History of the Belleville Police Service

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Pioneer Days (1790-1836)

There has been a police presence in the Belleville area for the past 220 years. The structure, responsibilities and functions of that presence have changed dramatically over that time.

On May 15, 1790, residents of Sidney Township, United Empire Loyalists who moved into the area following the American Revolution, held their first "Annual Meeting". This was one of the first such meetings in the newly settled territory of Upper Canada. Although not officially recognized or permitted by provincial law until 1793, the settlers wanted to exercise some degree of self-government, which would include a form of policing power.

Their meeting's first action was to appoint seven officials. John Meyers, (a prominent Sidney settler then in the act of moving to Belleville to open mills and other businesses) was chosen as chairman or Moderator. Other officials included a town clerk, two path masters to lay out roads, two fence viewers to resolve fence disputes, and a constable. The first constable was David Simmon(s). He served not only Sidney Township**,** but also the adjoining Township of Thurlow, since the government soon that determined the two townships should be united (at least temporarily) until Thurlow had enough population to justify its own local government. The early constables normally

served for only one year. It was a position with responsibilities but without pay and, after serving a single year, a constable could refuse to be reappointed. Accordingly, William Lownsberry served in 1791, Leonard Soper in 1792 and John German in 1794.

It was only in 1798 that Sidney and Thurlow held separate town meetings. By then, the moderator was no longer the head of local government, having been replaced by two wardens. John Fairman was selected as Thurlow's first constable.[1] However, the early constables had no authority in what is now downtown Belleville (between Front and Rear/Hillside streets). That land would be reserved for another 25 years for the Mississauga Indians, who had established a small community near the mouth of the Moira in the early 1700s. In fact, white settlers who lived within the boundaries of the present downtown either paid rent to the Mississauga Indians or lived on their land with the permission of the Mississaugas.

After the Mississaugas 'surrendered' their reserve and a town plot was laid out at the mouth of the Moira in 1816, the community came under the constables appointed by the citizens of Thurlow (including Belleville).[2] Law was enforced by local residents known as justices of the peace. Until 1839 they were appointed by the Midland District Administration, based in Kingston and comprising four counties, including Hastings. Important trials were held only in Kingston or Adolphustown and local law enforcement officers and trial participants had to travel some distance.

Throughout the early years of settlement, it became increasingly apparent that there was a need for improved policing in the community. Possibly the most publicized crime of the period occurred in 1832. On April 17, *The Hallowell Free Press*, a Picton newspaper, described an incident in Belleville as "a most serious and terrible affray … in the course of which the lives of one of the leading Magistrates and one or two of the most respectable inhabitants were very near being sacrificed."

Apparently ten journeymen tailors “of notoriously bad character” attacked their employer one evening. Armed with billets of wood they assaulted the tailor in his shop and beat him and those neighbours who came to his aid. James McNabb, a very powerful young man who shortly thereafter died in the Rebellion of 1837, was among those knocked to the ground and then kicked and beaten “dreadfully with both sticks, and stones” until he lay perfectly still. Magistrate Thomas Parker and Doctor Ridley were also beaten. All of the victims recovered and three of the attackers were jailed. However, this event, the presence of unchecked robber bands said to be operating in the district, and all-too-frequent violent political rallies, led the *Intelligencer* to demand improved policing and “men who will have their eyes upon all vagabonds.”[3]

Belleville residents continued to stress the need for village status and the separation of Hastings County from the Midland District so that law and order (and other matters such as road improvement) could be dealt with locally, rather than in Kingston. An article in the Toronto *Patriot* summed up their feelings: “There is no community of interest with the town of Kingston … felons are often allowed to escape rather then incur the trouble and expense of prosecuting at Kingston, in consequence of which crime has become fearfully great.”[4]

The government of Upper Canada was slow to grant local requests for improved local control over policing. However, on March 6, 1834, it separated Belleville from Thurlow Township and incorporated it as a police village. Unfortunately, a faulty description of the village’s boundaries required a new act in 1836.

In 1839, Hastings County was separated from the Midland District and granted its independence from the district. Until 1850, the new district was known as the Victoria District, in honour of the new Queen. The first sheriff of the Victoria District was Dunbar Moodie, the husband of famed author

Susanna Moodie. He and his successors exercised leading roles in local police matters until Belleville became a separated municipality in 1860.

A Police Village

Once elected by the principal male householders and leaseholders – women did not yet have a vote – the president and members of the Board of Police (comparable to today's council) had the power to control local roads, slaughterhouses, fire regulations, market hours, and many other aspects of village life. For example, the Board of Police had the authority to prevent indecent writing and pictures in public places (an early anti-graffiti law) and "generally to prevent vice and preserve good order."[5]

The five-man Board of Police met for the first time on June 16, 1836. Among its early actions was the appointment of two bailiffs - James Smith and William Dafoe. They were to "aid and assist" the soon-to-be-appointed high constable in providing police services. One of their special functions was "to hold elections for members of the Board of Police" in the village's two wards. When the Board of Police met for the second time two days later, it replaced James Smith, who had obtained a certificate from Dr. G.N. Ridley certifying that he was "not in a state of health" to allow him to perform the duties of bailiff. The Board then appointed Hiram Fulford in his place and also named Henry Avrill as high constable.

These officers were guided by an extensive set of regulations, which were amended frequently.[6] For example, the "special duty" of the high constable was to "keep the peace and preserve good order in the said Town, to impound all horses, cattle and swine which may be running at large … complain of and prosecute to conviction all and every person or persons who shall transgress any of the Laws or Ordinances of the town." He also was to have "the superintendence and control of the Constables in

each ward … and serve and execute all processes [legal actions] which may be issued by the said Corporation." [7] The surviving 1840 edition of the Regulation listed as its first concern "Immoderate Riding or Driving". It provided a fine from five to thirty shillings for driving or riding in any street at an immoderate speed or for riding or driving "faster than a walk" upon any bridge over the Moira River. The second regulation provided for a fine of up to twenty shillings for any person who set off any gun or played ball on any street. A fine of up to thirty shillings was provided for any person found guilty of shooting or using firearms, fishing or skating on the Sabbath.[8]

Originally, the payment of the high constable depended on the amount of business that he could generate, since he was to receive one-third of all penalties collected from delinquents and convictions upon his complaint. There was much opportunity for such income, because the town "Ordinances and Regulations" contained many parts. There were 23 sections dealing with general regulations, 14 sections dealing with nuisances, 13 with fire regulations, and 9 with duties of officials.[9] Detailed market regulations were to follow shortly. Moreover, the high constable began to take over some functions assigned to other officials. For example, on December 14, 1836, he was assigned all duties formerly held by the street surveyor, such as dealing with construction materials being left on the streets.

One of the most important functions assigned to all constables was to assist the local firemen when the need arose; "it shall be the duty of every Constable … to repair immediately on the alarm of fire, to the place where the fire may be, and there report himself and remain subject to the direction of the President or any other member of the corporation who may be present, for the preservation of the public peace, and the removal of all idle and suspected persons, or others not actually or usefully employed in aiding to extinguish such fire, or in the preservation of property in the vicinity thereof." At that time, there was no organized fire department and it was only on May 18, 1840 that the board determined to form "a volunteer Fire Establishment to consist of an Engine and Hook and Ladder Company, each company to elect their own officers."

In March 1837, Henry Avrill was reappointed high constable at a salary of £20 per year. However, less than two months later he resigned and William Courtney was appointed high constable in his place. Almost immediately, Courtney notified the Police Board that he would not accept the appointment and it was offered to Jacob G. Moore. Moore accepted on May 24 and very quickly was appointed pound-keeper in place of Henry Fulford who had resigned. Moore also was authorized to collect money to pay the appointed officials and, as assessor, was to determine what each person should pay. As well, he was appointed street surveyor**.** For some of this work he was paid five shillings per working day. For police work, he would receive half the fines imposed on persons under the board's regulations.

Moore's term as collector and high constable ended in a year and D.B. Sole was appointed in his place while Moore continued as street surveyor and pound-keeper. Residents must have found it difficult to keep up with the changes in the village's officials. It appears that individuals often were appointed to public offices without being consulted prior to their appointments. A further new position on February 3, 1841, saw the appointment of John Richard Stapley as "Public Chimney Sweeper for the Town of Belleville" and the setting of the rates he could charge.

Meanwhile, the Board had determined that its original set of "laws and ordinances" approved in 1836 were faulty. Accordingly, on March 25, 1840, they all were repealed and several new ones were brought in. One of the new laws provided for a fine of from 5 to 30 shillings for "obstructing constables." Soon after, Hyman Fulford was appointed "street Surveyor and constable" and a "Volunteer Fire Establishment" was set up to better provide fire protection.

Changes in the police service continued. Emerand Ruff (probably a sergeant who had served the Queen locally during the Rebellion of 1837) was appointed constable and street surveyor on March 12, 1841. Three months later, (June 25), Hyman Fulford replaced Ruff. And on April 7, 1841, D.B. Sole was named "assessor, collector, constable and overseer" at a salary of £25 in addition to his fees as

collector and constable. He was also named pound keeper. One month later, William Taylor was appointed high constable.

