Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

August Vollmer Historical Project

AUGUST VOLLMER: PIONEER IN POLICE PROFESSIONALISM
VOLUME II

With an Introduction by
Gene Carte

Interviews Conducted by
Gene Carte, Elaine Carte, and Jane Howard Robinson
1972-1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This volume has been made possible
through a gift of Elaine Carte
in memory of her late husband,
Gene Carte.

AUGUST VOLLMER
1946

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PREFACE

This volume is a second series of interviews about August Vollmer, who was the police chief of Berkeley, California, from 1905 to 1932. Vollmer had a remarkable influence on the direction of American policing in this century. The Berkeley department originated many technical innovations, such as scientific crime detection, police radio, modern record keeping, and polygraph testing. More important, however, was Vollmer's influence upon a whole generation of police reformers and educators who began their careers under his guidance and encouragement.

Volume I of August Vollmer: Pioneer in Police Professionalism focused largely on people who were close to Vollmer during those days in the Berkeley Police Department. This second volume explores the wider perspective of those who were acquainted with Vollmer as a national spokesman for police reform.

The goal of both volumes is a record of the Vollmer contribution. The Bancroft Library is the natural center for this effort because its Manuscript Division is the repository for Vollmer's private papers and letters. Further, Bancroft is the site of the Regional Oral History Office, which has established itself as an outstanding gatherer of oral histories, especially about California.

While gathering interviews for the first volume, which was published in 1972, the participants became aware of other people who had memories of Vollmer and insights into his contribution. The process of compiling the first volume and of cataloguing Vollmer's private papers had generated enthusiasm among Vollmer's friends and colleagues for preserving evidence of his role in reforming the police. John Holstrom, who was a key advisor and helped to supervise work on the first volume, had discussions with Jane Howard Robinson and Gene Carte, co-directors of the volume, about designing another series of interviews.

The first volume had been produced with funds from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and with time volunteered by the participants. New plans originally called for a more extensive volume that would be funded by a grant from another source. Although the search for a grant was ultimately unsuccessful, John Holstrom made many fruitful contacts with law enforcement individuals and agencies about possible interviewees, and he encouraged the other participants in their efforts to collect and organize more material.

For the next several years, Gene Carte, John Holstrom, Jane Howard Robinson, and Willa Baum, Director of the Regional Oral History Office, maintained informal communication about the progress toward compiling a new series. Even before the first volume was issued, Gene Carte had begun to interview people whom he was especially interested in including in a second volume. The first of these was Austin MacCormick, the prison reformer who had taught at the School of Criminology, University of California at Berkeley, in the early 1950s. Carte, who taught at Trenton State College in New Jersey from 1971 to 1973 and at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio from 1973 to 1977, scheduled interviews over the next five years as circumstances allowed. Jane Howard Robinson, who remained in the Bay Area, conducted the interview with Charles Gain, then chief of the San Francisco Police Department.

The same outline of questions was used during these interviews, but it was followed less closely. Many of the interviewees had fewer personal contacts with Vollmer than those who contributed to the first volume. They did, however, offer more information about the national reform climate and Vollmer's place within it.

The Regional Oral History Office at Bancroft Library agreed to hold the tapes and give whatever assistance they could until a time when specific plans for a new volume were made. Most of the tapes were transcribed, either at Bancroft or at the Criminal Justice Department at the University of Cincinnati, soon after completion. The transcripts were edited by Gene Carte or by Elaine Carte and were sent to The Bancroft Library for safekeeping.

Nine interviews had been conducted by 1977 when Gene Carte died. Some time later, Willa Baum, Jane Howard Robinson, and Elaine Carte agreed that the materials gathered should be made available in some form. They decided to produce a volume resembling the first one, with Elaine Carte serving as director and performing editing and coordinating functions. Two of the nine interviews were not available for inclusion, one because of an inability to contact the interviewee after the transcript was sent for approval, and the other because the interviewee was dissatisfied with the substance of his remarks.

Because of Gene Carte's death, some information about the setting and circumstances of the interviews has been lost. This is the reason for an occasional lack of detail in the interview histories. Similarly, interpretive comments made in this preface or in the interview histories are the responsibility of the present director.

I am grateful to everyone involved with this project for patience in helping to bring it to completion. All the interviewees were cooperative and supportive during the process of editing and approving transcripts and supplying biographical information. Jane Howard Robinson worked hard in

the early stages to compile a summary of necessary tasks, and she has continued to give friendly encouragement. Willa Baum has done far more than her share in keeping both a detailed and an overall sense of the progress of the volume. She greatly eased the problems of distance, both in place and time, that I faced in organizing the material.

Other assistance was given by staff members at the Regional Oral History Office and at the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Cincinnati.

Elaine Carte
Project Director

16 September 1982
Minneapolis, Minnesota

INTRODUCTION

The image of professional policing as we know it today is largely the creation of one man, August Vollmer, who was police chief of Berkeley, California, from 1905 to 1932. Vollmer was a tireless crusader for the reform of policing through technology and higher personnel standards. Under his direction the Berkeley department became a model of professional policing -- efficient, honest, scientific. He introduced into Berkeley a patrol-wide police signal system, the first completely mobile patrol -- first on bicycles, then in squad cars -- modern records systems, beat analysis and modus operandi. The first scientific crime laboratory in the United States was set up in Berkeley in 1916, under the direction of a full-time forensic scientist. The first lie detector machine to be used in criminal investigation was built in the Berkeley department in 1921.[1]

Vollmer's department was best known for the caliber of its personnel. He introduced formal police training in 1908, later encouraging his men to attend classes in police administration that were taught each summer at the University of California. Eventually he introduced psychological and intelligence testing into the recruitment process and actively recruited college students from the University, starting around 1919. This was the beginning of Berkeley's "college cops," who set the tone for the department throughout the 1920s and 30s and came to be accepted by police leaders as the ultimate model of efficient, modern policing.

Nationally, Vollmer worked through such forums as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, serving as President in 1922. He served as a police consultant in cities like Kansas City, Missouri (1929), and he directed the police study for the 1931 National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement,[2] better known as the Wickersham Report. He condemned the corruption and ineffectiveness that prevailed in most American police departments and urged professionalization of the police function, removal of political influence from routine police operations, and the adoption of modern technological methods.

Vollmer's concept of professionalism has dominated police literature since he articulated it, and remains relatively unquestioned today. We need to explore the origins of this concept, the historical realities within which it developed, and the police department that served as its model.

James Q. Wilson has characterized Vollmer's professional police department as one that emphasized "efficiency, law enforcement, aggressive street patrol, and honesty."[3] Traditional policing in the period when Vollmer was active was the victim of political meddling and inept leadership, and the traditional policeman was haphazardly selected and poorly trained. The ideal professional policeman, on the other hand, is honest,

skilled, and impartial in the face of competing political demands that are made upon him. He is trained in the technology of policing, especially in criminal identification, evidence gathering and investigation. He avoids the overtly coercive aspects of policing whenever possible, aiming instead for the prevention of crime or confrontation through his appreciation of the psychology and sociology of crime and criminals.

August Vollmer was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1876. His only formal education beyond the grade school level was a vocational course in bookkeeping, typing and shorthand that he took at the New Orleans Academy. His family moved to Berkeley, California in 1891 when Vollmer was 15. Three years later he opened a coal and feed store with a friend and was active in the formation of a volunteer fire department. He enlisted in the army when the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898 and was sent for a year to the Philippines, where the U.S. Army was engaged in warfare with indigenous Filipino groups following the expulsion of the Spanish. Vollmer took part in river patrols and participated in 25 engagements with the enemy. He came to admire the organizational skills of the professional army corps, and frequently referred to his army experience in later years when discussing the strategy of police operations. After returning home, he worked as a letter carrier in Berkeley for four years until he was approached to run for town marshal.

Police scholar Bruce Smith has referred to the position of marshal as "not primarily devised for what we now know as police work."[4] In Berkeley, the marshal was a political functionary who ran for election every two years and was responsible for a loosely organized body of services. Law enforcement had been lax in the past, and Berkeley had acquired a reputation for having poor police protection. Gambling and opium dens operated with little interference from the authorities, and criminals from San Francisco and Oakland found the town an easy target. It was these conditions that prompted several leading citizens to sponsor Vollmer for the job. His backers included Friend Richardson, editor of the daily newspaper and later governor of California from 1922-26; and George Schmidt, Postmaster, both important members of the Republican Party. Vollmer campaigned hard and won election by a margin of three to one.

Vollmer entered policing during the Progressive era, in a town that was known for its reform-minded citizens.[5] At that time Berkeley was a town of 20,000 persons, many of whom earned their living in San Francisco or Oakland but were alarmed by the corruption and lawlessness that prevailed there. Only fifty years before, San Francisco justice had been dominated by vigilante committees, the most organized and powerful in American history.[6] The current police forces both there and in Oakland had reputations for corruption and inefficiency.

Berkeley was an ideal setting for the introduction of an honest, efficient, technological police force. It was a small city dominated by middle-class business, professional and academic groups who supported municipal reform. Vollmer was able to provide the aggressive leadership in policing

that the community wanted. As one associate has described it, Vollmer "pushed crime north and south,"[7] creating a haven of honest policing. At one time Berkeley had the lowest crime rate of any city in its class, along with the lowest per capita police costs.[8]

History also intervened, when the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906 overnight doubled Berkeley's population and began a boom period of economic development, spurred by businesses that deserted San Francisco for the East Bay. Vollmer turned his department from a town patrol into an urban police force in a few short months, and the community was willing and financially able to support bond issues to pay for his innovations.

Scholarswill date professional policing from Vollmer's decision that the police officer needed significantly special skills to do his job, skills that could not be learned on the beat by a recruit who was indifferent to the "higher purposes" of policing. He was awed by the amount of technical information that could be used in crime investigation, an awareness that he developed from his contact with professors at the University and his own program of self education. Any new technology, whether two-way radios or computers, required the retraining of existing line operations, and suggested that the occupation may have been significantly changed by the introduction of the new techniques. Old-style policing had been so inefficient and uninspired that there seemed to be a radical difference between a political functionary who walked a beat and Vollmer's image of a trained professional who attacks crime with an armory of technical aids. It was natural for Vollmer and his advisers in the University faculty to overestimate the technical and intellectual skills that the new policeman would be required to have. He developed an almost visionary concept of the kind of individual who should be a professional policeman:

> My fancy pictures to me a new profession in which the very best manhood in our nation will be happy to serve in the future. Why should not the cream of the nation be perfectly willing to devote their lives to the cause of service providing that service is dignified, socialized and professionalized. Surely the Army offers no such opportunity for contributing to the welfare of the nation and yet men unhesitatingly spend their lives preparing for army service.[9]

What we see from the interviews below is that Vollmer was able to transmit that vision to many others.

From this enthusiasm emerged the finest police training programs and selection procedures in the country. In 1908 Vollmer began the Berkeley Police School, at a time when most departments did not even have informal training: officers were merely assigned to a beat and told to maintain "law and order."[10] This first school, which deputy marshals attended while off duty, had classes in police methods taught by Vollmer and an Oakland police

inspector; first aid; photography; and courses in sanitation laws and criminal evidence, taught by professors from the University. By 1930, two years before Vollmer retired, recruits were receiving 312 hours of work within the police school, in a curriculum that included, in addition to technical police subjects, Criminal Law and Procedure, Police Psychiatry, Criminal Identification, and Police Organization and Administration.[11] Vollmer himself taught police administration courses during summer sessions at the University between the years 1916 and 1931, and after his retirement from the department was appointed a research professor in Berkeley's political science department.

The "college cop" program began around 1919 when Vollmer placed an ad in the campus newspaper inviting students to earn extra money by becoming Berkeley police officers. This was a period of economic recession and many students responded, perhaps also attracted by the challenge of passing the intelligence tests that the department was using to screen recruits.

There is a gap between the image of the "college cop" that emerged from Berkeley, and the actual reality in the department, for college graduates never did comprise a majority of the force. They did, however, dominate the character or image of the department, especially in those early years. O.W. Wilson was to be the most successful of Vollmer's college cops, and a number of others had successful careers within the department or, more frequently, left for leadership positions in other police agencies or police education programs. Many college students worked in the department until graduation, at which time they left to pursue other careers.

During the years when he developed the Berkeley department, Vollmer was sensitive to the importance of using the press, both to maintain communications with reform elements in his own community, and to influence police reform throughout the country. This was a period when the press was a strong factor in California reform movements.[12] For several months early in his career, Vollmer was the subject of bitter attacks in the local paper, because of a disagreement with the editor over police policies. Vollmer never replied publicly to the attacks, nor did he criticize the newspaper in an attempt to gain support. The editor respected Vollmer for his restraint and soon initiated a reconciliation, and thereafter supported the department strongly.[13] Vollmer later used this incident in cautioning his junior officers against warring with the press, and he had a keen appreciation of the process that we now refer to as "image-building." His police/community relations were so successful in Berkeley that the mayor described the city's policemen in 1940 as "among the most popular individuals in the community, and every citizen (is) an ex officio champion of the police department...."[14]

Crime news was a more important part of newspapers then than it is today, and the Berkeley department had five or six full-time reporters assigned to it from Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco newspapers.[15] Before a new building was built in the mid-1920s, the press shared the squad room with working policemen, and throughout Vollmer's term as chief he granted the press open access to police records, so long as they respected the department's decision not to publicize certain stories.

Vollmer was making news in the Berkeley department, and his innovations soon gained a nationwide audience. But he also valued more scholarly and professional forums than the daily newspapers, and became a prolific contributor, writing in support of his ideas about the upgrading of policing through technology and personnel reform. Vollmer was well-acquainted with the important literature in criminal law, criminology and social science, as reflected in the curriculum of his police training school, and had a long association with the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology. He was the only police chief to be a member of its advisory board during the early period. He developed ties with academic communities outside of Berkeley, and wrote about policing in publications where researchers and scholars would read his ideas. No other police leader reached such an audience, and Vollmer soon became the primary spokesman for those who worked in policing. He acquired the important "face validity" within the academic community of a person who could claim to be doing as well as observing and criticizing. His critics within the police establishment were seen, often with justification, as reactionaries, or merely jealous of the favorable national attention that Vollmer's department received. Working at a time when most police leaders were impatient and resentful over what they felt was an overemphasis on the social conditions responsible for crime, Vollmer succeeded in getting the International Association of Chiefs of Police to pass a resolution pledging cooperation with various national research and reform groups.[16] In effect, the resolution called for a redefinition of the police function to include work with the intangibles of crime prevention.

For Vollmer, control of crime was the first role of the policeman, and was to be accomplished by giving him better organization and techniques than were available to the criminal elements. The other principal role of the policeman is discussed in a 1919 article that Vollmer wrote for a police journal, entitled "The Policeman as a Social Worker," in which he outlined his ideas about the importance of crime prevention, especially with juveniles.[17] The policeman was to work as part of a social team to identify and help children who might become social problems. During the same year Vollmer and a Berkeley psychiatrist initiated a study in Berkeley's Hawthorne elementary school, in conjunction with community social work and education groups, that tested all the children in hopes of predicting future delinquency.

This was a period -- immediately following the First World War -- when crime actually was increasing at an alarming rate,[18] and Vollmer's emphasis on crime prevention was a response, with the tools of the day, to a legitimate public concern. It also reflected his long-term interest in the use of psychiatry to explain the nature of criminality. Vollmer's book The Criminal, written in 1949, was the culmination of a lifetime of study in this area and he considered it his best work.[19] Although his theories of criminality seem dated today, they had a profound effect upon his concept of policing.

The Berkeley department also served as the training ground for new Alameda County deputy district attorneys, and it was in this connection that Vollmer came to know Earl Warren, who received his early experience as a prosecuting attorney in Berkeley. Warren has said that Vollmer "excited his interest in a host of problems relating to law enforcement and the need for improvement."[20] When Warren became District Attorney and began the "gangbusting" raids against gambling that brought him fame throughout California, he used Berkeley policemen and equipment to supplement his own small staff, and locked up his prisoners in the Berkeley jail. Vollmer's department had already developed the techniques of investigation and photography that Warren needed to gather evidence that would hold up in courts which were often unsympathetic. In later years, Warren and Vollmer worked together to set up police education programs in the state colleges and to develop state law enforcement agencies.[21]

It is relevant here to mention Vollmer's attitude toward the "third degree" technique of obtaining confessions. As might be expected, he was strongly opposed to such police methods, which were in common use at the time and were extensively documented in the 1931 Wickersham Report.[22] Although Vollmer opposed the third degree for many reasons, including the violation of individual rights, the core of his objection was that third degree techniques were the poorest method of collecting sound evidence that would hold up in court. The ultimate result of using evidence based on "third degree" confessions he felt, was that suspicion was cast on all police testimony, whereas he believed that the trained professional policeman should be viewed as the most reliable and neutral witness available. Critics of police excesses who welcomed Vollmer as a voice of enlightenment were right in perceiving that he agreed with their stand against the third degree and other brutal techniques, but essentially they and Vollmer came to this agreement from different perspectives: most of the critics were reacting against the very fact of excessive police power; Vollmer was reacting against its inefficiency as a tool of law enforcement.

Vollmer's enthusiasm for scientific lie detection was a natural outcome of his stand against the third degree, and he never lost faith that new breakthroughs would eventually correct the inadequacies that plagued the use of the lie detector in criminal investigation. John Larson, a "college cop" who built the first lie detector in the Berkeley department, later said that he felt the technique had been turned into a form of "psychological third degree," and confessed that he sometimes regretted having had a hand in its development.[23]

Although Vollmer conducted management surveys of numerous police departments during his long career, he served as chief in only one other city, Los Angeles, for a year in 1921-22. In Los Angeles he quickly recognized that the reform elements were far too weak to sustain a Berkeley-style department, and he concentrated his efforts on upgrading middle-management personnel, creating a cadre of committed officers who had a long-term impact as they rose to positions of leadership. This was typical of Vollmer's approach to personnel management, for although he constantly stressed the importance of training the line officer -- the patrolman on the beat --, he

devoted most of his own energies to training police executives. He worked to instill within police leadership a commitment to professional ideals, probably because he sensed that the internal pressure for reform and high standards would have to be strong enough to counteract the competing external political demands that he regarded as illegitimate.

August Vollmer worked for police reform throughout the first half of this century. His ideas were promulgated through the police executives he trained; through professional groups like the International Association of Chiefs of Police; through scholarly journals and societies; and through government surveys and reports, most notably the Wickersham Report. Both the regional and national press publicized the advanced practices of the Berkeley Police Department, and urban crime commissions and police departments requested Vollmer's services as a consultant.

Vollmer's professionalism was rooted in the freedom of the police from political interference; it stressed technical innovations in patrol, communications and investigation, and required a skilled, dedicated police officer. It also offered more for the working policeman, by emphasizing improved wages, modern facilities, and the dignity of performing an important service. The police field was rich ground for the application of new technical advances which met the needs of Americans living in an urban environment. Crime was increasing, institutions were being reshaped, and a better organized, honest and skilled police could protect important community interests from social turmoil.

Vollmer's true impact can best be understood by reading through the following interviews. His influence touched not only his "college cops," but also several generations of police leaders and writers in the field. Don L. Kooken, Rollin Perkins, William A. Westley, James Q. Wilson and A.C. Germann are among those who have acknowledged Vollmer's importance in establishing standards for professional policing.

Many of his innovations were based on ideas that may be traced to others, ideas that came from his associates, from police experiences in other countries, and from academic sources. Vollmer recognized the potential of these ideas and unified them into a working whole, using his energy and dedication to set a pattern for police reform that continues to this day.

Gene Carte
Assistant Professor
Department of Criminal Justice
Trenton State College, New Jersey

June 1972

FOOTNOTES

1. Biographical material on August Vollmer and the history of the Berkeley Police Department is taken from the following sources: Albert Deutsch, The Trouble with Cops (New York: Crown Publishers, 1954); J.D. Holstrom, "Supplement: Some Sources of Information," prepared for the August Vollmer Historical Project, Oral History Section, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, 1971; Alfred E. Parker, Crime Fighter: August Vollmer (New York: Macmillan, 1961); and unpublished interviews conducted for the August Vollmer Historical Project, op. cit.

2. National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, Report on Police (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931).

3. In the Introduction to August Vollmer's The Police and Modern Society (Montclair, N.J.: Patterson Smith, 1971), p. v.

4. Bruce Smith, Police Systems in the United States, 2nd Rev. Ed. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1960), p. v.

5. See George E. Mowry, The California Progressives (Quadrangle Books, 1963), p. 86.

6. See R.M. Brown, "The American Vigilante Tradition," in Graham and Gurr, The History of Violence in America (New York: Bantam, 1969), p. 162.

7. John D. Holstrom, interview with the August Vollmer Historical Project, op. cit., 1971.

8. V.A. Leonard, Police Organization and Management, 2nd Ed. (Brooklyn: Foundation Press, 1964), pp. 93-4.

9. Letter written from Chicago to Acting Chief Jack Greening, Oct. 15, 1930, Bancroft Library.

10. For example, see the story related by Deutsch, op. cit., p. 226.

11. Allen Gammage, Police Training in the United States (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1963), p. 9.

12. Mowry, op. cit., pp. 21, 87-88.

13. Holstrom interview, op. cit.

14. Frank S. Gains, Mayor of Berkeley, "Berkeley: Athens of the West," in Western City, XVI, 1, (January 1940).

15. Rose Glavinovich, interview with the August Vollmer Historical Project, op. cit., 1971.

16. Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, XI, 2, (August 1920), pp. 168-70.

17. The Policemen's News, June 1919.

18. W.P.A. Writer's Project, Berkeley: The First Seventy-Five Years (Berkeley, Calif.: 1941), p. 129.

19. See Fred P. Graham, "A Contemporary History of American Crime," in Graham and Gurr, op. cit., p. 490.

20. The Criminal (Brooklyn: The Foundation Press, 1949).

21. John Kenney, The California Police (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1964), p. 24.

22. Ibid., pp. 23-5.

23. National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, Report on Lawlessness in Law Enforcement (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931).

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RICHARD A. McGEE AWARD

The Faculty of the School of Criminology, University of California, Berkeley, has traditionally presented the Richard A. McGee Award to the student finishing his doctoral dissertation in the previous year who has demonstrated the greatest promise for professional and scholarly development.

The recipient of the award this year, 1972-1973, is Gene E. Carte.

Gene Carte's dissertation, "August Vollmer and the Origins of Police Professionalism," is the culmination of a concerted historical investigation which has also produced a landmark research volume for the Bancroft Library of the University entitled "August Vollmer: Pioneer in Police Professionalism." Dr. Carte's dissertation is both an intensive examination of the work and ideas of August Vollmer and an examination of the historical setting of the development of police professionalism. Dr. Carte is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati.

MEMORIAM

This volume is completed in memory of Gene Carte, who studied with August Vollmer and his times as a way to discover what history can teach us about the role of the police.

Gene decided to work in criminal justice because of a visit he made, as part of an education class at a nearby university, to Florida State Prison at Raiford. He was drawn to questions about the definition of crime, the perceptions of those who entered that life, and the influence of the political and administrative decisions that are made to control it.

From Florida, Gene went to New York City for graduate work in vocational counseling at Teacher's College, Columbia University. He then worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor in San Francisco before entering the doctoral program in the School of Criminology at the University of California, Berkeley.

Although most of his work experience had been in corrections and rehabilitation, Gene came to see policing as the central issue of criminal justice in the mid 1960s. Challenges to authority during those years provided an unusually clear glimpse into the conflicts between politicization and professionalism in law enforcement. These issues led Gene to develop the Vollmer project, in cooperation with Chief John Holstrom, at The Bancroft Library. When he completed his doctoral work in 1973, Gene was awarded the school's Richard A. McGee Award as the outstanding graduate of that year.

Gene returned east in 1971 to join the faculty of the criminal justice department at Trenton State College, New Jersey. After two years he left to take a position at the University of Cincinnati. He was a faculty member there at the time of his death in 1977.

Gene Carte pursued his study and teaching with a lively commitment to social justice and a critical understanding of the role of law enforcement and corrections in relation to it. He had strong beliefs about the need to include all segments of the community within criminal justice occupations. Another central conviction was his opposition to capital punishment, a belief that deepened as he gained experience and knowledge about the often arbitrary operations of the American justice system. The recognition that Vollmer's career reflected some of these same concerns contributed to Gene's enthusiasm for preserving recollections about the historic police innovator.

Elaine Carte

June 1983
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

August Vollmer Historical Project

Austin MacCormick

EDUCATION FOR THE PROFESSION

Interview Conducted by
Gene Carte
in 1972

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Austin MacCormick was interviewed as part of the second series on August Vollmer. Mr. MacCormick, who died in 1979, was a nationally known prison reformer and educator. He became a friend of Vollmer when he moved to Berkeley in 1951 to join the faculty of the School of Criminology, University of California.

Interviewer: Gene Carte.

Time and Setting of Interview: The interview took place on March 16, 1972, in Mr. MacCormick's office at the Osborne Association, 114 East 30th Street, New York City.

Editing: Elaine Carte edited the interview for spelling and typing errors. Mr. MacCormick then reviewed the transcript and edited it for accuracy.

Narrative Account of Mr. MacCormick and the Progress of the Interview:

Austin MacCormick, who was born in Canada and spent his early years in Maine, became interested in prison reform through exposure to the work of Thomas Mott Osborne. He twice posed as an inmate--in the Maine state prison and in the naval prison at Portsmouth, New Hampshire--to gain information on prison conditions. In 1934, Mayor LaGuardia named him to head the New York City correctional system, where in six years he introduced many reforms. The penitentiary on Welfare Island was notorious for inhumane conditions at the time he was appointed.

Mr. MacCormick then became research director of the Osborne Association, a prison reform organization in New York City. From 1951 to 1960 he was a professor at the School of Criminology at Berkeley. He then returned to New York to become executive director of the Osborne Association.

The interview begins with Mr. MacCormick's recollections of his move to Berkeley in 1951 and the friendship that he quickly developed with Vollmer. He discusses the evolution of the School of Criminology, including his part in establishing a corrections curriculum.

Mr. MacCormick details some of the innovations in the Berkeley Police Department that made Vollmer the "Father of Police Science." He describes Vollmer's close but informal involvement with the School of Criminology. At this time, Vollmer's health had begun to deteriorate, but his long association with Dean Wilson resulted in his continuing influence in decisions about the direction of the school.

Vollmer's philosophical attitudes toward crime and the criminal are then discussed. Mr. MacCormick says that Vollmer "was not punitive" and outlines Vollmer's views about punishment versus treatment as ones that were similar to his own. Vollmer's last book, "The Criminal," is discussed in the context of his wide reading and eagerness for knowledge.

