

Tucson Fire Department

TPD Historical Notes



POLICE DEPARTMENT

Historical Note

Almost a century ago hardy pioneers on the territorial frontier endeavored to establish law and order by organizing the Village of Tucson.

On May 17, 1871, when the sixty-six votes of the first municipal election were polled, William Morgan was elected Marshal and the foundation of our law enforcement heritage was laid.

Conflicts arose in the early attempt to provide a government of law rather than men. The sentiment prevailed in the community that outlaws and murderers rarely received punishment befitting their heinous crimes. In the summer of 1873 vigilante vengeance flared when the populace, in swift and merciless vigilante justice, hung four men accused of murder. The extreme measure was taken by the citizens, "...in vindication of their lives, their property and the peace and order of society."

With the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1880, Mayor John Carr said, "Tucson is no longer a village or country town requiring one or two policemen....with the mixed and constantly increasing population...with the advent of the railroad, the discovery of valuable mines, it naturally attracts the element that requires the attention of the police...."

Tucson had assumed the position of a city and on May 8, 1883, an ordinance was passed creating and regulating a police department. Adolph G. Buttner, a Prussian emigrant and ex-Union soldier who had been wounded during the Civil War, was appointed the first Chief of Police.

John Spring wrote later, "Chief Buttner rendered good service for several years, finally dying of consumption on November 7, 1885, after having exposed his life time and time again while keeping order in that then turbulent frontier town."

In 1885 there were twelve policemen and a Chief of Police needed to restrain the lawless element, but a decade later the force was composed of four men. The population of the City was about 7,000 and remarkably free from the many dangers of crime peculiar to cities of its size elsewhere.

At the turn of the century and into the twenties, Tucson was a small, easy-going railroad town. The Chief of Police was still an elected official and the policemen were hired on a monthly basis.

It was September 21, 1931, that the police department was placed under civil service. John E. Dyer, the last elected Chief of Police, was appointed to head the department which consisted of 22 men. Politics was eliminated in the selection of new recruits and the roots were set for the unswerving struggle to develop law enforcement to a professional status. Today's Police Department consists of 287 commissioned personnel.

A significant step in the war against organized crime and gangsterism in the early thirties was the capture here of John Dillinger and his gang in January, 1934.

The first modern police administrator was appointed in 1939. He provided the first technical training ever available to many of the forty members of the force.

After World War II, Tucson's population and economic growth was phenomenal. 45,454 people lived in the city in 1950, but during the next decade the population rose to 212,892. Today the city has an area of 75.8 square miles and a population of 260,000.

Since 1957 when Bernard L. Garmire assumed command, we have been guided by a philosophy which demands that the Police Department be a professional service with professional attitudes and techniques.

This is reflected in the selective screening process of police applicants. Slightly more than 4% of all police applicants are hired. The academic training now consists of thirteen weeks of intensive training, as compared to 1957, when only days or weeks were used to train new officers. The training of today's officers is constantly updated. In-service training sessions are held periodically to keep the officer abreast of the ever changing concept of law enforcement.

We are on the threshold of a new era but the memory of those who throughout the years have devoted their lives to the fight against crime is still with us. They have inspired us to carry on the struggle against those who would beget hatred, cruelty and oppression.

Today's guardian of law and order faces a challenging and rewarding future. Since January, 1963, the Tucson Police Department has offered an expanded service to the community in the form of the School Resource Program. As of September, 1965, a total of six specially trained officers will be assigned to junior high schools in a new facet of juvenile delinquency prevention and control. These officers combine personal knowledge of a specific area and children to effect a lessening in delinquent acts.

The Tucson Police Department has employed the Electronic Data Processing System in tabulating the various high collision areas and crime frequency locations. A daily recap of this analytical report is supplied to the various Division Commanders for consideration in deploying available manpower to the critical areas.

Greater Tucson Fire Foundation

Thanks you for taking an interest in Tucson Fire Department history —

This is one of many sections that contain information, documents, letters, newspaper articles, pictures, etc. They have been collected and arranged in chronological order or by a subject. These items were collected, organized and entered into a computerized database by Dave Ridings Assistant Chief Tucson Fire Department, Al Ring friend of the department, Greater Tucson Fire Foundation and with the help of many friends and fellow firefighters.

All graphics have been improved to make the resolution as good as possible, but the reader should remember that many came from copies of old newspaper articles. This also applies to other items such as documents, letters, etc.

Credit to the source of the documents, photos, etc. is provided whenever it was available. We realize that many items are not identified and regret that we weren't able to provide this information. As far as the newspaper articles that are not identified, 99% of them would have to be from one of three possible sources. The *Arizona Daily Star*, The *Tucson Citizen* and the *Tucson Daily Citizen*, for which we want to give a special thanks.

Please use this information as a reference tool only. If the reader uses any of the information for any purpose other than a reference tool, they should get permission from the source.

Should the reader have additional information on the above subject we would appreciate you sharing it with us. Please see the names and contact information on the 1st. TFD Archives page right below this paragraph.