Location, Location, Location

A police force needed "a Court Room and Place of Confinement" and planning for such a building (also to include an "Engine House" for firefighting apparatus) began on September 21, 1836. By February 22, 1837, the building was completed and Billa Flint was reimbursed £143.5s.4d. for financing the project. The small building stood on the southwest corner of "the public ground in Pinnacle Street", on which location the new Court House and Gaol would be constructed after Hastings County was separated from the Midland District. The 1837 building was used only briefly as a "Police Court Room" and the Board soon authorized the placing of an ad offering the building for sale at a public auction on September 5, 1840.

Riotous Times

Constructed in 1838-1839, the court house and gaol dominated the town's architectural landscape. Moreover, the presence of the imposing structure, coupled with the appointment of efficient county court officials such as Sheriff J.W.D. Moodie and the ready availability of such officials had a dampening effect on local crime. There appears to have been less violence than there had been in earlier times and during the 1840s there was not one execution in Belleville. Susanna Moodie noted that there was so little robbery in the area "that the thought of thieves and housebreakers never for a moment disturbs our rest."[10] Visiting Belleville in 1840, the editor of Kingston's *British Whig* wrote: "The good folks of Belleville, now that they get cheap law at home, do not seem so fond of it as when they had to travel sixty miles down to Kingston … It is creditable to the new District, that but few criminals were convicted." Moreover, reports in the Montreal press of a riot in 1846 between 300 Orangemen and Irish Roman Catholics were branded as false by Benjamin F. Davy, chief engineer of the Belleville Fire Department. According to Davy, it was drink and not religion that inspired the fracas in Harper's Bar during the Kingston Fire Companies' visit to Belleville. Order was quickly

restored; the Kingston firemen were cheered aboard their steamer at the wharf, and a fight three hours later in which prominent citizen Edmund Murney received a severe blow had nothing to do with either the Fire Company or religious rivalry.[11]

A Capital Hanging

Over the years, there have been a number of public hangings in Belleville. Probably the most sensational one was the hanging of Richard and Mary Aylward of Monteagle Township, about 125 kilometres north of Belleville. Not only was the double hanging of December 8, 1862 attended by thousands of area residents, but it revealed the bitter rivalry between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Belleville police officers were not involved in the investigation, but they were involved in maintaining the peace among the area citizens – perhaps as many as 5,000 – who made up the "gallows mob" on the bitterly cold morning. The Belleville *Chronicle* reporter observed that "we saw numerous instances of young men drunk and unable to stand without assistance. And quarrelling, hooting and yelling combined to make it one of the most terrible and heart-rending scenes we ever witnessed. And we cannot but pause and ask what good effects arise from these disgusting public executions."[12]

For Town and County

Some early police chiefs served both the Town of Belleville and the County of Hastings. For example, on November 13, 1866, George James, who identified himself as "Chief of Police in the Town of Belleville and a Constable for the County" sent a petition to the county warden and council. He revealed that during the three years (1863-1865) he had arrested more than 25 persons in the various townships. The arrests were made for a variety of offences, including larceny or theft (5), assault, and assault and arson (5), threats (5), horse stealing (3), bigamy, breaking the peace, forgery, and other matters. "In many cases, the arrests were effected with considerable trouble and expenses … at last Quarter Sessions, but one, a notorious Horse Stealer and robber from Tyendinaga was arrested by Memorialist [George James], tried and sentenced to the Penitentiary, and the Grand Jury passed a vote of thanks to him, for his successful exertions". All very nice, but in at least two other counties,

councils had recognized such services by “special remuneration”. Could he be considered for such remuneration?[13]

As is the case today, the public always wants to know how successful the police have been in dealing with crime in the community. Accordingly, police chiefs have compiled statistics to show trends in law enforcement. Their task is sometimes made difficult by newspaper editors and their assistants. Consider this apology in *The Intelligencer* of January 29, 1864, under the heading “Crime in Belleville”:

> “Our Printer’s Devil was so astounded at the array of crime during the last few months, that in a state of collapse he disarranged the type and horrified our readers by announcing 14 cases of Bigamy, and 68 Riotous and Disorderly. It ought to read thus:-
>
> Rape …… 1
>
> . Bigamy ……. 1
>
> Riotous and disorderly … 14
>
> Assault …….. 68

The editor went on to assure his readers that the other figures in the report were correct.

Policing on Horseback

Belleville played a role in the development of the Canadian Mounted Police. In August, 1866, gold was discovered for the first time in Ontario. The discovery was made at what would be known as Eldorado, a few kilometres north of Madoc. Within a short time, hundreds and even thousands of miners from the gold fields of California, British Columbia and elsewhere were pouring into the Madoc area. Local prospectors and farmers were also searching on local properties. Hundreds of claims were made and permanent residents began to fear for their safety. The government of the United Province of Canada (consisting of the southern parts of Ontario and Quebec) was planning for a larger Canada to include the Maritimes, but it was also concerned for the safety of the new mining field. Accordingly, on March 21, 1867, the government created the Quinte Gold Mining Division and

Colonel Alfred Campbell, Crown lands agent at Belleville, was appointed to supervise the division and set up a police force. The force would enforce new regulations governing miners, speculators, and tavern operators and be prepared for any problem.

Sergeant Major Foxton, a Kingston police officer, was appointed to head the force. He was described as a hero of the Crimean War and an "efficient cavalryman". In late March, recruiting posters went up in the Belleville area and a force of 25 men was quickly raised. After drilling for two weeks at Belleville, the mounted police force (less two members who had been arrested and jailed by Belleville police for robbery) arrived at Madoc. Several members of the force also served in the Chaudiere gold fields in Quebec. This mounted police force – usually neglected by police historians – was the last such force in the Province of the United Canadas and the first for the new Dominion of Canada. When the need for such a force diminished it was disbanded on September 30, 1867. Interestingly, Foxton, its chief officer, appears to have become Belleville's police chief in the new Canada.

There was a need for a strong police presence in Belleville in the Confederation era. There was concern about increasing lawlessness, with a Front Street tavern being described as "one of the greatest hell-holes in Canada, wherein more liquor is sold, more crime committed, than in the lowest slums of New York, in which place no less than four deaths occurred from delirium tremens inside of one year."[14]

Also in 1867, Belleville Police moved from their Market Square station of the 1850s, to the first floor of the new town hall and police and fire stations on Front Street (the building now occupied by Bren's Bake Shop). The move was to allow a British garrison to move into Belleville in case of a Fenian attack. (The Fenians were Irish Americans who hoped to capture Canada and exchange it for Ireland's independence). After the completion of the new Town Hall in 1873, the Police followed and remained there until 1905, when they moved back to the earlier Market Building at the east end of Market Square. [15] The constables were said to have more room and a spacious cell block on the first

floor. Upstairs, the police magistrate had a private office and there were witness rooms for use by lawyers and witnesses.

Two Chiefs, a Sergeant and a Riot

The significant – but largely forgotten – Grand Trunk Railway Strike of 1876-77 focused Canadian attention on a serious local police problem. A depressed national economy had led to layoffs and reduced salaries among railroad employees shortly before Christmas. A strike of locomotive engineers followed on December 29 as the railroad announced that it was prepared to use "renegades" and "scabs" in case of a strike. As a major railroad divisional point, Belleville was affected. To block traffic between Montreal and Toronto, strikers put snowploughs off the rails, one at each end of the yard. Some strikers and sympathizers armed themselves with pistols.

The town magistrates were alarmed and felt that some action must be taken. Unfortunately, the town's police force could not respond. Early in December, the chief had been fired for physical inability, and the senior sergeant had been dismissed for drunkenness on duty. A former chief had been reappointed and the number of constables reduced to six, ones less than before. At the time of the strike, both men claimed to be chief, but neither went to the GTR station at the height of the dispute. Only Sergeant Cole Snider would be commended for his role in the affair.

The town magistrates were no more successful in dealing with the strike, when they attempted to use the local militia to reopen the tracks. Finally, 167 members of the Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto arrived by train to restore law and order. Local police and militia had been unable to act against the strikers, some of whom were their friends and relatives.[16] Three weeks after the strike, following the theft of Police Commission records from the police chief's desk and other problems, the new chief was dismissed.

Distinguished Chiefs

The Belleville Police Force/Service has had several noteworthy chiefs over the years. In the late 19th century, these included Hugh McKinnon and John Newton. From serving as a private investigator

and going undercover in the 1870s to help investigate and infiltrate the infamous Black Donnellys, a famous south-western Ontario family involved in a community feud, McKinnon arrived in Belleville as the first chief after city status was achieved (1878). Almost immediately, he added to his reputation. To quote *The Intelligencer*, "…A row occurred in Buchanan's Hotel last night among a party of young men who were drinking. The row becoming general, resulting in the breaking of a number of bottles by the crowd, who seemed masters of the situation when the Chief of Police arrived on the scene and summarily landed the whole crowd in the street?" In the words of legendary *Intelligencer* reporter Harry Mulhall, there was no need for the newspaper to name the chief of police, who performed the single-handed feat of law enforcement. During his term as chief, McKinnon reorganized the formerly inept and divided police force. He set the pattern of police conduct to this day. One of his achievements was to draw up a set of Police Rules, most of which are still relevant. For example, the constable "must be quiet, civil and orderly in his conduct and deportment … must act with coolness and firmness in all cases, even in times of extreme peril …" Another rule, reminding the current reader of concerns over the use of tasers, noted that no constable was to "use any baton or other offensive weapon except in cases of self-defence or to prevent the escape of a felon – and then with caution."

Throughout his Belleville years, McKinnon kept the presses humming with news of his exploits, everything from cornering thugs to hunting down murderers. When he left in 1886 to accept the post of police chief in Hamilton, the citizens of Belleville presented him with a purse of $200 in gold as a token of their gratitude.