The interview turns to Vollmer's personal life in his last years: visits from the small boys who lived in the neighborhood; Vollmer's many friends. Mr. MacCormick describes the progress of the illnesses that plagued Vollmer before his death, especially the Parkinson's disease that caused him to tremble and experience great discomfort. MacCormick expresses his belief that Vollmer took his life because of fear that the drugs he was taking would lead him to harm another.

Mr. MacCormick talks about Vollmer's work to professionalize law enforcement through education. He believed in the relevance of general education for the police officer. In describing his own term as Acting Dean of the School of Criminology, Mr. MacCormick refers to the later direction of the school toward the production of researchers rather than practitioners.

The interview concludes with a comparison of Vollmer and O.W. Wilson. Mr. MacCormick discusses Wilson's reform of the Chicago Police Department and how his actions there reflected the integrity and high standards that he shared with Vollmer.

Austin MacCormick
March 16, 1972
Osborne Association
114 East 30th Street, New York City
Interviewed by Gene Carte

Carte: What was your personal relationship with Mr. Vollmer?

MacCormick: When I went to the School of Criminology at the University of California, Berkeley, as professor of criminology in 1951, I had already known of Chief Vollmer. I had met him the year before when I taught in the summer session at the School of Social Welfare. I had known him as a great and distinguished man, and now I found myself living a block away from him. I became one of his proteges almost immediately. My first experience with him was on the night my wife and I moved into the house we had rented for the summer. We had an earthquake, and the house was on the very steep side of a hill. We didn't know what to do when it shook the house three or four times as if it would slide down the hill. So we phoned Chief Vollmer and said, "What do we do? Do we dress and go out in the street?" He said, "Go back to bed, it'll all be over in a minute." This is a trivial thing, but it's part of his greatness that he was very reachable. I'll tell you later about the affection the little boys in the neighborhood had for him, and how he would be the judge in all the quarrels they'd bring to him. They also came to get candy, but they liked to have him pass on the things they were disputing about.

An Innovator for Police Science

MacCormick: But let me go back. His first relationship with what is now the School of Criminology was when he organized courses in police science in the summer of 1916, as I recall it, at the University. In what department it was, I don't know, but probably public

MacCormick: administration. This was the beginning of what finally became the School of Criminology, the only school in the country with that title, although other universities have departments which they could call a school or department of criminology if they wanted to, notably Michigan State University. But it all began with police administration. It became the School of Criminology when it branched out into other phases of the crime problem, and finally the three parts of its curriculum were police administration or law enforcement, scientific crime detection, and the correctional curriculum, which I was brought in to establish in 1951.

Carte: Police science was Professor Kirk?

MacCormick: No. Dr. Paul Kirk and Edwin O'Neill, who is still there, were terrific experts in the field of what they called criminalistics. Dr. Kirk created that term as a title for crime detection by laboratory and other scientific methods. It was not merely detection, like the people in the detective stories who go around and question a lot of people, but the use of microscopic and chemical analysis, and many other scientific procedures. It was the toughest part of our curriculum, and it took longer to complete the requirements than either of the other two parts of the curriculum.

But --- we always called him "Chief" --- Chief Vollmer was known as the "Father of Police Science," and to jump ahead to one of your other questions, the thing he's most famous for is his influence on the professionalism of police work. And he didn't mean that only the man in the laboratory must be a professional, but that law enforcement itself should be a profession. We had courses there in police work on such a high level that our young graduates went out with much more training than most police chiefs in the United States. They were encouraged to go to work in departments like the Berkeley Police Department, which officials from Scotland Yard told me was the best police department among what they called the smaller cities of the United States. It was actually in the top one hundred as to size, so it was not really a small city. Its police department was respected all over the world, beginning with the years when Chief Vollmer headed it. Police science -- to him -- included the people in the patrol cars. It meant the whole police process from top to bottom. Nowadays we wouldn't call police on the beat or in cars professionals, but they are working in a field in which one can reach professional rating.

Chief Vollmer made several very innovative contributions at Berkeley in the early 1900's. You may have heard of them from other people. He was the first official to put police officers in patrol cars, although all he had were Model-T Fords. He was the first one to install radio communication. They used the old-fashioned crystal sets. I've seen pictures of the police officers

MacCormick: in Berkeley standing proudly by a Model-T Ford and wearing a very funny looking type of uniform. But this was the beginning of tremendous progress in police work.

Carte: There were squad cars in other parts of the country, I believe.

MacCormick: I probably was inaccurate when I said that. I'm not too sure though. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Chief Vollmer was the first one who did it. That's the way I seem to have heard it. But if Dean Wilson didn't say it, or John Holstrom ---

Carte: I just thought that there were squad cars ---

MacCormick: Well, O. W. Wilson knew more than I did about that. He was one of Chief Vollmer's proteges. Another one was General Dean -- we always called him Bill Dean. As you know, he was a Congressional Medal of Honor winner in the Korean war. Another one was Walter Gordon, who later became the head of the California Adult Authority, which is the state sentencing and parole authority. He then became Governor-General of the Virgin Islands and later a federal judge. Wilson, as you know, resigned as Dean of the School of Criminology in 1960, to become head of the Chicago Police Department and did a wonderful job of reforming and reorganizing it.

Chief Vollmer also organized what I know for sure was the first juvenile crime prevention bureau. So, at the same time that he was trying to improve the methods of detecting and preventing crime by surveillance by police in cars or on foot, he was also the pioneer in the juvenile delinquency prevention field. It spread over the country pretty rapidly, but he was the first on that. Another thing on which he was the first is that he introduced England's Henry System of fingerprinting to the United States. He got the State of California to accept it and it spread to the rest of the country. There's a period in his history about which I don't know very much, when he went to Northwestern University and established a curriculum or a division that had to do with police work and with the general subject of crime. He was there for several years. So he was an innovator, and was also in on some of the early innovations which perhaps other people started.

Carte: Your first real contact with Vollmer, then, was when you went on the faculty. He was already retired.

MacCormick: Yes, he'd been retired for a long time. I arrived in 1951. His active career ended in the 1930s, as I recall.

Carte: But he was very much interested in the School of Criminology.

MacCormick: Oh, yes. It was his baby. But he didn't come down there an awful lot; it wasn't as if he was always messing with it.

MacCormick: We went to him for advice, went to him for encouragement, went to him just because he was such a wonderful person to talk to, to be with.

Carte: When there were early faculty meetings, he wasn't invited to those meetings, necessarily ---

MacCormick: No. At the time when I joined the faculty, he was already beginning to have terrible arthritis and suffering greatly from it. And he later developed Parkinson's disease. I would like to speak about that a little more later. That was toward the end of my stay, and just before his death. But when my wife and I first arrived, I'd forgotten that one of the things he did was to take us in his car, or perhaps I drove, all over Berkeley's hugh park system. There was a canyon up back of Grizzly Peak where you went down the other slope and were in a huge canyon, and that and the slope of the ridge were the city park system. He was very proud of it; he'd been a promoter of the parks years before. It was one of his great interests.

Carte: You drove, or he drove?

MacCormick: Well, I know that he was active at that time, I think he probably drove. Yes, I'm quite sure he did. I was thinking that he was already beginning to be --- crippled with arthritis. He didn't come regularly to the faculty meetings. But he was seeing all of us school faculty members all the time. We'd drop in on him, just to see him and talk with him, whether we had anything to ask his advice on or not. He was always very closely in touch.

Carte: You were in corrections ---

MacCormick: No, it was the correctional part of the whole curriculum. During the four months after Dean Wilson went to Chicago, I was the Acting Dean. I was the advisor to all the graduate students, also to those students wh were in the correctional curriculum, and to those students in criminology. I had an overall involvement in the school. It was a small faculty, and we were all experts in fields.

Carte: The only faculty members were Kirk, O'Neill, yourself, Mr. Wilson ---

MacCormick: Dr. Kelley, the psychiatrist, was there; John Holstrom, Chief of Berkeley Police Department, was part-time. We had two or three other people who were part-time faculty members.

Carte: So Vollmer had contact with ---

MacCormick: Yes, he was very close to all of us.

Carte: Including Dr. Kelley.

MacCormick: Yes. Whenever Dean Wilson thought of doing anything new, I have no doubt he talked it over with Chief Vollmer. Even bringing me out there -- he probably talked that over. And Vollmer, with his primary interest in police work and law enforcement, would unquestionably have leaped at the idea of introducing correctional courses too. Now Dr. Kelley, don't forget, came on the scene just before I did, and his courses cut across all the others, because everybody had to take at least one of his courses, even the criminalistics students. He not only was a psychiatrist; he had complete credentials as a psychologist. So he had everybody. Even the man who was going to go right out and get a job in the sheriff's office as a police officer had to take some of the courses in psychiatry. So Vollmer was in on this too --- I know they never made that step forward without talking to him. That was chiefly because of Dean Wilson; he'd known him longer than anybody else on the faculty and respected his opinion. It wasn't that Vollmer would get angry if he wasn't consulted ---

Carte: He had that kind of influence on the way the curriculum went.

MacCormick: That's right. And he could see way ahead. I'll wager that on every single thing that finally developed, from summer courses in police work to a full-fledged school of criminology, he was consulted at evey step.

Vollmers' Approach to the Criminal

Carte: Vollmer, of course, was always interested in the individual criminal. His last major book was The Criminal.

MacCormick: He had a lot of interest too in the psychiatric or the emotional phases of crime. You can see that in his book, he's got quite a bit in there. The only thing I ever disagreed with him on is that he thought perhaps we should adopt what was then called the British system of giving heroin users free heroin. He just said that tentatively; he wasn't sure, but he knew that efforts to treat the heroin problem were failing. (It was nowhere near as widespread then as it is now.) So he thought possibly that we should try the English system. But the English system was never really a system. It was simply that British physicians could treat an addict without being clobbered. But in this country, the Bureau of Narcotics under Harry Anslinger would go after a physician and try to revoke his license if they found he was prescribing heroin.

Carte: So Vollmer didn't agree with Anslinger's approach to controlling crime, controlling narcotic addiction.

MacCormick: He thought it was a failure, and I think he was wise enough to think in terms of the heroin user as a sick person, although I don't recall he ever said that. But I think you hit it; he was certain the answer to crime of all types is not just heavier sentences. He would certainly believe that the more arrests you can make the better, but then after they were arrested and convicted, he was never one to keep piling on the heavy sentences.

Carte: Was this disagreement with the failure to handle narcotic crimes a philosophical disagreement, that he just disagreed with that approach, or was it because it had failed? In other words, he was just a man who was a pragmatist?

MacCormick: I think in his mind it was that the problem did not belong in the field -- the police, courts, punishment field. But in those days it was really a minor problem compared with what it is today. I've been dealing with it since 1929, and you know it's only in recent years that it's reached such colossal proportions and has spread into a lower age bracket. It was probably characteristic of him that he believed in the efficiency of the arrest, trial and court procedure, but he was never interested in just punishing everybody heavily. He would always be thinking of ways in which you could treat the offender, or if you had to sentence him to prison or put him on probation or parole, he would want to do everything possible to straighten him out. He was a real correctional reformer too.

Carte: But that distinction -- Some people are just philosophically opposed to certain types of treatment of offenders. And other people realize that if we treat offenders harshly it just fails. Vollmer was more concerned in trying to keep the criminal justice system as efficient as possible rather than just being philosophically opposed ---

MacCormick: He was not punitive. No, and I'm in the the same state of mind. I wish it were possible to arrest everybody that does anything halfway serious, but then dispose of the case wisely and with a great variety of dispositions. There are some things, like running through red lights repeatedly, and then tearing up your violation tickets, that call for punishment. I would be willing to punish anybody who does that. But if he's a burglar, and he was brought up in a neighborhood where everyone was living by thieving, then someone should just try to get him straightened out by teaching him a trade so that he can earn a living. And I know Chief was that way. If he had happened to land in the correctional field, if he had been a prison warden, say, at this

MacCormick: time, he would have been just as far ahead in his thinking -- prisons, operation of prisons, and other correctional services -- as he was in police work.

Vollmer's Influence on Criminology Curriculum

Carte: The original thrust of the School of Criminology was influenced by Vollmer and the direction that the school went was ---

MacCormick: Well, since he was in police work himself, it was natural that he should start with police courses.

Carte: But he drew into it a particular type of policing that many other schools around the country didn't have, and that was the emphasis on the criminal, and realizing that there was a psychological component to crime.

MacCormick: Yes, but I think if you didn't know what was going on in his head or what his feeling was philosophically, you would have known that he was greatly interested in the efficiency of law enforcement. Some of my students were Berkeley police officers, and they had wonderful training. And it's a very interesting thing that at one time the Los Angeles Police Department was very bad and Vollmer was brought down there as Chief to straighten it out. It eventually reached the point where it was the best police department in the United States; the best big one, I mean. You could see his influence on that too.

He was keenly interested in crime laboratory work, and he liked to solve murder cases, but he also like to be scientific enough so that he could clear an innocent man. One of the most gruesome murders that we had in the Bay Area -- and they were trying the person who had been charged with that -- was in the newspapers every day Two of our graduates in the Oakland Police Department crime laboratory cleared him completely by scientific methods. They then found the person who actually did it.

Carte: You don't remember that name of that case?

MacCormick: No, I don't. I remember some of the details.

Carte: That was in the early 1950s ---

MacCormick: Yes. In his writings he would often tell about cases where scientific methods would prove a man's guilt: for example, in a rape case they found squirrel fur at the foot of the tree at the place where the girl was raped, and they found some of it on

MacCormick: the cuff of the man's trousers. Paul Kirk had a tremendous collection of the fur of animals and soils and other things that could be used in scientific detection. But all I'm saying about the Chief is that he would look on the scientific aspects of crime and law enforcement as being as much concerned with proving innocence as guilt.

Personal Library

Carte: When he writes, he tends to tell anecdotes. Did he also give a good many anecdotes in his personal conversation? Was he a man with a lot of rich stories?

MacCormick: Oh, yes. Because he'd heard of a lot, and he participated in a lot, and he read a lot, just like if you don't turn me off, you can get five miles of bedtime stories about things I've seen in prisons and things I've been through myself. And you know that book was not the most scholarly ever written.

Carte: You're talking about The Criminal?

MacCormick: That one. The Individual Criminal, wasn't it called? He sort of went off the deep end with somebody's theory, I've forgotten whose it was, and he was so eager -- he hadn't had much formal education himself -- he was so eager to know about these things that he read a great deal, but I don't think that he discussed it enough. In other words, out of his own experience he would say what he thought about a thing. But it's a good book, and its approach is a good one. There were one or two things that I think two or three of us could have talked him out of believing!

Carte: His personal library -- I know you lived only a block away from him -- did he have ---

MacCormick: He had about this many books (pointing to three ten-foot shelves). These books are practically all out of print. They're valuable because they are old ones that were written years ago. There are some new ones mixed in, but we don't pretend that this is an up-to-date library, because otherwise we'd have to have a librarian. We have access to other libraries, and I've got some of my best books upstairs. But he had just about this many, and that was pretty good in those days. Up at his house, I mean.

Carte: He read a great deal?

MacCormick: Yes. I imagine he'd read everything he could lay his hands on.

Carte: He read it and had it in his personal library.

MacCormick: Not all of it, because he was living right at the edge of the university campus, and could go down there and take out anything he wanted to read. Nobody had to have a big library, although Dr. Kelley had one of the biggest of all the private libraries around there because he used to review books and he'd get twelve dollar books that none of the rest of us could afford to buy by writing a comment on it.

Vollmer in Later Years

Carte: You mentioned that you had some other anecdotes.

MacCormick: Well, in the first place I want to tell you what he looked like. His face was -- he had a very strong expression. He was a handsome man; he must have been very handsome in his early days. It was a mature face, and he'd look a little grave, but it was much more likely he'd be smiling. So the small boys would come in, and I happened to be there one day visiting with him, when they came in and were arguing about some rules. You know the way kids make up rules when they're playing a game, and they'd come in and just as solemnly as could be ask him who was right! At the end of this judicial hearing there would be rock candy. He had some kind of candy on hand all the time, but they really came in because they like be with him. And they'd be very solemn too. He would keep his face very grave, and then after they'd go he'd laugh to me about the kids. By the way, his wife had been dead so long that I never thought of his family life. He was living alone, with a wonderful housekeeper, and she took good care of him, but his family life -- there wasn't any family life, he didn't seem to need it.

Carte: He had no family near him.

MacCormick: Oh, he had so many friends, there were so many. But it was a real part of his character that he liked people. He liked those little boys, and he liked to have them want to decide things the right way, and it cheered him up to have them come in and so on. Sometimes you'd see him with his face kind of severe, especially if someone was saying something he didn't like, he'd take on a kind of grave expression. But there was all that warmth inside him. Then -- I don't know whether you should use this, but the Parkinson's disease caused him to tremble terrifically. I went up

MacCormick: to see him one time toward the end of my stay there when he was pretty far gone with this disease and the arthritis was so bad; the two together were terrible.

Carte: When you first met him he didn't have Parkinson's disease?

MacCormick: No.

Carte: He had arthritis.

MacCormick: He had arthritis, and that kept getting worse, so it was really very severe. But then the Parkinson's disease came along. One day he came into the room. I had already been sitting there while he was in some other room, in his study. He had three or four chairs arranged in a line, and he put his hand on one after the other and walked along and then sat down. I said, "Chief, are you in much pain?" He said, "I wouldn't want my worst enemy to hurt as badly as I do." And this was with the arthritis. Then with the Parkinson's disease, he'd tremble like that, and then would hold on to himself like this, and I said to him, "What does it do when you hold your hands like this?" He said, "I just shake inside." I've forgotten how much pain there was connected with the Parkinson's disease, terrific discomfort, and you know it makes you feel so awfully feeble when you're shaking all over like that. Did John Holstrom tell anything about the time he had to go up and take the Chief's gun away from him? Chief Holstrom, as his friend, took it away from him and gave it back to him a week later. Only once did Chief Vollmer ever refer to it. He didn't know that I knew, but he said "They shifted the drugs on me for this Parkinson's disease." And he said, "There was a while there when I didn't know what I was doing." He didn't say anything about the gun, but he may have thought that I knew. He did hold it back, obviously. Later he committed suicide with that gun. That was the manner of his death. And I know in my heart that he committed suicide for fear he would do some harm to somebody else. He was a man of terrific courage that no amount of pain alone could cause him to commit suicide. Many years before I knew a man -- a Congressional Medal of Honor winner -- a tremendously courageous man, who committed suicide not for fear of the operation that he knew he had to have, but for fear that in the meantime he was going to do some harm to somebody. And this, I'm sure, was the Chief's motive. He went out in the backyard and shot himself.

Carte: Now, after his death you were involved in the memorial fund that you just mentioned when we first met.

MacCormick: Yes, that's right, that's true. We didn't organize it well enough, you know. It was trying to get money from foundations in California rather than smaller amounts from people in police departments all over the state. But he was a legendary figure, and his active

MacCormick: career was so far behind that he didn't have many people who had served under him or knew him.

Carte: So the memorial fund never really ---

MacCormick: Never got very much.

Carte: So you don't remember what happened to his library, or to his papers?

MacCormick: He left the house to Mrs. Miller, the housekeeper, and probably some money, but I don't know what happened to the other things. He probably gave the library to the School of Criminology to do what they wanted with, but I don't recall that. We didn't have a library in the school. I had my own books, and all the rest had their own books, but we had them at home, most of them. Wilson had a lot, a good library, but it was in his home. And I think that probably his books must have gone to the university, but what became of them, I don't know.

Carte: Some of his papers are in The Bancroft Library, but not that many. About Chief Vollmer, another thing that I was especially interested in: are there other people that you remember who should be interviewed other than the ones that we have listed here? For instance, you mentioned O. W. Wilson and General Dean. Are there any other people on the faculty that might have known him? Do you know V. A. Leonard?

MacCormick: No.

Carte: He writes very many police textbooks.

MacCormick: I think that the head of the state crime laboratory in Wisconsin, whose name I've forgotten -- I think his name is Wilson, too -- that he was one of the Chief's disciples. But I don't think you could find enough others. Walter Gordon probably is retired and living in California. He and General Dean and O. W. Wilson, they knew him from way back. But there is a man in Washington who was deputy chief of the Berkeley department under John Holstrom, second in command, but I don't think he knew the Chief, so I don't think he could contribute very much more.

Education for the Profession

MacCormick: You asked me a question, "What were the major influences that Vollmer had on policing, education and training, and on other areas?" As I've said, he's called the "father of police science"

MacCormick: because he was the first one who talked about and worked for the professionalization of law enforcement, and he knew that this involved not only general education but special training. If he didn't think of it at first, he unquestionably agreed immediately that they should know as much psychology and psychiatry as you could pump into them without taking time away from other things.

Carte: So he didn't see that as a wrong direction for policing to go. Many people, even today, would say that the police should stay away from sociology, social work.

MacCormick: No, he'd take exactly the opposite view, that the broader your general education, the better. I think he would always want it to be in the behavioral sciences, because you had only so much time. But if you said to him, "Chief, don't you think that anybody who's going to be a cop ought to have a course in English composition?" -- he'd agree at once. Even if it was only so that they'd write more intelligent reports. And he would assume that maybe this fellow was going to go up the ladder because being able to use the English language was of real importance. But he believed not just in training for police work and its techniques, but in training that helped you to understand the offender and the social and environmental causes behind his offense. His belief was that you must have training -- broad training and special training in law enforcement.

Carte: Especially in the social sciences.

MacCormick: I'd forgotten to say that during the four months when I was Acting Dean we were under a mandate from the administration of the University to step up the level of the curriculum, so as to make it possible to grant a doctor's degree, which we'd never been allowed to do. They used to say that we were a vocational training school or something like that, you know. They didn't want us to teach a man what to do when he's riding around in a police car. They wanted us to talk in terms of police administration, and I had to step courses up and eliminate courses which I knew to be very valuable or put less emphasis upon them, because the university was going to get rid of the school unless it became a more scholarly place, with more provision for research. We used to be training people to go to work in police departments, laboratories and corrections. The sheriff's departments were improving all the time in California, and there was always a demand for young recruits: so instead of preparing people to go right to work, even in my field, in prisons, probation, parole, we tend to be producing people with a Ph.D. or Doctor of Criminology trained to be researchers. I hear the school has changed greatly. The relationship that the faculty had with the students, which was very close, I hear that this has almost disappeared. And so I think that part of what

MacCormick: Vollmer believed in, and what I believed in, and I'm sure these others, is now being de-emphasized. I know that we weren't scholarly enough to be allowed to exist on the Berkeley campus, which is an ivory tower of great height. But we could have done both, and if I'd stayed there, we sure would have done both. We'd have been preparing people to go right to work, and been preparing others to go on for the doctorate.

Carte: But the university insisted that the curriculum be changed.

MacCormick: Yes, and it was changed.

Carte: But it wasn't a shift from emphasis on police work to emphasis on corrections and police administration, it was a shift into research.

MacCormick: No, they still had the three. And I have no doubt that the laboratory work was not touched, because this was on a high level anyway. They had a lot of chemistry and physics courses.

Carte: I understand that the School of Criminology is moving the criminalistics program out of the school, moving it to San Jose State.

MacCormick: Well, all right. San Jose always had very good criminology courses, but their emphasis was on police administration and procedures. Just as up at Michigan State, they were famous for what they called the School of Police Administration. The minute they brought in a fellow to give correctional courses -- and they already had the laboratory work -- they could justify calling it a school of criminology. I have always been called a penologist. I don't like the word, because the connotation of "penal" is punishment, and I am not an expert in punishment. But the minute I began to teach I could call myself a criminologist. If you're a professor of criminology, even if all you're teaching is correctional work, you can call yourself a criminologist. In Europe, if you were a criminologist, you might be a scientific crime detector or a detective or something very limited like that. But I think that we need more than ever before the training for police work. It is possible to get police departments out of politics. A good example is that Berkeley required all candidates to pass a psychiatric examination, which Dr. Kelley used to do. Los Angeles did the same. They rejected a tremendous number of candidates on fundamental instability. A man's marital history or job history was important; things that showed fundamental instability were what they would reject him on. San Francisco wasn't doing it and wouldn't recruit anybody outside of San Francisco. The result was that the police was steeped in politics, and in spite of a good chief, they had all kinds of troubles. Oakland also had psychiatric examinations. That was an excellent police system. I don't know how many of them survived the attacks during the revolution at Berkeley!

Carte: I assume the revolution failed.

MacCormick: I think that they found they had new problems.

A Second Vollmer?

MacCormick: I think we've covered almost everything. How did he relate to friends, to employees and to professional colleagues? All you can say are adjectives. I mean, he was marvelous. He would never throw his weight around with professional colleagues or try to be the big shot, but he'd speak firmly and decisively. And in his human relationships he was always wonderful with everybody.

Carte: Would that same apply to O. W. Wilson, as well? Because O. W. considered himself almost a direct descendant of August Vollmer.

MacCormick: O. W. was different, but he too had a pleasant manner. Wilson was and is such a just person that he would never try to force anybody to teach something just because he didn't personally believe in it. For example, I've been fighting the death penalty all my life. I started originally from the humanitarian standpoint and now usually argue from the practical standpoint that it doesn't do any good and makes it more difficult to convict. But Wilson believed in it strongly, yet he never even tried to talk me out of it. There are quite a few areas where I think that my attitude toward offenders is probably much more lenient than his.

Carte: Vollmer apparently disagreed with the death penalty too.

MacCormick: Oh, yes. He always did. Very strongly. But what I mean is, Wilson surely did not believe everything that Vollmer believed, although he worshipped him. And he would certainly never get up and attack his views, or anything like that. He just wouldn't follow them, and the Chief wouldn't expect him to. Vollmer would try to change his opinion maybe on the death penalty, I don't know. But Wilson is not a second Vollmer. He's a wonderfully efficient person, though. He made about thirty-five police surveys, surveys of police departments all over the country. I thought he would do this after retirement. He had enough money, he'd inherited some, had some good investments, so he's living in San Diego and taking it easy apparently. But Wilson was a true expert. When he went to Chicago to head the police department he had a terrible time. At one time five thousand of his own cops signed a petition to get rid of him, but he stuck it out, and Mayor Daley was behind him one hundred and fifty percent all the time and never let him down. Pretty soon Wilson began to bring the major crime rate down.

MacCormick: The first thing he did was to insist that the police report all crimes, instead of carrying around little black books with their own notes but not reporting them. Also the higher ups, when they released statistics for the year, changed them. If they wanted to scare the taxpayers or the city council into giving them more appropriations, they'd have a higher crime rate. If they were being criticized, they would change it in the other direction. Wilson actually did a magnificent job in Chicago. He wasn't kicked out, and when he retired Chicago had an efficient police department, and the crime rate had been substantially reduced.

