

# **History of the Minneapolis Police Department**

A Presentation of the Minneapolis Police Museum

# Policing Before the Founding of the Department in 1867

- Prior to 1867, policing was the responsibility of a single City Marshal, Captain Michael Hoy, who was appointed by the Mayor and was authorized to command the services of every mature male citizen to help him in if needed.
- Captain Hoy was paid \$60 per month (\$1,184 in 2022).
- He worked during the day at the City Jail which was a small stone structure with a dirt floor located on Central Avenue between 5th and 6th Streets.
- We know from the book *"History of the Police and Fire Departments of the Twin Cities: Their Origin in Early Village Days and Progress to 1900"* (published in 1899) that when Captain Hoy locked up and left the City Jail each night he did not know if the prisoners would still be there when he returned the next morning. Sometimes, the prisoners would dig themselves out of the jail and flee the city. After a number of such occurrences, the city appointed L.C. Smith as Assistant City Marshal to help Captain Hoy and overnight escapes became rare.
- The majority of crimes charged prior to the founding of the MPD in 1867 were for minor offenses such as public drunkenness, fighting, and solicitation and were mostly committed by lumbermen coming in from the woods.



Captain Michael Hoy

# The Founding of the Department in 1867

- The Minneapolis Police Department was founded in 1867 at a time of great growth and transformation following the incorporation of the separate cities of St. Anthony and Minneapolis into one larger Minneapolis.
- The first Police Chief was H. H. Brackett who was paid \$1000 per year (\$19,749 in 2022).
- Reporting to Chief Brackett were six officers who were each paid \$780 per year (\$15,396 in 2022).
- The patrolmen were not uniformed but wore the star badge on the breast pockets of their suit coats.



FIRST SUSPENSION BRIDGE (1855),  
LOOKING TO ST. ANTHONY, IN 1865



ST. ANTHONY FALLS AND PIONEER  
LUMBER MILL IN 1860



BUILDING THE APRON, 1870



A VIBRANT COMMUNITY, 1860

Contemporary Views of Minneapolis



# A Snapshot of the MPD in 1890

- In 1890, the MPD was comprised of 226 members in total (including Admin) and the city was divided into five precincts.
  - The First Precinct was bounded by First Avenue North and Eighth Avenue South and the river and Twentieth Street. It had 67 officers including two jailers.
  - The Second Precinct consisted of the territory on the east side of the river, and the precinct consisted of 37 officers.
  - The Third Precinct covered the territory south of Eighth Avenue South and the force consisted of 38 members including two jailers.
  - The Fourth Precinct covered the territory north of First Avenue North. The Precinct had 37 officers including two jailers.
  - The Fifth Precinct covered the southern outskirts of the city and was the most thinly-settled area of the city. The Fifth Precinct consisted of 28 officers, 15 of which were mounted officers.
- There were three watches, each under a sergeant. The first or "Day Watch" went on duty at 7 AM and off at 6 PM. The second or "6 o'clock Watch" then went on duty and served until 4 AM. The third or "9 o'clock Watch" went on duty at 9 PM and served until 7 AM when it was relieved by the day force. The watches alternated each month, and during the year each officer served four months on day duty and eight months on night duty.
- Each night there was a detail of from 4 to 6 officers from the day force who were held at the Central Station as a night reserve. These officers slept at the station and were only called upon in case of a fire.
- Prisoners were held at the First, Third and Fifth Precinct police stations which had jails.
- All women who were arrested were brought at once to the Central Station and turned over to the care of the Police Matron, Emma Louise Paine.
- There were 17 patrol boxes, where officers reported by telephone at stated times to police headquarters which kept a record of the time and place of each report.
- Each officer had a stated beat, and the sergeant of each watch made the rounds of the precinct to see that all officers were at their beats.
- The total MPD budget in 1890 was \$193,321 (\$3,818,048 in 2022). The number of arrests made in 1890 was 6,154.