In addition to his policing skills, McKinnon was famous for his athletic ability. He was the American Champion in the Caledonian Games, having won the title for these Scottish games at the Great Athletic Championship at Philadelphia in 1876. [17]

McKinnon's immediate successor, Chief John Newton, remained in office until 1919. Of him it was said that he was able "to pick out a crook by instinct, and that he was absolutely without fear,

more than once facing single-handed the criminal's pistol and invariably arresting those he was after". [18] Newton also enjoyed the longest term of any police chief in the city's history – some 32 years.

Sergeant Snider and an Unlikely Marriage

Local newspapers in the 1870s were filled with crimes of passion. Love, sex and violence were closely linked in many stories, although sometimes court officials or newspaper editors felt that complete details should not be published. For example, in a case of indecent assault that took place on Zwick's Island in April 1878, the crown attorney noted that "the facts of the case were so disgusting in their details that Justice Moss, at the last trial, had said that it was a case that should never be brought before a jury in Open Court. In the interests of morality, and in view of the fact that the complainant appeared to have been a consenting party, he would offer no evidence in the case." The prisoner was then discharged.[19]

As elsewhere in the province, circuit judges handled cases such as murder, abortion and indecent assault, while local courts, often incorrectly referred to as "police courts" dealt with lesser crimes. The newspapers competed to cover these lesser crimes in considerable depth. Prostitution was one of the papers' favourite subjects. Under the headline "A Drunken Carousal", the *Daily Ontario* of April 8 1878 reported that "The people of North Front Street were very much pained and shocked last evening by a gang of prostitutes with their drunken companions making the night hideous with their lewd utterances … so startled were many in the neighbourhood that they had to bar their doors for fear of an attack."

Fortunately, Sergeant Cole Snider and other officers were credited with bringing the full weight of the law to bear on such occasions. They helped close – at least temporarily - two "dens of iniquities" on Pinnacle Street and many houses of ill-repute throughout the city. Police statistics indicate that during the month of April 1878 more arrest were made for prostitution and related acts than in the rest of the year. Of the sixty-seven persons arrested for all offences that month, twenty-eight were charged for sex-related

crimes – keeping houses of ill-fame (7), being inmates of such houses (14), frequenting such houses (6), and exposure of the person (1). [20] Owners and inmates of these houses normally were identified by name.

In one of the April cases, Police Magistrate Abram Diamond showed that he had a sense of compassion. He dropped charges of being an inmate and a frequenter of a house of ill-fame against Nellie T. of Camden, near Napanee, and Hugh C. of Trenton, since they professed a desire to marry. He arranged for the issuer of marriage licences to attend the clerk's office, then for the minister to conduct the service, and finally for the newlyweds to leave by the back door, missing a crowd of well-wishers who had assembled at the front door.

Charges in 1878

Crimes of passion might be popular newspaper items, but they were only a small part of the total number of arrests. A study of the 1878 statistics from the Police Chief's Annual Report indicates that there were 529 total arrests that year. The largest numbers were charges **categorized as:**

Drunk	158
Drunk and disorderly	153
Vagrancy	53
Larceny (theft)	36
Inmate of house of ill-fame	17
Assaults of various types (including 3 for assaulting police)	16
Disorderly conduct	11
Exposing person	10
Fighting on Public Street	10
Trespassing	9
Frequenting houses of ill-fame	7

Others charges with lower numbers included arson, breaking windows, cruelty to animals, shooting a cow, and murder.

Of the 529 persons arrested in 1878, 85 were convicted and sentenced, 105 were fined, 36 were acquitted, and 363 were discharged. In addition, 651 “tramps” spent time with the police “receiving protection.” Sergeant Snider was credited with making the greatest number of individual arrests – 135, while Sergeant McCrodan made the fewest – 32.

Fortunately, John McCrodan’s small, leather bound daily log of his police activities for most of 1878 and 1879 survives in the Hastings County Historical Society’s Archives. Many of his entries read simply “all was quiet for the day” or “all quiet for the night”. Even the entry for July 1, 1878, (the day when thousands of Belleville residents and visitors celebrated the Town of Belleville becoming a city) reads “The day was very quiet for so many people in town.” Probably the fact that four of the seven police officers “came on duty at ten o’clock for day duty and remained on duty all night for night duty” had something to do with the lack of problems. The three other officers went home at one in the morning.

McCrodan’s daily log recorded many features of life in Belleville. It listed the hours worked by each police officer, as well as reasons for any absences. Special weather events, such as an early ice break-up that caused considerable property damage on February 23, 1878, and a lightning strike on McCrodan’s house on August 9, resulting in his inability to report for work, were highlighted. Listed entertainments for 1878 included a Grand Trunk Railway men’s ball (February 27), a firemen’s ball (May 24), and a band concert on the Court House hill (June 5). Tragic events ranged from the drowning death of James Skinner on Christmas Day to the destruction by fire of a storehouse four days earlier. McCrodan attributed the fire loss to the fact that it took five hours to put the blaze out, caused in part by the fact that the firemen were “all drunk”. Several of the arrests he made were for drunkenness and on one occasion a man’s ear had been bitten off. His final entry for 1878 noted that on New Year’s Eve there were “lots of drunks this night around town.”

The Police Chief's Annual Report for 1879 indicated that larceny (theft) was a continuing problem.[21] There were 31 cases and what especially concerned Chief McKinnon was the number of lads less than 16 years of age involved. He called on parents 'to "guard them from evil" and "make the home a home of pleasure to them". Another serious problem was the "social evil" found in a notorious place in Thurlow Township called "the Farm." The owner of "the Farm", identified as the "Mistress of the House" would bring in "a batch of unfortunates" from Toronto or elsewhere. She would then release the young women to earn a living in Belleville, where they would form "a constant parade on Front Street." Police had raided some of their houses of ill repute two or three times in the last year and sent some inmates out of town. But the Toronto police were hustling them out of their city and some were finding their way back to the Quinte area. Meanwhile, there were three changes in the Police Force – two by dismissal and one by resignation. In one case (August 26, 1878) the chief suspended a constable "for not a boying [obeying] his orders", to quote Sergeant McCrodan. Two weeks later, he was suspended again, this time without pay for "not abaying the chief". McCrodan was a good police officer, though somewhat deficient in spelling skills.

In his Annual Report for 1880, McKinnon continued to call attention to both positive and negative matters. He was pleased that "rowdyism and its chief promoter, street corner loafing" had almost been ended, because of police efforts. On the other hand, he regretted that the number of cases of wife-beating "has become large." He felt that "the ordinary punishment permitted by law in these cases has no apparent deterring effect, and that it would seem to require something more than a fine or two months imprisonment to cause the cowardly wife beater to more fully appreciate the enormity of his crime." [22]

The Early 1900s

The media has always had a fascination with police news. As the news editor for CJBQ in the early 1950s, my first two stops each day were at the police stations. The first stop was at the Belleville

Station in the former Market Building at the east end of the Market Square. If the desk sergeant just inside the southern door was in a good mood, he would let you check out the reports of the night's activities or he'd supply you with the home phone numbers for officers he thought you should contact. Some mornings, you'd have the chance to climb the steps to the small "police court" on the second floor where Magistrate T.Y. Wills was dealing with various cases. You might also get the chance to see one or more of the accused individuals either near their cells on the first floor or in the second-floor court room. They normally appeared polite and well-mannered. The second stop was in the Ontario Provincial Police Office in a recently constructed building on the east side of Pinnacle Street, just across from the Market Square.

Over the years, reporters have tired of writing about repetitive crime and police matters and have employed humour and other devices to enliven their news coverage. Consider this story in the *Intelligencer* of June 25, 1901, concerning Etta C…[23]

"Squire Flint's Busy Day.

A Number of Sinners Before the Magistrate

Who Administers Salutary Correctives."

"Mrs. C. is just experiencing the troubles of King Lear, who exclaimed 'How Sharper than a serpent's tooth to have a thankless child.' Her Etta has been evading the straight and narrow road of virtue and the mother's heart is torn with anguish.

"For some days past Mrs. C… has been running to the police station and telling stories about the waywardness of Etta. The police listened to the tale of woe but took no action until yesterday. Then they decided that Etta would have to be arrested and they told Mrs. C… that her daughter would soon be safe at the stone pile [jail] on the hill.

"Just at this stage … Mrs. C… relented and came to the conclusion that Etta wasn't half as bad as her husband who is in the Central Prison for stealing a stationary steam engine in sections. She hurried to Etta's camping ground and told her the police were going to arrest her. Etta decided to pull stakes

and leave town. Mrs. C… packed her daughter's wardrobe in a 7x9 valise and told her to go east until she saw the big lumber piles loom up in the quiet village of Deseronto. Etta was seated comfortably in the second-class coach when Officer Hayes walked in and told her that she could not ride on that train but could go on the streetcar as far as the police station. Etta shed some alligator tears and went with the officer.

"This morning at the Police Court, Magistrate [J.J.B.] Flint sent her to jail for a week, during which time he will consider what is to be done with her. She will likely go to the Salvation Army home in Toronto. Etta has always had a fondness for the army."

The police continued to deal with a variety of other matters, among them the responsibility of ensuring that all bread sold in Belleville was of the required weight. The same morning that Magistrate Flint dealt with Etta, he dealt with prominent merchant James W… The police had seized 60 loaves of bread because they were a few ounces light. Flint ordered that the 60 loaves be given to the Women's Christian Association for distribution to the poor.