Carte: But many people want to make direct descendants -- Vollmer to Wilson --

MacCormick: As far as efficiency, honesty and intelligence go, and as far as believing that police work is a science and that you have to have technical competence, Wilson is a second Vollmer. I think perhaps technology is a better word than science, although I never called it that before.

Carte: But on this question --- For example, the death penalty; many times people disagree on the death penalty because of fundamental differences. One person comes as a humanitarian. Vollmer, who apparently was opposed to the death penalty, and Wilson who wasn't ---

MacCormick: But they shared this, about police work and law enforcement; they had a similar type of integrity. Wilson would be the first to discipline anybody who beat up a suspect that he had arrested or anything like that. No matter how heinous the murder, he would have insisted on protecting every right that the alleged or admitted murderer had. One of the worst ever was the man who killed the eight nurses in Chicago. If Wilson was still there when it happened, the police would never have been allowed to swerve an inch from the man's police rights. He was a person of great integrity, and not only personal integrity; he believed that is the way the police must be. If they're ever going to command respect and support of the people, they've got to be careful to operate rigidly within the law.

What personal characteristics do you think Vollmer had that made him an influential man? I see a lot of people who are influen ial because of their ability to write, but that wasn't it in Vollmer's case. He probably wrote a lot of papers that I've never seen, and he undoubtedly made many speeches. But it was what he did rather than what he said that caused him to be such an influence.

Carte: It was the impact he had on the people around him rather than the fact that he was able to put it down on paper and convince other

Carte: people through argument.

MacCormick: Yes, whenever he went to a meeting, such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, anybody who ran into him would have great respect for him, they'd know what he had done. I don't know, maybe he wrote more than I realize.

Carte: He wrote a great deal, especially ---

MacCormick: And in his early days there wasn't much being written.

Carte: He was one of the first police chiefs who ever published anything.

MacCormick: He probably wrote very directly, laid it right on the line, and would tell you how to do a thing, not just philosophize about it. I don't know how much education he had; he seemed to be an educated man.

Carte: He only had a grammar school education.

MacCormick: Yes. Did you know he was in the Spanish-American war? And he was quite deaf because he was standing too close to a cannon that was fired. It shattered at least one ear drum. I couldn't see that it affected his hearing very much, but he said he had always been, since the war, hard of hearing.

Transcriber: Michelle Stafford
Final Typist: Sheila K. O'Neill

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August Vollmer Historical Project

Donal E. J. MacNamara

CONTRASTING PHILOSOPHIES

Interview Conducted by
Gene Carte
in 1975

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Donal E. J. MacNamara, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, was interviewed for this series about Vollmer's wider contacts. MacNamara's comments provide an excellent picture of Vollmer's role in his later years as a "fountainhead" of advice and assistance for younger criminal justice professionals.

Interviewer: Gene Carte.

Time and Setting of Interview: The interview took place on November 2, 1975, in Mr. MacNamara's hotel room during the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Toronto.

Editing: Gene Carte edited the transcript for continuity. Mr. MacNamara reviewed the transcript, correcting spellings of names and making minor additions.

Narrative Account of Mr. MacNamara and the Progress of the Interview: Mr. MacNamara, who was educated at New York University and Columbia University, has had a long career in education and consulting work in the field of criminal justice. Since the mid-1960s, he has been a professor of criminology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and at Bernard M. Baruch in New York City. Mr. MacNamara has been active in the American Society of Criminology since its early years, serving as president in 1961. He has written on many aspects of correctional and police policy, and shares Vollmer's belief that a merely repressive approach is inadequate for meeting the problem of crime.

Mr. MacNamara describes his first meeting with Vollmer in 1948. He arrived in Berkeley with a letter of introduction from Bruce Smith, under whom he was working toward a doctorate. Vollmer, then in his early seventies, soon became a personal friend and mentor.

Vollmer's active interest in the progress of the fledgling police science programs in California and other states is discussed. Mr. MacNamara recalls that Vollmer operated a "one-man employment agency" in which he advanced the careers of younger professionals in the field. Mr. MacNamara contrasts the backgrounds of Vollmer and Smith, pointing out that Vollmer had the experience within operating police agencies that Smith lacked, although Vollmer had sacrificed many of his police establishment ties by his more "radical and imaginative" visions.

Mr. MacNamara tells how Vollmer recommended him for a position at the University of Southern California and provided other help. Mr. MacNamara and the interviewer reflect about Vollmer's willingness to help people in general who were interested in policing and his lack of critical evaluation of their specific approaches to police problems.

In discussing Vollmer's relationship with O.W. Wilson, Mr. MacNamara describes the early meetings of the association that developed into the American Society of Criminology. At first a California-based organization, the association eventually broadened both geographically and occupationally from its police science beginnings. Mr. MacNamara contrasts Wilson and Vollmer in terms of their approach to police professionalism and their personal styles.

Mr. MacNamara discusses another key figure in California policing, Bill Parker of Los Angeles. He describes Parker's familiarity with the suggestions for reform that Vollmer had made when he was chief there. He talks about Parker's views and ambitions and states that Parker best exemplifies the "legalistic" model outlined by James Q. Wilson.

The interview ends with more observations about Vollmer as a person, his refusal to gossip about or denigrate others, and his great respect for people in the academic field. Mr. MacNamara recalls that Vollmer was especially impressed with people like Sheldon Glueck and Thorsten Sellin and that he sought to emulate them.

Donal E. J. MacNamara
November 2, 1975
Toronto
Interviewed by Gene Carte

Vollmer and Smith

MacNamara: I first met Vollmer late in 1948 in Berkeley, California. At that time I was completing my work for a Doctorate in Public Law and Government at Columbia University and had been assigned to work under Bruce Smith who had an adjunct appointment at the University. He was the Assistant Director of the Institute of Public Administration in New York and a well known police consultant. He, at that time, was working in the advance planning for the mayor's survey of the New York City Police Department which he later conducted. He gave me a letter of introduction to Vollmer, to go and discuss with him his experiences in surveys of major police departments, such as the Los Angeles department, traps to look out for, things to look for, the learnings by experience that he had in this very difficult task of making a critical analysis and evaluation of an ongoing operational agency. That was the focus of our first meeting. I went first to the little office that he had in one of the temporary buildings on the Berkeley campus; and he was so warm, so protective, a person that, from then on, our relationship became a very personal and a very intimate one with many visits to his house and many visits to restaurants and to houses of his colleagues to discuss both this and other problems.

Vollmer was an old man at that time. I forget exactly what his age was [seventy-two], but he was still extremely active. His eyesight had just begun to fail, although it had not gotten as bad as it did some years later, but he was vigorous; his mind was alert; he was extremely physically active for a person his age, and a very fine-looking figure of a man yet.

Carte: What was his connection with the University?

MacNamara: Well, he had retired from the University of California, but he still was the father figure. O. W. Wilson was the chairman of the department. To all of the people who knew him, he still was the "Chief," and he was the guiding light, not only of the department, but of the society that later became the American Society of Criminology, which he had founded before World War II. All of the people from Washington State, Fresno State, San Jose State, from the University of Southern California where the fledgling police science and criminal justice programs were being developed, were continually coming back to the fountainhead for advice, assistance, etc. He also, of course, was really operating a one-man employment agency in which he started the careers of almost all of the original people in the police science field, by getting them university appointments.

Carte: So he was very much concerned about where his people were going?

MacNamara: Oh, he was. He kept a continuing interest in everybody that he ever met, not just in the classroom, but that he even met in a casual way, but who seemed to him to be interested in the movement for police reform and professionalism.

Carte: Smith gave you the letter of introduction. What did Smith think about Vollmer's work?

MacNamara: Smith was an admirer of Vollmer's work, but Smith had a different background. Bruce Smith was a lawyer with no police experience who worked with Luther Gulick at the Institute of Public Administration but concentrated in the area of the administration of criminal justice, court reform, police reform, rural crime control, state police movement, that type of thing. He was to some extent a police "buff." What he needed from Vollmer and he expected me to get from him was the job knowledge of a man who had been a policeman, who had been a police chief, and had dealt more intimately with the operating police problems and who had done, although Smith had done other police surveys, had done surveys that Smith thought were the kind of thing that New York needed at that time.

Carte: Vollmer was expansive about what he thought policing could become. Was Smith, pessimistic or concerned? Donald Stone, a student of Smith indicated that Smith was much more concerned, even much less optimistic about what policing really could be.

MacNamara: Well, of course, Smith had very strong police establishment connections which Vollmer had sacrificed by his more radical and imaginative and creative visions. After his term as President of the IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police) back in the early 1920's, Vollmer had been considered more of a fringe or outside

MacNamara: person than an insider whereas Smith was an insider in the IACP. He was one of the few non-police officers who was made a voting member of IACP, and he, because of his public administration connections, kept better relationships with the operating agencies than Vollmer thought it was necessary to do.

Carte: Did Vollmer ever say anything to you about that, or did you ever discuss the issue?

MacNamara: No, we did not. When I presented the letter, he merely glanced at it. It was a very short letter saying who I was and what the purpose of my visit was. He seemed to have a friendly disposition to what Smith was doing. I don't know how much personal contact they actually ever had. There were three thousand miles between them geographically. There was an age differential with Vollmer being the older man, having been in the field first, and there was the fact that Smith was not a police officer and almost all of the people that Vollmer had around him were the Wilsons, the Boolsens, the Schmidts, the Leonards, the Wiltbergers, et al. All persons with operating police experience.

As a Mentor

Carte: Was Vollmer reserved, or was he outgoing about his own experiences? Was he intimate?

MacNamara: I found him more fatherly; of course, I was much younger, very much younger at that time. He took a very protective interest. For instance, he was the one who sponsored me for membership in the IACP. He recommended me for the directorship of the police program at the University of Southern California, and in every way he could, after that first casual meeting, he furthered my career and was always ready with letters of recommendation or letters of advice or telephone calls of advice or personal business until just the day of his death.

Carte: That's amazing. He must have sensed in you that you were one of the police reformers, one of his kind of people.

MacNamara: Well, perhaps, but he seemed to nave this warm, protective feeling for a large number of people who weren't as reform minded as I. I think he liked people, he liked to be helpful, and I got the impression that he helped a large number of people, not just the few who agreed with his points of view.

Carte: Some of the people who worked with Vollmer, especially some of the more academic people had commented that he was warm and friendly but that he didn't have that critical sense. He would help people who were reform minded and people who were not reform minded. He seemed to want to help people who were interested in policing. Is that your assessment?

MacNamara: Yes, I would say so. He never interrogated me as to what I believed or what I was trying to do. We had general conversations about various things, and apparently I impressed him with my knowledge of the field because otherwise, I don't think he would honestly have recommended me for so high a post when I was so young in the field. He didn't try to pin me down nor did I ever see him try to pin other people down as to whether or not they agreed with each of the points he made. In fact, I made some critical comments about some of his own books which I thought were perhaps superficial in some areas, and I think largely because in many of his books he had collaborators and whether or not everything that is in those books was actually Vollmer's thinking, that is questionable.

Carte: I have the same problem... Vollmer didn't have that critical sense.

MacNamara: No, he was not a research man. He wasn't a methodologist. He had never taken management science, he didn't know systems analysis or operations research. He was an older man, who in a small community, in an earlier period of time had developed a profile, a picture in his mind of what he would like to see -- the professional police of the future -- without specifying, without detailing exactly what they would do. He thought of better educated police, more all-around people who would feel as much at home in the laboratory and in the files as they would be out on the street. He thought more of the image they would project rather than how they would actually handle a criminal investigation, a mob scene, or a traffic problem.

Carte: When he was recommending people for better jobs, like yourself or O. W. Wilson, whose career was pushed by Vollmer -- I was wondering -- at least in his later years, however, he wasn't that critical of the kinds of people that he would recommend.

MacNamara: No, he was not. It was friendly, fatherly, charitable, philanthropic approach, rather than that he was trying to place disciples who would carry on the Vollmer doctrine, because there actually was very little of a Vollmer doctrine. For instance, O. W. Wilson was much more dogmatic and specific as to what he believed should be done and of course, I disagreed with many of these dogmata.

Vollmer and Wilson

Carte: Did you ever have a chance to see Vollmer and Wilson together?

MacNamara: Oh, many times.

Carte: Could you describe with an anecdote?

MacNamara: Well, the first meeting of what then was the Association of College Teachers of Police Science, O. W. Wilson was the president at that time, and Vollmer was the grand old man. We met at Berkeley, I guess in 1949 for the first meeting of it that I attended as a professional and at which I got elected secretary. There was a very deferential relationship on Wilson's part towards Vollmer, but this was the relationship of all of us who were both younger and, to a certain extent, had been dependent on Vollmer. I thought there was a very friendly feeling. There were no controversies, very few points that if either Vollmer said them, or Wilson said them, everybody else didn't agree on. In fact, it wasn't until a meeting two years later that the first little controversy arose. It was smoothed over very quickly. At that time Wilson had left the chair, and Douglas Kelley, who later committed suicide, was the president. There was a dispute as to whether the organization, which was terribly California oriented with only a few people like Brandstadder, Wiltberger, Leonard, being in states outside of California, should expand; and whether or not they ought to make the membership roles open to persons who were not so limited in police science and had broader criminal justice and criminological interests. That fight was won later and, of course, the organization is now entirely different from what it was then. But, Wilson and, I think Gourley and a few of the oldtimers were, interestingly enough, more interested in bringing in people like Sutherland, Sellin, Sheldon Glueck, who were of his age group more or less and whom he knew and who had a very respectful idea of his contributions, if not of his abilities as a criminologist. Most of them criticized that last book very badly, for example, The Criminal, which was a very poor book.

Carte: Did you ever have a chance to see Wilson, Smith and Vollmer?

MacNamara: No, I never saw Smith and Vollmer together, much less Wilson and Vollmer. They just didn't, their paths didn't meet during the period I knew both of them.

Carte: And their age differences ---

MacNamara: Well, there was an age difference. It's hard to know. Smith was older that I thought when I met him at the time. When you're young,

MacNamara: all old people seem to be more near contemporaries, and apparently Smith was older than I thought he was. Smith was a very vigorous, outgoing, extrovert type. He used to dress very youthful, and he would be what we might call today, although he wasn't in the sexual sense, a swinger. In his appearance and in academic circles, he was not the conservative type that Vollmer was, both in his dress and in his conversation. So, he seemed to me much younger than Vollmer, but it turns out when he died, he wasn't all that much younger. There was over a ten year difference. I had thought there was a twenty year difference because of the different personalities of the men.

Carte: You had a great deal of contact with O. W. Wilson?

MacNamara: Oh yes, right up until the time that O. W. Wilson retired from the Chicago Police Department, we were very closely in contact. He kept on with the American Society of Criminology, and we gave him the August Vollmer Award, which is now a big plaque in the Chicago Police headquarters. Both by correspondence and by meeting personally, we had a very close connection until he retired and went to California.

Carte: Wilson, while he seemed to be deferential to Vollmer and in private contacts, he had much more clear ideas ---

MacNamara: Yes, he knew what he wanted and it was mostly organizational and structural and technological whereas Vollmer's was more this overall ambiance of the police profession. Wilson was shy and reserved. He was quite different from Vollmer. He was not the friendly, fatherly, protective type at all. He was never antagonistic as far as our relationship was concerned, but I never considered him in that way that I considered Vollmer.

Carte: And he didn't have the same kind of disciples?

MacNamara: In fact, people were turned off by him, largely because he retreated from them. He had a few very close people, like Colonel Minor Wilson, Herman Goldstein, but these were not people who were in the original Berkeley group. These were people that he picked up here and there, either from his army career in public safety or in his work with the IACP. General Kreml was, of course, one of his very close friends. the chap who was head of the Northwestern University Traffic Institute.

Carte: We have Wilson's letters and Vollmer's letters, while Wilson was in Wichita.

MacNamara: I didn't know Wilson then. I only knew him after he came to Berkeley.

Carte: That was in the twenties. Wilson wanted to publish those letters as a book because he felt it would really be informative. He called it "Learning How to be a Police Chief by Correspondence." He said it casually on the tape, so I read them, and he was right.

It's interesting that they both come across as very personable men, and Wilson in the letters described to Vollmer some of the kinds of personal problems a man has who is running a police department when he has a different philosophy: he came from reform minded California to conservative republican Kansas.

MacNamara: I never was a man to keep correspondence and always regretted it because I had very wide correspondence over a period of thirty years with most of the people who were active in police reform, not only in the United States but all over the world. But because I was secretary of this society and correspondence used to pile up, we had no principal office and every once in a while, we would give the heave ho to it. Some of it would have contributed to our understanding of the things that happened. He was very decisive, very determined. Where you can see Wilson best is in his original draft of Municipal Police Administration. There are extremely specific statements about things about which there was no documentation or no empirical base.

Carte: I agree with you. If you read his letters to Vollmer and other people, you realize that behind that decisiveness, he had a lot of questions in his own mind, "Should I really do this?"

MacNamara: I would certainly like to read these letters.

Carte: So, he comes across as a person who had the kinds of hesitancy that we expect all people to have. Vollmer told him to keep a certain kind of front in order to survive. Do you have any other anecdotes of anything about Vollmer you think is typical of him?

Personal Philosophy

MacNamara: Well, his relationship with his housekeeper. I think he was always interested that she not overwork, that he make things very easy for her, etc. She kept his house very, very nice for him, and he was sometimes a little irritated when she moved things in his study. Even when he decided to take his own life, he sent her on a message so that she wouldn't be there and made a telephone call to have the police and coroner come so they would find him rather than her. He was always so considerate of what the impact of things would be on other people. In his house many times, when they made coffee

MacNamara: and sandwiches for me while we were talking, it was always a "Please, if it's not too much trouble" type of thing without using those words. It was none of this authoritarian type of thing, "Do this or get that." I thought this was very nice. She was not a young woman. I don't know how long she had been with him, but he treated her very, very nicely.

Carte: Any other anecdotes about his general philosophy towards life? He said in his writings that he expected the things he was talking about to happen in about fifty years. Did he have a sense of intellectual pessimism?

MacNamara: No, I didn't think he was a pessimist at all. In fact, he was an eternal optimist about police, no matter what happened. There was the setback, the big scandal, things of that sort; he always felt that these were artifacts that did not interfere with the continuum. He felt that the fight for the college educated police officer had been won. It was merely a question now of providing the finances and the programs around at the various universities. Even when there were setbacks, when the various agencies that had told him they were going to introduce the two-year college requirement didn't actually implement it. He had the feeling this would be done. I don't remember ever talking about time parameters, but he felt it was the wave of the future.

Carte: Vollmer comes across as a civil libertarian. He says: Let people have their point of view. He did that well into the fifties in terms of people who wanted to stop speakers at Berkeley. Did that ever come through in his personal conversation?

MacNamara: Yes, I found him very tolerant of dissent. Occasionally, he would get cranky at stupidity. I remember once we were having a meeting, and somebody didn't know what the word, "criminalistics" meant, and he gave a very short answer that anybody in his position, I forget who it was, ought not to have such terminological difficulties. Outside of that, in disagreements, he had a complete flexibility, and in the general perspective, he'd be more towards a permissive tolerant attitude than towards a restrictive one which was popular among his disciples in California.

Vollmer and Parker

Carte: Vollmer and Parker, did you ever have a chance to see them together?

MacNamara: Yes, Bill Parker was much younger than any of the others that I mentioned. He was an inspector in the Los Angeles Police Department.

MacNamara: He had been to Notre Dame and had gotten a law degree and had done some teaching in a Navy program. When he came back, Horrall was in his period of difficulties of being relieved as chief, and a Marine general, Whorton, came in as an interim chief, and there was a civil service examination. I was working with Parker -- as one of two people, Jim Fulton and he, both of whom had been associated as adjuncts at the University of California -- in his preparation for the examination. The general conventional wisdom was that Parker would come out first on this competitive examination. Vollmer had been chief down in Los Angeles and had made many recommendations about the Los Angeles Police Department, and Parker knew everyone of them right down to the comma. He had a very good memory. He would take the Municipal Yearbook and he would turn to the police section and know to a second decimal point per capita costs of policing in each of the number of years, ratios of police of population in every city that was listed, and all of these other little factual details. It was quite obvious that when the results of the exam came out, that this was the right way to approach it because he got a much higher mark than any of the others.

Carte: Did Parker ever comment on Vollmer? Did he see Vollmer as an idealist or a father figure?

MacNamara: I don't remember any specific conversation we had about him but he was respectful of Vollmer, and of Wilson in his general approach. In Parker On Police, I think you will find a comment or two. I don't remember specifically, but you will find a comment or two there. Parker was a very tough man. He was a very ambitious man. He wanted to be governor of California. He was a very judgmental, moralistic man. He was a Catholic and of the more conservative Catholic group. He was no way near the civil libertarian, of course, that Vollmer was, but he was very legalistic and if a right was in the law, he would insist that the police respect that particular right. I think the whole legalistic model that Jim Wilson talks about in Varieties of Police Behavior was better exemplified by Parker than by any other chief of police I've ever known.

Carte: Was Vollmer critical of what Parker was trying to do?

MacNamara: I don't think so. By the time Parker became chief, Vollmer was very old and beginning not to pay much attention to contemporary events. His eyesight was bad and what he was trying to do was tidy things up. I remember one day being in his study, he had tremendous numbers of papers, files, things that he had started to write, or started to do, and he was trying to get some order out of them. Whether to send them back to the people who had worked with him on them or to get them published, I'm not quite certain. I think he had this idea for a long time that he was going

MacNamara: to die or do away with himself, and he wanted to leave things in a very four-square condition.

Carte: Did he see that he had advocated something that was being changed?

MacNamara: I don't think he really felt that way. He stayed away from a lot of things. He didn't go to the IACP any more or anything of that sort. I think he saw his career as in the past and that he was to a certain extent sitting back waiting to see what the fruition would be, without interesting himself in the individual personalities except those from the older group that he had been in contact with or people who came to him rather than him making general contacts. I know I was there one day when a telephone call came. Somebody wanted him to comment on a police scandal. I think it was in Denver. He refused to make any comment.

Carte: He did that in private as well as in public.

MacNamara: He was not one for gossip. I never heard him say, I can't think of once I heard him say anything denigratory about anyone else. There were some people he said things in favor of, or he discussed people objectively. But, never like you hear around here, "So and so is a homosexual," "somebody else is sleeping with somebody else," "somebody drinks too much," or "that last thing somebody wrote was plagiarized." That type of thing was alien to him.

Carte: A man who was his assistant for many years, Milton Chernin, thought that Vollmer was overly impressed with people in the academic field.

MacNamara: Yes, he was very impressed with Sheldon Glueck, by Edwin Sutherland, by Walter Reckless, by Thorsten Sellin, these were the people he wanted to emulate, in his appearance --- their thinking. He followed their methods of speaking, their methods of dress. He liked to be considered one of them instead of one of the police science crowd. He saw them as the kind of person he wanted to be if he had had the advantages, the education, that they had. Particularly, this was true of Sellin and Glueck. And they both had very much the same feelings towards him, but they were more looking down from the academic heights at a man who they felt had done a lot for his potentiality.

Transcriber: Michelle Stafford
Final Typist: Sheila K. O'Neill

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August Vollmer Historical Project

John P. Kenney

GUIDANCE TO AN ACADEMIC CAREER

Interview Conducted by
Gene Carte
in 1973

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

John P. Kenney, who has had a distinguished career in police education in California, was interviewed in connection with his personal and professional memories of August Vollmer. The interview reflects Mr. Kenney's detailed knowledge of the role that Vollmer played in the development of academic and professional programs for the police in California.

Interviewer: Gene Carte.

Time and Setting of Interview: Mr. Kenney was interviewed on April 4, 1973, in Newport Beach, California. He recorded his answers in response to a printed outline of interview questions, without direct participation by the interviewer.

Editing: Elaine Carte edited the transcript lightly for grammar and sentence continuity. Mr. Kenney then reviewed the transcript carefully, correcting dates and spellings of names.

Narrative Account of Mr. Kenney and the Progress of the Interview: Mr. Kenney began his career as a Berkeley police officer in 1942. He became an instructor at Visalia College in 1947 and since then has held teaching and research appointments at the University of Southern California and California State University at Long Beach. He has served in management and consulting positions in state, local, and federal agencies in public and criminal justice administration.

Mr. Kenney tells that his frequent contacts with Vollmer began after he became director of the police science program at Visalia College. Vollmer's familiarity with the police needs of the Los Angeles area helped him to advise Mr. Kenney when he was negotiating for a position at the University of Southern California. Mr. Kenney details Vollmer's close connection with Emory Olsen and the program at USC. By correspondence, Vollmer also helped Mr. Kenney when he was teaching at the University of Tehran in 1954 and 1955.

Mr. Kenney describes conversations he had with Earl Warren about Vollmer, specifically about the development of the police science program at San Jose Junior College and the California Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation.

In discussing Vollmer's impact on the Los Angeles Police Department, Mr. Kenney recalls conversations with William Parker and his deputy chief, Richard Simon, about the Vollmer contribution. Initiation of a records system, a juvenile bureau, and suggestions for regional expansion of the department are mentioned.

Returning to memories of his early days in the Berkeley Police Department, Mr. Kenney tells about living next door to retired Inspector Frank Waterbury, who told him stories about Vollmer as a "lady's man."

Mr. Kenney then describes the strong motivational effect that Vollmer had on him. Without Vollmer's encouragement, he doubts that he would have had the confidence to choose an academic career. Mr. Kenney recalls a conversation with Milton Chernin of the School of Social Welfare at Berkeley in which he described Vollmer as one of the greatest idea men he had ever known, despite his lack of academic training.

John P. Kenney
April 4, 1973
Newport Beach, California
Interviewed by Gene Carte

Kenney: I first became acquainted with August Vollmer early in my career as a police officer for the City of Berkeley, the department I served in from March 1942 through January 1947. I had little contact with him during that era, and can recall little of my early relationships. It was later, beginning in 1947 when I left the Berkeley Police Department to become Director of the Police Science Program at Visalia College, now the College of Sequoias, and during my career with the Youth Authority, 1947 to 1950--that I had more frequent visitation with him in his study in his home in the Berkeley hills.

I had a number of conversations with him in the spring and summer of 1950 when I was negotiating with Dean Emory Olsen of the School of Public Administration at the University of Southern California for a faculty position. Vollmer had had a long professional career association with Dean Olsen, beginning in 1923 or 1924 when Vollmer was Chief of Police in Los Angeles. He was thus thoroughly familiar with the educational needs in the Los Angeles area, and with the program of police administration which had earlier been started at the University of Southern California. Vollmer more or less outlined for me the visions and hopes that he had for the educational program, and his perception of the needs in the Los Angeles area.

