

Eleanor/Elnor Patch of the 'Original' Mounted Patrol

This article was written by Edward J. "Ed" Steenberg, Saint Paul Police Historical Society.



Over the years the Saint Paul Historical Society (SPPHS) has received many pieces of police memorabilia, often donated by active or retired police officers, but in some cases from family members or the general public... sharing with us a piece of their personal history. In this case it is an 18" x 22 ½" black and white framed photograph of Eleanor Patch, the last of the Saint Paul Police Department's original horse patrol. Some documents suggest that her name was spelled "Elnor". Also captured in the photograph is Patrolman Michael H. "Mike" Cullen¹ who rode Eleanor on police patrol for some fourteen years. This piece of memorabilia was given to the Police Historical Society by Eric Anderson², a current member of our police family who had obtained it from police retiree Dan Harshman³. Both Anderson and Harshman are past

¹ Michael H. Cullen was appointed Mounted Patrolman on June 15, 1906; was reduced to Foot Patrolman on October 1, 1913; was promoted back to Mounted Patrolman on September 3, 1914; was reduced to Foot Patrolman on December 1, 1927; and resigned for purpose of pension on January 16, 1931.

² Eric C. Andersen was appointed Patrolman on June 9, 1980; was promoted to Sergeant on September 15, 2001; was appointed Acting Commander for a period starting on November 19, 2006 and again on May 17, 2009; and was promoted to Commander on May 19, 2012. He is currently assigned as Station Commander, representing the department in the absence of the Chief and Assistant Chiefs.

³ Daniel D. Harshman was appointed Emergency Patrolman on February 25, 1970; was certified Patrolman on March 23, 1970; was promoted to Sergeant on April 1, 1978; was appointed Acting Lieutenant for a period starting on April 18, 1993, again on May 13, 1984, and a third time on January 9, 1994; and retired for purpose of pension on November 30, 1999.

commanders of the more 'recent' Saint Paul Police Mounted Patrol Unit which became a functional part of the citywide patrol on June 30, 1995.

One of the many problems that early Saint Paul police officers had to deal with over the years was transportation. Officers in the 1850s were forced to utilize whatever mode of transportation that was available no matter how ill-suited to the task at hand. It was not uncommon for unfortunate inebriates to be transported to the town jail in a wheelbarrow.



In 1856 a civic-minded grocer donated his horse and wagon for use, at night. Used during the day by the grocer, the horse and wagon remained parked and ready for police use at what's now the corner of Seventh and Wabasha Streets during the nocturnal hours. In June, 1883, the first horse-drawn patrol wagon was contracted for, and duly delivered the following October. During the months intervening a temporary wagon, costing \$135, was procured. The first coach team (draft horses) to enter the department were magnificent creatures, costing the city \$500. When hitched to the new patrol wagon, a rather cumbrous affair, they were an astonishment to the natives, and many a semi-respectable 'vagrant' let himself be arrested, just to see how it felt to be driven up the street in style by driver Patrick J. "Pat" Casey⁴. The wagon was manufactured by the Fire Extinguisher Co., of Chicago, and cost \$600.

The 'Black Maria' horse-drawn paddy wagon⁵ was built for the department in 1897 for \$300. The same year saw the emergence of a twelve man bicycle squad, formed to patrol areas of downtown Saint Paul.



The Black Maria

And then a motorcycle squad was started in 1909, consisting of two men and their machines. But the true motorization of the department didn't take place until 1912, when a White Motor Company squad wagon was acquired for \$5,000 and a Chalmers-Detroit Motor Company five-passenger touring car was purchased for \$2,400. The following year, an authorization was given

⁴ Patrick J. Casey was appointed Patrolman in May of 1882; resigned in May of 1889; was re-appointed Patrolman on September 4, 1902; and retired for purpose of pension on March 1, 1922. As a 'teamster', most of Pat's police service was as a Patrol Wagon and/or Ambulance Driver of horse-drawn units.

⁵ The 'Black Maria' workhouse van is now on display at the Western District office, 389 N. Hamline Avenue, between I-94 and University Avenue.

to purchase an automobile ambulance. It wasn't until 1914, however, that the department purchased automobiles suited specifically for police work: a Velie Motors Corporation Runabout, a White Motor Company patrol car, and two Kissel Motor Car Company police patrols. These predecessors to the modern squad car ranged from 30 to 37.5 horsepower.

The use of motorcycles reached its peak in the 1920s. The so-called 'flying squads' consisting of an operator and a cycle were assigned to a series of substations, garages, and fire stations. These units were utilized to provide maximum coverage at crime scenes. The fifteen 'flying squads' were instructed to proceed to the scene of a call while picking up the nearest beat officer on the way. The department claimed that only two to ten minutes were required to answer most calls. "Minute Service" became the slogan of the department, largely due to the speed of the motorcycle units. The unit operated until 1930 when it was suspended.