In other Police Court business that day, Flint dealt with Irvine R…, described as "an arbitrary sort of a cuss", and Herbert F… The two had argued on Saturday night and Irvine was determined to win. Herbert told him to "go home and husk cucumbers and then slapped his mouth. Irvine was so surprised that he was speechless. This morning Herbert had to pay $2 for being so handy. "

In another case, Samuel P…, Daniel P… and S. C… were said to have "imagined they were a whole crowd … and ran their horses down Dundas Street and yelled like a band of Sioux Indians on the warpath." "Plenty of fire water" was to blame and they each were fined $10.55.

Recommendations from Chief Kidd

Early in 1922, when Chief Constable Alexander Kidd presented his annual report for 1921, he was able to report that the department was doing well financially. Not only had it raised over $10,000 in fines and fees, but it had raised more than $4,000 in license fees from various by-laws enforced by

the department, and recovered more than $9,000 in lost and stolen property for the citizens. Total expenditures for the department totalled $19,275.75 so that the “approximate value of services rendered over expenditures” came to $4,201.11.

As in previous years, the largest number of charges was laid under the Ontario Temperance Act: 179 including 99 for intoxication and 80 for other infringements. Ninety-nine charges were laid under the Motor Vehicles and Highway Travel Act. City traffic by-laws accounted for 34 charges – mostly for cutting corners and going on the wrong side of the “Silent Policemen” that stood at intersections. These “Silent Policemen” were three dimensional dummies used to help guide traffic. So successful were they that the chief wanted to purchase three more, including one for the intersection of Pinnacle & Bridge streets. Some 45 charges were for vagrancy: the men were honestly looking for work and wandering from place to place, but failed to report to the Police Station for a shelter at night. There were 29 charges under Lord’s Day Act, mostly for trading on the Lord’s Day or gambling. The Dog By-law led to 19 charges. Three houses of ill-fame were raided leading to several charges. Among the host of other charges were those for theft (57), vagrancy (45), riding a bicycle on the sidewalk (15), assault (10), and bigamy (2). In addition, 299 transient lodgers were accommodated overnight in the cells.

Of those charged, 379 were convicted and paid fines, 18 were committed to jail in default of payment, and 33 were committed to jail without the option of a fine. Charges against another 118 were discharged or dismissed. One person was ordered deported from Canada. Some 299 transients received police protection overnight in the cells. Those in their 20s made up the largest percentage of the 687 charged:

Under 20 years of age	113
20-30	261
30-40	152
40-50	100

Over 50 61

More than three-quarters of those charged (528) gave their nationality as Canadian, while English (53), American (39), Russian (20) and Italian (13) came next. This generally reflected the nationality of the police force, where the sergeant and four constables were Canadian, a sergeant and a constable were English, and the chief was Scottish.

A further examination of Police Court records for 1921 indicates that women appeared before the magistrate on very few occasions. The 23 women charged that year made up only 3.3% of the total. Their ages ranged from 14 to 51 years of age. The four youngest – all teenagers – were charged with vagrancy, drinking in a public place, disorderly conduct, and concealment of a birth. The oldest five were charged with insulting language, being an inmate of a bawdy house, obstructing the sidewalk, obstructing a police officer and being insane.

Chief Kidd made five major recommendations in his report, which were:

(1) the necessity of providing proper accommodation for female prisoners, whilst being detained at the Police Station and making other alterations to the cell room "to take care of transient lodgers"

(2) the addition of another officer to deal with the increasing motor vehicle traffic

(3) three more "silent policemen"

(4) property record books for the second-hand and junk dealers, the cost to be borne by the license holder, and

(5) direct communication between citizens and fire department to avoid delay caused by calls having to be relayed by the police; alarms should go directly through fire halls. Nevertheless, Kidd recognized the strong tie between the police and fire departments. During the year, police had attended 64 fires.

Also in July – on the 25th day – the force purchased a new Dodge car. It was to be used for patrolling the city's outskirts. Without the new car, Chief Kidd said the city would have to add more officers.

Murders and More Murders

Belleville has had its share of murders. For example, on April 6, 1925, there was a double murder. Clayton McWilliams, a Front Street drugstore clerk, and John Cameron McGie, an accountant, were shot dead in Lattimer's Drug Store. *The Daily Ontario's* front page the following day proclaimed it to be the "Worst Tragedy in City's History" and a headline read: "John McGie died Hero's Death trying to Protect his friend." The murderer was David Arthur Moon, messenger and caretaker of the Front Street branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Soon after the shooting, Moon was arrested in his rooms on the third floor of the bank and the murder weapon, a 32 Webley-Scott revolver, was found in an accountant's desk drawer.[24]

Moon believed that his wife was having an affair with McWilliams and a series of "wretched letters" from the wife to McWilliams, revealed at the trial in November, supported this view. Moon tried to convince the jury that the two shots that killed both men were "accidental", but the jury did not believe him and he received a life sentence. [25]

October 4, 1934 was the date of one of Belleville's most brutal murders – that of Mrs. Nathaniel Vermilyea, the widow of a prominent former Thurlow Township reeve. The murder took place shortly after 10 p.m. in front of her daughter's home at 101 Bridge Street East. So severe were the wounds to her head inflicted by several hatchet blows that her daughter – the wife of Doctor A.J. Faulkner, MLA and minister of health in Mitchell Hepburn's Ontario Liberal cabinet – could only recognize her mother by the brooch she was wearing. Evidence pointed to her son, Harold Worden Vermilyea, who had lived in California where he had owned an orange grove for twenty-three years. Vermilyea was extradited to Canada and the trial began in Belleville on February 11, 1935. A salesman from Simpson's Department Store in Toronto testified that he had sold Vermilyea the hatchet, which had been reduced in price from $3.75 to 1.50. Taxi drivers testified that they had driven him from Toronto to Belleville and back on two occasions. Vermilyea's sister testified that he had asked his mother to divide her estate and give him his share for the orange grove. Despite an attempted insanity plea, the

jury found him guilty and sentenced him to hang. Good detective work, both local and provincial, had been responsible for the successful conclusion of the case.

A murder case that ended without a conviction was the famed Percy Bell case in 1954. Providing live coverage, CJBQ staff broadcast from a home on Albert Street as police arrested Percy's wife, Mary. [26] At the trial, a Front Street druggist testified that he had sold Mary the same kind of rat poison that, mixed in a cup of hot chocolate, had killed Percy. Mary testified that her husband had asked her to purchase the rat poison, although there was inconclusive evidence that rats had been a problem in the home. There was a suspicion that Mary might have been having an affair with a boarder. A skilled defence lawyer suggested that Percy might have poisoned himself, because of his concern about this alleged affair. The jury could not satisfy itself beyond a reasonable doubt that Mary was guilty and found her "not guilty."

The Great Depression and the 1930s

The 1930s were not easy years for the Belleville police. By 1932 the force consisted of two sergeants and five constables. Constables worked up to 14 hours a day. Starting salary for a constable was $1,200 and "the police department was completely self-supporting from fines collected from infringements of the by-laws and statutes of the day."[27] Because of the Depression, the provincial and city budgets were in financial difficulty and increases in salaries and additional staff were not possible. In fact, so stressful was the city's financial burden that, on February 13, 1933, council reduced salaries for all city employees. Those earning between $1,201 and $1,800 annually – and this would include most police officers – had a seven percent reduction. The few who made more than $1,800 lost ten percent.

At the same time, increased unemployment meant that more and more people – mostly men – were unemployed and looking for ways to support themselves and their families. This sometimes led to vagrancy and petty theft. The growing number of local unemployed was swelled by numbers of

men who rode the rails, travelling in or on boxcars and dropping off at Belleville. Their headquarters was the so-called “Bums Woods”, south of the main CNR line and just east of Belleville. From there, they headed out into the community in search of food and other handouts and, on occasion, caused problems for the police. These hoboes had ways of identifying homes where, on the basis of previous visitors, they too might be helped.

Many organizations, particularly churches, helped deal with the problems. For instance, commencing in October 1931, the Great War Veterans’ Association offered the basement of its hall on Front Street for use as a hostel for transients. Unfortunately, the project failed, since some visitors were returning every few days and others, described as “well-dressed with money in their pockets” were using the facility as “nothing more than a lounging room”.[28] City Council recommended that the basement “be thoroughly fumigated and cleaned” and opened only “for the use of our city unfortunates and that the police be requested to issue no more meal tickets without permission of the Mayor.” Police assisted in relief efforts and continued to provide accommodation for many transients in the jail.

Transients were not helped by the city’s relief program introduced in 1933. To receive vouchers to help with food and other necessities, recipients had to have been resident in the city continuously for at least three months.

Nonetheless, Belleville was in a better situation than many communities, since the local economy was diversified. No single industry “held the economic health of the city in its hands.”[29]

As the Depression began to recede slowly, a member of the force, Sergeant Arthur Booth, is credited with developing the first radio for use in a police cruiser. In 1936, he installed a radio in the force’s lone cruiser and experimented with transmissions from the police station on Market Street. For his transmitter, constructed of second-hand parts purchased for little cost, he strung an aerial from the station to the city clock tower. The ground-breaking apparatus had a ten watt output and was

licensed as Radio Station CJR. "The very first night they tested it," the sergeant recalled, "they caught a window peeper at the Belleville General Hospital." [30]

The 1940s and World War II

Police activity involving automobiles assumed greater importance during the 1940s. In addition to the investigation of scores of motor vehicle accidents, the force was kept busy issuing fines for speeding, licence violations and illegal parking,

The Second World War added to police responsibilities. There were numerous incidents of automobile theft in Belleville, and communities such as Kingston, Cobourg and Port Hope notified local authorities of cars gone missing there. Wartime shortages resulted in the theft of gasoline, tires and parts. Even the occasional reports of missing ration books and coupons for gas and other commodities demanded police investigation.