My immediate concerns, of course, were those having to do with my becoming a member of the faculty with only a bachelor's degree, one semester of teaching experience at the College of the Sequoias, three years as a consultant on Juvenile Control for the California Youth Authority. I worked with police agencies throughout the state. I was also concerned about relationships with Dean Olsen and about my future in the academic community, where I would have to compete

Kenney: for promotion and position with people who held the union card (the Ph.D). Vollmer was most helpful in outlining the quid pro quo's which were to become the basis of my negotiation with Dean Olsen for the position. The quid pro quo's basically were that I would pursue a master's degree, do some writing, and thus would not be hampered in any way in terms of promotion because I did not have the Ph.D. It subsequently worked out that the quid pro quo's were honored, and promotions, salary increases, and so on came along as Vollmer had suggested they would.

Police Administration at USC

More specifically, I think we ought to talk a little bit about the relationship of Vollmer and Emory Olsen as it relates to the development of the police administration program at USC. When Vollmer became Chief of Police in Los Angeles in 1923, one of his first moves was to contact the then president of USC, Rufus B. Von Kleinschmidt, with the request that a member of the faculty provide management training for the command officers of the Los Angeles Police Department. Emory Olsen was chosen, and subsequently organized a series of training classes for the command officers of L.A.P.D. during the years 1924 and '25. As a result of that association, Emory Olsen and Vollmer became close friends. It led to the establishment of a curriculum in police administration at USC, the first courses being offered in 1928.

As far as I've been able to ascertain, USC became the first university in the United States to integrate its curriculum into the regular academic program. Dr. John M. Phiffner, Professor in the School of Public Administration, took over the basic responsibility for planning the development of the police administration program at USC. Consequently, there have been continuous course offerings in the field since 1928, with the program gradually expanding. In September 1950, when I replaced Donal E. MacNamara, who had been on the faculty for one year--1949 and '50--the program at USC was by far the largest academic program in the field of police administration in the United States. It was during the heyday of the post-World War II G.I. Bill, and several hundred local police officers were enrolled in a degree program, particularly at the Civic Center Campus, which catered to public employees.

At several times during the early 1950's I sought Vollmer's counsel, and he was most helpful in shaping the nature of developments at USC. In fact, in 1954 and '55 when I was in Iran teaching on the Faculty of Law, the Institute for Public Affairs, the University of Tehran, I corresponded regularly with Vollmer. In August 1955, just prior to departing Tehran, I received one of the last letters I'm sure August Vollmer wrote.

Earl Warren and Vollmer

Kenney: During the preparation of my doctoral dissertation, entitled "The Administration of the Police Function in California," subsequently published in book form as The California Police, I reviewed many documents in the Berkeley Police Department in order to chronicle August Vollmer's contribution to the development of the police system in California. The essence of that research, of course, appears in the doctoral dissertation and the published book.

One of the highlights of gathering material for the dissertation was an hour interview in 1962 with then Chief Justice Earl Warren in his office at the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. During that interview the Chief Justice chronicled his experiences with August Vollmer in the development of a number of programs in California. For example, we discussed the development of the police science program in San Jose Junior College, which began, if I recall correctly, its first course offerings in 1932. The development of the program had been sparked by discussions between Earl Warren, August Vollmer, and the president of the college. Specifically, as the Chief Justice recalled, it was August Vollmer who finally tipped the scales with the president to begin the program, and it was Vollmer who helped in the development of the curriculum. Warren was at the time District Attorney in Alameda County.

The Chief Justice also talked about the great contribution Vollmer made in the expansion of the activities of what was then called the California Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation. Warren worked very closely with him in expanding the services of that Bureau and developing such programs as the state teletype system, and the addition of a statistician to the Bureau, which was a forerunner of the present Bureau of Criminal Statistics. Vollmer also worked closely with Warren in the development of the first state-wide police training program under what was called the Supervisor of Peace Officer Training, a position located in the State Department of Education. The program was originally headed by George Brereton, who was also an ex-Berkeley police officer. This was in the middle 1930's.

I know we discussed the academic program in the University of California and Vollmer's role there, but I do not recall the conversation with the Chief Justice on this subject.

Vollmer's Impact in Los Angeles

When I was president and a member of the Los Angeles City Board of Police Commissioners from 1961 to 1964, on numerous occasions I discussed

Kenney: Vollmer's impact upon the Los Angeles Police Department with the late William H. Parker, who was then Chief of Police, and Richard Simon, Deputy Chief. Both spoke in glowing terms of the contribution Vollmer had made to the development of L.A.P.D. Although L.A.P.D. had periods of corruption and maladministration subsequent to the period when Vollmer was Chief of Police, Vollmer's blueprint for the organization and programs of the department were long-lasting. I mentioned his initiation of the management training program with U.S.C. It was Vollmer who employed the first statistician for the department, Fred Knowles, who subsequently started the statistical program in the old state Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation. This led to the Bureau of Criminal Statistics which Fred was chief of for a few years prior to his retirement in 1956.

The record system for L.A.P.D. was initiated by Vollmer; that is, the model for a comprehensive records system was initiated by him. He organized the first juvenile bureau for the department. A worthy comment of his vision was that he pointed out to the mayor and city council that the growth of Los Angeles city would be in the San Fernando Valley, and that in due course of time a major regional headquarters should be located for the police department in the Valley. In fact, he was so persuasive that the city purchased a piece of property in Van Nuys for the construction of the facility. I'm not sure that the present regional headquarters is on the exact site that Vollmer suggested the city choose, but it is within three or four blocks and was constructed during the early 1970's.

Randomly I recall other comments made by Parker and Simon. One had to do with continued attempts to frame Vollmer during the time he was Chief of Police in Los Angeles, and the astuteness which he showed in avoiding traps that were set for him. If I recall correctly too, they also commented about his impact upon the examining and civil service program, which subsequently became a model for recruitment and for dealing with the personnel problems of the police department.

Vollmer as a Motivator

Some other random comments may be helpful. I recall one conversation with Vollmer when he was talking about his illustrious proteges, and in that conversation he was very laudatory of the work of O.W. Wilson, but he was prompted to add that his "shining diamond" was John D. Holstrom.

Early in my career as a policeman in Berkeley, in the years 1943 and 1944, I lived next door to retired police inspector (detective) Frank Waterbury from the Berkeley Police Department. Practically all

Kenney: of his career was spent with August Vollmer on the police department. I recall him talking about how tough an administrator Vollmer was, and how he countenanced no nonsense from the officers in his department--at the same time encouraging them to do all the things that they did, which is history. Frank always liked to tell the story of Vollmer being quite a lady's man. And Frank, being quite a wily character with a rough, gruff personality and a heart of gold, who for many years was the Juvenile Officer for the department, saying that the way he maintained his position working days in the Inspector's Division was by keeping up with the activities of Vollmer and his girlfriends, and when on the carpet, subtly letting it be known what was going on!

I really apologize for not being able to be more specific in my recollection of conversations with various people, particularly with Chief Justice Warren, and with William Parker. I've tried to capture the essence of conversations I had with them relative to Vollmer's contributions, and I guess it's the old story that as time passes, memories fade, and this seems to be the case here.

I guess I should cap this tape by giving some general reflections on my experiences with Vollmer. I do recall that after every conversation with him I always felt, as I walked out of his study, that I could "carry the world on my shoulders." He had an extremely motivational personality that was just captivating, and after a session with him you had so many ideas and so much motivation that it just seemed like there was nothing you couldn't do, because he made you feel like you could do anything and everything. I am quite confident that if it hadn't been for his counsel, I might not have entered the academic world at U.S.C. I had real reservations about my own capabilities, and many concerns about going into a university setting with only a baccalaureate degree.

In fact, along this line I recall a recent conversation with Dean Milton Chernin of the School of Social Welfare of the University of California, Berkeley, who of course knew Vollmer intimately. We were talking about my career, Milt being one of my mentors also. I had just recently, prior to that conversation, obtained my Ph.D. I was recounting to Milt my reservations about going to U.S.C. and entering the academic world, and we were talking about Vollmer. Milt made the point that nobody was quite sure whether Vollmer had ever graduated from high school or not, let alone had any of the academic accouterments required for a professorship at a university. In fact, Milt said many times when the discussion came up about education versus practical experience in the field, that is, in discussions in the university, he usually referred back to Vollmer as being one of the greatest idea men that he had ever known, and it wasn't because he had the academic background.

Transcriber: Pat Young
Final Typist: Sheila K. O'Neill

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August Vollmer Historical Project

V. A. Leonard

VOLLMER'S UNIQUE SYSTEM OF POLICE SERVICE

Interview Conducted by
Gene Carte
in 1972

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- V.A. Leonard

INTERVIEW HISTORY

V.A. Leonard worked closely with Vollmer in the Berkeley Police Department, a relationship that continued when Mr. Leonard left active police work for a career as a teacher and writer about police administration.

Interviewer: Gene Carte.

Time and Setting of Interview: The interview took place in Denton, Texas, on August 24, 1972.

Editing: The transcript was edited for continuity and spelling by Elaine Carte. It was then reviewed and edited by Mr. Leonard.

Narrative Account of Mr. Leonard and the Progress of the Interview: Mr. Leonard worked in the Berkeley Police Department from 1925 to 1932. He then took a position in the Fort Worth Police Department. In 1941, Mr. Leonard was hired to develop a program in police science at Washington State University, where he taught until his retirement in 1963. Mr. Leonard has written extensively on topics in police administration. He received a Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1949.

Mr. Leonard begins the interview by reading about Vollmer from a book he has written for young people. Throughout the interview, Mr. Leonard uses readings from this book as a framework for his comments.

Mr. Leonard relates his earliest memories of Vollmer and tells about the difficult entrance examination for the Berkeley Police Department. He describes his off-duty involvement in the construction of a radio system for the department, the first to be used in policing, and the encouragement he received from Vollmer.

Similarly, Mr. Leonard details some of the methods and successes of the scientific crime detection laboratory in the Berkeley department and discusses the development of three polygraph machines. He talks about the fellowship that existed among the police officers during the days of the "college cops." Vollmer's progressive ideas and the respect for him within the department are discussed.

Turning to Vollmer's views on crime prevention, Mr. Leonard recalls a survey that Vollmer supported within the Berkeley public schools that was designed to identify problem children. The survey was used to direct attention toward the prevention of criminal behavior. The work of Mrs. G.A. Lossing, the department's psychiatric social worker, is discussed. Returning to reading from his book, Mr. Leonard lists some of Vollmer's other achievements: modern police records sytem, patrol beat analysis, police training.

Mr. Leonard then discusses his own career in the Fort Worth Police Department, which he resigned to work on a master's degree. During a vacation, he received a telegram from Vollmer concerning a position at Washington State University. This contact resulted in an appointment as head of a new program in police administration.

Mr. Leonard's publications and his contacts with the Charles C. Thomas publishing company are discussed. He relates the launching of the Police Science Series of textbooks, reference works, and manuals. A later series was aimed toward smaller police departments.

The interview turns to personal observations about Vollmer. Mr. Leonard tells about the force of Vollmer's personality and his leadership abilities. He remembers learning about Vollmer's death from a colleague while he was lecturing to a class at Washington State.

V. A. Leonard
August 24, 1972
Denton, Texas
Interviewed by Gene Carte

Leonard: Reading now from Chapter Five in a book that I wrote recently under the title Police Science for the Young American. The book, incidentally, is directed toward young people. It was written with a career emphasis and designed to interest young people in the possibilities of a professional career in police service. Now, for Chapter Five:

> In every walk of life there are men who stand out like a beacon because of the contributions that they have made to the welfare of mankind. Their names are written into the record for all time. In the realm of music, one thinks of such masters of the piano as Paderewski, Chopin, Liszt, Mozart and other famous composers. The literary works of Longfellow, Conrad, Byron, O. Henry and many others are familiar to everyone. Likewise in engineering, law, medicine and the other professions, there are outstanding men whose contributions have set them apart as outstanding leaders in their field.
>
> There are quite a number of men who have outstanding records in the American police field. But it is probable that the most noted of all is August Vollmer. For thirty-two brilliant years he was chief of police in the police department of Berkeley, California. The world literally beat a path to the man's door. His mail included letters from police administrators the world over, seeking his advice and counsel. Many of them came to see him in person. In his mail could also be found letters from men in prison. He had sent them there, but they respected him as a man. Two of them he encouraged to write books while serving their sentences. One of them was Jack Black, author of the book, You Can't Win. The other was Ernest Booth, who wrote the book, Stealing Through Life.

Leonard: It might prove of interest to list some of the contributions that Chief Vollmer made to modern police service:

1. Vollmer's system of police administration attracted national and international attention.

2. He illuminated the way for an emerging profession and launched the American police services into a new era of achievement and prestige.

3. In developing this unique system of police service, he gave to the people in Berkeley the lowest crime and delinquency rates of any city in Berkeley's population class.

4. He also gave Berkeley the lowest traffic accident rate and the lowest cost per capita for police service.

5. In spite of this low cost to the taxpayers for police services in Berkeley, he paid his officers the highest salaries of any comparable police department in the United States.

6. Chief Vollmer was called in as a consultant to reorganize some seventy-five American and foreign police departments, including the police departments in Los Angeles, Chicago, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Syracuse, Dallas, Peking, Honolulu, and Havana.

7. Under his direction the police department in Berkeley became a training ground for American chiefs of police. Many of his officers went out to become police administrators. One of them, O.W. Wilson, superintendent of the Chicago Police Department, is the highest paid police executive in the world today. (O.W. is now retired.)

8. Many of his officers became professors of police administration in American universities and colleges.

9. Chief Vollmer preferred candidates for police service who possessed a university degree. If they didn't have a degree at the time of appointment, he encouraged them to attend the University of California on their off-duty hours.

10. In the early 1920s he took police officers off their feet and put them in automobiles for the first time.

11. He developed and put into operation the first police radio communication system.

Getting on the Force

Leonard: And I would like to digress here at this point: Before I filed an application to take the entrance examination in the police department at Berkeley, California, 1925 ---

Carte: And you were what age?

Leonard: Twenty-seven. Just before I filed my application I was in the radio business in San Francisco -- on Market Street, no less. So --

Carte: Is that how you came about to meet the Chief, through your radio business?

Leonard: No, a roommate of mine at the University of California who later became a member of the Berkeley police force -- his name was Herold Schultz -- and the last I heard of him he was a bailiff with one of the criminal courts in Oakland. I came into contact with him one day and he informed me about a forthcoming entrance examination that was being given by the Berkeley Police Department.

So I dressed up one morning in my finest and went down to the police department in Berkeley and had a chance to meet the Chief and I'm sure I deliberately said just the right thing. I told the Chief that I was familiar with his scientific achievements in the American police services. I told him that because I had read about him, you see, and I'm sure that pleased him. He didn't comment, one way or the other. Anyway, I filled out the application form and I took the entrance examination. There were forty-five men who took the examination, and I thought it was going to be a typical forty-five minute civil service test. That examination lasted three days and parts of three nights. The Chief threw every psychological, psychiatric test in the books at us. The Thorndike Will and Temperament Test, the Army Alpha, the Otis Group Intelligence Test, a half a dozen other tests.

Carte: Was he there for the whole -- for most of the three days?

Leonard: Oh, no. His personnel officer.

Carte: But he interviewed you before you took the examination.

Leonard: Oh, yes.

Carte: You met him before you even took the test.

Leonard: Yes, and there was a final interview after that with the Chief, after the final examination.

Forty-five men took the examination, three passed. I was not the high man. The high man was a fellow by the name of Miller, and V.A. Leonard was second, and Sickler was third. This is quite significant, I think: Miller, who made the highest grade, he washed out in six weeks, and Leonard and the third man filled out their life with a career in police service. Miller turned out to be an "old woman," couldn't get along with people in his shift there in the records division, criticized the system, he just didn't fit into the organization. And the significant thing about this is that despite the fact that the Chief had put together an entrance examination of such magnitude, it let a guy like Miller in. That's a significant thing about it, really, which indicates the amount of research yet to be done in the field of personnel administration.

Leonard's Education

Carte: You were a Bay Area resident all your life, you had been born in the Bay Area?

Leonard: No! I was born and raised in Texas. And when I was eighteen years old I decided I wanted a university education, and I wrote to twenty or twenty-three different universities all over the United States. I was going to major in poultry husbandry, of all things. Chickens! And so I decided upon the University of California, which meant the agricultural branch at Davis, and for one year I carried an eighteen-credit-hour course in poultry husbandry, plus associated courses, of course, in liberal arts. One year was enough for me, and I decided that chickens were not for Leonard. So I transferred to the main university in Berkeley, in the College of Commerce, and among the courses I took the first year was an introductory elementary course in accounting, which I dropped like a hot iron after the first two weeks. I have no aptitude whatsoever for mathematics. I changed majors three or four times, and finally at the end of my sophmore year I dropped out of college and went into the radio business in San Francisco after holding two or three other jobs.

Leonard: To continue with my college career---

Carte: Your later involvement with communications in the Berkeley Police Department---

Leonard: Yes. I'll get back to communications in just a minute. I didn't get back into college until about fifteen years later, and I finished my bachelor's degree at Texas Wesleyan College at Fort Worth and master's at Texas Christian University and Ph.D. at Ohio State.

The First Police Radio Communication System

Leonard: Well, I had had some radio experience, getting back to various communication systems, and one day I walked into Chief Vollmer's office and I said, "Chief, what do you think about the possibilities of radio communication in patrol service?" He reached over and picked up a pencil and he tapped it on his desk like that, and he said to me, "If we just get that over from police headquarters into a patrol car, it would be a monumental contribution." So I went to work. The first thing I did was to ---

Carte: What beat were you working at that time?

Leonard: I was working in the records division.

Carte: Was this extra time or was this part of your regular shift?

Leonard: No, it was extra time.

Carte: So you were volunteering ---

Leonard: Yes. This was off-duty. So I prepared myself to take the qualifying examination for an operator's license, given by the Federal Communications Commission, or whatever it is, in San Francisco. I stayed up more than once all night long studying, preparing for this examination, which was an eight-hour examination. No lunch, and you couldn't leave the room. And Captain Greening came in and congratulated me later. I made ninety-five on the examination. That's for the record!

And so I went to work on the construction of a seventy-five watt Hartley transmitter. First of all, I drew up the plans for a police radio system -- and this is for the record too, it's in the record in the police department of Berkeley -- I drew up the blueprints for a police radio system and made appointments with the chief executives of RCA, General Electric and Western Electric, in San Francisco. I

Leonard: made appointments with them, and I went over there, and I laid the blueprints on their desks, and each one of them told me: "There is no future for radio in police service."

Carte: They felt that the equipment was so sensitive that it couldn't stand in a moving car? What was their argument against it?

Leonard: They just simply lacked the vision and imagination.

Carte: But it wasn't the fact that they thought the technology just couldn't master it, but that even if you had the technology it wouldn't be any use to you?

Leonard: That's right, it's stupid. Yes. "Forget it," they said to me. "There's no future for radio in police service."

I came on back and got acquainted with a student in the College of Engineering at the University of California by the name of Reginald Tibbetts. And we worked together and built this seventy-five watt Hartley transmitter.

Carte: Was he already a personal friend, or did you seek him out?

Leonard: No, I sought him out.

Carte: Was the Chief involved in this at all, or he had simply given you the go-ahead to work on it? Did he know this Tibbetts?

Leonard: Yes, he knew what I was doing. I kept him informed all the time, and it was the Chief's inspiration that kept me going.

Carte: In other words, he was urging you on.

Leonard: He was the driving force behind the whole thing. We put together this seventy-five watt Hartley transmitter and went on the air in 1926 with the first police radio system in police history. (I thought I had a picture of me standing beside this transmitter.) The Chief was a tremendous man, and I'll get back to his contributions here in just a minute. I'm thinking in terms of his inspiration to me toward pulling together the first police radio system in police history.

Carte: When you came back with this report that said that the executives from the corporations in San Francisco felt that a police radio system would be impractical, what was Vollmer's reaction to it?

Leonard: I think it hit him like water on a duck's back. He said, "Leonard, go ahead with your homework," and so we did. Okay! That was the first one in police history. Of course, we all know what the picture is today. Every city, town and community with a population of four or five hundred or more makes radio contact with its officers in the

Leonard: field. Two-way radio. Three-way radio, even! Because there are times when the field commander needs to take over control of a section of the force in the solution of a field problem, to take away control from police headquarters.

Carte: But I think it's very important that at this time you were getting discouragement about setting up a communications system, that type of communications system, your job at the time was in records---

Leonard: Right.

Carte: And you were working what shift?

Leonard: Four to twelve.

Carte: So it was in the mornings that you were working on the radio system.

Leonard: Right.

Carte: In the records division you were under Mr. Greening or Mr. Lee?--- Who was in charge of the records division?

Leonard: Gabrielson. If he's still living, he's a man that should be interviewed too. He reorganized the police department in Honolulu under the Chief's guidance. I don't know if Gabe is still living or not. But if he is, he's one of the men that should be interviewed.

Carte: How did other people in the department think about the idea of having a radio? Did anyone within the department agree with the executives that it really was not going to be useful?

Leonard: Oh no. Everybody was waiting for the time, especially the patrolmen, when they could have an instrument in their car.

Carte: How about other police departments, like Oakland and San Francisco? Were they more skeptical?

Leonard: They didn't---they had no information about what was going on at all. They knew nothing about it.

Carte: So you didn't discuss this with other police in San Francisco or anywhere else.

Leonard: No.

Carte: This was strictly a Berkeley idea that was kept in Berkeley.

The First Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory

Leonard: Right.

Let me read now another of the contributions that Chief Vollmer made to modern police service:

12. The first scientific crime detection laboratory was organized in the Berkeley Police Department under his direction.

And I'll never forget the first case. A man woke up one morning, put his clothes on and went outside to look at some flowers that he had planted by his bedroom window the day before, and he looked down and he saw a brown package and it had some brown string wrapped around it. And there was a white string about ten feet long, coming out to the right and it was burning at the end. He realized what was happening; so with rare presence of mind he pulled out his knife and cut off the burning end and went in the house and called the police. They came out, looked the situation over and took this package back to the crime lab, this new crime laboratory that had just been organized and made operational, and the criminalistics expert opened up the package---

Carte: Was that Albert Schneider?

Leonard: E. O. Heinrich.

Carte: So this must have been 19---

Leonard: It was in the 1920s.

Carte: So Mr. Heinrich was operating the lab.

Leonard: Right. An there were ten sticks of dynamite. The crime expert cut off a piece of string that was wrapped around this lethal package. He cut off a piece of string about ten inches long and he cut this ten-inch piece of string up into pieces about one inch in length, and he put each one in a test tube in a solution. And then put the test tubes on the centrifuge, and after they had spun around on the centrifuge for the required period of time he stopped it and took each test tube off, and poured off the solution so he could examine the precipitate in the bottom of each test tube microscopically and chemically. Which he did. And that afternoon he handed to the chief of detectives in the Berkeley Police Department a report which said, in part, that this package came from a farm on which you will find sorrel horses, Jersey cows, two rare varieties of weeds -- and he gave the botanical names of the weeds -- black and white rabbits, Rhode Island Red chickens, and a fast stream

Leonard: of running water. All of this incredible store of information from a ten-inch piece of string.

Well, as the chief of detectives --- at that time it was Wood, and the name of his son is Gene ---

Carte: Right, Gene Wood.

Leonard: Yes, the same as yours. The chief said to the crime expert, "What are you doing the rest of the afternoon?" He said, "Well, I don't have any other cases on hand right now." So Chief Wood said, "Well, let's get in the car and go out and browse around and see if we can find a farm that meets these specifications." So they did. And they'd find one with rabbits and nothing else. They'd find one with running water and nothing else. Black and white rabbits, Jersey cows, Rhode Island Red chickens, but still part of the combination was missing. But finally they found it. It had everything! And all of them were in plain clothes. They walked up to the front door and knocked, and a woman came to the door. Then another woman, and a man, and then another man. And Chief Wood told them that he was looking for a family by the name of Jones that he thought lived down in this area somewhere, just to get the conversation going. And the more they talked, the more suspicious Chief Wood became. And finally they took them into custody and took them down to police headquarters, and at ten o'clock that night they had a confession for this conspiracy to take a man's life.

Carte: All from this one laboratory ---

Leonard: Yes, from a piece of string.

Carte: Now, this experience, this first example -- how did word get around in the department of something new like this? I guess what I'm trying to get you to talk about are those "crab sessions," or the sessions where Chief Vollmer---

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: Is that where other men in the force learned about what was going on?

Leonard: Oh, everything was on top of the table in the Berkeley Police Department. The information, any new information about anything appeared on the police bulletin, which was peeled off the typewriter every twenty-four hours and which included all criminal cases reported to the department and any developments of any kind. Then in these training sessions every Friday afternoon in the squad room, presided over always by the Chief, he would bring men up to date on things. Meanwhile, what I was doing, it just spread automatically from one man to another on the force, you see. People talked, people communicated, and things got around. That's the way it is.

Carte: Now you had an interest in radio. Were there other people in the force who had had radio experience?

Leonard: No, not that I know of.

Carte: Were you teaching other officers at the same time in a sort of collegiate way about how to --- Were there other people working with you on the force?

Leonard: No.

Carte: So you were working really by yourself.

Leonard: With Reginald Tibbetts.

Carte: With Mr. Tibbetts. He wasn't on the force?

Leonard: No.

Carte: He was just an engineering student.

Leonard: That's right.

The Polygraph for Criminal Investigation

Leonard: Now going ahead with reading the contributions, some of the contributions, not all of them, but some of them, that Chief Vollmer made to modern police service.

> 13. In the police department of Berkeley, California, the polygraph was developed and used by the police for the first time in criminal investigation.

As a matter of fact, three polygraphs were developed there in the Berkeley Police Department under the inspiration of Chief Vollmer. The first one was initially put together by Dr. John A. Larsen, a psychiatrist.

Carte: He was also a patrolman, wasn't he?

Leonard: He was a member of the force. I've forgotten now just what his assignment was.

Carte: He did wear a uniform?

Leonard: Yes, I think he did. He was in uniform. This polygraph -- I remember it so well -- It was a big cumbersome affair about six feet long. And

Leonard: the chart paper on which the needles recorded bood pressure and changes in respiration was a paper band about six inches wide and about six feet long that was coated with lamp black. They held it over a burning gas flame and coated it with lamp black and the needle scratched the verdict of truth or deception on the chart paper. I had that instrument on display in my office at Washington State University for about eight or ten years under plate glass. It's now back with the Berkeley Police Department.

