

# **The Cop Is Professional Man Now: 1939**

by Alton D. Smalley  
St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press  
March 19, 1939

TIMES HAVE CHANGED—and so have policemen. In education, in appearance, in efficiency, the policeman of the present day has little in common with the men who enforced the law in St. Paul years ago.

This is not to say that all the old time policemen were inferior. There were good policemen then and they are the superior officers of the force today. But these superior officers rose to their present rank without benefit of the assistance given recruits now, without the aid of the methods of modern criminology, without the developments that have changed the business of being a policeman from a job to a profession.

Take the case of a recruit policeman twenty years ago: Let us assume he was appointed to the force at 10 A.M. At 6 P.M. that same day he went on duty.

That was all there was to it. When he got out of bed that morning he was a private citizen. A few hours later he was patrolling a beat with a gun and badge, and backed by the authority of the law.

He had no more than an ordinary citizen's knowledge of the law. His instruction in firearms was limited principally to the information that he "shouldn't try to shoot anybody dead all at once." He hadn't been trained in discipline and courtesy. Evidence was something for the prosecutor to worry about.

He was a policeman—allegedly. If he made a success of his profession, it was because intelligence, the instincts of a good policeman—and good luck—carried him through his days.

Nowadays, there isn't such a thing as a "rookie cop" in St. Paul. There are new policemen on the force, alert nattily-clad young men who perform their duties in a sensible and efficient manner. But, they are not rookies. They are policemen, who, when they "went on their own," had received training equal to the experience of two years actual duty.

This training was received during 30 days of instruction in the recruit school of the department, a school that turns out a confident, capable policeman who has been taught the difference between a criminal and a citizen who needs a lecture instead of a cell.

How about a St. Paul policeman of the old days whose natural ability pulled him through his hectic, untrained recruit days? What happened then?

Well, he continued to learn only by experience unless he personally attempted to gain more knowledge through haphazard study off duty. The department did not provide supervised instruction keeping policemen informed of new developments in criminology. The sum total of

daily information was limited to such bulletin board notices as that John (The Baboon) Doaks was wanted in Peoria for stealing a water hydrant.

Again, we have a change for the better.

Now all policemen, including superior officers, detectives and uniformed men, are required to attend regular classes at which the latest advances in police work are explained and discussed. Each member of the Bureau of Police must attend at least one two-hour session each week, under orders of Clinton Hackert, police chief.

Here is a list of the subjects in which the recruits receive instruction:

Necessity of police training, courtesy and discipline, rules and regulations, school of the soldier, report writing, traffic, Red Cross, morale and service records, methods of identification, crime scene investigation, Bureau of Police functions, coroner's office, public relations, information and informants, searching prisoners, power of arrest, morals division, juvenile division, jurisdiction, narcotics, care of vehicles and equipment, misdemeanors and felonies, observation test, laboratory exhibit.

Also personal hygiene, strikes and special details, city charter and local geography, admissible evidence, communications, raids, cooperation, functions of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, warrants and subpoenas, interviewing, photography, school police, general appearance, descriptions, origin of police, court procedure, handling unruly prisoners, handling of mental cases, firearms and laws and ordinances.

Before a new policeman is permitted to go on duty alone, he is taken in a squad car with experienced men. He is then questioned about occurrences during his tour of duty and instructed in the proper way to meet the numerous problems encountered by law enforcement officers.

Here is a day's [training] program for a recruit:

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|------------|-----------------------------------|
| 8 A.M.     | — Law enforcement a profession.   |
| 9 A.M.     | — Care of vehicles and equipment. |
| 10 A.M.    | — Conduct in court.               |
| 11 A.M.    | — Traffic enforcement.            |
| Noon       | — Dismiss.                        |
| 6:30 P.M.  | — Squad duty.                     |
| 10:30 P.M. | — Dismiss.                        |

Police training was started first in 1923 under direction of Gus Barfuss, present commissioner of public safety, at that time a police sergeant. Classes were held intermittently until 1936, when Barfuss was elected commissioner and made the training a permanent, planned program of the bureau.

The training is under direction of Dewey Schaible, assistant police chief, who in 1937 and 1938 attended the National Police academy in Washington, D.C. Police officers who are specialists in various fields assist Schaible in instruction.

Civil service rules now require only a common school education for policeman, but it is expected that a high school diploma will be a requirement before long. Recruits now come from among better-educated men. A recent class admitted to the force included four men with college degrees.

The age limitations are 21 to 35.

According to Schaible, the average age recruit gets married when he has passed successfully his six-months' probationary period on the force.

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The above St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press clipping from 1939 was donated to the Police Historical Society by Jerry and Bev Wettergren of Hugo, Minnesota, and was part of an original collection (17 items in all) of Harry N. Wettergren, St. Paul Police Superintendent of Traffic, including an original "star" badge, and that of "Sup't. of Traffic." Harry started his career with the Saint Paul "Bureau of Police" in 1909. – Ed Steenberg