Another war related activity involved the search for Germans (mainly officers) who had escaped from prisoner of war camps. And, not surprisingly, police were, on occasion, called upon to investigate incidents involving exuberant military personnel enjoying free time in the city. Police responded to incidents involving sailors fighting on Front Street, an airman "insulting an older woman", and sailors trying to crash a party in the Conservative Club Rooms in the pre-Christmas period. In another case, a soldier on leave from Camp Borden was charged by police after an accident. Rather than going to court, reportedly acting on the advice of a friendly neighbourhood lawyer, he returned to his base and quickly prepared to embark for Europe. The police did not collect any fine.

In many respects, police work in the 1940s reflected the "small town" nature of Belleville. For example, on November 6, 1944, a resident complained that cows were destroying the garden at King George School on North Front Street; police responded and told the Donald Street owner to "get same and keep tied up."[31] In another case (November 30, 1944), a visitor to the Queen's Hotel left a loaded 30-30 Winchester along with spare shells in his car overnight. The car and gun were stolen, but later

recovered. Then, three days before New Years, a driver for Brown's Bread, found that his sleigh had been damaged by a motor vehicle after he had unhitched his horse from the bread-delivery sleigh.

Police work in 1944 also reflected trials and tribulations. On December 13, police were called to help a woman and her five children on relief, who had no coal to heat their home. Police contacted the proper authorities. And a week later they were called to the Quinte Hotel, where an Oshawa man on his honeymoon had died suddenly. A heart condition was blamed.

The 1950s

A major change in policing motor vehicle traffic and funding police costs occurred in 1955. On the recommendation of Belleville City Council, the Police Department purchased "an electric Speedometer". Though in use for only about six months that year, the portable electric speedometer – likely an early radar unit – resulted in 2,255 speeders being charged, a dramatic increase from the 143 charged in 1954. The increase in fines and fees was also dramatic – up to $37,905 from $16,940 the previous year. A further beneficial result of the crackdown on speeders probably was the decrease in traffic-related deaths and injuries. In 1955, there were no fatalities and 55 injuries, down from 62. "There is no doubt", Chief Walter Probert wrote, "that constant traffic supervision by our officers, with the use of cruiser motorcycle and electric speedometer are a decided factor in curtailing a greater accident rate." As previous chiefs had said and future chiefs would repeat, Probert noted that "We in Belleville suffer, as do many other municipalities, in that our streets were never laid out to accommodate anything like the volume of today's traffic."[32]

For 1955, the police were happy to note improvements in other areas. The number of persons charged with being intoxicated was down to 288 from 362 the previous year. The number of minors charged with consuming liquor was down to 9 from 15 the previous year and 24 two years earlier. Among the somewhat unusual charges was one for riding a bicycle while intoxicated and one for infanticide. Other statistics indicate that 1955 was a normal year. The number of males brought before

the court was 3,420 compared to 197 females. Parking meters contributed $20,005.85 to city coffers and parking tickets brought in $3,294.00. There were three major break-ins, with losses totalling $30,421.32. They occurred at Paul Mercier's Jewellery Store, Lee Grills Dairy and Acme Farmer's Dairy.

The Mercier theft had been extremely well planned. "The Modus Operandi was removing the barrel in the door-lock and inserting one in its place, then using the key suited to this new barrel, unlocked the door permitting access to the store proper." The safe containing diamonds was moved to a nearby office and broken open. Safes in seven other businesses were also attacked during the year. Such robberies here and elsewhere in the province pointed to "experienced thugs operating in gangs. Their operations are well planned and take a matter of minutes only to do their jobs"[33]

The addition of Dale Ashbury to the Belleville Police Force in November 1959 would lead to a major change in the way that forensic identification services were used to study crimes. On his arrival, he found that city police depended on the Ontario Provincial Police for such services. According to Ashbury, "All they (Belleville police) had was a sort of a petty cash box with about two to three vials of powders in it – one grey, one black and one another colour, about three brushes and some rubber lifters … We didn't even have a camera."[34] Following a few years of volunteer work and study, Dale took training courses with the RCMP investigation unit in Ottawa and the Forensics Sciences Lab in Toronto. On his return, he set up what Police Chief Doug Crosbie termed "a complete first class identification department". For several years, Dale worked alone in the forensics identification unit and was on call 24-7. He often used his own car to carry the bulky camera equipment.

The Need for New Accommodation in the 50s

Unfortunately, working conditions did not keep up to technological improvements. In 1955, a city councillor described the Market Street building as "a coop with poor ventilation and poor accommodation for constables." Another constable added the words "disgraceful and filthy" to the

description. Three years later a special committee was formed to investigate the possibility of building a new police station suited to the needs of a modern police force. However, it was six long years before city council gave its approval, not to build a new police station, but to buy and renovate the downtown YMCA as a police station. Purchase cost of the YMCA was $55,000 and renovations were limited to an estimated cost of $100,000.[35] In May of 1965, the Market Square station came under the wrecker's hammer.

The police force of 1965 had now grown to 41 men. These included five uniformed staff sergeants, 27 constables and seven plainclothes officers. The force's makeup changed dramatically in 1972 when Constables Daryl Wagar and Lynda Salisbury became the city's first policewomen. They agreed "with the concept that a policewomen can do certain things better than her male counterpart in blue, especially along the lines of domestic and juvenile work."

The renovation of the fifty-year old former YMCA building won grudging approval from city council, some of whose members still felt that a new building was an ideal solution. Nevertheless, the building was going high tech, with the latest innovations in instant police contact – including a telex machine which provided local police with almost simultaneous contact with nearly a hundred provincial and municipal points in the province. The opening of the new police station on Campbell Street in 1965 indicated that "skilful planning and imagination have provided a crisp and contemporary environment for the force." The major rehabilitation job on the Y building was said to have created "the most up-to-date small-city police headquarters and magistrate's court in the province." The police shared accommodations with the Provincial Court[36]

Meanwhile, Inspector Ralph Blatchford reflected the new pride and higher morale of the force when he spoke to a local service club. "A policeman," he said, "is not just another citizen. He is a symbol of honesty, fidelity and honour both in and out of uniform. He must work with the public in the knowledge that the law he enforces is the law of the people and not just the law of a certain clique."[37]

In 1973 the Provincial Court moved to the new Provincial Court building at 15 Victoria Avenue and the former courtroom space was converted into a lecture hall and larger offices for the Detective Branch of the Force. When the police moved to Dundas Street East in 1985, the Campbell Street police station was demolished. Immediately prior to its demolition, the property had earned some notoriety: officers assigned to check the building reported hearing sounds of people on the upper levels; despite the fact the building was empty.

Jailbreaks

There have been occasional attempted escapes from custody – sometimes while en route to jail or from jail or while in court. For example, on November 6, 1944, police were alerted to a jail break at the Hastings County Court House.[38] Four young prisoners assaulted the jail governor and turnkey, injuring both about the face. Police responded quickly and a search began.

One of the most spectacular attempted jailbreaks occurred on May 30, 1957, when two ex-gunmen, George Coy and Bruce Saunders attempted to escape from the County Jail. Already under lengthy sentences for armed robbery elsewhere, they were awaiting trial in Belleville for the armed hold-up the previous May of Brown's Bread. They were determined to make a desperate bid for freedom. However, to quote the *Intelligencer* reporter, they "ran up against a literal stone wall." Using a toy gun they or an accomplice had fashioned of lead and soap, the pair overpowered two jail guards and locked them up. Using the guards' keys they opened an outside door to make their escape. Instead of the blue sky, fresh air and freedom they expected, they found blue sky, fresh air and high stone walls. They had opened the door to the jail exercise yard. Alerted by an alarm, city and provincial police had thrown up a cordon around the building and Belleville firemen, with hoses attached to hydrants in case the convicts broke into the clear, had taken up a strategic position near the jail. [39] The hapless would-be-escapers immediately surrendered to police.