Carte: One question now: Many people have called that period of the twenties the "golden age" of the Berkeley Police Department. You were working with police communications; Dr. Larsen was working on the lie detector; O. W. Wilson was a part of the force; Walter Gordon was on the department --

Leonard: Right. Gordon later became governor of the Virgin Island. Colonel William A. Wiltberger -- Have you run across his name yet? Has he been interviewed?

Carte: No, he hasn't.

Professional Fellowship

Carte: Back to this "golden age," though: Because so many people were working on different projects, was there any competition between the "college cops"? What was the relationship between the individual officers? How would Chief Vollmer be involved in that?

Leonard: The only word that I can think of to describe what you're trying to get at is fellowship, professional fellowship. A bond of fellowship that held a group of seventy-five to one hundred men together. No jealousy, no envy -- total respect for each other. They all operated under the realization that they were a very superior group of men, because of the screening process they had to go through to qualify. A very superior group.

It reminds me of what I found at the Central Police College in Taipei, Taiwan, during the past year when I was over there. Last year there were better than 4,700 young men who took the entrance

Leonard: examination. One hundred and eighty made the grade. So you see, what I was working with over there in terms of a class of seniors and a class of graduate students was a very superior group of young men. And they were all conscious of this, and they were proud, a sense of pride in depth pervaded the organization. Plus the inspired leadership that was always coming down from up above. No competition. It was a work-together operation. And only eight hours a day were required, but most men worked from twelve to sixteen hours a day. Twelve to sixteen hours a day. Always more than eight hours, because after you went off duty you had to come back to the squad room and write reports on all the cases that you had investigated during your tour of duty.

Carte: This sense of --- Was there any kind of competition? All the force wasn't college cops, there were never more than twelve or fourteen men who were really the college cops ---

Leonard: Yes, that's true. There were some old-timers on the force.

Carte: How did they feel about people like yourself?

Leonard: I don't remember any disturbed emotional feeling of any kind. There was Waterbury and some of the others, Chief Wood for example. This kind of inspired leadership neutralized anything that would get in the way of this operation.

Carte: So Chief Vollmer's presence was felt a great deal of the time.

Leonard: All the time. He was simply terrific. You know, he didn't go any further than the seventh grade in school, but he had the equivalent of an Oxford education. He was a scientist! A social scientist. He met all the qualifications.

Carte: He had many friends at the university. Did they often come down to speak to the police? Did he bring them to the department while you were there? Did you see him with these professors?

Leonard: Yes, once in a while.

Carte: Who were his closest associates?

Leonard: His closest crony in terms of these training sessions was a psychiatrist there in Berkeley. It wasn't Jau Don Ball, although the Chief worked with him for many years. Trying to think of this doctor's name, I can't think of it now. But he gave a long series of lectures to us on different types of mentally ill persons. The general public would be amazed at the number of mental cases that the police come into contact with.

More on the Polygraph

Leonard: Okay. We're still on number thirteen of Vollmer's contributions. Larsen put together this first polygraph, and I had a ringside seat at its operation, and I saw it used successfully in hundreds of criminal cases. Then, Captain Lee, who succeeded Wood as chief of detectives, developed a polygraph there in the department.

Carte: Captain Lee was a local man, wasn't he? He had worked his way right up through the department.

Leonard: Right. He's still living too, to my best knowledge.

Carte: Yes, although we haven't been able to interview him because he's been in ill health.

Leonard: Oh, has he? I'm sorry to hear that.

Carte: He felt that when he recovered, recuperated a little more he could ---

Leonard: Oh, I see. Okay. I'm sorry to hear about that. He developed the Lee "psychograph," as it was called. And then two polygraphs were not enough, a third polygraph was developed there at the Berkeley Police Department by a young medical student at Stanford University.

Carte: That was Keeler.

Leonard: Yes, Keeler. Leonarde Keeler.

Carte: He was also a Berkeley resident, though, wasn't he? He went to high school in Berkeley.

Leonard: I think so. Yes, I think so. He paid his way through Stanford University by raising rattlesnakes. He milked them periodically of their venom and sold the venom to medical schools. That's the way he made his way through.

Carte: Most of the police officers on the force in this period, they all lived in Berkeley?

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: Did they live on their beats?

Leonard: No, not necessarily. No. There was no tie-in like that. Perhaps you have a good thought there. But this was not the case. I can see some advantage in a police officer living on the same beat he patrols.

Carte: I know that the officers who were on patrol duty used their own vehicles.

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: Now you were in the records division. Did you use your own vehicle, or did you have a vehicle provided?

Leonard: No, I had my own car.

Carte: Did you get the thirty dollars a month allotment just as everyone else did? Or was that only for officers who were on patrol?

Leonard: I think it was just for officers on patrol.

Carte: So you didn't get --- that was --- of course, that was thirty dollars a month. That was a good piece of money in that time.

Leonard: Yes, it was, in that time. That's right. So there were three polygraphs developed under the inspired leadership of Chief Vollmer.

Progressive Ideas

Now, to continue reading the list of Vollmer's contributions:

> 14. He created in his department the first crime prevention division and brought to head it a woman with a degree in psychiatric social work.

The Chief became convinced that the arrest, the trial and conviction, the jail, the reformatory, and the penitentiary were all trademarks of failure in society's approach to the problem of crime and the criminal. They were all trademarks of total failure, and he recognized the fact that --- or his theory, his conviction was --- that perhaps society should first spring into action during the youngster's early childhood years when behavior patterns were just beginning to take form. And that perhaps at that time in the first, second, or third years of grade school, teachers might be able to pinpoint, pick out, identify, youngsters showing some evidence of behavior deviation and then bring the clinical resources of the community into contact with this youngster and straighten him out and get him headed toward a normal life.

Carte: Chief Vollmer's emphasis on prevention as part of that police function is really something that had not been articulated prior to that.

Now, Chief Vollmer clearly seems to be a progressive in the sense of the historical term -- a man before his time.

Leonard: Right.

Carte: For instance, Chief Vollmer had ideas about -- he was opposed to capital punishment. He had many, what we consider, progressive ideas. Did other people in the department sense that his own ideas about prevention and his opposition to the death penalty, his strong opposition to the third degree -- did those feelings spread to other members of the force? Was there anger at him, or a sense that he was too far ahead of his time?

Leonard: Oh, no! I know hardly of any other way to express it, but individually and as a group they worshipped the man.

Carte: Within the department.

Leonard: Within the department. They worshipped the man. Individually and as a group, the respect for him was total. It's unbelievable, really.

Carte: Now, other police departments in the Bay Area were often critical of Berkeley as being too far out. Did they criticize Vollmer for ---

Leonard: No, no. His press was terrific. That's how I found out about him. That's how I was able to say to him, on this first interview, "I'm familiar with some of the scientific accomplishments that you've made to modern police service." His press was terrific.

And I was never aware of any envy or hostility on the part of other chiefs in the Bay Area at all. As a matter of fact, the Chief was elected president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police in San Francisco in 1923. Now, that measures the man.

Carte: Did he encourage other members of the department to join the IACP?

Leonard: Oh, sure.

Carte: You joined. In fact, didn't you attend a meeting with him once?

Leonard: No, I don't remember --- no.

Carte: But he did encourage others---

Leonard: Oh, he encouraged every man in the department to go as high up the ladder of career success as he could. If it meant going and becoming chief of police somewhere else, that's fine. Or if it meant becoming chairman of a department of police science and administration, that's fine.

Advances in Police Communications

Carte: Now, we were talking about a breakthrough that you had, of putting a radio in a car. That was 1927?

Leonard: 1926.

Carte: That was obviously an expensive operation. How did you get the money to provide this equipment?

Leonard: No, it was not expensive. This seventy-five watt Hartley transmitter, for example, the copper tubes I used in this transmitter were copper tubes from a confiscated whiskey still. And I don't remember where we got this DeForrest transmitter tube. But we developed an interest on the part of some outside people in the project, and they furnished this and that. A few rusty nails, some screws, one thing and another.

Carte: That was you and Mr. Tibbetts.

Leonard: Yes, right.

Carte: When you originally established it, what beat, what car did you decide to put it in and why?

Leonard: It was -- I don't know why -- but it was in the car of Officer Fisher. But we did go on the air in 1926 with the first police-owned and controlled and operated radio system in police history. But I would have to say that at that point we had barely scratched the surface. The transmitter was no problem. But a radio receiver in a moving automobile with constant change of location, that was something else again. Even at that time there were radio receivers in many homes in this country and in the Bay Area. But they were stationary and in a stationary position. But a moving automobile with changing location, road shock and static from vacuum cleaners and high tension wires and other sources of interference, police radio systems had to remain in a static position until 1930 when radio manufacturers developed the first automobile receiver. Then, police radio systems began to go to town.

Carte: Chief Vollmer had established the first signal system throughout the city.

Leonard: You're talking about the recall system?

Carte: Right, the recall system. And -- I believe in the mid-1920's -- he had a bond issue to put in call boxes. In other words, he had an investment in the existing technology in Berkeley which was fairly progressive. Was there not some question that rather than getting involved in this radio he could simply improve the system he already had?

Leonard: No, I made a study of the police recall system in terms of -- say if you were calling Officer #41, on beat 41, it flashes four times and then one time. The average time of response from the time that the signal was turned on on the controls there at the PBX until the officer called in on the beat telephone was three minutes and fifty-seven seconds. I made a rather exhaustive research operation on that score, kept records and all that sort of thing. Well, in three minutes and fifty-seven seconds a criminal offender could be sixty miles away. His margin of safety is pretty well guaranteed within three minutes and fifty-seven seconds. Whereas, with radio, contact is instantaneous, you see.

Carte: When you made this evaluation, did you submit it to Chief Vollmer, and what was his reaction to it? Any technology that reduced the response time, he was in favor of it? Would you say that?

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: How much daily contact or daily encouragement did he give this radio? I've looked at some of his personal papers and he seemed to be very interested in it.

Close Contact with Vollmer

Leonard: Well, I had a very, very close personal contact with the Chief. At the time I came on duty in police uniform in the records division, 4 p.m. to midnight, one of my chief responsibilities was to take care of the Chief's correspondence, and my first duty every afternoon when I came on duty at four o'clock was to take my notebook and pencil into the Chief's office and take his dictation for forty-five minutes or an hour.

Carte: You'd been on the force for --- You went directly into the records division, and did you immediately become Chief Vollmer's secretary?

Leonard: Yes, right.

Carte: You had prior clerical training? Because you were a sophmore in commercial studies.

Leonard: Oh, I could do about ninety words a minute at a typewriter and I could take dictation at around 135 to 140 words a minute; so I was tailor-made for the job.

Carte: So for those years you were working very closely because you were in his office doing ---

Leonard: For an hour to an hour and a half every day. Sitting right there by his desk, facing him. And so often we would branch off into conversation about various and sundry things, and in the process I picked up an awful lot of ideas.

Carte: Now, Chief Vollmer of course had been a Berkeley resident since 1895. Was he at all consulted and involved in local Berkeley politics, as far as people coming to him for advice? The city manager -- he almost was a city manager on his own?

Leonard: No. Well, he was of course in favor of the city manager form of local government because it, in contrast with the commission plan and the mayor/council set up the city manager plan, more than any other, separated politics from administration. Set up a gap between administration and politics. Police officers in the department were encouraged not to belong to any kind of organization, fraternal or otherwise, much less a union, because membership in an organization fractioned allegiance to some extent, you see.

Carte: But, of course, Chief Vollmer belonged to almost every association in the city of Berkeley, as far as always speaking to them.

Leonard: I don't know about his membership.

Carte: No, but I know he was ---

Leonard: Oh, yes. He was always available in terms of public speaking engagements. And so were his men.

Carte: He encouraged his men to ---

Leonard: Right, right.

Carte: But he encouraged them not to join these organizations.

Leonard: Not to join, that's right. In fact, it was an unwritten law that membership in any organization, regardless of what it was, was not in high favor.

Carte: So those years -- I guess this is from 1925 until you left the force, which was ---

Leonard: About 1934.

Carte: In those years that you were taking active dictation, he wasn't that much involved in local city government or in local city politics. City councilmen didn't come in and talk about --- ask him about this or that?

Leonard: No, no. To get a friend appointed to the force? That was unheard of.

Carte: Not necessarily, but maybe to get traffic regulations enforced in one part of the city versus another, or ---

Leonard: He would appear before the city council.

Carte: But the councilmen didn't come to his office?

Leonard: No. My impression is that he would not encourage that sort of thing.

The First Crime Prevention Division

Leonard: Well, now I want to project some degree of continuity in what I have to say. Vollmer created the first crime prevention division of its kind in police history. Like I said before, he was convinced that the arrest, trial, conviction, jail, reformatory, penitentiary -- this was not the answer in society's approach to the problem of crime and the criminal. That we must transfer our interest and our efforts up into the tributaries, the headwaters. During the early years of the youngster's life the behavior patterns are just beginning to take form. And one of the things he did to give scientific support to this conviction of his was a survey of the public school population in Berkeley at the primary and elementary grade levels. He formed a panel consisting of the superintendents of schools and two or three specially selected teachers, the head of the public health department, the welfare department, and a psychiatrist and a psychologist. And they launched a survey to see if they could pick out and identify youngsters in the public school population in Berkeley with problems, physical, mental, social, or a combination of those. Problems so severe that, in the opinion of the panel, if they did not receive clinical attention they would be headed for the rocks in the penitentiary. And at the conclusion of this survey the panel found that 3.5 percent of the public school population at the primary and elementary grade levels were problem youngsters, and in the opinion of the panel, unless this 3.5 percent received appropriate, individual clinical attention, that they were headed for trouble. Fourteen years later ---

Carte: What year was that, by the way?

Leonard: That was somewhere in the 1920s.

Carte: Can I ask you when the panel came up with 3.5 percent, what was Chief Vollmer's reaction? That was a tremendous number of people in the city of Berkeley.

Leonard: Well, the Chief was jubilant because it confirmed his conviction that we need to transfer the emphasis from the jail and the penitentiary to

Leonard: these problem kids. And within the frame of reference of delinquency crime prevention, there's where we can get the job done and reduce the crime rate.

Carte: Did he perceive of police officers themselves involved in this?

Leonard: Right. And I'll get into that. Fourteen years later, after this survey was made, a graduate student at the University of California, Nathan Bodin, conducted a follow-up study of this 3.5 percent. He chose as his project for his master's thesis a follow-up study of this 3.5 percent to determine their present social, economic and professional status.* He was able to run down better than 90 percent of them, individually, and his findings were terrific. He found that 93 percent of the original 3.5 percent were in penitentiaries, reformatories, had had criminal records, or were otherwise community liabilities in one form or another. Now, that was tremendous. Research-wise, that was a tremendous finding.

So, the Chief created this crime prevention division, he brought in this woman, Mrs. G. A. Lossing, a graduate in the field of psychiatric social work, and he permitted her to bring into this new division three or four young women, all of whom were graduates of schools of social work. And I want you to know that I again had a ringside seat in an operation in the field of delinquency and crime prevention that was phenomenal. I saw miracles performed. I remember one particular case where a nine-year-old girl was gang-attacked by seven or eight kids. She was that kind of a girl at the time. Took her under a bridge and let her have it. She was in a home that didn't have what it took. She had parents who didn't have what it took. And she just went on the rocks. And she was picked up in connection with this gang operation and Mrs. Lossing and her social workers made a background investigation of this girl and her parents, school history, medical examination, psychological examination, psychiatric examination. And then this young girl became, so to speak, a patient presided over and served by people like Mrs. Lossing and her social workers, and they changed that girl around completely. And she eventually graduated from college and married a young engineering student and is living today in Pasadena, California, on what any American would describe as a beautiful estate. Who can tell where this young girl would be today if it hadn't been for what happened to her there in the Berkeley Police Department.

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* A full presentation of this study may be found in an article by Bodin, "Do Problem Children Become Delinquents and Criminals," condensed from his Master of Arts Thesis at the University of California, in the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, November-December, 1936, pp. 545-559. Bodin's study is also covered in my book, Police Crime Prevention, Springfield, Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1972, pp. 45-49.

Carte: Was Mrs. Lossing also a member of, did she come to the crab sessions? Was she involved in the whole operation of the department?

Leonard: No, no she didn't.

Carte: The prevention unit was separate from the other parts because it was women?

Leonard: Well, there was a very close allegiance, and a very close relationship between Mrs. Lossing and her division and the rest of the force. But I don't recall her coming in or any of her personnel attending these training sessions on Friday.

Carte: Her unit was a staff function, it wasn't part of the line in the sense that ---

Leonard: It was a line area. I wouldn't describe it as staff. I would say it was line, in terms of the police attack upon the problems.

Carte: Was there any encouragement of patrolmen becoming involved in social work? To go to school as a social worker? To think about social work as a career, as part of the police ---

Leonard: I think there has been since.

Carte: Vollmer wasn't encouraging people to ---

Leonard: It was new at that time, yes.

Carte: Because he wrote an article before the twenties called "The Policeman as a Social Worker." I was wondering if he was encouraging some of his officers to go to school as a social worker as well as to specialize in scientific technology.

Leonard: No, that is something that would certainly fit into the picture as far as Chief Vollmer was concerned, but I don't recall any officers doing that.

Traffic Engineering

Leonard: Okay. Getting back on to Vollmer's contributions from Chapter Five:

15. He introduced the traffic engineer to the field of traffic regulation and control.

Leonard: He felt--among his convictions was the thought that the dynamics of high speed, heavy volume traffic flow was too much for the amateur. And it required qualifications of a man at the university level who was trained in the dynamics of high speed and heavy volume control, traffic control.

Carte: This wasn't a function of the patrolman, it was a function within the police department? Did he see this as a function of the patrolman himself?

Leonard: It was a function of the patrolman on the beat to reduce the traffic accident rate on his beat as far as he could, to regulate traffic on his beat and whatsoever. But the overall traffic problem in an American city was a job for a trained traffic engineer whose primary function would be planning, research and planning, with members of the force carrying into execution the various phases of the plan that might develop.

Carte: Do you know, because you were his secretary during that period of time -- the city of Berkeley was a city that was designed for horse and buggies. Through this period of time we're seeing a sudden influx of cars. Was he under some pressure from different factions of the city to regulate traffic in their area? Was he asked or placed under sort of contradictory demands by different parts of the city?

Leonard: He was conscious of pressures that were put on him from time to time.

Carte: About traffic regulation?

Leonard: Traffic and many other things.

Carte: How did he handle that?

Leonard: He took a professional approach and he involved himself in no kind of action that didn't satisfy his conscience from a professional point of view.

Carte: Can you think of an anecdote or an example of a case where that happened?

Leonard: No, just off-hand, I don't believe I can, but as to further contributions ---

Further Contributions

16. Chief Vollmer drew the blueprints for the modern police record system and for the first time gave

Leonard: police management factual data concerning police problems of crime, vice and traffic.

17. During his reorganization of the Los Angeles Police Department he inaugurated electronic data processing in police service and paved the way for police use of the computer.

And we see today what this contribution ultimately became. Under the control of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, D. C., the National Crime Information Center is the computerized national crime information center and logged into that computer system is information on wanted criminals, stolen cars, stolen securities, stolen jewelry, contraband of every kind and description. So that a police officer in Dallas, Texas, today, can smell a suspicious car here at the curb, pick up his radio, get the message across to the Dallas computer terminal, and in ninety seconds, from Washington, D. C., can have information on this car.

18. Also during his reorganization of the Los Angeles Police Department, he conceived and created the first tactical unit, the mobile task force, in police service.

19. Chief Vollmer developed the concept that the individual patrol beat was the foundation of effective police service.

20. He also developed a formula for beat construction, that is, a means for determining the size and boundaries of patrol beats.

21. He began the use of the competitive examination for the selection of the chief of police.

22. He initiated the single-officer motor patrol.

23. He pioneered police training at the university level.

24. Chief Vollmer was elected unanimously as president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the parent organization in the police field. In appropriate recognition of the man, The Bancroft Library of the University of California in Berkeley has established a permanent collection of his voluminous letters and papers under the name of Vollmeriana. These letters and documents reveal the depth of the man's character and they contribute to a fuller understanding of his service to society.

In the years to come, researchers will find in this collection of letters and papers the evidence that his name and his contributions are written into the record for all time.

Leonard's Career

Leonard: Now. Let's transfer the scene of our thoughts to Lake Worth in Fort Worth, Texas. My wife and I and our daughter were vacationing at Lake Worth. I had resigned from the Forth Worth Police Department to work on my master's at Texas Christian.

Incidentally, you might be interested in this little story because it could only happen to one man and only once in a lifetime. In 1934 I took a leave of absence from the Berkeley Police Department to come back to my home state to finish up the manuscript of a book, Police Communication Systems, which was published by the University of California Press in 1938. Subsequently, I decided to cast my lot with police service here in my home state, and after I finished the manuscript I began looking around. And the opportunity came in the police department at Fort Worth. I had learned that the position of executive secretary to the chief of police in Fort Worth would soon be vacant; the incumbent was a part-time gambler and was resigning in order to devote full time to his gambling interests. So I made an appointment and I went in to see Chief Lewis. We had a conference lasting about an hour and a half. I told him something about my background, and he turned around to me and he said, "Leonard, I'd like to put you to work. But you know too much." So we talked a little further. Finally he said, "You come back to see me again Thursday." So I came back and we had another conference and I went to work the next day. That was on May the 19th.

Carte: 1938.

Leonard: 1934.

Carte: You took a leave of absence from Berkeley after eight years.

Leonard: Yes. So I went to work as executive secretary for Chief Lewis on May the 19th, making out payrolls, answering phones, that sort of stuff. May the 19th. On August the 1st I held the rank of captain in that department, commanding the records and identification division. The man who held that position was secretary for the Police Benevolent Association, a group insurance operation, and shortly after I was appointed on May the 19th, the information began to come to light concerning this man and his operations. He had been embezzling money

Leonard: from the association, buying apartments and ranches and what have you. When this came to light of course he had to take a powder, he had to get out. And when this happened I was all set. I prepared a three-page letter, and it was on Chief Lewis' desk when he came to work the next morning. I really laid it on the line. I could hear him turning the pages while he was reading it. And after he finished he came out and he said, "Damn it to hell, Leonard, why didn't you tell me about all this before?" I said, "Well, once I tried to." So he took the letter into the city manager, and the city manager sent an airmail letter to the police deparment in Berkeley, to verify what I'd put in this letter, and Greening was then chief of police. Jack Greening. And he came back beautifully. Chief Greening said, in effect, "Not only is what Leonard said true, but he neglected to mention ---" and went on to enumerate a lot of other things! So, on August 1st -- May the 19th to August 1st -- I became captain, commanding the records and identification division, a position I held until I resigned to go to work on the master's at Texas Christian.

So that brings us back to Lake Worth. This cabin had a telephone, and we were down on the dock fishing. Somebody went up and answered it, and it was Western Union, and it was a telegram from Chief Vollmer. And at the time he sent the telegram the president of Washington State University, Ernest O. Holland, was in his study. Holland made frequent train trips back to the East, and on a train coming back -- he was an outgoing personality, he liked to sit down and talk to people -- and on this trip back he sat down by a young man who turned out to be an ex-convict. And there was something -- I never did quite learn -- there was something that was said during this conversation that germinated the idea in President Holland's mind of a degree program in police administration. And so he cultivated an acquaintance with Chief Vollmer, had him come up and speak at the university three or four times. They became real close personal friends.

Carte: That's at Pullman.

Leonard: Yes. The president of Washington State University. President Holland later told me, he said, about Chief Vollmer, "Leonard, the man is a genius!" So here we are. I got this telegram saying that President Holland is in Vollmer's study.

Carte: On Euclid Avenue.

Leonard: On Euclid Avenue. 923 Euclid Avenue. I've been there so many times, and my wife has too.

I remember the exact wording to the telegram. "Would you accept directorship of academic police training program at Washington State University? And what salary ---?" I especially liked these words --- "What salary would you demand?" I liked these words real good. What had happened was that President Holland had become fired up over

Leonard: this idea and had sold the board of regents on it and had gotten a salary figure okayed. He told me later that he was a little provoked with me because of the salary figure I wired back because he had to talk long distance to each one of the board of regents to get a new figure cleared. But Holland became fired up over this idea and was down in Berkeley in Chief Vollmer's study to get a recommendation for somebody to head up this program. And I was the lucky boy.

Carte: Had Vollmer encouraged you to come back to Texas, to take your leave of absence?

Leonard: No, I did that all on my own.

Carte: You discussed it with him before you did it?

Leonard: No, he was on a trip around the world at the time. I talked to him about it, though. He had returned from that trip, I talked to him about it before I left for Texas.

Carte: So that's how you --- Vollmer picked you to head this program.

Leonard: Right, right. President Holland came down to get the Chief to recommend a man to come up and head the program. I was the lucky boy.

Carte: Did Vollmer come to Pullman often before he retired? I know he did a police survey in Dallas in 1944, but you were in Pullman by that time.

Leonard: Yes, yes, I was in Pullman. He came to Pullman twice while we were there.

Carte: And lectured to your group.

Leonard: Yes.

Publications in the Police Field

Carte: Now, you mentioned that your book, Police Communication Systems, was published with the University of California Press. When did you start having contact with Charles C. Thomas? Did Vollmer have any contact with Charles C. Thomas, senior?

Leonard: My chief book, Police Organization and Management, that was my Ph.D. dissertation under the title A Theory of Police Organization and Administration. Vollmer told the Foundation Press in Brooklyn, New York, about that, and the head man came to see me in Pullman and I

Leonard: signed a contract. The book has been well received by the field; the third edition was published in 1971.

Carte: Who was the person that Vollmer knew at the Foundation Press?

Leonard: Loren R. Darr, President; he contacted Vollmer in Berkeley. He's retired now. And then Charles C. Thomas, back about fourteen years ago -- they're prolific publishers of books in the police field, as you know.

About fourteen years ago they decided to launch a police journal. Thomas invited me to become Editor-in-Chief of this new journal Police, which enjoyed national circulation. The opening article in the first issue presented the Vollmer story, which I wrote especially for this occasion. Before that, they had approached Chief Vollmer to write a book in the general area of police science and administration, sort of a master text. And he referred them to me. I persuaded Mr. Thomas that the total area of police science and administration was so vast that only a series of books could meet the challenge. As a result, we together launched the Police Science Series, a series of textbooks, reference works and manuals. As editor-in-chief, it was my responsibility to interest and recruit qualified authors in the various areas of police organization and management. A total of some forty-eight books were published in the series.

Carte: There was never any meeting between the three of you?

Leonard: No.

Carte: This was with Charles C. Thomas senior?