Above left: Officer Henry Thompson wearing first version of MPD badge pictured with his young family; Above right: The dark lantern which was the forerunner of the flashlight; Below: Officers of the First Precinct





# The 1900s and the Beginning of the Horseless Age

- On June 10, 1909, the first automobile patrol wagon was put into service by the Minneapolis Police Department. It had originally been designated for the North Side Station but was used for the Central Station. It cost \$2500 (\$70,823 in 2022).
- Law required that all automobile patrol wagons be enclosed. The closed body of the automobile patrol wagon was built and placed on a Rambler touring car of 35 horse power.
- The automobile patrol wagon was also equipped to be used as an ambulance and, in fact, was always used if the call for an ambulance was coming from some distance away.
- From June 10 through December 31, 1909, the automobile patrol wagon travelled a total of 5,144 miles.
- The cost of repairs during that period was \$312.88 (\$8,838 in 2022). Gasoline and oil cost \$142.97 (\$4022 in 2022). The automobile patrol wagon responded to 2,764 calls. Several times, it travelled more than 70 miles in one day.
- We know that the first automobile patrol wagon was chauffeured by Sergeant James McElligot, Patrolmen Charles E. Wolfe and Peter O'Neill, and Detectives Otto Wirtensohn and Oscar Martinson. We are not sure which of these officers are pictured in the photograph above right from 1909.



RAMBLER POLICE PATROL AT MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

July 28, 1909.

## THE HORSELESS AGE.

### Minneapolis Now Has a Motor Patrol Wagon.

The city of Minneapolis has been using a Rambler Model Forty-five car, equipped with a special body, in the patrol service for the past two months. We are informed that the car has been in active service every day, and on one occasion eighteen people, including four officers and fourteen pris-

oners, were carried after a raid on a gambling outfit 3 miles outside of the city. The car was built to carry but ten passengers. The vehicle is electrically lighted, and is equipped with the Rambler spare wheel. A duplicate of this car will be purchased by the city of Minneapolis for use as an ambulance.

# The 1910s Brings the First Policewoman to MPD

- Georgiana Sharrot was the first Minneapolis Policewoman, appointed June 11, 1914.
- She was widowed with two grown children when she was hired at the age of 44.
- She had previously served as matron at a home for children with intellectual disabilities, the head of the nursery at Pillsbury House, and a special officer of the Juvenile Protection League.
- Sharrot was hired prior to taking the civil service and physical fitness exams on the condition of passing them and she passed them.
- Her first year's salary was paid for by The Woman's Club of Minneapolis.
- She was officially called "Street Mother".
- Sharrot had responsibility for youth and children under the age of 17.
- She enforced curfew and child labor laws across the entire city.
- She provided advice to parents.
- Sharrot was Secretary of the International Association of Policewomen and President of Policewomen's Association of Minnesota and the Northwest.
- She served for 23 years until her line of duty death in 1937.



Georgiana Sharrot - First Policewoman of MPD

# Safe-cracking on the Rise in the 1920s

- Detective Martin Dougherty was given a potentially explosive assignment on September 20, 1922.
- Minneapolis Police Officers had made numerous arrests for attempted safe burglaries over a period of months.
- Nitroglycerin and stick dynamite had been confiscated as evidence in these attempted burglaries and was accumulating at the Courthouse.
- In the 1920s, the Minneapolis Police Department had no Bomb Squad and no robust protocols for managing explosives.
- Accordingly, Captain of Detectives Frank Brunskill – who was getting worried about the safety risks of storing these explosives at the Courthouse – assigned Detective Martin Dougherty the job of transporting the explosives down to the Mississippi River for disposal.
- Detective Dougherty took the explosives carefully in hand and walked from the Courthouse to the Third Avenue Bridge. When he reached the west end of the bridge, he walked down to the river bank, stopped under the first arch of the bridge, donned hip-boots, and with a small spade dug a hole underneath the water and buried the explosives.
- We can only imagine that Detective Dougherty felt more relaxed as he walked back to the Courthouse than he had earlier as he made his way to the river.



Detective Martin Dougherty



# The 1930s: Radio Technology - An Innovation in the Fight Against Crime

- In the 1930s, during the famous hunt for John Dillinger, police actively tracked the notorious gangster from city to city. No more had he left the scene of a crime than police radio operators were broadcasting the route he was traveling.
- But other ears besides those of the police were able to listen in on the communications.
- Numerous amateur operators and police radio fans were able to follow the trail of John Dillinger by short-wave radio as law enforcement officers pursued him. When orders went out to squad cars and sheriff patrols to guard certain sections of the highway over which the gangster was expected to travel, hundreds of persons knew exactly where law enforcement was located.
- And it was also evident that John Dillinger himself had only to tune into the short-wave radio to be able to listen and evade law enforcement.
- In 1936, experimental radio frequencies were allotted to police radio systems in Minneapolis, Detroit, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Davenport for testing of the practical application of radio-telegraph code. The new code system of radio-telegraph would mean that gangsters and other underworld characters would have less chance of obtaining police information than they did under the short-wave radio telephone system.
- When writing about the new technology, the Minneapolis StarTribune noted: "The criminal whose head is already bowed by the use of modern crime-fighting equipment and operations by police throughout the country will have just another worry to add to those that keep him awake nights."