Throughout the 1930's and 1940's, the department utilized many types and models of automobiles. Squad cars were generally Fords, Chevrolets, Pontiacs, Dodge-Grahms, Cadillacs, Lafayettes, and the most popular car of the late thirties, the Hudson Motor Car Company's Terraplane. The police ambulance was usually a Packard, Buick or Dodge, while the department's motorcycles were predominately Indians, later replaced by the Harley Davidson.

When Officer Mike Cullen first rode Eleanor Patch in about 1913, there were 22 mounts on the police department, but Eleanor Patch was the first to patrol Summit Avenue. She was a favorite of the children who would run when they saw her exclaiming, "OH! There goes Eleanor and Mike." While she was boarded at 365 Portland (Summit & Western), retired Police Sergeant Paul Paulos remembers walking down to see Eleanor, and as he relates, "Everyone knew that she was the granddaughter of horse racing champion, Dan Patch."

"Practically every youngster in the Hill District had rides on Eleanor," recalled Officer Cullen. "She was gentle when they were around as she was speedy when we had a call. She was a smart horse, and I never had to tie her up all the 14 years I had her."

The friendship between the horse and her master was a veritable "Mary and Her Little Lamb" relationship. Everywhere that Mike went, the horse was sure to go, or at least try to go. When he stopped to enter a store, Eleanor would walk up on the sidewalk and many times succeeded in getting her head in the store door. When Mike dismounted to walk a block, Eleanor would trot along behind unless ordered to stand still. Then she became a statue, with eyes on her master and ears alert for the whistle that told her she could come.

Eleanor Patch was jet black with not a blemish on her according to her former master, and police lore suggests that she was raised on a Savage, Minnesota, farm, and granddaughter of Dan Patch⁶ (1896-1916), an outstanding pacer of his day. Dan Patch broke world speed records at least 14 times in the early 1900s, finally setting the world's record for the fastest mile by a harness horse during a time trial in 1906, a record of one mile in one minute and fifty-five seconds, which stood unmatched for 32 years and unbroken for 54 years. Dan Patch lost only two heats in his whole career, and never lost a race. His speed was such that other owners sometimes refused to

⁶ Dan Patch was foaled on April 29, 1896 in Oxford, Indiana, relocated to Savage, Minnesota, in 1902, and lived there until his death on July 11, 1916. Dan Patch lost only two heats in his whole career, and never lost a race.

race their horses against him, leaving him to run against the clock. Dan Patch retired in 1909 as the holder of nine world records and spent much of his later life attending exhibitions, and providing studhorse services (breeding).



Dan Patch

Prior to her death on Saturday March 08, 1930, Eleanor Patch enjoyed a two year retirement at a Forest Lake farm in Washington County, Minnesota, owned by one Louis H. Carroll, where she received a pension of all the blue grass and clover she could eat. After her demise, Eleanor's coat, which all the kiddies from Summit Ave. to St. Clair St. and from Dale St. to Lexington Ave., including Crocus Hill, loved and petted, was made into a lap robe and keepsake for the Cullen family. I'm not sure that that would happen today.

Parts of this story were taken from a St. Paul Daily News article written about the death of this most favored horse [Vol. 30, No. 15, p. 1-2; dated March 15, 1930 – price two cents]. And, although police lore states that Eleanor was the granddaughter of outstanding racehorse Dan Patch, a pedigree check with the American Trotters Association, the Dan Patch Historical Society and the Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame failed to find the documented proof that I was looking for. I have not been able to identify Eleanor's sire or dam, making the direct link to Dan Patch somewhat cloudy.

I was advised by the aforementioned organizations that if Eleanor was donated for police service, her name may have been changed and/or transfer of ownership made without said transaction being registered, that being done to protect the direct bloodline as well as the financial interests of the stockbreeders. Dan Harshman concurs, stating that it is still standard practice today to change a donated horse's name to protect the bloodline. It is rare for law enforcement agencies to use the registered name. And although donated horses often come with registration papers, they are seldom transferred. The registration papers are kept in the horse's files along with training and health records. To date, I have been unable to find said records on Eleanor/Elnor Patch.

If Officer Mike Cullen first rode Eleanor in about 1913, and horses are not fully mature until the age of four or five, we have to assume that she was born sometime prior to 1910. The earliest registered standardbred record relating to offspring of Dan Patch is a filly named Little Judy Catherine foaled in 1901. Same records show 21 additional offspring over the following fifteen years – some of which were perhaps name changes and/or duplicate records. As you consider the

known offspring (1st generation) and then reflect on their foals (2nd generation), you can see the problem quickly multiplies exponentially.