Leonard: Right, right. Charles C. Thomas passed away on August 13, 1968, and after his death, his son Payne took over. Subsequently, I interested Mr. Payne Thomas in a series of ten books addressed to the smaller police departments of the nation with a personnel strength of from one to seventy-five officers. Even though the literature of the police field has expanded enormously over the past quarter century, most of it is of immediate concern to the larger departments. The smaller police departments, some 33,000 of them, have been the forgotten man in this respect. These are the titles of the books in this series:

The Police Enterprise, Its Organization and Management
Police Personnel Administration
The Police Records System
The Police Communications System
Police Patrol Organization
The Police Detective Function
Criminal Investigation and Identification
Police Traffic Control
Police Crime Prevention

Leonard: Police Pre-disaster Preparation, the last book in the series, is now on the press. In fact, I finished reading page proof on it yesterday and mailed it back to the publisher. It is my twentieth book altogether. All the others in this series of ten have already been published. And I have also published with them Police Science for the Young American and The Police, the Judiciary and the Criminal. What this book is all about is a critique on Supreme Court decisions affecting the police.

The Thomas headquarters are in Springfield, Illinois, you know about that. He'd be delighted to talk with you sometime.

Carte: Do you think he'd be a worthwhile source to go to? He knew Vollmer so he might be a useful source to get some information?

Leonard: I don't know if Payne actually ever met the Chief or not. I know his father did. But Payne knows all about the Chief. I'd say he would be a useful contact.

Carte: One of the things I was trying with my own research was, in fact, in my dissertation in the appendix; I wanted to list all the things Vollmer had written. This was very difficult to find. I've been trying to find it. He wrote many introductions to books, and I was trying to find those. I thought I might contact Charles C. Thomas to see if he could give me a complete list of the books that Vollmer had written the introduction to.

Leonard: I don't know.

Vollmer's Papers

Carte: My problem is trying to find all the material --- now you've mentioned off the tape that you turned over your papers to The Bancroft Library.

Leonard: Right, I gave them everything.

Carte: What we're trying to do is get it all in one place and get it properly indexed.

Leonard: I'd like to go on the record with statements I made to you earlier when you first came here, that I'm a little disappointed with the manner in which the Vollmer papers have been handled by the University of California library.

Carte: I hope that we can redress that and make sure that they're handled properly in the future.

Leonard: On the other side of the coin, it's encouraging to know that people like you have taken an active interest in this thing and are in the process of giving this thing appropriate attention, getting it organized, like it deserves to be organized. The library seemed to be so enthusiastic in their correspondence with me about what I turned over to them that I gained the impression that they were going to hop right on it and do the job, but it's apparent now that this is not the case, as you indicated.

Some Personal Observations

Carte: In the last few minutes we have on the tape, were there any personal observations about Vollmer, the man, that you really would like to ---

Leonard: Yes, I would. I told my classes so many times, both here and in Taiwan, and incidentally, the name August Vollmer is just as significant in Taiwan as it is in the Bay Area. To a man, when you mention the name they know it connotes a scientific police system. And I would say to my classes over there and my classes at Washington State in describing the man, I would say that he could open this door and walk in and come over and stand by me and turn around and walk out without saying a word, and yet the atmosphere would be charged with his personality. It was terrific. He had a tremendous personality. You could just feel the charge in his presence.

Carte: You mentioned that you also socialized with him,you and your wife. There was another side to his personality, people weren't standoffish ---

Leonard: Oh, no, he was a human being on top of everything else, socially well adjusted in every respect. He visited Mrs. Leonard and me while I was with the police department in Fort Worth, Texas.

Carte: Oh, he did.

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: That was after his around-the-world trip?

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: Both he and his wife visited?

Leonard: Yes, yes.

Carte: While you were on the force, did you socialize with him?

Leonard: In terms of visiting in his home, and that sort of thing? No, to my knowledge nobody did, no.

Carte: Being on the Berkeley Police Department in those years in the twenties was like, I think you mentioned once, like being in an advanced college.

Leonard: Right.

Carte: And out of that came yourself and O.W. Wilson. Were any of the college cops -- did any of them have a special relationship to you that you'd comment about? You mentioned before that the whole force had a sense of esprit de corps.

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: I was wondering if there was any --- Walter Gordon was the first college cop. Did he sense that he was the first among many? He came on the force in 1919, and you came in 1925. Wilson came on in 1923. Holstrom, I guess, was the last college cop. He came on in 1934?

Leonard: I don't remember.

Carte: Was John Holstrom on the force when you were there?

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: He was just a young patrolman, though.

Leonard: Yes.

Carte: Was there a sense of each of you knowing then, at that time, that these men were going to be preeminent in the police field?

Leonard: Yes, I think that Chief Vollmer, the thrust of his personality and his concepts, fired every man in the organization. It was contagious. Something that you don't come into contact with very often. This inspired leadership was a contagious affair, and it possessed every man in the organization. He was a remarkable man, most remarkable.

Carte: Now, when you first met him, though, he was already in his middle years. He was then forty-five, right?

Leonard: Yes, about that.

Carte: Was he still vigorous?

Leonard: Oh, yes.

Carte: He also mentioned in his writings a heart condition.

Leonard: Yes, the Chief had a heart condition. I don't know exactly --- My impression, and this is just an impression, is that it was angina pectoris. I recall on one of his visits to Pullman, I was going to show him the library, we just had a new one built, and it was magnificent. And he was going in and saying that few people knew how to look up information in the library. They didn't appreciate the almost unlimited number of angles that you could pursue in locating the information which you were looking for. And he practically delivered a dissertation on the subject! I remember walking up the steps of the library. At every two or three steps he'd stop. And he told me why -- to let the muscles of the heart rest and relax for a few seconds. So he'd walk up two or three more steps, and he'd stop again. So I do know that that's the case.

Carte: You heard of Chief Vollmer's death.

Leonard: Yes. That's the most amazing thing.

I was lecturing to one of my classes, Police Science 101, General Administration of Criminal Justice, that morning, and the chairman of the department and a member of my staff knocked on the door, stuck his head in and motioned to me. And a member of the news staff there at Washington State had called the department. They got the news on the wire, see. They came back, and he told me about Chief Vollmer, what had happened. And I thanked him and dismissed him and went back. I didn't do a very good job of lecturing that morning! That's the kind of news that hits you pretty hard. Because, you see, since 1925, he was a part of my life. Both in the department and ever since I left. We were in constant communication with each other. Like I said before, our correspondence was very voluminous. And a news item like that was rather staggering.

Correspondence with Vollmer

Carte: In this correspondence, did you often ask --- did you have discussions about technical matters that related to police administration? The reason why I ask that is that O. W. Wilson has kept an exchange of letters between himself and Vollmer while he was at the Wichita Police Department. He said as part of one of the interviews that he was thinking of publishing these letters as correspondence ---

Leonard: Oh, he didn't turn those over to the library?

Carte: -- with the Chief, in other words he said this was almost a correspondence course that he had on learning how to be the chief of police at Wichita.

Leonard: Right.

Carte: I was wondering, in your correspondence that you turned over to the library, were there questions about higher education in policing?

Leonard: Right, right. I remember one letter in particular that I wrote to him and it was a deliberate piece of strategy. I was finishing up on the master's at Texas Christian, and I told the Chief in this letter that I was pursuing my educational program at the graduate level because I felt that sooner or later the time had to come when the training and research resources of American universities had to become concerned with the personnel requirements in the police field. And of course that was like a glass of nectar to him. And I'm sure that letter at least indirectly was responsible for that telegram to me on Lake Worth that day. That's what I had in mind when I wrote it!

Leonard's Activities in the Police Field

Carte: Were you personally active in the IACP? Were you active there in your professional career?

Leonard: No, but one organization I was really active in was originally the Academy for Scientific Interrogation, national organization of polygraph examiners. It is now the American Polygraph Association. And on our way to Texas three years ago, I guess it was, I was booked as their banquet speaker at the national convention in Los Angeles on August the 20th. And at that time I was made an honorary life member of the association. Before that, when the organization was known as the Academy for Scientific Interrogation, I was a very active member. As a matter of fact, at the Chicago convention of the association in the late 1950's -- I didn't attend the convention -- but even though I was not there, I was elected president without my knowledge. I had no idea any such move was in the picture. They elected me president and in the following year I staged the annual convention at Washington State University. And it was a memorable occasion. One of the speakers I had on the program was a retired detective from the Berkeley Police Department, Al Riedel. He was their polygraph man.

I want to tell you, that guy actually laid them in the aisles! I remember him telling about one case where a mistake that detectives and officers sometimes make in an interrogation is to monopolize the conversation instead of letting the suspect -- giving him a chance to talk. You see what I mean? So he was telling about this case, he was grilling this criminal suspect in a rape case, a pretty sordid rape case. And he was doing all the talking. Finally the suspect said, "Damn it, if you'll shut up I'll tell you I did it and how I did it!"

Leonard: Just like that! He rolled them in the aisles, he was terrific.

Carte: I know that you started to publish a series of books dedicated to August Vollmer, an August Vollmer series.

Leonard: No, it's a series of ten books. I had a contract with Thomas for each one of them, ten books addressed to a smaller police department with a personnel strength of one to seventy-five officers. As previously indicated, everything that I've written, everything that Wilson's written, everything that everybody else has written is designed primarily for the larger department. The smaller police departments -- 35,000 of them in this country -- they're a large segment of the police service in this country. They're the forgotten man!

Carte: But I saw a book somewhere that had your name as editor of a series dedicated to August Vollmer.

Leonard: Oh, I know what you're talking about. Thomas pushed Vollmer on this book, Police Science and Administration, and Vollmer referred him to me, and through our correspondence I got across the idea that police service is so complex in all of its phases that one book could not do the job and that we needed to launch a series. So for a number of years I was editor of what was known as the Police Science Series.

Carte: Vollmer's name was in the dedication then because it was his inspiration ---

Leonard: Right. Well, I am delighted that you thought of me, and made available this opportunity to make some observations concerning the Chief and my association with him. He has been a part of my life, as you can well understand.

Transcriber; Michelle Stafford
Final Typist: Sheila K. O'Neill

INDEX -- V. A. Leonard

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

August Vollmer Historical Project

Charles Gain

BAY AREA POLICE CHIEF REFLECTS ON VOLLMER'S INFLUENCE

Interview Conducted by
Jane Howard Robinson
in 1976

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Charles Gain

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Charles Gain, well-known Bay Area police chief, was interviewed by Jane Howard Robinson for this second series on August Vollmer. The interview includes excellent material about Chief Gain's attitudes toward police reform and the influence that Vollmer had upon his early career.

Interviewer: Jane Howard Robinson.

Time and Setting of Interview: The interview took place on December 27, 1976, in Chief Gain's office at the San Francisco Police Department.

Editing: Elaine Carte reviewed the transcript against the tapes for errors and omissions. Chief Gain then reviewed the transcript.

Narrative Account of Chief Gain and the Progress of the Interview: Chief Gain entered policing as a patrolman for the Oakland Police Department in 1947. He was promoted to positions of increasing responsibility, becoming chief of police in 1967. He later served as the public safety administrator in St. Petersburg, Florida, and was appointed chief of the San Francisco Police Department in 1976. In addition to his direct involvement in police administration, Chief Gain has lectured and written on police problems and has conducted police surveys.

Chief Gain begins the interview by recalling his contact in 1949 with Vollmer. After several conversations with Vollmer in his Berkeley study, Gain decided to pursue an administrative career in policing. Gain describes the dissatisfaction that he was experiencing as a young officer in the Oakland Department. Vollmer advised him about the arduousness of effecting change. Chief Gain mentions the problems--brutality, disorganization, political influence--that he perceived in the Oakland department at that time.

Chief Gain tells about following Vollmer's advice and choosing times to talk with superiors about problems and offering suggestions for improvements. He says that Vollmer made him aware how few people within an organization are actual catalysts for change.

After acknowledging that he is in the tradition of Vollmer and O.W. Wilson in terms of professional policing, Gain says that a later development is the recognition of the "drastic limitations" of the police in preventing and reducing crime. Instead, a police chief should be held responsible for efficient management of resources.

The interview turns to the subject of political influence within policing. Gain says that the Oakland department was reformed by Chief Vernon in 1955. He then describes the process of his own appointment as chief in 1967. Although

not the political favorite, Gain was supported by the city manager, who threatened to resign if the city council rejected the appointment. Chief Gain gives examples of the kind of political pressure that can arise, and how he would respond to it.

The subject of resistance to change is raised again. Chief Gain says that police are "intensely traditionalists." He mentions the resistance of the police subculture when recruitment or community involvement are changed, and the dishonesty of the police chief who plays to the dominant community. He reviews some specific changes that he has brought to the San Francisco department. The general topics of police unionism, honesty and sobriety on the force, vice-law enforcement, and relations with the media are discussed.

Chief Gain talks about the year he spent in St. Petersburg. The city council had set a goal of reducing crime by ten percent, which he believed was unrealistic. A more serious problem was open interference in the department by a state senator. Gain tells how he effected what changes he could, including an increase in the number of black police officers. He finally left after being pressured to remove restrictions on use of firearms.

The interview ends with Chief Gains' observations about the direction of American policing. Although basic improvements in police efficiency are difficult to implement, he expresses his belief that, with community education about the police role, a city can reach this goal over time.

Charles Gain
December 27, 1976
Interview held at Chief Gain's office in San Francisco
Interviewed by Jane Howard Robinson

[Gain begins the interview by telling how, as a young Oakland police officer, he had visited August Vollmer, retired chief of the Berkeley Police Department. Gain had become disillusioned with the corruption and inefficiency he saw in policing and was trying to decide whether to stay in the field.]

A Career Decision

Gain: ...and then if I did stay, and I'd only been on the department about two years, I'd have to decide what I wanted to do in the department. In talking to a friend about that -- whether I wanted to pursue an administrator's role in the police department, or whether to be a policeman, that is, an investigator -- he suggested to me that I talk with Vollmer. As I recall, he gave me his home phone number. In time, I called Vollmer on the telephone, which resulted in about three meetings in his home, the first one of about an hour, and the next two, one or two hours in duration. Of course, then I was a very young policeman. I knew practically nothing about policing.

JHR: Was Vollmer at the University of California at that time?

Gain: I think he was retired. This was in 1949. I think he was totally retired at that time. I think that O.W. [Wilson] was at Cal at that time. After the first meeting with him was when I read his books; I believe one of them was about modern policing in America,* something like that. I read them in between the first and second meeting so

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* THE POLICE AND MODERN SOCIETY, published 1936 by The University of California Press

Gain: that I could have a better perspective, and then met with him two more times. The things that we were talking about were the things he was well known for. Some of the needs in policing, the difficulty of changing the police generally in this country as an institution, and bringing about reform in police departments. They were very in-depth conversations. But I knew, as a result of these conversations, that what I wanted to do was stay with the Oakland Police Department as it was at the time, and to pursue an administrative career in place of what you might call an orthodox police thing, where I would be interested in investigations and things of that nature -- as a cop. So it was very beneficial to me. Probably, I would have just left policing if I hadn't had those conversations.

Facing Ostracism

JHR: Was it due to his personality? How did he influence you?

Gain: Due to the things which he had done. He just stated that if you're going to stay in policing, you have to choose a specific goal in policing and then stay with it notwithstanding the arduousness of effecting change, being ostracized within the police department, and things of that nature.

I made notes at that time, and I learned a great deal. I'd only been a policeman for two years, and I was approximately twenty-three to twenty-four years of age; I couldn't really put it all in perspective. But I'd already had a real desire, which I'd acquired in 1947, within six months, to do something to change the Oakland Police Department because it was such a devastating mess at that time. So the conversations I had with him were very beneficial. He was optimistic and at the same time somewhat -- well, bitter is probably too strong a word -- some disappointment in what he had not been able to accomplish because he related some of the trauma that he had gone through in Berkeley in trying to effect changes, some of the ostracism, I think, is the word he used, that he'd received from some of his collegues. He just pointed out that if you pursue a goal to change a police department so that you get honesty and integrity within a police department and effect professionalism, that you're not going to find yourself embraced by the other members of the police department nor among your colleagues generally. So much is a matter of "not rocking the boat."

So we had those type of conversations; I guess about five or six hours of conversations.

JHR: It's interesting also that he was so accessible to a young patrolman.

Gain: Yes. Of course, at that time I didn't realize how gracious he was being in giving me time. Obviously, it was a very altruistic act on his part. So it was beneficial to me.

JHR: I hadn't heard from the other people we've interviewed, the people who were close to him, I hadn't got the same sense that he felt ostracized within his own department.

Gain: Well, I kind of had that feeling. I wouldn't say totally, but to a degree. Of course, within Berkeley it was a different type of environment generally, within that city and within the police department, but I had the feeling that there was trauma and loneliness, to some degree, attached to his bringing about change in Berkeley.

JHR: That's real interesting, because it's probably so: it's logical.

Gain: It's just my own feelings at that time.

The frame of reference that we were talking about was that I was telling him, and I'd only been in the department about two years at that time, that I wouldn't countenance untoward acts by other policemen in my presence. At that time in the Oakland Police Department, in the late 1940's, it was not an uncommon thing for prisoners, arrested persons, to be demeaned, at least, if not physically brutalized in the city jail. I was in the traffic division in 1949 or 1950 when I talked with him, and there was just a total absence of discipline by way of appropriate procedures, rules and regulations, and this distressed me a great deal. It was just kind of chaotic, a lot of political influence within the police department -- I did, at that time I related names -- but nevertheless it seemed they weren't trying to effect change, be they captain or lieutenant. He said, "Well, what you have to recognize is that a person first has to get an environment that is conducive to change, a supportive type of environment, and wait 'til the right time to effect change. What you're going to find," he said, "is that there will be certain numbers of people who will be resistant to that change," and that's where he stated that he found some degree of -- I use the word "ostracism" -- of loneliness and not getting total support for the things that he did. So he was empathizing with the trauma that I was going through then, and was relating that he had experienced some of it, too.

Changes Can Be Made

JHR: And then once he got in a position to change things...

Gain: He did marvels. He did wonderful things at that time.

JHR: How did he strike you as an individual? What kind of a person was he?

Gain: Oh, I thought a very warm, very reflective individual. And obviously very gracious because he spent that time with then a very young patrolman, two years in the police department, who had really no knowledge whatever of policing. The only thing I had discerned in the couple of years I'd been in policing was that there was no orderly process to virtually anything and there was some degree of corruption in the police department. It seemed to me that it was not beyond anybody's control to change if people were willing to change it. So he sat there with an appropriately paternalistic attitude, a very professional attitude, very warm and very open. And he permitted me to sit through--I don't know--catharsis, because it did real good. When I made a statement he would ask me to qualify the statements. So I found him very warm and very helpful.

It may have been that the person who recommended I talk with him had called and provided the atmosphere that I received there. I'm quite sure something like that occurred. "Here's a guy that's going through some problems in the police department, doesn't know whether to stay, and if he does, what to do." I don't think otherwise he would have spent so much time. I was no doubt very presumptuous at the time, but I just called and asked to see him and identified myself as a member of the Oakland Police Department. He set a date and time, and I went over, and I didn't realize then, of course, how busy he must have been. He was a very important person, but he was very gracious, and he spent a lot of time. I think that each time, I don't know how we disengaged ourselves from the conversation, but I came to realize that there were telephone calls, and volumes of papers around the study that we were in, the library, and I was impressed that he was a pretty busy guy, and here I am taking up all this time.

I'll tell you what I concluded from that, not knowing yet the significance of the whole thing, was that you could effect change if you had a belief and you stuck with it. Because he had done it, he had done wonders in policing, and shown that it could be done, notwithstanding the very devastating, unsupporting environment that was in the Oakland Police Department. Frankly, if I had not talked with him, I probably would not have stayed in the Oakland Police Department. He had a very, very strong influence because my goal then was literally in time to reform the Oakland Police Department in whatever way I could contribute to that reform. I wouldn't have stayed there if it hadn't been for Vollmer. There was no one in the police department I could talk with at that time.

I don't know why I went into policing. I had never thought about being a policeman; I don't know the date when I decided to go into policing. So it wasn't something where, in becoming a policeman, I was fulfilling some long pent-up desire. It was a matter of having gone

Gain: into the police department, based upon previous experience with the police or knowledge of policing; I didn't know why, still don't know. I talked with him, and I really got a solid feeling from him that this is what I want to do, but I don't want it to be done the way it's being done now. Somehow, I want to contribute to that change over time.

Starting to Unload

The number one thing he stated to me, and which I exercised many times thereafter, was at particular times, when I thought it was propitious, to let those persons know how I felt about whatever condition it may be, rather than hold that in. And I did that many many times. I think it was about 1953 when I first did it. I was a sergeant in traffic, and it was a chaotic mess. The individual, then captain of traffic, who later became chief, his name was Wyman Vernon. I finally had enough. I went and talked to him about the mess the traffic division was in. After all, he was running the thing...

JHR: You were one of his staff?

Gain: I was one of his staff; I was a sergeant in that division. I went in and just unloaded one morning. What precipitated my doing it was this: Wyman Vernon became quite a professional and transformed the Oakland Police Department. But as captain of traffic, he seemed to be just kind of going along with the winds, as it were. He had a very stern countenance. I knew he was a very warm individual because I had talked to him privately on numerous occasions. When he walked around, he always walked like he was going to break into a run, always had something on his mind.

And one morning he walked into the traffic division--I was a desk sergeant--at eight o'clock in the morning; he walked in, and he said, "Sergeant, if you would smile more often, then it might be a happier place around here by your appearance." He said that, and I reflected: Now is the time to unload. Okay. So I had his secretary ask for an appointment, and I went in there and unloaded for a half hour about what a lousy division he had, people coming to work late, that there weren't satisfactory rules and regulations, procedures, and on and on, and why in the hell didn't he do something about it? He turned the tables on me and said, "Okay, we need rules and regulations; you do it. You do it in such a way that no one knows you're doing it because right now you're looked upon as an oddball in this division." He said, "Everyone thinks you're cold, they know you won't countenance any improper conduct in your presence; so don't you do it, engineer someone else to do it." And I did. The person I engineered to do it was a co-sergeant who later on became chief. I succeeded him as chief. But anyway, that's how I started unloading. And thereafter when I got something on my mind, I just quickly developed a plan--that one was a fast plan, as you can tell--then made suggestions.

JHR: And that was an idea where Vollmer said....

Gain: If you have something on your mind, think it out, identify the problem, analyze it, and then don't hesitate. If you feel firm in your convictions, then tell the person who can do something about it. Tell him. You'll find many times that they will be receptive.

I was amazed when I got through talking with Captain Vernon. Because I just went in and said, "May I talk with you?" And he said, "Yes." I said, "You say that I have a cold countenance. You have a reputation for being cold and aloof with so and so. Why don't you effect some rules and regulations in this division? You're the captain. I know the whole police department is a mess. There's Chinese gambling going on in three district stations, and all this kind of business. But you could do it. So why don't you straighten things out?" He said to me, "Well, you can only do those things as the captain of a division that the environment will permit. Someday there may be a different chief." I didn't realize at that moment that he was thinking about himself in the future, perhaps, or someone else. "You can only do those things that are within your control." Then he asked me more about what I meant by needed procedures and rules and regulations, and I told him in depth. It was about a two-hour conversation. And I laid the whole thing out. He said, "Okay, you do it. But get someone else to be the chairman of the committee to develop rules and regulations, and present them to me."

Well, thereafter during my career I went back to him, and we established a wonderful professional relationship. He was chief until 1959. His successor, Toothman, had been a deputy chief. At the time I was sergeant, Toothman was a lieutenant in that division. So each time throughout the years, all the time that I was a subordinate of whatever rank -- sergeant, lieutenant, captain, deputy chief -- in the Oakland Police Department, if I would have things on my mind, I would tell the chief or the deputy chief. And I mean not tell them off, but identify the problems.

Perseverance

A lot of this just came from Vollmer. Persevere, if you feel you're right. Make your case, recognizing that not all the time will your suggestions be accepted, but sometimes they will. And then he said something else, too, that was very important: You're going to find throughout your professional career, in the Oakland Police Department or wherever you may be, that perhaps only two, three, or four persons will be the catalysts who are effecting change. You'll find that the mass of people will not be. I sure found that to be true. Throughout the years.

JHR: But I take it that he said to persist anyway.

Gain: Oh, sure. It's the only thing you have to do. He said that you'll find

Gain: that whoever is head of the organization, if he's doing the proper thing, he'll be one who is effecting change, now give him support. So among his top people, he'll have one or two. And somewhere down below he'll have one or two. Sure, he said that you'll find that in policing, just because of the nature of policing, because it's such an imprecise art, that in a police organization, two, three, or four persons at the most will constantly strive to effect change.

In spite, sometimes, of the community, although they like the results of it, but as far as their recognizing the need for change and supporting it actively while it's being effected, not too many. Within the police department not many at all. Although at times they will come to recognize the benefits of it. And that sure turned out to be a truism.

Limiting Factors

JHR: Would you place yourself in the same tradition of police administration as O. W. Wilson and Vollmer? We're looking into how the profession is growing and changing, and what you carry from the past, and what you don't.

Gain: Well, I think there may be a difference. I don't recall, of course, that I have reread Vollmer's material, as far as its philosophy, nor Wilson's, for years and years. I think that as far as carrying on the tradition of O. W. Wilson and Vollmer, as far as advancing policing professionally, to the extent it can be, yes, I would be in the same mold. I think that in regard to their optimism about what policing could become -- technological applications, whether it be in the records field or with lie detectors; in administration, to experiment with the latest management models or whatever they may be at a given time.

But I think what we've come to recognize in policing are the drastic limitations that the police have insofar as accomplishing what was once thought to be the mission, and that's preventing and reducing crime. Because what has been validated is that regardless of the number of police personnel or the technological refinements of whatever nature, that because of the nature of criminality, the police have a very limited influence over crime, a very limited influence. We can improve response time and things of that nature, but the nature of crime is such that the police are very limited in what they can do. I think professionally what it amounts to is getting all the latest technological advancements and the greatest productivity we can. Ultimately what a police department has to be held responsible for, particularly the chief of police, is the efficient management of resources: putting personnel where problems are, particularly serious crime problems; implementing programs needed by the community, whether it be family crisis intervention, landlord-tenant

intervention, hostage negotiations, or whatever; and then the chief has to be held responsible for the management program, the implementation of resources.

The police simply do not have the capability, because of the underlying nature of criminality, to prevent and reduce crime. Now that's what's been validated in this country. I think that is accepted by modern police administrators, because that's a fact of life. If we still have a situation today where any police administrator, in any city where there's a high quantity of crime, feels that if only given the resources, or if only give a change in procedural law that the police can prevent and reduce crime, then I think we delude ourselves. Experience has not validated that at all.