Left: Howard Kelly, Minneapolis Police Radio Superintendent, stands at the police radio system which is set up to start broadcasting messages in code.



Right: Minneapolis Police Radio Operator George Elliott, broadcasts a message in code.

# WWII Brings MPD an Auxiliary Police Force

- With the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, many younger officers took leave of the MPD to serve in the Armed Services.
- The Auxiliary Police Force was established to provide aid to the Minneapolis Police Department should bombing or any other war disaster strike Minneapolis.
- On the evening of March 12, 1942, the Minneapolis Police Department launched a training course for 500 men who were hoping to qualify for membership in the new Auxiliary Police Force.
- Training took place at the Marigold Ballroom at 8:00 pm every Thursday evening for 16 successive weeks. The volunteers received 32 hours of instruction in first aid, fire and gas defense, drilling, and general police work. Volunteers had the option of taking additional training which would lead to Red Cross First Aid certification.
- They also studied from a 45-page handbook which was issued by the Minnesota Office of Civilian Defense. It was written by Elden Rowe who was at the time the State Crime Bureau Chief.
- The first evening of training began with a discussion of general duties led by Police Chief Edward B. Hansen. Following the Chief, Detective Ed Ryan, who was head of the internal protection detail, lectured on sabotage dangers and prevention.
- After completing the 16 week course, volunteers were required to pass a final examination before joining the Auxiliary Police Force.
- A similar training course for an Auxiliary Fire-Fighting Force was began that summer.



Hopeful volunteers-in-training, Dr. P.C. Ware and Theodore "Ted" Chalgren look at the arm band to be worn by members of the Auxiliary Police Force as shown to them by Detective Ed Ryan

Right: Members of the Auxiliary Police Force drilling at the Marigold Ballroom in July of 1942. They are wearing new uniforms which were donated by an anonymous sponsor. The uniforms were comprised of blue shirts, dark blue trousers and caps, and white belts.



# Policewomen Begin the Push for Broader Duties in the 1950s

- In the 1950s, MPD Policewomen wore plain clothes and a badge and carried their guns in their handbags.
- At this time, Policewomen were limited in their duties to working with women and children and restricted by gender stipulations in the civil service rules from applying for positions such as Detective or Patrol Officer.
- In the 1950s, Policewomen Edith Evans, Gladys Cooke, and Bernice De Jarlais were the first to push for a change to the civil service rules to enable women to be hired into all MPD roles.
- In 1974, the civil service rules were changed and 279 women applied to take the exam for Patrol Officer.
- In 1976, 8 women patrolled the city in uniform as Patrol Officers.
- The approximate number of sworn women members of the MPD are as follows:
  - 4 women in the years 1914 - 1927
  - 8 women in the years 1928 - 1984
  - 32 women in 1985
  - 100 women in 2020



