people or cars were on the streets, the beat became tiresome. With little supervision and low pay, the temptation of breaking and entering was great, or at least it was for these two men. The men had keys to the buildings of many businesses and knew how to enter undetected. The risk of being caught by a passerby was minimal. If the men had not begun stealing from the building, they may never have been caught.

Henry's Diner on Bank Street reported a robbery on November 19. This was the first actual robbery the two men committed. Not long after the incident at Henry's, other businesses began reporting similar late night break-ins. The Police Department thus became suspicious of the two officers, because judging from the hours and locations of the robberies, detectives found it improbable that neither of the patrol officers saw the incidents. Their locations were known because patrolmen were required, as a safety measure, to call into the station every 30 minutes on one of the communication boxes located throughout the city. The men were prompt about checking in with the main desk because they believed they were covering their tracks. They were unaware that after the break-in at Henry's their own detectives were conducting a major undercover investigation of the late night beat.

Captain George A. McKenzie, Detective Captain Arthur J. Carron, and Detective Sargent Robert G. Abare, along with three other detectives, conducted the

five-week secret investigation. No other members of the force knew of the probe except Chief Donald P. Russell and Lt. Raymond Mercure, the officer in charge of the 12-8am shift. These men often worked double-shifts in order to gather evidence and follow Malloy and Adams on their late night beats. The effort these men exerted in order to solve the case demonstrated the extreme dedication of the members of the Burlington Police Department toward a professional organization.

The first real evidence the detectives found was the torch Adams and Malloy used to break into the safe at Henry's. The men had hidden it next to a barn just below City Hall Park under an upside down bathtub. The detectives left the torch there until further evidence could be gathered. This torch was a good point of reference for the detectives because they could easily stake it out from the police station and watch for signs of additional break-ins. The torch proved to be a valuable tool used for detectives while questioning the men.

Malloy and Adams were actually apprehended on December 21, 1961, after breaking into the Above Par Restaurant at the corner of Bank Street and South Winooski Avenue. Ironically, this is the same building in which the Detective Division would later be located. The two first entered the building for only about five minutes. The two detectives watching them decided they did not have enough time to do anything while inside the building. Adams and Malloy had only broken in to get keys which would allow their readmittance. When the men left the building, they each went to a call box to report in, as was required each half hour. They soon returned to the Above Par Restaurant and let themselves in. It was at

this point that the detectives arrested them.

Neither man would give the detectives much information. Because of this restraint, one of the detectives told an officer to walk slowly across City Hall Park toward the place where the torch was hidden. Since at that time the detectives' offices overlooked the park, the officer was visible not only to the detectives, but also to the two men who were being questioned in different rooms. A detective pointed out the officer to one of the arrested men and told him that his cohort was laying all the blame on him. This maneuver inspired the men to talk, as neither wanted to be the principal fall guy. Both were placed in the Chittenden County Jail at 220 Main Street on \$10,000 bail each. In the end, both men were sentenced to four-to-six years at the State Prison in Windsor.

After the initial arrests, the Police Department began to keep a close eye on the remaining men on the force. On January 13, 1962, detectives arrested three additional police officers on charges of burglary while on duty. These men had stolen household goods, food, and clothing because their salaries were so low that they felt they could not support their families. The weekly take home pay at this time ranged from \$59.25 to \$69.71.

When these men were arrested, their bail was set at \$3,500 each. In addition, they were sentenced to terms ranging from six to twenty-four months in the House of Corrections. Their punishments were considerably less severe than those suffered by the other two men. This was due to the nature of the crimes. Adams and Malloy were involved in a series of burglaries in which they stole not only merchandise, but also cash. In addition, one of the men stole for the excitement. The other three officers were

indicted on fewer charges and stole a minimal amount of merchandise. They were strictly trying to supplement their incomes. As one of the officers stated, "I don't think anyone realizes the great amount of temptation that a policeman faces-and the small amount of money he is paid".

As a result of the first two arrests in December, the Police Commission, the Mayor and the Police Chief agreed that steps needed to be taken in order to prevent similar incidents in the future. They decided to enlist the services of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). It would not be the first time this organization evaluated the Burlington Police Department.

The IACP, a non-profit management consultant organization, first evaluated the Burlington Police Department in 1938, during a period of reorganization. Immediately following the request for a comprehensive survey of the department the Alderman approved funding for the project. The \$4,100 survey was not, according to acting Chief George McKenzie, "...to investigate individuals. They will go over the complete structure of the force, performance on duty: they'll check our filing system, workload, police conditions and city problems."

R. Dean Smith of the IACP conducted a preliminary, one-day evaluation of the Department on January 18, 1960. Smith prepared a report that defined the major problem areas within the Department. Based on this report, the IACP drafted a contract for the comprehensive survey. Early in April Leon Francisco, Morton Reed, and R. Dean Smith, all of the IACP, began the full evaluation. They completed the survey within a three week time period.

On page 8 of the report, the IACP gave the reasons they believed caused a lack of internal control. "Management practices of the BPD are poor. The ultimate results of this were clearly apparent to the survey staff. Areas of greatest concern include the supervision of personnel, a program of personnel functional inspection, training and personnel advancement, personnel recruiting and promotion and finally effective allocation and distribution of personnel." As stated before, the measurement of a professional department is the internal supervision that exists. The IACP clearly found the BPD to be lacking in this area.

"The supervisor is the basic force in management. This force has been ineffective, if not entirely lacking in the BPD for a number of years. The absence of, or weakness in, supervision has very likely given rise to the majority of the difficulties presently faced by the department. The supervisor is merely the extension, physically, of the management area of the department. The supervisor carries forward the work of the department according to the direction given him by his supervisor. This extension, and therefore, the influence of management, has been absent at the level of execution and must be reestablished."

The end result of the IACP evaluation was an eighty-two page report containing recommendations designed to help Burlington's Police Department modernize while avoiding future occurrences of recent problems such as the burglaries and low morale. The evaluators separated the problems and subsequent recommendations into five primary categories. These areas were training, supervision, manpower allocation, records

systems, and inspections. Within these categories were suggestions for manpower cuts with reliance upon additional cruisers, increased authority delegated to the Chief, and control of moonlighting. In addition, the IACP recommended a higher pay rate for all officers, the new level being needed to be competitive with that of other employers. If the Department decided to implement their suggestions, members of the IACP felt that within eighteen to twenty-four months the Police Department would be running smoothly.