JHR: That's a big realization. That's a big change, I'd say, from Vollmer's thinking.

Gain: Well, yes, it's a big change.

With Vollmer, with [William] Parker, with O.W. Wilson -- I think until O. W. Wilson got to Chicago; maybe then he recognized and had a change in thought -- it was felt that if only we could professionalize the police, have better educated police and better technology, whatever it might be, we then could uniquely reduce and reverse the crime problem. Experience hasn't shown that, hasn't shown that at all. I think that's a switch. So we still have to deal with this thing. We have to have the qualified policemen, whatever that may be, and better educated policemen, to the extent that education relates to the content of the job, and all these technological improvements. But we have to recognize that we're in a very frustrating business, which is not within our control, and that is controlling the crime problem. It simply is not, and as long as those underlying factors that give rise to criminality exist in the city -- whether it be unemployment or family deterioration or the attitudes of people -- as long as those ingredients are there, then the police simply cannot stop crime, let alone reverse that crime rate.

Politics for a Police Chief

JHR: What's your perspective on the question of politics and the police? Vollmer came up in the 1920s when there were really endemic political problems in policing.

Gain: This is one that always interested me. In Oakland the police department was reformed by Chief Vernon in 1955. Corruption was done away with. It became a typical professional and legalistic police department. A lot of emphasis on managerial efficiency, on technological applications, proper

Gain: demeanor by policemen, and whatever. But politics was still an influence. The city manager from Richmond, Wayne Thompson, came to Oakland, and I'm assuming because he appointed Vernon that he had a free hand in the responsibility for cleaning up that police department. And they did. Except I know that Vernon did not have freedom from politics in that at least one, if not two, of the deputy chiefs that he appointed were dictated to him. So he didn't have that freedom.

His successor -- Vernon retired about 1959 -- his successor still had problems with political intervention and influence in the police department. The next chief of police was appointed in 1966. I had been deputy since 1963. For twenty years, ever since 1953 when I talked with Vernon, who was then a captain, I related intimately and professionally with all the chiefs of police. So I knew intimately what was going on as regards influence from City Hall. I know that the chief of police who was chief for eighteen months preceding my appointment -- he died of a heart attack in 1967 -- very commonly received telephone calls from city councilmen.

When I was appointed chief I was not the political favorite. No one, literally, except one person, called the city manager on my behalf. That one person who did was known as a radical in Oakland at that time. As far as the city council, my name never came up when they dropped hints to the then city manager. My predecessor died of a heart attack about September 3rd. He had appointed me the acting chief when he went away to Philadelphia for an IACP conference. So I remained acting chief, and I was appointed chief of police on September 29th. The city manager, Jerry Keithly, he is now retired, appointed me knowing that I was not the political favorite, knowing that I was not the organizational favorite, but because I'm a very straight-type administrator. I play no favorites whatever, that's what I call a principle. But when it came to the people then, in that one-month period, those who wanted to be chief, a lot of them were politicizing to do it, having businessmen call the city manager, having businessmen call the city councilmen. Some were even getting political persons outside of California to send telegrams or whatever. I did none of that. I just took the position that the city manager, who was appointed in February 1966, that we'd related enough to one another when I was the deputy chief that he knew me, my strengths and weaknesses, so that if he wanted a professional chief he would appoint me. If he didn't want or couldn't appoint me, for whatever reason, fine, then I wouldn't be chief.

I came to know that on the day he appointed me, he went into a city council executive session and said to the council, "I'm going to appoint Charles Gain as chief of police. I will now leave the room so that if that is not acceptable to you then you can vote to get another city manager." That's a fact.

JHR: That's support!

Gain: They said to him: Okay, don't get excited. So I was appointed chief of police.

Gain: From the day I was appointed, September 29th, there was never any political influence in the Oakland Police Department. Absolutely none. I wouldn't countenance it.

JHR: But before, people would call up and say, "Don't go after this or that," or what kind of influence?

Gain: Oh, I think it was a matter such as being in the office with my predecessor many times and Councilman X -- I've got real names in my mind, but I'll call him Councilman X -- would call on his private line while I was in a conversation with the chief. It would be a matter of parking problems here or there, talking about some community issues that related to the police and saying that his feelings were so and so, or perhaps a transfer of certain persons within the police department. Relatively insignificant things, but nevertheless politically influenced, where he had to talk with him. Or if there were crime problems, whatever it may be, the councilman would call, and several of them did call him. It was a worrisome thing to him. And I know in conversation with him -- and this is to me the real ultimate test politically of a chief of police -- we would spend some time after six o'clock at night, two or three hours, just talking, hypothesizing.

One conversation we had was this: I don't know how it got going, but we were talking about if politically it was decided that there would gambling in Oakland, would the chief of police go along with it? Well, he said to me, "Yes, Charlie, " because if politically it is determined that there's going to be gambling -- and that would be the word, "politically," because as it was in pre-1955 Oakland, you had Chinese lotteries ....

JHR: By ordinance, or just by what?

Gain: No, no, by word of mouth. In other words, you don't enforce as was done in pre-1955 with Chinese runners and Chinese lotteries; you just don't do it. Politically, it was countenanced. Ultimately, of course, it's City Hall that determines whether you're going to have corruption in the police department. It's tolerated. Sometimes it's condoned. So we were talking along that vein. I said, "Would you stay if you got the word that you had to open up gambling in any form?" His answer was -- and he was a good thinker -- and he analyzed it this way: "Well, yes, I would, because after all if I didn't there would be another chief who would have to," so he might as well stay with it. And he said, "What would you do?" And I said, "I wouldn't do it. I would quit." I said, "I would not just go out silently, but I would expose why I'm going out and state it emphatically that this cannot be countenanced, and as a chief I'm not going to stay." That might not influence the gambling taking place, but then, if every person that they appointed as chief did that, it would have a heck of an influence because they probably couldn't have gambling.

Not only that, but what I would do -- you know, we're just talking --

Gain: I would go to the district attorney, say what is happening, go to the attorney general, bring all the pressure I could against the politicians who would let that take place. To me, that would be kind of an ultimate test of whether a guy would stay or not.

But I had no politics. After I was appointed chief, I got a telephone call from one of these persons within four days on that private line -- I had the number changed thereafter. Councilman X called, and he used to call my predecessor two or three times a week, and he said, "I just wanted to call to let you know you have my support, and if you don't mind I'll call you periodically," and I said, "No, this is the last call. Under our charter you have to deal with the police department, all administrative functions under the city manager, through the city manager, except for the purpose of inquiry." And I said, "Therefore, you're not inquiring, I don't want any inquiries. Put them in writing as other citizens do, because no citizen has access to my private line unless I give it to them. You're not going to get it. That's the end." So, that was the end. The end of him. And he became one of my great supporters later on for very objective reasons. I got two other calls from city councilmen who said about the same thing, and the third one who called me, called about a traffic ticket. I've forgotten whether he got it, or someone got it; it was alleged to be unjust. So I said, "Go to court. Tell your friend" -- it was a friend of his -- "go to court and contest it in court. Don't ever call me again over something like this."

Of course, each time I did this I told the city manager, and the day the city manager appointed me we talked for several hours, and I told him I would not countenance any of these types of political acts. So he understood it. We had this reinforcing mechanism, an explicit understanding, that anytime I had conversations with a city councilman, I would always tell him immediately after the conversation what it was about. Even though we met socially. I'd just reflect what it was.

So I never had trouble with politics in the city of Oakland -- never. Nor do I have it in San Francisco. Nor did I have it in the short time I was in Seattle. I had it in Florida, but I quit because of it. I just wouldn't countenance politics influencing the manner in which the police and the fire departments were run. And I think that one of the greatest problems we have today, still, is that politics do determine what occurs within a police department. There's political intervention so far as transfers are concerned, personnel, many times promotions to ranks above civil service, deputy chiefs, or whatever. I think that too often, politics is a determinant. To me, it's a very simple problem. The chief of police should accept the position only with the explicit understanding of no political intervention whatever, and then make sure that that is the situation all the time he's chief. It's easy to do it.

JHR: But it's interesting that you've been so successful in doing it.

Gain: Oh, absolutely successful. Never does a political determination influence or govern my actions. Politics do not influence transfers, promotions, or anything else. Never. I was six years as chief of Oakland and not once did politics determine it. So it is a simple matter, as long as you have the explicit understanding before you accept the position that that's the way it's going to be. And then whenever -- like with those telephone calls I had from that councilman-- you keep reinforcing it. As long as the person who appoints you supports you, then you can do it. Of course, my position is that anytime the person or persons who appoint me will not support me in being nonpolitical, then I won't stay. I just pick up my marbles and go.

I took that position in Oakland. I had five or six years to go when I was appointed before I'd be eligible to retire. There, I could have been demoted -- that would not be tenable at all, to be demoted -- I would have just plain quit. And I would have lost my retirement. But I call it risk management, and that's the way I operated. And I would have quit. Even though I would have given up, it wasn't a vested retirement system; the only thing I would have got out of it was what I put into it. But that's the only way you can operate.

So this whole thing with politics is a very simple thing. Just make your position known, that you're going to operate based upon principle and conviction, fairness, and then do it. Our big problem with policing is that so many times it's a political decision that's made to appoint an individual, which in itself is not bad, but that person who's appointed takes the job with the understanding that there's going to be a political influence and intervention. So you can very easily end it. You just have to get a guy with guts, that's all. And principles to go ahead and do the job.

Recruitment Standards

JHR: Vollmer believed that police officers should be recruited from the "best" in the community, and he meant this in the traditional sense of merit. Would you expand this to say that the police have an obligation to represent the community -- minority, women, gays, etc. -- and thus go beyond the simple principle of wanting to recruit the "best?"

Gain: Well, police officers should be appointed based on merit, I believe that. There's been a big change in policing based upon law and the constitution, where what we have to do today and which is only realistic, is to have entrance requirements based upon the content of the job. Where there's been a big change in policing has been that we simply can't validate as we once thought we could -- that a person had to have a college degree in police administration, criminology, or something else in order to be a policeman -- because the content of the job is required. We want persons

Gain: who are adequately trained, and so on, but it has to relate to the job.

I went through this in Oakland because of the intense minority nature of the city over there. What we have to do is have realistic standards, validated, and then appoint people based on the content of the job. The same with promotions. I feel strongly, of course, that a police department should be reflective of the community when it comes to minority group persons, including those of certain sexual orientation, and including having women, of course.

Resistance to Change

JHR: We talked a little about this question: Why is it so hard for an innovator -- even from within -- to gain acceptance from people in the police establishment? Is it because of the political and social views of police leaders, or is there something else about the nature of the police establishment that discourages change? You didn't say why you thought it was so hard to effect change. What factors are there?

Gain: There are so many factors. One, in effecting change in a police organization, is that you've got the phenomenon of resistance to change per se. People become very comfortable working at a certain norm, working under a certain police system, in the individual departments. When it comes to changing, any change, you find some degree of resistance. Particularly because policing was so long viewed with having only college graduates, for example, that when you modify the entrance examination based upon validation, then some say you're lowering the standard. When you do that, you're going to need to change. Simple things like changing colors of police cars. Police are intensely traditionalists. Now, here, there was no problem within the police department changing colors of police cars. In Oakland, when I did it in 1969, there was a trauma. Well, there are these symbols. There's a self-identity of a police officer. So much, in many police departments, of being a crime fighter. So all these symbols -- seven-point badges, if that be the case, or black-and-white police cars, or a certain shield, patch, they have on their shoulder -- those become a matter of the working ego of the officer. so if you change those, you've got real problems.

When it comes to some of the more important things -- of changing procedures and systems to get greater efficiency and effectiveness -- people have to work harder, and there's a resistance to that. When it comes to getting involved in programs based upon the policing needs of various subcommunities -- family crisis intervention programs, landlord-tenant intervention programs, or recruiting minority group persons -- you're dealing with an institution that has an intense subculture, so when you try to change, you meet with that resistance.

Now, what happens in my experience is that as chief of police, you

Gain: always think over a plan to change; you think of the legal implications, political, organizational, civic, whatever it may be. After you've gone through all that, getting as much input as you can within the department, you determine that the change is needed. Then what you find, what my experience has been, is that you damned near do it alone. Because of people, just because of the human nature of wanting to affiliate and to have all these relationships, my experience has been that you fight your whole organization in doing it. I was a member of the Oakland Police Department for twenty-six or twenty-seven years, and I effected change as a sergeant and as a lieutenant in charge of certain organizational units, as a captain in charge of the investigative bureau, and whatever it might be. And I effected change at whatever rank, and found ipso facto that I was ostracized. You just can't be one of the boys and effect change at the same time.

Maybe I have a personality defect too. But I think what's been shown in policing is that the police administrator who does effect change, getting as much participation as he can, is still going to be somewhat of a loner in doing it.

JHR: You've repeated Vollmer's experience, in that way. You had some of the same personal experiences, it seems.

Gain: I think that any chief is going to have them if you're honest and principled, and you do what's best ultimately for the community.

Sometimes the chief can play games; for example, if you play to the dominant community, and you say things philosophically that identify with them, to the detriment, perhaps, of one or more of the minority communities, you still can bring about change in the police department that policemen wouldn't ordinarily like, as a trade-off. If philosophically you're identifying with them, then they'll go for these organizational changes. But I don't think that's honest, if you're doing it deliberately. That's playing to the dominant community, which would be reflective of the majority police personnel, usually. So you try to trade off, and you win them that way, usually by posturing and making statements that the dominant community likes, sometimes vis-a-vis the minority community.

You might take your policemen with you that way, and then they'll more readily accept internal changes that ordinarily they would not. But to me there's a hell of an inconsistency and dishonesty there. So my problem is I go along philosophically and organizationally [tape unclear], but I do the same thing. And I get in trouble at times with the community and the police department. And sometimes more than one segment of the community. But if change is needed, then you've got to do it.

Identifying with the Community

JHR: Vollmer, in his writing and in his practice, emphasized both the importance of working closely with the community and, in apparent contradiction, the importance of detachment and objectivity on the part of police officers. What are your thoughts on reconciling these apparently conflicting demands on a police chief?

Gain: It's absolutely essential that you've got to work with the community. To me the essence of policing is to provide police services and programs based upon community needs. So you have to identify all of the communities out there, be it business, student, black, latino, women, or whoever it may be. And then you've got to get very specific, of course: What police-related problems is the business community afflicted with? Now, you will find in dense business areas they want walking policemen, and visibility of policemen in cars and on foot, and they want them to drop in the stores at times. So the thing to do is, given the resources, do the best you can, communicate with the business community, tell them what you can do based on the resources, and get policemen walking on foot to the extent that you can. But be very honest with them: That given the overall demands upon the police for services, this is what we can and will do. But don't give in just to curry favor with the business community. And then do the same, of course, with the student community. You have to know what their thinking is at a given time and relate to them as effectively as you can. The same with the latino community, black community, whatever it might be. To me that's the whole essence of policing. If you don't relate with the community in those ways, then you simply cannot have viable policing. Because unless the community understands what your goals and objectives are, and recognizes that you're doing the best you can to provide the services they need, whether as a homeowner or a businessman, a student or whatever it might be, then, of course, you're not doing your job in policing. So you've absolutely got to identify with the community.

JHR: I'm curious -- this is just an aside -- I gather that this family intervention and those kind of things are part of the direction we're going as a result of community input?

Gain: Well, we're now developing -- Some people are developing, and we're cooperating with them -- a federal grant for a crisis intervention program, because one is needed here, and one has long been needed here.

Implementing Change

Right now in the San Francisco Police Department I've been here approximately a year, a year next month -- and what I've spent about a year doing is to stop all the politics. There are no more politics

Gain: in the San Francisco Police Department insofar as appointments or transfers are concerned. None whatever. And, of course, this police department was known for it for the last sixty years. That is over, literally.

Another thing is that this was a police department of empires where we had a traffic bureau that was looked upon as a separate and distinct entity; inspector's bureau, separate and distinct; and then nine district stations, separate and distinct; and the chief's office. And I guess there are maybe a couple more. A lot of fragmentation. A lot of it effected over the years by political appointments. There was some layering, and who was in favor based upon nationality, or religion, or race, whatever it might be. All that is over, so that now we have one police department; it's recognized that there's a chief, and three deputy chiefs, and there are captains, and it's all based upon fairness and this type of thing. That's taken a long time to achieve.

It's institutionalized now, and as long as the present police commission and chief of police are here, it's known, that's the way it is. I never get telephone calls from people asking favors. I never have, because I took so much trouble when I first got here, and so did the police commissioner and the mayor, to state that we're going to operate on a professional basis. Well, that takes a long time.

And then I spent eleven months meeting with business persons and various people in the subcommunities, minority and whatever, in order to tell them what we're doing. We opened up the police department. We have a community advisory council that's some fifty or sixty persons. They've established task forces on training and on women in policing -- we have female police officers --, on prostitution details, and whatever. So the police department has opened up. More and more there's a recognition that we have a top management team -- the chief, deputy chiefs, and the captains. Now this is in the process of being felt and believed by everyone.

When it comes to community related programs, we have a community relations bureau which is effective in a lot of ways, and we will be implementing programs on an ongoing basis as needed. The first thing to do was to get each captain and district station relating with neighborhood groups. They meet with them in an ongoing way; they submit monthly reports. The same with business groups. And that's opening up.

As I sit and reflect on a mere eleven months, it seems like not much has been done, but there's been quite amazing change, which is recognized out in the community too, that things are different. So we'll just keep identifying programmatic needs and implementing things on a need-to-do-so basis.

Unionism

JHR: On unionism: Do you have thoughts on police unionism?

Gain: Well, police unionism per se doesn't bother me right now, from the standpoint of whether our policemen become affiliated with the teamsters, because that isn't a big issue. If we have, as we have out here, a law prohibiting strikes, then I don't think it's such a problem.

Now, police unionism from the standpoint of having police associations -- which is the same as a union -- I feel very strongly that strong police associations are needed to deal with the concerns related to working conditions and things of that nature. I think they're needed. What bothers me about a police association is that -- and I think that happened here, I know it did until I became chief -- is that they were the strongest entity in the police department. They had more power, mainly through abdication of previous police commissions. Or whatever it was, maybe that's not the right word, lack of influence by the chief's office and the police commissions. The association became very powerful, so powerful that they brought about a strike here in 1975 where 52 percent of the police personnel went on strike. Now that's inordinate power, beyond the scope of a police organization. Because the association wasn't merely a matter then of unionism, it was more than that. They had so much power that they could bring about a strike. They abdicated the responsibility to police this community, to provide policing services.

JHR: So you'd say that when a union, in policing, went to the point of a strike, the chief or whoever had lost control of his organization.

Gain: Oh, certainly. To me there was a matter of who influenced whom. Obviously, 52 percent of the personnel went out on strike, then the police commission and the chief and his top staff did not have much influence within the police department. It was, as I was given to understand here, basically a matter of the inspector's bureau not going on strike, which was kind of indicative of that being a separate entity. So it was mainly the patrol persons who went on strike. Of course, not all of them. My feeling is that if a policeman goes on strike he should be fired, and that's it. No bargaining, just fired. Because then you're witholding life-support services from citizens.

Honesty on the Force

JHR: Do you see your emphasis on individual honesty and sobriety as coming out of the Vollmer/Wilson tradition, or as, simply, part of your own policing philosophy?

Gain: When it comes to honesty, sobriety, and all that type of thing, I know Vollmer talked about that. To me it's one of the givens in policing that there just has to be absolute honesty and integrity, things like sobriety. It's a given. We talked about it at the time. One of the things that so disgusted me when I was a young patrolman in the Oakland Police Department until 1955 when Vernon reformed it -- was that there were lots of problems there, some of which hinged upon sobriety and honesty. So it was cleaned up. It's just a given in policing that you have to have consummate honesty.

Enforcement Priorities

JHR: From the experience of your own career, what is your opinion about the problems of vice-law enforcement?

Gain: With vice enforcement we have to enforce vice laws such as prostitution and gambling. There's no question we do. Here, there was a problem in that the district attorney made a statement which was misinterpreted: that in emphasizing violent crimes they would not be citing complaints when it came to so-called victimless crimes like prostitution. He clarified that, or attempted to, during his inaugural address.

My position -- I've been involved in this business so long -- is that you absolutely have to enforce things like laws prohibiting prostitution. You've got to do it. There is no choice. It's not a victimless crime, because we know from years of experience that if you have, say, streetwalkers walking the streets, that economically businessmen are going to start suffering. Socially, you're going to find that citizens are going to take exception because of the appearance of the women being intimidated, they're going to complain. So you've got to take action. And we've done it consistently. Never any wavering. It's a matter, really, when it comes to police problems, of just ordering them out in a priority way, starting with the violent crime of murder, to the extent that policemen can do something about that, forcible rapes, and robberies. And then going down to the burglaries and thefts, the car thefts, or whatever, then get down to the prostitution, the gambling. And you've got to take appropriate action in regard to each given the resources you have. When it comes to prostitution, when you've got a situation within the city, where by way of numbers, streetwalkers are literally blocking entranceways to businesses, and you're getting complaints from businessmen, from tourists, and from passersby, if you don't take action you're abdicating your responsibility. So we have to do it.

To me it's a legislative problem. What's needed in California now is for the legislature to either reinforce the existing laws, if they're

Gain: going to be maintained, or entertain local option, or increase penalties....

JHR: By reinforcing them financially?

Gain: No, no. Just state that they're going to stay on the books. Because there are some numbers of people who state that, well, we should decriminalize. That's a legislative issue, for the state legislature. So if they want to decriminalize, fine. Entertain it, and see what the vote comes out to be, or provide local option, or whatever it may be. The police are simply stuck, when it comes to prostitution, with an impossible problem. You can't eradicate it, so you just have to play a numbers game and try to keep the numbers of streetwalkers as low as you can. When you don't get complaints in substantial number, then that becomes the norm. So try to maintain the norm. That's the name of the game. Hopefully, they'll go to Oakland or Seattle or Los Angeles, wherever it might be.

Local Politics

Gain: There's no doubt we operate in a political environment, political culture, and I think each professional is a politician in a sense. But the whole key of policing is that you don't have political intervention and politics determining police programs, transfers, promotions and all that type of business. No one can get a ticket fixed, no one can get a favor because he's a politician. As long as that remains, why you're okay.

Media Coverage of Police Activity

Gain: As far as media coverage of police activity, I believe strongly that whatever activity can possibly be covered by the media should be covered. The only restriction being that if it would interfere or preclude an investigation, then obviously we can't have media doing that. But the media here has free access. Anyone can come here and talk to any person they want to. It's wide open. And that's how it should be. Because that's one way you keep a police department honest.

JHR: That's true -- Let everybody know!

What factors do you think led to your success in Oakland?

Gain: The factors which led to my success, maybe one, very predominantly, was a very objective, professional city manager. He appointed me and supported me all the way through, and insured that there was no politics determining police programs. That is, no political intervention or inordinate-type politics. The main problem encountered was intense organizational resistance.

[end of tape 1]

Working in Florida

JHR: Could you talk about your experience in Florida?

Gain: In Florida I wanted to get more involved in the general manager thing, managership within a city. I was offered several jobs, but all as chief of police. I came to learn of a vacancy in St. Petersburg as a public safety administrator, who was not chief but in charge of the police department and the fire department. So I went there, and I was interviewed, and I took it because it was more on the level of general administration in the city. But when I got there I came to learn that the police department was very backward, and there was such intense politics that I couldn't — I had to appoint a new chief of police, and there was simply no one competent within that department to appoint. Organizationally, it would have been devastating, in my judgement, to bring a chief in from the outside, which I could have done. So I wanted to develop people within the department.

It so happened that -- I was appointed in November 1973 -- in 1973 they had experienced a 22 percent increase in crime over 1972. All of Florida, at the time, was experiencing increase in crime because they had come into that experience of density of populations, youth groups, and the whole thing, whatever it is that results in crime, the economic factor: there was a high degree of unemployment. And although I'd dealt with the same damn thing in Oakland, there, what had happened was that the city council had gone to an American Management Association "Management by Objectives" course. Here comes increased crime, 22 percent. They felt that they could realistically set an objective for the city manager to reduce crime by 10 percent. If they gave him the wherewithall to do it. So I went there, and the city manager told me at the time when we were talking -- preceding their appointing me -- he say, "Well, what do you think about this thing? The council went to an MBO session by the AMA, and now they've set an objective for you to reduce crime by 10 percent," and I think they gave me ten months. He said, "Would that be acceptable to you?" I said, "No. It's impossible to achieve." The police don't control the environment. If you're going to pave a street, one block long, the street's fifty feet wide, set the

Gain: objective and you can do it, given the equipment. But for crime, No.

JHR: Particularly in numerical percentages.

Gain: Yes. So anyway, when I got there in Florida I found there was a certain state senator. It's the fashion there that state senators get involved intensely in the politics of the local community. For the city council -- given the crime problem and the real bad police morale and lots of other things -- politics became all-consuming.

They had twelve black officers. I'm just looking at the general problems in the police department. First of all, I learned that my predecessor as public safety administrator had set himself up as both fire chief and police chief in one. They'd taken the fire chief and given him a sinecure position on the third floor of the building. As the chief of police and the public safety administrator, he was going out chasing fire calls and police calls. So it fragmented the whole police organization by making a public safety department which compromised both police and fire, and in theory it was good but in practice it was just terrible, the way it was operated. So I appointed a new chief of police, and gave the fire chief back his authority. The problem is because the public safety administrator had been looked upon as the chief of police for two years -- notwithstanding a lot of efforts in writing and on TV and whatever to change that -- to say that we had a chief, but I wasn't chief. I never could achieve that. So that when it came to changing the police organization, which was manifestly needed, and saying that there was a chief, they always looked upon me as the chief.

This whole crime spectre during 1974 kept getting worse and worse. And when it became known throughout Florida that there was an increase in crime, there was consternation. So the state senator kept getting involved politically, and I found that the city manager, although he said he would support me 100 percent, didn't do so. In his relationship with the council he would be saying things that were not to my advantage, to say the least.

Anyway, I found that there were twelve black patrolmen. So we started a minority recruitment program. I increased it in eleven months to about twenty-nine. It wasn't known when we'd appointed the last black sergeant, but two patrolmen were eligible, and I had them appointed to sergeant. There was a female who was eligible to be a sergeant, but she was stuck in an office job, so on merit I had her appointed to sergeant. She went out on the street. That caused trauma. There, great numbers of crimes, as was not uncommon, were committed by black persons. So there was somewhat of a tenor in the community and the police department to do something about these people. Of course, I wouldn't tolerate actions outside the law at all. I restrained the police in that regard. So as we kept recruiting, they had discriminatorily not promoted or hired black persons and that caused trauma.