Policewomen's Bureau in 1929



Policewomen's Bureau in 1938

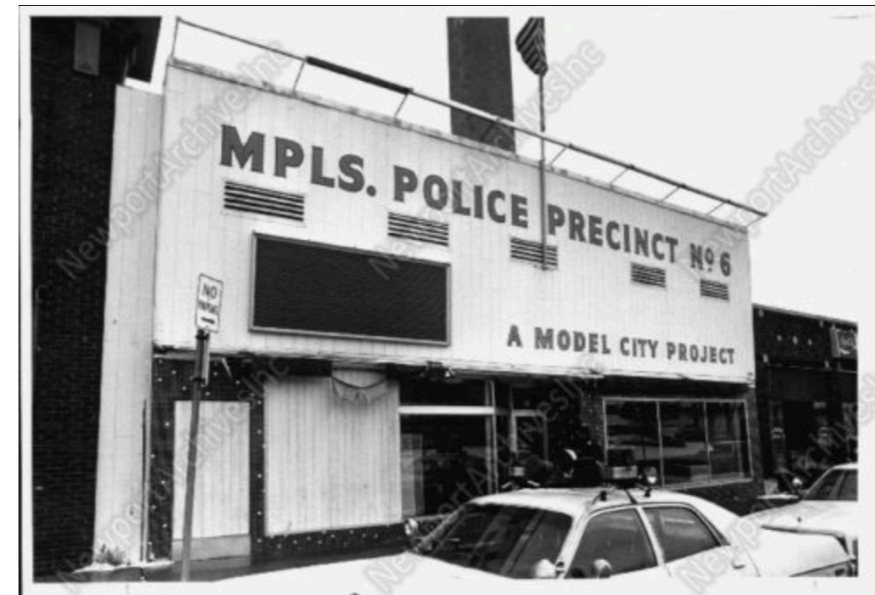


StarTribune article from 1951 highlighting shooting prowess of MPD Policewomen



# The 1960s: the Model City Precinct and the Effort to Strengthen Community Relationships

- Minneapolis was chosen in November 1967 as one of sixty-three cities nationwide to participate in the federally sponsored Demonstration Cities (Model Cities) Program.
- With funding from the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD), the Minneapolis Model City Program concentrated its efforts in the Whittier neighborhood which at the time was a racially-integrated neighborhood that suffered from high unemployment, crime, poverty, and housing and educational deficiencies.
- One of the outcomes of the Model City Program was the establishment of the Model City 6th Precinct at 2639 Nicollet Avenue. The precinct was bordered by I-94 and E 36th St on the north and south and Hiawatha and Lyndale Avenues on the east and west. The five square mile precinct had a population of 58,000 or about 13% of the population of the city but 23% of the city's major crimes.
- The Model City Police and Community Drop-In Center was an integral part of the Model Cities approach to building more meaningful relationships between the community and the police.
- The Drop-In Center started out in one room with only a small number of apprehensive youth stopping by to check it out. It grew to be a highly-popular meeting place not only for youth but for entire families. It had a boxing program, a women's self-defense program, and arts, crafts and music programs.
- At its height in the 1970s, the Drop-In Center had over 150 officers and hundreds of youth participating in its programs.



The Model City 6th Precinct at 2639 Nicollet Avenue



A community service officer greets two young men at the door of the Police-Community Relations Center, inviting them to come in and use the facilities.

# The 1970s and the Formation of the K9 Unit

- The MPD began testing the use of dogs in policing some time before 1970. Police Chief Gordon Johnson sent two officers, Welton Kopp and Mike Fisher, to Washington, D.C. where they trained with two German shepherd dogs.
- The officers returned to Minneapolis with their dogs and were successful in gaining city support for a K9 program. Officers Kopp and Fisher recruited 8 officers from the MPD and dogs from private sector breeders for the first K9 class.
- The first MPD K9 Unit was then formed in 1970 by the late Officer William R. Lundquist who began his career in the MPD as a member of the Rookie Class of 1966-1967.
- The unit had eight teams. They were: Officer William Lundquist and K9 Sergeant; Officer Mark Jacobson and K9 Rommel; Officer Phil Bishman and K9 Lance; Officer Dave Neibur and K9 Thor; Officer Richard Stahura and K9 Trooper; Officer Dick Morrill and K9 Rex; Officer Roger Fancher and K9 Clancy; and Officer Charles Adams and K9 Lance.
- Leveraging his experiences in the MPD, Officer Lundquist, along with Lieutenant Mike Fisher and Officer Al Hancock, helped the St. Paul Police Department to develop its own K9 Unit.
- Officer Lundquist and his K9 partners were well known throughout the city and were a popular attraction at neighborhood events and at the Minnesota State Fair.



Above left: Officer Lundquist and one of his K9 partners.



On Left: From L to R, Lt. Fisher, Officer Hancock, Officer Jim Cocchiarella of the St. Paul Police Department, Officer Lundquist.



# The Introduction of 9-1-1 in the 1980s

- Before November 31, 1982, if you had an emergency, you would open up your telephone book to find the number for the police, fire or ambulance and then call the appropriate seven-digit number for your particular emergency.
- With the advent of 9-1-1, you could call one easy-to-remember number and then the dispatcher would send the appropriate agencies to your rescue.
- The move to 9-1-1, as with most changes, had its smooth and rough spots.
- The initial rough spot was the large number of curiosity calls to 9-1-1. This happened because people wanted to verify whether 9-1-1 could actually see their address when they called and because they had various questions about 9-1-1 operations. Large volumes of hang-up calls were also reported in the first weeks of 9-1-1. When asked why they called and hung-up, people responded that they just wanted to make sure that the phone number worked.
- The initial education campaign for 9-1-1 indexed heavily on its use for emergencies only. It took a while for people to settle on a practical definition of “emergency” and additional communication was needed to help people understand that they did not need to wait until a crime had actually occurred to call 9-1-1 but that they should call if they suspected that a crime was developing; for example, when an unfamiliar person was peering into the windows of their vacationing neighbor’s house or when someone was walking down the street looking into car windows.
- In the first 18 months of its existence, people were especially hesitant to use 9-1-1 for medical emergencies and still generally first called their doctors to discuss their condition before calling 9-1-1.
- In the summer of 1983, Minneapolis experienced a rash of robberies of elderly couples and rapes of elderly women. It was suspected that one man was committing these crimes. In September of 1983, a 9-1-1 call from an elderly couple who had just been robbed was the key to apprehending the suspect. Third Precinct Captain Dan Graff said that the timing of the police in capturing the suspect within minutes of his latest robber was “extraordinary”. “It’s a credit to the 9-1-1 emergency line, to the officers and to the surveillance effort going on at the time”.