More Technological Change

The celebration in 1967 of Canada's first century as a nation may have centered on Expo '67 in Montreal and Parliament Hill observances in Ottawa, but for Belleville's Police Force, a highlight of the year was the introduction of a new piece of equipment in August. With hip-slung walkie-talkies, officers were turned into "walking radio links with the central station, virtually abolishing the vulnerability of the lone constable on his beat."[40]

Police officers also were being supplied with other equipment. In 1973, following concerns over recent shootouts that claimed the lives of two Toronto officers, the department ordered three bullet-proof vests. In 1976, a second sniper's rifle with a powerful telescopic sight was added. Subsequently, marked cruisers and later unmarked cars were equipped with pump .12 gauge shotguns, said to have good stopping power and to be effective at close range. Perhaps the most unusual acquisition was a crossbow. Found in 1983 in an abandoned car, the Police Emergency Response Team received permission from the Police Commission to use it in an emergency situation to launch lines from one building to another.[41] At least one proposed change did not occur. A suggestion in 1968 that officers be supplied with min-tear gas guns (similar to those used by the Stratford Police Department) was rejected. A newspaper reporter noted that such guns were not appropriate, being "camouflaged in a fountain pen, reminding one of scenes in movies."[42]

At times, technology caused difficulties for the department. Private burglar alarms were a major problem. In November 1986, Chief Begbie asked city council to impose fines for false security alarms. The previous month, there were 145 security alarms to which police responded. Of these, 136 or more than 90% were false.[43]

The police radio system could also lead to problems. In August, 1975, police messages were interfered with by messages from the sheriff's office in Tomkins County, New York. The radio frequencies for both forces were identical. In very hot weather a new American antenna would have its signals "bounce across the Lake" and Belleville officers got messages intended for American

officers. Belleville spent $64,000 on a new radio system to overcome the problem. The American sheriff's new equipment could filter out Belleville's messages. [44]

Community Policing

Commencing early in 1970, Belleville Police Services introduced a Community Service Branch. Headed by Inspector Ralph Blatchford, it was the first such branch in eastern Ontario.[45] Over the years, it would more than justify the hopes of its founders that it would bring policing closer to the citizens of the community. Among its accomplishments would be bicycle patrols. From time to time, the branch participated in community events. For example, in 1975 Police Chief Crosbie and Inspector Blatchford spoke at church services as part of celebrations marking Law Enforcement Week. In 1977, 600 seniors attended an evening of variety and music at Centennial Secondary School where representatives of several police forces presented the event as part of National Police Week.

Among the improvements in local policing during the 1980s were the introduction of the Neighbourhood Watch program and the creation of an auxiliary force. The auxiliary force would be used "primarily in emergency situations to provide police with back-up in situations which might require extra assistance." In the words of Deputy Chief Bob Begbie, "I think people may be a bit spoiled from watching too many police shows on television. We don't solve all the cases in 30 or 60 minutes. And we often lack the crucial bit of evidence to make a convincing case that the TV series always seem to have,"[46]

By 1995, the city had been divided into five zones, each with a liaison constable called the Community Policing Officer.[47] Offices were provided for a time in appropriate locations, such as the Quinte Mall and the Bayview Mall. Such developments brought police and citizens closer together.

Similarly, the bus drivers of the Belleville Transit Commission came to have a greater role in crime detection. In 1984 they became the "expanded eyes and ears of the force" when police began to monitor bus radio transmissions.[48]

There were other changes as well during Police Chief Doug Crosbie's term (1968-85). Following Toronto's example, the city began using yellow police cruisers. Many officers were sent for drug and breath-test training. A lot of authority from the top was delegated. Crosbie continued his interest in community development and protection after his term as chief. While serving nine years on Belleville City Council, he was instrumental in introducing a 9-1-1 service for the area.[49]

Downtown Policing

One of the recurring themes of policing in Belleville has been the need to protect the downtown core. As business developed in the former rural outskirts of the city (at the Quinte Mall, the Bayview Mall and the Loyalist Mall), downtown merchants and residents felt that they were being neglected. Commencing in the 1980s, *The Intelligencer* noted, on a regular basis, the need for additional downtown policing. And the paper noted, also on a regular basis, that additional police resources were being provided to deal with such problems as loitering, vandalism, and drug use and distribution. Increased foot patrols and bicycle patrols were two methods employed. The bicycle patrols peaked in 1993 when five officers were assigned to help police the downtown and other parts of the city. A "mini-pilot project" commenced under Chief Begbie in 1992 saw the Downtown Belleville Improvement Area supply free accommodation for a Community Policing Office in its office at 318 Front Street. One or two other areas of the city followed the downtown example by providing space for Community Policing Officers.

A story in *The Intelligencer* of November 26, 1995 summed up the downtown situation. "On this night, the Belleville police paddy wagon is parked strategically . . . directly across the street from Monopoly's, a college beer joint that draws big crowds once or twice a week and has been the subject of many complaints by residents who live in the nearby McNabb Towers and Quinte Living Centre." Concerns about the downtown continue to the present.

The 1990s

According to Police Chief Robert Begbie, 1990 ended "with all members of the Force under a great deal of pressure brought on by a large increase in the number of armed robberies being reported." In total, there were 714 breaking and entering cases compared to 576 the previous year. Armed robberies had risen from 5 to 30. Motor vehicle thefts had risen by 15% and thefts in general were up 36%. Offensive weapons charges were up 50 %. On the other hand, charges of possession and/or trafficking cocaine and cannabis and incidents of spousal assault were down significantly. Also, although motor vehicle accidents declined slightly from the previous year with 1,607 being reported, the number of injury accidents remained relatively constant at 235.

Chief Begbie noted that the total 1990 budget came to $5,521,727, of which over 82% was contributed by city taxpayers. Belleville officers travelled 642,090 kilometres and there was an agreement that Belleville would "host communication needs" with the Stirling and Deseronto forces.

The Belleville Service took part in Loyalist College's Field Placement Program in 1990, as it had for several years. This cooperative venture continued to benefit both the Police Service and Loyalist College and its students. A total of six second year Law and Security Administration students were on placement, three in each semester. The Service's Auxiliary Unit saw ten new members complete training, bringing the active complement of members up to 20. Collectively, they donated 1,834 hours of their time. General patrol duties occupied 1,086 hours, with the balance spent on such special events as the Waterfront Festival, the Quinte Exhibition and the Santa Claus Parade.[50]

A highlight of the 1992 Board Meetings was the presentation of citations to citizens who had "assisted the Police Force in a significant manner during an investigation or an arrest." Begbie believed that this type of assistance is "a must if our Community is to remain safe." Other highlights of the year included the completion of an Employment Equity Plan and the establishment of a three officer bike patrol (soon replaced by a two officer foot patrol). Unfortunately, March 1992 saw the termination of the R.I.D.E. grant program for impaired-driving enforcement. However, the Belleville

Police Service continued its ongoing initiatives to combat the serious problem of drinking and driving. Almost 19,000 vehicles were stopped in sobriety check stops (down from 43,000 the previous year) and 31 charges were laid (down from 90). In addition there were 18 charges for trafficking in a narcotic or possession for the purpose of trafficking.[51]

Troubling Times & Difficult Days

From time to time, the Belleville Police Force has gone through difficult days. In 1870, the Grand Trunk Railway Strike revealed a problem when two men claimed to be chief and neither went to the railway station to deal with the strike. A century later, in 1967, a chief resigned following an investigation by two advisers of the Ontario Police Commission, precipitated by the resignation of eight officers.

And in the early 1990s, the Ontario Police Commission intervened again. The intervention was the result of a variety of issues, many of which related to personnel and went back several years. At least as early as May 15, 1982, *The Intelligencer* noted that police morale was questionable and that the force was in "an unsettled state." By March, 1992, a 15-year veteran had, for five years, been fighting dismissal on medical grounds. Another officer had been fighting charges that he had talked to the press concerning absence from his New Year's shift in December 1986. Another officer with 14 years experienced had a police charge of discreditable conduct dismissed by the Judge Byers in 1991 on the grounds that he "would never, ever convict anybody of assault on this evidence."[52]

The conflict was further heightened by an earlier by-law passed in 1986 by the Belleville Police Services Board requiring all new officers to live within city limits. Belleville had not yet expanded to include Thurlow Township, meaning that new officers would be very restricted in their choice of residential location. The result was that the Belleville Police Association filed two grievances.[53] By October, 1991, the wives of some officers were entering the discussion in support of their husbands. Ten police wives staged an information picket outside police headquarters.

Such events over an extended period of time led the Belleville Police Services Board to ask the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General for an inspection, which resulted in the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services appointing a three-member panel to conduct a hearing in Belleville. The panel interviewed 142 people, including 64 uniformed officers, and reported that it had found "an unusual amount of tension."[54] The report, described by the press as "damning", made 81 recommendations in 31 policing areas and was critical of the management style of both the police chief and the local board. Of the 115 municipal forces in the province, this type of investigation took place only once every two or three years, according to Ontario Police Services Board chairman Douglas Drinkwater.[55] The president of the Belleville Police Association found the report to its liking. The Police Services Board was not so pleased.

Chastened by some of the terms of the report, the local Police Services Board agreed that there should be a more detailed investigation by the provincial ministry. The ministry agreed. This investigation took place in two stages over 18 months – including a lengthy delay during the proceedings while the city determined if it should proceed. Some 21 witnesses were heard and 87 exhibits were presented. As a result, several changes occurred, either before the investigation concluded or a result of it. These included the resignation of the chief, the placing of limitations on the deputy chief, and changes in the membership of the Police Services Board.

A New Chief

The arrival of Chief David W. Klenavic in September 1993 continued to move the Belleville Police Service forward. New programs were encouraged. One was a change in response procedures. According to Klenavic, "The days of a Belleville police officer looking at your empty driveway and saying 'Yep, your car has been stolen' are over." The new chief had introduced "a differentiated response policy." Calls for service were divided into three categories. First priority went to calls where an immediate response was indicated. Second priority went to calls where up to 15 minutes

delay would be acceptable. Third were “non-mobile” or least urgent calls where the caller could come to the police station or the information could be given over the telephone.[56]

There were other changes. For example, an Adopt-A-School Program was begun relating to Community Policing, in which individual policemen volunteered to work with individual schools. A second initiative, still strongly supported by both local school boards and the Belleville Kinsmen Club, was the Values, Influences, and Peers Program; it was presented to all grade six classes within the city with over 500 students graduating in its first year. In its seventh year, the Adopt-A-Child Program to provide winter clothing for young people received a record number of referrals. Excellent promotion by Quinte Broadcasting and an impressive response from the citizens resulted in the delivery of parcels of winter clothing to 500 children.[57] Belleville Police Services adopted a new motto “Partners with the Community”.[58]

Budget restraints led the force to begin a joint effort in connection with the R.I.D.E. program and almost 10,000 vehicles were checked. Charges were laid against 172 drivers because of breath samples. Criminal Code statistics indicated that there were 2,083 thefts, 826 break and enters, 647 assaults, 354 frauds, and 58 possession charges. Three Joint Forces projects were undertaken in 1993. Project “La Bomba” targeted organized criminal elements, resulting in the recovery of over $200,000 in stolen property. Projects “Pest” and “Kilt” were narcotics oriented and resulted in almost $200,000 of drugs being recovered. The annual report gave special credit to Constable James T. Orr of the Uniform Division for initiating one of the largest seizures of hash in a single incident – eleven kilos or 10,841.6 grams. This seizure, worth some $160,000, accounted for about 93% of the total hash seized during the year.[59] Orr made the discovery when he became suspicious of an individual moving around a north Belleville motel in the early morning hours. Upon investigation, he found that the female desk clerk had been assaulted by the individual when a dispute arose over the method of payment for a room. A subsequent check of the individual’s car trunk uncovered eleven bricks of hash.[60]

Employment Equity and Race Relations

Since pioneer times, Belleville has been a traditional White Anglo-Saxon Protestant community. However, that has been changing, especially in recent years. At the instigation of the provincial government, in 1993, the Belleville Police Services Board approved an Employment Equity Plan that would have the uniform ranks truly representative of the local community. That would mean that the service eventually would consist of:

- 51.8% female employees …..… instead of 20.0%
- 12.5% disabled employees …… instead of 15.5%
- 5.2% aboriginal employees ….. instead of 0%
- 2.5% racial minorities …….. instead of 2.1%

When the plan was approved, only one of the four targets had been realized.

In the summer of 1996, the Belleville/Trenton Police Race Relations Advisory Committee met at Eastminster Church to deal with a report. It revealed that there were 30 languages spoken in the Belleville area and that the city was becoming much more "international." Accordingly, it called on the Police Services Board to consider those factors.

Further Help for Officers

The 1990s saw further improvements for the Belleville Police Service. Among these was the introduction of canines to assist the officers. In late 1994, corporate donations provided Erin, a two-year German Shepherd. Two years later, the Belleville Kinsmen Club provided Erin's successor, Baron, a three and a half year German Shepherd. Constable Colin Cook was the handler and the Kinsmen Club paid for the team's training. The dogs were used to track suspects involved in car theft and break-and-enters.

Meanwhile, pepper spray had joined the police arsenal, 40. Calibre semi-automatic Beretta revolvers were replacing .38s, and two cruisers were equipped with video cameras, a sign of things to come.

November 18, 1998 saw an event that catapulted Belleville police into the national media. On that day, police apprehended the infamous "Bookworm Bandit" who had robbed some 30 banks across the country during an 18 month period. "The Bookworm Bandit" – so-called because she kept the robbery note in a commercial receipt book, which she took with her when she fled, thereby leaving no fingerprints behind – was born Anatoli Misura in Belgium in 1949. Following a sex-change operation, she became Christine White and, after her arrest, the media called her the "Unisex Bandit". Her undoing happened after she robbed the Scotiabank at the Quinte Mall. First, a bank employee chased her out into the mall, until she showed him a pistol, under her jacket. When she left the mall in her car, a tow truck gave pursuit. Alerted by police radio to a disturbance at the mall, Constable Jeff Holt, one of three constables who happened to be in the vicinity, followed the tow truck and took up the chase. During the chase, which went on for perhaps ten minutes, the "Unisex Bandit" fired two shots at the constable's car. Near Wallbridge in Sidney Township, the fleeing car went out of control and crashed on an "s" turn. Holt placed Christine under arrest and was relieved to discover her weapon was actually a starter's pistol. She was sentenced to 11 years.[61]

The Twenty-First Century

The Belleville Police Services Board continues to be responsible for Civilian oversight of the Police Service. A surviving part of the original administration created in 1836 and known as the Board of Police, it is composed of five members – two from Belleville Council, one appointed by Council, and two appointed by the Province of Ontario.

2005 was one of the most successful recent years for the police service which then included 82 uniform officers and 34 civilians. In the Annual Report, Police Chief Stephen Tanner reported that the

Belleville Police Service continued its commitment to drug enforcement through "its full-time commitment to Project Longarm" (a joint program of Belleville and Ontario Provincial Police). Cooperative work within Hastings and Prince Edward counties led to the seizure of drugs with a street value estimated at $81 million during 2005 and the arrest of 186 people with 450 drug related charges being laid. Although the drugs could be classified in more than a dozen categories, about 99% of the total estimated value came from the seizure of 82,156 marijuana plants.

During 2005, the Belleville Service responded to 22,929 incidents. They were categorized as 342 Missing Persons, 445 Unwanted Persons, 866 Hang Ups, 550 Trouble with Youths, 848 Suspicious Persons, 857 Lost/Found Property, 1535 Traffic Accidents, and 1959 False Alarms. Some 8,682 incidents were classified as "crime incidents" and included 254 Theft of Motor Vehicles, 287 Bail Violations, 190 Criminal Harassment, 49 Robbery, 1,075 Theft Under, 653 Break and Enter, 651 Assaults, and 267 Utter Threats. Police cleared 57% of these crime occurrences, much better than the provincial average of approximately 40%. An additional 3,426 occurrences were listed within the "Other" category. As Chief Tanner noted in describing the nature of police activities, 40% of the people the Belleville Police Service dealt with were not from Belleville, but from outside areas.

Also in 2005, construction began on a state- of-the-art Children's Safety Village adjacent to the Police Station. It was undertaken by volunteers using private funding. At the same time, "partnerships such as the Aggressive Driving Campaign – a partnership with the local health department, worked to make our roads safer through high enforcement and education." The operating budget for 2005 was just over $10 Million, 89% of which was for staffing costs and compensation. [62]

2006 saw the police operating budget increase to just over $11 Million. Calls for service were up slightly. Chief Tanner cited a notable improvement in Break and Enters (from 653 in 2005 to 461 in 2006, a decrease of 29%). Project Longarm, the joint drug enforcement project with the OPP seized over $49 Million worth of drugs from the Hastings Area. However, marijuana was rapidly being overtaken in value. Although the number of marijuana plants seized fell to 28,695 worth almost $27

Million, 66,000 grams of seized ecstasy and ecstasy powder were valued at over $21 Million. Heroin and cocaine seizures were each about a half-million dollars.

Also in 2006 a dedicated Traffic Unit of two full-time officers was created. Its goal was to substantially slow traffic flow and target areas with high frequency of collisions. To further assist in the development of driving and pedestrian skills among young people, the Children's Safety Village was opened. [63]

Commencing in 2009, under the direction of Chief of Police Cory McMullan, annual reports for the Police Service Board are to be found on the Services webpage at www.police.belleville.on.ca. These reports follow the pattern of earlier reports; however, they tend to be more detailed and contain more charts. Many of these charts show trends for the preceding ten years. Among the notable changes in 2008 was peak for charges relating to prostitution charges – 46 compared to a single charge in each of 2004 and 2005. Speeding charges under the Highway Traffic act fell from 4,788 in 2007 to 2,517 in 2008. The Community Policing Program in 2008 saw approximately 50 volunteers dedicating 3,247 hours to a variety of programs, including Crime Watch, Kids Fishing Derby, Halloween Safe Streets, Torch Run for Special Olympics, Neighbourhood Watch, and Volunteer Criminal Record Checks.[64] The Operating Budget for the year stood at $12,259,125, of which about 90% continued to go for staffing costs and compensation.

The 2009 Annual Report saw an increase in budget by about a half million dollars. However, the major change was its manner of presentation. No longer were the reports produced almost exclusively over the signature of the chief or acting chief, but each division of the Service was described by an officer most closely associated with it.[65] In addition, a section entitled "The Year in Review – A Recruit's Perspective!" offered a one page summary of the inaugural time spent by three new recruits to the Belleville Service – time spent both in Belleville and at the Ontario Police College near Aylmer. The author was Constable Jeremy Ashley, a rookie officer and former reporter at the Belleville *Intelligencer*.[66] Fortunately, the complete report is available at www.police.belleville.on.ca.;

activities of the Criminal Investigation Division, Belleville Community Policing, the Forensic Identification Section, the Drugs/Intelligencer/Street Crime Unit, the Belleville Police Emergency Response Team, and Domestic Violence are described in some detail. In addition, the report lists the twenty different community and other government agencies that provide collaborative assistance in its investigations.