By Joe Kimball  
Staff Writer

Not everyone calls 911 for help in an emergency, especially in a medical emergency, according to a \$9,000 survey released Wednesday by the Metropolitan 911 Telephone Board.

Among the reasons for not calling 911, survey respondents said:

- “I live in a condominium and it would cause too much confusion in the building if I called 911. You have to call security and they’d have to let whomever come in. It would just be too much commotion.” (This victim had trouble breathing.)
- “I didn’t think it was that much of an emergency. If it had been a heart attack victim or something like that I would have.” (The victim was spitting up blood.)
- “I thought it best to call the doctor first,” said a heart attack victim.

“There still is a need for more education of the general public that 911 is available,” said Board Chairman William Koniarski.

Board member Robert Orth, however, said it will take time for the 911 system to become a habit for some people. “Eighteen months isn’t much of an education period,” he said.



Right: Note the emergency telephone number on the back of the squad car. This photograph was taken before the advent of 9-1-1.







# Service in Time of Community Need - The Turn of Our Second Century

- MPD Officers travelled to NYC just days after the Towers fell to lend aid in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks.
- In the early morning hours of August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of the United States with winds in excess of 140 miles per hour stretching 400 miles across. 20 MPD Officers went down to help and gave the New Orleans Police Department officers a chance to catch a much needed break. 'By the time we got down there the New Orleans cops were just wiped. They were running on fumes. When we got down there it was kind of a relief for them because they were then able to go home and take care of their own families. The cops were finally able to collect belongings from their own homes; a lot of these guys lost everything down there,' Sergeant Patti Hellen remembers.
- Shortly after 6:00 pm on August 1, 2007, the Interstate 35W bridge over the Mississippi River near downtown Minneapolis was loaded with rush hour traffic creeping through an ongoing construction project. Without warning, the bridge collapsed, taking with it 111 vehicles. Thirteen people died and 145 were injured in the collapse of the bridge. Shortly after 6:00 pm on August 1, 2007, the Interstate 35W bridge over the Mississippi River near downtown Minneapolis was loaded with rush hour traffic creeping through an ongoing construction project. Without warning, the bridge collapsed, taking with it 111 vehicles. Thirteen people died and 145 were injured in the collapse of the bridge. MPD officers were there to lend aid.
- On June 8, 2008, the people of Cedar Rapids, Iowa fell victim to catastrophic flooding. Ten square miles (14% of the city), including 5,390 homes that were home to 18,623 people, were destroyed by the rushing waters of the Cedar River. Twenty officers from the Minneapolis Police Department travelled to Cedar Rapids where they spent one week assisting in the recovery.
- On May 22, 2011, a severe tornado struck North Minneapolis. 3,700 homes were damaged that Sunday afternoon. The tornado cut a three-and-a-half mile path through North Minneapolis, tossing around 6,000 trees, destroying 350 traffic signs, 75 street lights, and 1,600 sidewalk panels. Sergeant Chuck Peter remembers the weeks following the weather event. "A lot of officers were helping families gather belongings. Some people wanted to temporarily move out of the area and officers helped them load up their cars and trucks with boxes," Sergeant Peter said.
- August 2, 2017 was an idyllic morning. Staff members at Minnehaha Academy were busy preparing for the school year ahead and Officers Dean Milner and Greg Kosch were cruising through the 3rd Precinct. Moments later, a large explosion at the school demolished the entire middle section of the building. The staff members ran out and MPD officers went rushing in.



From top left: September 11; Hurricane Katrina; 35W Bridge collapse; Cedar Rapids flood; Northside tornado; and Minnehaha Academy explosion.

# Appendix: Some Milestones