The changes in the format of the 2009 annual report were introduced by Belleville's first female police chief, Cory McMullan. A former officer with the Peterborough Lakefield Community Police Service, McMullan succeeded Steve Tanner, who had moved to Kingston. From March to September, she conducted an organizational review that led to an expanded review by the Business Plan Steering Committee. It conducted environmental, internal and external scans. These scans included surveys completed by members of the Belleville Police Service and the community at large, as well as many extensive consultations. The ultimate goal was "a safer community for all those who live, work in, or visit our community."[67] "Service Excellence" was the vision for the 2010-2012 Strategic Business Plan, which was "to guide the strategic directions of the Service throughout the next three years." The motto remained "Partners with the Community."[68]

Throughout the first decade of the 21st Century, the calls for improved facilities for the Belleville Police Service have steadily increased. In March 2006, Chief Tanner said, "We absolutely need a new facility as soon as we can."[69] There was a real need to have the forensics unit more secluded and not as easily accessible to the rest of the force. He hoped to have construction begin by 2008. Early in 2010, Chief McMullan called attention to various problems such as heating, accessibility, generators, and a leaky roof.[70] The local media continues to focus attention on this matter. An editorial (April 9, 2010) by *Intelligencer* City Editor Chris Malette was headlined "Cop shop a dump, officers deserve better." As of late 2010, the problem remains, but the citizens and council are aware that something must be done … and soon.

From foundations established in Sidney and Thurlow Townships in 1790 and the Police Village of Belleville in 1836, local policing remains a key institution in the community. From a lone constable in 1790 to a single high constable (assisted by two bailiffs in 1836), the service has grown to a complement of 121 persons – 86 sworn personnel and 35 civilians. In addition, there is an authorized strength of 12 Auxiliary Constables. The service is divided into two divisions – Operations and Operations Support – and these divisions are divided into special areas. Plans are afoot to revive and expand the concept of zone policing. Duties range from traffic enforcement and school liaison programs to highly involved criminal investigations. From travel by horseback in its early years, the service has grown to almost 40 vehicles. The total area policed includes an urban and a rural ward for a total of 245.6 square kilometres.

Today, as one of the older municipal police services in Canada, Belleville Police Services utilize the most modern techniques and equipment in order to provide the highest level of police service to some 49,000 citizens. In fact, as this article was being completed on October 15, 2010, the trial of the infamous Russell Williams was coming to a conclusion in the Hastings County Court House on Pinnacle Street. The criminal investigators of the Belleville Police Service and Ontario Provincial Police, working together, were able to link Williams to two horrendous murders, two sexual assaults and numerous break and enters. Tire tracks and shoe prints were two of the essential links that led to Williams Court officials paid high tribute to the excellent effort of local police in ending the criminal career of the former base commander of CFB Trenton, now serving two concurrent life sentences in the Kingston Penitentiary.

Heads of Belleville's Police Services

Police Village 1836-49[71] (Chiefs were known as High Constables and were supported by bailiffs, one for each of two wards:

1836	Henry Avrill
1837	Henry Avrill (January-May), Jacob G. Moore, (May- December)
1837-1840	Jacob G. Moore
1841	D.B. Sole, William Taylor
1842-1843	William I. Taylor
1844-1845	S. Sinclair
1846-1847	John P. Morden
1848-1849	C.V. Bogart

Town (Prior to Separation from Hastings County) 1859-1860[72]

1850	William A. Haselstine
1851-1860	Zenas Dafoe

Town (Subsequent to separation from Hastings County) 1861-1877[73]

1861-1862	Zenas Dafoe
1863-1868	George James
1869	H.P. Foxton
1870-1877	A.T. Petrie

City (1878-present)[74]

1878-1886	Hugh McKinnon
1887-1919	John Newton
1920-1942	Alexander Kidd
1942-1963	Walter Probert
1963-1968	J.B. McLauchlin

1968-1985	Douglas Crosby
1985-1993	Bob Begbie
1993-2001	Dave Klenavic
2002-2008	Steve Tanner
2009-	Cory McMullan

ENDNOTES

[1] Mary Plumpton, *The Rambling River: A History of Thurlow* (Belleville: Thurlow Township Council, 1967), 26. The earliest Thurlow Township minutes appear to have disappeared since they were consulted in 1967.

[2] Gerald E. Boyce and others, *Sidney Township, 1790-1990*, 2-7. Actually, the treaty was only finalized in 2010 when the Alderville Indian Nation agreed to accept the final resolution of a land claim.

[3] *The Intelligencer* quoted in *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette*, October 10, 1835.

[4] *The Patriot*, January 29, 1836.

[5] "An Act to … establish a Board of Police in the Town of Belleville" (passed April 20, 1836), quoted in W.C. Mikel, *City of Belleville History*, 196-201.

[6] The

[7] Belleville Minute Book, June 6??? 1836. page 12 City

[8] HCHS, Reprint of 1840 Regulations issued by the Belleville Board of Police.

[9] Village minute book, June 18, 1836.City

[10] Moodie, Clearings, 157.

[11] *Victoria Chronicle*, September 10, 1846.

[12] Quote in reporter Harry Mulhall's article in the Intelligencer, January 6, 1965.

[13] HCHS, Petition of George James in File 1566-9.

[14] Quoted in Gerry Boyce, *Belleville: A Popular History* (Toronto: Dundurn Press), 208, 117.

[15] W.C. Mika, 243-244.

[16] See the *Toronto Globe*

[17] Perhaps the best printed account of Hugh McKinnon's career is to be found in staff Reporter Harry Mulhall's article in *The Ontario Intelligencer* of May 8, 1965.

[18] Quoted in Nick and Helma Mika, *Belleville: Friendly City* (Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1973).

[19] The *Intelligencer*, April 1878.

[20] It is interesting to note that on July 31, 2008 *The Intelligencer* proclaimed "City's Got a Hooker Problem."

[21] HCHS, Scrapbook Two, 30.

[22] *Daily Intelligencer*, January 25, 1881 in HCHS File 638-2.

[23] HCHS, File 638-3, "Squire Flint's Busy Day".

[24] *Daily Ontario* clipping April 7, 1925, found in HCHS, File 1012.

[25] *Daily Ontario* clipping, November 6, 1926, found in HCHS, File 1012.

[26] Nick and Helma Mika, *Belleville: Portrait of a City*, 240

[27] Nick and Helma Mila, *Belleville: Portrait of a City*, 241

[28] *Ibid.*, 23-24.

[29] *Ibid.*, 19.

[30] *Ibid.*, 243.

[31] Belleville Police Archives, Occurrence Book 2 for 1944

[32] HCHS 641-1, Report of Belleville Police Chief for 1955.

[33] *Ibid.*, 8.

[34] Benzie Sangma, "Dale Asbury: Belleville's pioneer of CSI". *The Intelligencer*, May 6, 2006.

[35] *Ibid.*, 244.

[36] *Intelligencer*, May 8, 1965, quoted in Nick and Helma Mika, *Belleville Centenary Flashback*, 63-64.

[37] Nick and Helma Mika, *Belleville: Portrait of a City*, (Belleville: Mika Publishing Company, 1983), 246.

[38] Belleville Police Archives, Occurrence Book, November 6, 1944.

[39] *Intelligencer*, May 30, 1957, found in HCHS, file 1015.
[40] Nick and Helma Mika, *Belleville: Portrait of a City*, 248.
[41] *Intelligencer*, December 30, 1983.
[42] *Ibid.*, January 27, 1968.
[43] *Ibid.*, November 28, 1986.
[44] *Intelligencer*, August 1 and August 25, 1975.
[45] *Ibid.*, January 10, 1970.
[46] Nick and Helma Mika, *Belleville: Portrait of a City*, 249.
[47] *Intelligencer*, February 5, 1996.
[48] *Ibid.*, July 24, 1984.
[49] Ibid, October 5, 2009, comments by Retired Inspector Garnet Goodwin.
[50] Annual Report of the Belleville Police Service for 1990, 15, 23, 25, 28.
[51] Annual Report of the Belleville Police Service for 1992, 2, 23-24.
[52] *Intelligencer*, October 24, 1991.
[53] *Ibid.*, May 13, 1986.
[54] *Ibid*, December 5, 1991.
[55] *Ibid.*, August 11, 1992.
[56] *Ibid.*, September 3, 1994.
[57] Annual Report of the Belleville Police Service for 1993, 8, 10, 13, 19, 22.
[58] *Intelligencer*, April 26, 1994.
[59] Annual Report of the Belleville Police Service for 1993, 19.
[60] Interview with James T. Orr, August 22, 2010.
[61] Telephone conversation with Constable Jeff Holt, August 26, 2010 and article by Doug Beazley "Bookworm Bandit" in *Maclean's*, March 1, 2004.
[62] Annual Report of the Belleville Police Service for 2005, 1, 3, 9, 12.
[63] Annual Report of the Belleville Police Service for 2006, 1, 3,7, 9,12
[64] Annual Report of the Belleville Police Service for 2008, 7, 8, 15, 17, 24-26.
[65] Writers of sections were:

Criminal Investigations Division by Detective Staff Sergeant Shawn Yuille
Belleville Community Policing by Jodi Donovan, Chair
Forensic Identification Section (FIS) by Sergeant Grant Boulay
Drugs/Intelligencer/Street Crime Unit by Sergeant George Farrow
Belleville Police Emergency Response Team by Sergeant Jeff Green
Domestic Violence by Detective Constable Sheri Meeks

[66] Annual Report of the Belleville Police Service for 2009, 1-8.
[67] *Belleville Police Service's 2009 Annual Report*, 1.
[68] *Belleville Police Service Strategic Business Plan 2010-2012*, 4.
[69] *Intelligencer*, March 13, 2006
[70] *Ibid.*, April 8, 2010.
[71] W.C. Mika, 28.
[72] *Ibid.*, 30.
[73] *Ibid.*, 33.
[74] *Ibid*., 43.

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