Gain: I knew, after being there for one month, that it was only a matter of time. That because of the politics of the situation, the intervention, the city manager worrying constantly, "Well, go ahead, Chuck," he was always saying, "Go ahead, Chuck, I will support you on this," but then a city councilman got on his back, and they were all deathly afraid of this state senator. No one publicly talked about him, although in private conversation they'd call him everything....

JHR: The senator from St. Petersburg?

Gain: Yes, the state senator. He got on my back. Called out to Oakland, for example. And then reported on TV that when I was there, morale was low and crime was high. Now morale is high and crime is low. Neither of which were facts. After one month I knew what was going to happen. So I just set into effect -- totally reorganized the police department, minority recruiting, and a lot of other things -- and just doggedly stuck at it until October 1974.

They wanted in the police department at that time to do away with the restrictions on discharging firearms. I couldn't countenance that. The city manager was wavering, kept asking me to change it, and I said, "I've had it. Now this is a matter of principle. This is it. That's going to stay, I'm going to quit." So I quit. That's all.

JHR: You were there a year or so?

Gain: About eleven months.

JHR: Well, you were able to do a lot of what you wanted.

Gain: Oh, yes. We did a lot, within a short period of time. To me it was a good professional experience. I wanted to get out of policing, but I got involved in it intensely.

Directions for San Francisco

JHR: We've talked quite a bit about San Francisco. Do you have any plans for the future?

Gain: Oh yes, sure. What we're going to do in San Francisco is to reform the police department so that, given enough time, it will be looked upon as a professional, humanistic police department. No question about it.

I think what's needed here in San Francisco -- it's a matter here of an adverse, historically bad police system. There's a lot of tension on the people here. With reorganization, getting more people involved in programs and whatever, I'm optimistic about the future in this city.

Gain: We've already taken care of the politics thing, the drinking is taken care of, and so on. So I'm just going to go ahead here and do what I've done before and try to effect the greatest efficiency and programs needed by the community, and nothing will change so far as my professional posture in that regard.

JHR: Do you have any concluding general reflections on your experience in policing?

Gain: As far as my reflections on my own experiences, I've been very fortunate, in Oakland, and Seattle, and St. Petersburg, and here, being involved in policing as a chief of police at a particular time when intense change is needed within the police organization. To me, it's a good experience. I enjoy it very much.

JHR: Do you have any general concluding reflections on the probable direction of American policing in the next five? ten? or twenty years?

Gain: I don't see a great deal of change. Just from the standpoint that what we have to do is recognize what our mission is, and what its limitations are. And then do the best we can to get the greatest efficiency, effectiveness, productivity. Bring about a recognition on the part of police personnel, of whatever rank, precisely what the police business is all about. Try to get them to educate the community in that regard, too. I think that, more and more, policemen are going to have to do that. It's very tough. It's very tough. But give them five or ten years in any city, and it can be done.

Transcriber: Michelle Stafford
Final Typist: Sheila K. O'Neill

INDEX -- Charles Gain

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August Vollmer Historical Project

Donald C. Stone

REFORMING THE POLICE AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

Interview Conducted by
Gene Carte and Elaine Carte
in 1975

TABLE OF CONTENTS --- Donald C. Stone

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Donald Stone was interviewed for this second series on August Vollmer because of his perspective on the wider atmosphere of reform that influenced the Vollmer contribution. Alice Stone participated in the interview as a friend of Vollmer and a worker in areas of social concern that were a part of these developments.

Interviewers: Gene Carte and Elaine Carte.

Time and Setting of Interview: The interview took place at 3333 Vine in the Office of Metropolitan Studies, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio. Also present during part of the interview was Joan Berry, a staff member at the university.

Editing: Elaine Carte edited the transcript of the interview for spelling and continuity and rearranged the material into sections dealing with the several major topics covered. Donald and Alice Stone then reviewed the interview closely, correcting spellings of names and making minor changes.

Narrative Account of Mr. and Mrs. Stone and the Progress of the Interview: Donald Stone is adjunct professor at the School of Urban and Public Affairs, Carnegie-Mellon University, and dean emeritus of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh. Since his early career in municipal administration, Mr. Stone has held senior positions in public administration at the national and international levels. He has served as a teacher, writer, and consultant on many topics in international development and public policy. Mrs. Stone, who has completed graduate work in government and public law, has been active in public service, teaching, and writing. She has collaborated with her husband on many overseas projects and has co-authored a monograph and several chapters for books on public administration.

The interview begins with remarks by Mrs. Stone about their friendship with Vollmer. She recalls visiting a meeting of the Berkeley coordinating council that he helped to establish. Mr. Stone then discusses his work with the Cincinnati Police Department in 1926. He describes the reforms that he helped to implement for the new council-manager city government.

A major job was the design of a police records system, for which Mr. Stone adapted forms that were used in the Berkeley and Los Angeles systems. Mrs. Stone remembers how the new system of pawn records helped them to recover a stolen camera. Mr. Stone discusses the development of uniform crime records, a project on which he worked with Bruce Smith.

Mr. Stone then describes the "1313" operation in Chicago--the setting up of a headquarters for associations in public administration. With the backing of foundation money, this clearing-house worked to build up professional associations for public career officials. The International Association of Chiefs of Police was one such association, and Mr. Stone relates some of the controversy that surrounded J. Edgar Hoover's efforts to control the association.

In discussing the role of the University of Chicago in this clearing-house, Mr. Stone talks about the problems of establishing public administration programs in universities. Failure to institutionalize a program beyond the personalities of people can lead to its disintegration when key people pass from the scene.

Mr. Stone discusses reforms within the Chicago Police Department, including a new records sytem. Mrs. Stone tells about the intentional misfiling of police records that she discovered while conducting research within the department.

The conversation turns to the insularity of the police, especially in confronting change. Mr. Stone discusses the "enormous difference in the culture of the police" as compared with engineers and social workers. Because Vollmer and O.W. Wilson were untypical, they were not regarded as legitimate within policing.

The interview ends with a discussion of Bruce Smith and his views, in relation to those of Vollmer. Mr. Stone describes Smith as a conservative, with little of the "social work orientation" that Vollmer included in his idea of professional policing.

Donald C. Stone
March 5, 1975
Interview held at: 3333 Vine in the Office of Metropolitan Studies, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Present at this interview: Mrs. Alice Stone (AES), Mr. Donald Stone (DCS), Mr. Gene Carte (GEC), Mrs. Elaine Carte (EHC) and, occasionally, Mrs. Joan Berry (JB)

GEC: You knew August Vollmer.

AES: He was one of the very precious persons in our life. I visited one of the Berkeley coordinating councils of social agencies in which August Vollmer participated. The day that I visited them, one of their juveniles had murdered somebody. They sat there in a very sad circle of people trying to assess where they had failed.

EHC: From what I have read, they took a very personal interest in the individual. It wasn't just agency cooperation.

AES: They had been working on -- it wasn't that they hadn't worked on this youngster; he had been a part of their advise and research for a couple of years. They really did feel that they had failed. It was a marvelous moment to be visiting because you had everything in review there.

EHC: They were committed people, probably.

GEC: One of the things that we have tried to do in these interviews is to find people who really knew something about Vollmer and some of the ideas that were current at the time that he was trying to influence American policing.

AES: Vollmer came to the University of Chicago, where he served as a full professor. That's where I knew him, not first, but best.

EHC: Did you spend most of your time in Chicago during those years?

DCS: We lived there from 1930 to 1939. I went first with the City Manager's Association and was a research associate at the University of Chicago. We were doing projects, national projects to improve municipal services. Then we founded the Public Administration Service. I was head of that from 1933 to 1939. Then I accepted the part of assistant director of the U.S. Bureau of the Budget in Washington.

Police Reforms in Cincinnati

GEC: One of your first assignments in the city manager's office here in Cincinnati was dealing with the Cincinnati Police Department.

DCS: That's right.

GEC: Could I ask you what were some of the problems that the Cincinnati police were facing in 1926?

DCS: This was a new council-manager form of government adopted in 1925. Colonel Sherrill was the first city manager. He had been on the job six to eight months before I got the assignment in October 1926 to work with him as an assistant. The problem of police was very much on his mind, as there was much criticism in terms of its not being a modern agency.

GEC: Was it also highly political at that time? The Charterites had just won.

DCS: This was within twelve months after that.

GEC: Were personnel selected on political grounds?

DCS: I did not find a lot of evidence that the department was highly politicized. Its personnel was mostly incompetent with a police chief who was not a part of the stream of advances in the police field. It was an ingrown, narrow kind of institution. They had not adopted a lot of elementary police techniques ---

GEC: Such as?

DCS: ---that were being developed at that time. Well, they had no record system, no police training was taking place.

EHC: None at all?

DCS: It was so limited you could say it was almost nonexistent.

Just a little on-the-job training and a few lectures and that was it. They had virtually no kinds of equipment. This, of course, was

DCS: before police radio had become standard practice. The department was quite decentralized out in districts or precincts and had virtually all foot patrols. There was very little motorization or ability to respond to emergency problems. I doubt if there had been any change in the department in twenty-five years that amounted to anything.

EHC: Did you feel there was anything about Cincinnati itself that made it more of a decentralized policing? We still find it a city that's strikingly a neighborhood city.

DCS: Well, I suppose that was characteristic. I know one of the things on the survey that we did was to examine the whole beat layout and we found there had been no change in that in years and years. One of the things I did at that time, I paced up and down every street and alley in this town, charting it -- what the character of the street was or the alley and the crime potential there, and the kind of things you need to be observing, and what kind of patrol work would be effective. We worked out a totally new system of patrol coverage for the city.

The detective bureau, as it was called, was not using a lot of what were becoming then good practices. There was no laboratory work going on, the fingerprint system was not very well developed. There was no single fingerprint practice whatever. There were no analyses of criminal occurrences and the mobilization of the police force in respect to the kinds of crime and where it was taking place, and things of that sort.

GEC: You mentioned before that in your graduate program you had contact with Bruce Smith.

DCS: That's right. I studied police administration under him in New York.

GEC: So you had some orientation to good police practice when you came to Cincinnati.

DCS: Yes, I had visited a number of police departments as a part of my training for public service.

GEC: I guess Fosdick's book on policing ---

DCS: Yes, American Police Systems, European Police Systems. I had studied both books.

AES: What about Harrison? Did he come a little later?

DCS: Yes, Leonard Harrison. We met him a little later. My wife here edited a policewoman's handbook for Harrison, who was Fosdick's man in the police field.

AES: I guess it was the first handbook for policewomen. It was originally written by a woman police lieutenant, but was so poorly organized they had to have it redone. I suspect a reason for asking me to edit it was to get my husband's advice too.

GEC: Now the cities you visited: Did you visit also on the West Coast? Were you aware of Vollmer and what Vollmer was trying to do in California?

DCS: I knew of some of the developments on the West Coast. When I visited the West Coast, it was really after the Cincinnati survey and the recommendations were developed. Bruce Smith was responsible; I was just his assistant. The city manager approved the report and said to me in front of Smith, "It's your job to implement all of these recommendations." We shook hands and he said, "Go to it." Well, this was a great experience because this meant working out schedules, reassignments, new regulations, and assisting in getting a new police chief appointment. This also involved setting up a training school, which became quite a famous one.

And the biggest and most difficult job of all was designing a police records system. Now, the survey report merely pointed out the deficiencies and said that there should be records from the beginning of the report of the complaint and on through the investigations until it was finally disposed of. It dealt with some questions of property records in a general way, but it didn't prescribe the system. To develop a system, I decided to visit a number of departments, whereupon I became acquainted with the Berkeley and Los Angeles systems. August Vollmer had been responsible for designing the Los Angeles system, so there was considerable similarity. We considered their forms but developed many new features that seemed to fit Cincinnati. I thought ours an improvement on their basic records of offenses committed, investigations, arrest records, and the rest of the forms that go with these processes. I utilized pretty closely their property records; records of lost and found, stolen and pawned property. The system worked well.

AES: Yes. I just can't help but think of a good illustration. Don had just gotten the pawn records installed. We had a camera and some baggage stolen out of our car on a Saturday afternoon. In three hours they were recovered by matching the camera serial number on the pawn shop report with that on the stolen property card. It was remarkable.

DCS: We can credit August Vollmer with that. I knew the serial number of the camera. I had quickly made a record when I got acquainted with how the whole system worked. Since then I have kept a record of the serial numbers of all property.

AES. Just in no time we recovered it from the pawn shop.

GEC: In 1928 you published an article on police recruiting here in Cincinnati.

DCS: I guess I did.

GEC: That was based on your Cincinnati experience. What were the problems of police recruiting in 1938? I haven't done my homework -- I haven't read that article.

DCS: I can remember an examination they used here for recruiting of patrolmen which had a lot of questions in the use of grammar and in arithmetic. Some of it dealt with a description of the city and identification of well-known places, which had nothing to do with the --- Nobody had ever thought of this in terms of what kind of qualities were needed in a policeman and what kind of examining process will help provide some guidance as to whether you are getting those kind of qualities. Well, that's a problem that goes on eternally.

EHC: Did they have any civil service at that time?

DCS: Civil service was so flimsy that it hadn't amounted to much. The city was starting under the new charter and already had appointed a director of personnel -- this is a post that Don Heisel finally occupied. It was necessary to modernize the entire personnel system. What we did on the police was tied in with that.

GEC: When was that?

DCS: I remember the city had a service rating system. That was one of the things I worked on, not just for the police department. I developed a new service rating system based upon the army scale approach. The old efficiency rating report put down a variety of things about the person. One of them I remember was "speed." The employee was rated whether he was excellent, good, fair, or poor in speed. I kept asking, what kind of speed is this? Nobody seemed to know. There were just a lot of things like that. This is how primitive it was.

GEC: In 1926-27, when you went to California, that was the first time you met Vollmer?

DCS: Yes. Then we got well acquainted when we were out there in 1930 and spent more time with him. He was also involved in the IACP Committee on Uniform Crime Records.

GEC: You were just visiting San Francisco, and you visited him for just a few hours? Or was he deeply involved in showing you his record system, personally, or did someone else show it to you?

DCS: No, he had a fellow by the name of Gabrielson who showed me his system.

AES: I'm amazed that you remember that.

GEC: We're interested in what kind of impact Vollmer had on people like O. W. Wilson and also some of his students. Most of the people we have interviewed for this book are people who are much younger than he was, and we would like to get some independent ---

AES: He had a great personal interest in them. He was inspirational.

GEC: We're interested in how you saw him as a young city manager, as someone seeing him from a distance.

DCS: Well, I was greatly impressed with him in terms of the quality of his department, and this applied to the Los Angeles department as well.

Developing Uniform Crime Records

DCS: I visited these and other departments when I left Cincinnati and moved to the Institute of Public Administration in New York, where we did the staff work for the Committee on Uniform Crime Records. That committee was a dual committee. It was a committee of selected police chiefs from around the country, and another committee, essentially an advisory committee, that had people who were interested in the field and had knowledge of special features of it. The two working together became very effective.

In developing the system we had to first design the classification of offenses that was to be used as that basic part of the whole reporting business. I had worked out a classification for Cincinnati that had used the concept of Part I and Part II offenses, although we didn't use those terms. Felonies and other major offenses and misdemeanors were what we used. We employed a couple of persons to make an analysis of all the state penal codes to identify which of the state statutes fitted into the definition of murder, manslaughter, rape, aggravated assaults, and so on.

Then we worked out the kind of report forms that we would want from the local police departments, to feed in to whoever would be the collecting agency. Some of their chiefs wanted IACP to do this. They initiated and operated the fingerprint system before it was transferred to the Department of Justice. We had considerable pressure from persons interested in the Census Bureau that crime reporting should go there. Smith and I became convinced that the Department of Justice would respond more competently. We finally achieved that.

After having designed the monthly report forms used by the departments for reporting prescribed data, the question came: How are the police departments going to collect and compile the required information.

DCS: What kind of a police record system is needed? When Bruce Smith got tagged to do the uniform crime reporting job, he had seen the Cincinnati manual. As a matter of fact, we reproduced the manual and gave it a lot of circulation. Even before the uniform crime reporting system was developed, there were quite a number of departments around the country that were changing their systems based upon the Cincinnati manual, which was very complimentary.

JB: I read a reference to it at one time, the Cincinnati manual, and how it was a landmark.

DCS: In that project, I visited a lot of police departments.

Chicago and the Development of Public Associations

GEC: When you left Cincinnati and went to Chicago, working on police records, you were in an entirely different climate. In 1929, I think the city was under a lot of criticism from all kinds of circles.

DCS: Well, the police department in Chicago was really politicized.

EHC: You really couldn't make much impact on it, could you?

DCS: It was primitive. Of course, it was a vast organization. I worked on its structure and communications. We developed, in Chicago, the same concept as we had in Cincinnati. We set up a central control over all complaints. Unless you get control over the input, you are at the mercy of your district or precinct officers. They can report or not report and you may never know what's going on, so you have to keep some kind of control. In Chicago we were able to do this with a two-way radio installation with teletypes to all of the districts. We set up the central complaint center. Up to this time all of the telephone complaints had gone into districts. We brought them straight into central headquarters and then they could be relayed by teletype or telephone or put out on the radio. The control officer had those three choices as to how to handle each case.

GEC: You said "we." The director was Bruce Smith?

DCS: Well, he wasn't around very much on this job. Arnold Miles and Earl Garrett were working on this project.

GEC: Who were some of the other people who were there in Chicago? You were really in an institute. Did you have any kind of connection with the faculty at the University of Chicago?

DCS: Well, not at that time.

DCS: This was a contract between the City of Chicago and the Institute of Public Administration in New York. Bruce Smith made lots of studies around, and this just happened to be one of them.

EHC: Was it connected with a citizen's commission?

DCS: Oh, no.

GEC: Nothing at all to do with that, but he also did a report for the citizen's commission.

DCS: That was a different study.

EHC: That was before this, wasn't it?

GEC: 1929.

DCS: He probably did at least fifty police studies and projects in his lifetime. This police reorganization project started in 1929. I went out in the Fall of '29 and ---

GEC: Directly from Cincinnati?

DCS: No, I went from New York.

AES: He was in the uniform crime reporting job at the time.

DCS: I was a staff member of the Institute in New York. When we finished the crime records project, my next assignment was Chicago. It was while that was going on that the whole 1313 setup of Chicago -- Do you know what I mean by that? Chicago became the headquarters of a whole group of associations of public jurisdictions under the guidance of the Public Administration Clearing House. This was done with the financial help of the Laura Spelman (Rockefeller's mother) Memorial. Louis Brownlow and Charles Merriam were two of the key architects. It was located on the University of Chicago campus but not under the control of the university.

The whole concept was to professionalize the the public career officials; build up their professional associations, build up the associations of governmental jurisdictions. This included what was then called the American Municipal Association, now the National League of Cities; the Council of State Governments with the American Legislator's Association which was just coming into existence; the ICMA which was the first organization to arrive there; then the civil service people, now the International Personnel Management Association; the Public Welfare Association; the American Public Works Association; and the housing officials. A building was provided on the Midway at 1313 E. 60th Street, across from the university proper.

GEC: That's where your office was as well?

DCS: That's right.

AES: Much of their initial budgets came from foundation funds that made it possible to carry on for a few years, to upgrade their professions.

GEC: Did you have a lot of contact with Merriam?

DCS: Yes, I was listed as an adjunct in his department of political science. I went from IPA to the City Manager's Association, and this did have a little relation with the university. The university gave three or four of us at 1313 faculty appointments. These were very useful. We had few responsibilities but many of the privileges. For the funding of the projects I worked on, the university allocated some funds through the social science division. Some we got separately from foundations.

Upgrading the IACP

GEC: Your wife said that one of the things you were concerned about, almost as a volunteer, that you worked a good deal with the IACP.* There was concern that there was a move toward more centralized policing, especially that J. Edgar Hoover was interested in---

AES: In taking over the states.

DCS: I still have the folder of the shenanigans of the FBI in trying to control the association.

GEC: The IACP?

DCS: Yes, the IACP.

AES: That was the only organization that came to 1313 that was not funded.

DCS: I got money from Brownlow. Arnold Miles and I contributed our services.

##

William P. Rutledge, former superintendent in Detroit, was president of IACP. He enlisted our help in carrying on his work as president of the association. IACP had a secretary, but no staff. The secretary was the police chief of Baltimore. He was a dodo, and turned out to be a crook. IACP officers felt that the association should be built up to do something. They kept pressing us, "Won't you help us?" Well, so we started a police chief's newsletter, which has now evolved into their journal. We then set up programs for their annual conferences.

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* International Association of Chiefs of Police

DCS: These were formerly just a binge. We developed highly professional content. Then we put the proceedings out as a yearbook. We were terribly proud of these products. Several monographs were printed. I remember one on the recruitment of patrolmen, one on criminal identification systems, things like that.

Mostly, we were trying to build the association up and to find sources of funds to enable appointment of an executive director who would make something out of it. We got it to that point. This is where O. W. Wilson (a Vollmer man who had become chief at Wichita) and Don Leonard (deputy superintendent of Michigan state police) became more involved. O. W. would have taken the job of executive director. Several of the progressive officers backed him, but J. Edgar Hoover foiled it. One of his stooges stacked the meeting so that his selection was prevented. Some of the officers were prevented from being participants in the decision. It almost blew the association wide open. The rump group appointed a fellow named Ed Kelly who had been director of state police of Rhode Island.

AES: He became the first executive secretary.

DCS: First executive director.

AES: Paid one.

DCS: I dropped out after this took place. I was too busy, anyway.

EHC: Did he answer to Hoover?

DCS: Well, he was under his thumb a lot.

EHC: About what time was this?

DCS: This was about 1935.

AES: Just an incident that Donald probably wouldn't mention: To thank Arnold Miles and Don, the chiefs voted them a distinguished service membership in their association. They were the second and third persons to be elected. Hoover was the first. I understand that when Hoover learned that they had been elected he was just about ready to turn in his honorary membership.

GEC: Hoover must have seen you just as an academic?

DCS: He did not know me in that context.

AES: He was a young Turk.

EHC: Just a threat.

GEC: You had a faculty appointment, but not really a ---

DCS: No one would have known that. I never used that appointment. I had no responsibility in the university. I was a member of the Quadrangle Club and could use its tennis courts and I played in the racquet and squash courts at the university.

AES: Well, look now, you also lectured now and then.

DCS: Very seldom. I never taught a course.

The Role of the University of Chicago

GEC: Did you have any awareness of what was involved in getting Vollmer that appointment? He was the first practicing policeman ever to become a college professor. Merriam, I understand, was involved in appointing. Spencer Parratt said that he was his graduate assistant or did some of the ---

DCS: Well, Parratt was a graduate student around there at that time. I remember that.

GEC: Do you have any idea what some of the issues were around appointing a man -- Vollmer had no formal education as such -- to a position as a full professor? Was it controversial?

DCS: The social science division had a lot of money. They had more money around there than any other university in the country has ever had for social science research.

AES: That's why Leonard White -- I don't know if you have read much or any of his public administration studies -- was so prolific. But he had something like eleven or seventeen graduate assistants. As a result, his work is widely quoted and made a great impact.

GEC: It was foundation money, I assume? Sears, Roebuck founded it?

EHC: Rosenwald Foundation.

DCS: Yes. But most of the social science funds come from the Rockefellers.

GEC: In the 1930's, when Vollmer was there ---

EHC: Hutchins was there.

AES: Hutchins had just come then. Vollmer was already on deck.

DCS: Hutchins would have opposed Vollmer's recruitment.

GEC: Do you remember any issues --- You indicated that it was not very controversial to appoint Vollmer as a full professor.

AES: You made the statement that not an eye was batted when Vollmer was appointed. I just remember that.

DCS: Well, there were a few blinks. But at that time, Merriam, who was a great person, had lots of interest in the police field. They just hoped that Vollmer being there would stir up a lot of interest and help produce more credibility of the university with local authorities. This was part of the notion. Actually, I didn't see a lot of Vollmer. I was terribly busy on all kinds of projects around the country.

GEC: Most people were not surprised that there were now policemen in the university?

DCS: Also, another factor here is that the University of Chicago, like the University of Cincinnati and many other places, developed considerable public administration resources, but never institutionalized them. Public administration never got established organically at Chicago so that it had survival capability. As soon as Merriam passed from the scene, things began to disintegrate. When Leonard White retired, there was nothing left. If they had set up a school of public administration/ public affairs, or whatever you want to call it, as an organic part of the institution -- Vollmer would have been in it -- and if they had really organized not only from within but related the people across the Midway in 1313 in this institutionalized effort; then it would have been a much more viable and permanent effort. Everything was done on an ad hoc basis. A little here and a little there. A Vollmer here and somebody else over there. It was never pulled into any kind of a program.

GEC: So it didn't have any long-term, institutional effects. Once the immediate issue was resolved, then it just went back to standard practices.

DCS: At the University of Cincinnati Gale Lowry was the torch bearer; like Merriam at Chicago. I saw a great deal of him, talked with him many times about his curriculum, but it was always -- the organization was always Gale Lowry. He had someone teach this, arranged for someone to teach that. When Lowry left, the thing fell apart. There was no institutional vitality.

AES: It happened in many places.

DCS: Columbia -- another case.

AES: It happened in Wisconsin and in Michigan. Unless a program is institutionalized into something that carries beyond the personalities of people, it won't survive.

GEC: Many people observed that Vollmer was almost overly impressed with academic people and academic ideas. Does this ---

DCS: I think that is probably true. Of course, he had grown up in Berkeley so he shouldn't have been. He should have known ---

AES: That was true of Brownlow, who was a tremendously great man. But he was never so flattered as when he was invited to lecture at Harvard. Those people who did not go through the formal process always seem to have an exalted idea of academia.

DCS: I think you're right. He inhaled it.

AES: Brownlow would shoot around from campus to campus and just love it, and he brought so much more than anything he found in the areas.

GEC: But he was so impressed with the learning that he thought was at the university.

DCS: University of Chicago was a great institution. Both Brownlaw and Vollmer were greatly impressed by it. I thought it was dreadfully administered.

Some Policing Reforms in Chicago

GEC: But the comparison between what people were talking about and what was happening in terms of local policing ---The Chicago police department was fairly poorly organized in 1929. There was a great deal of concern about it, as now, with crime and so forth. Was there any effort to integrate what was being said with what was apparently happening in the city?

DCS: A lot of changes were made as a result of this work that was under Bruce Smith's responsibility. We got the whole communications system of the department completely modernized and turned around. There we also installed a whole new record system. We cranked the uniform crime reporting into the Chicago police handbook. That all went into effect. There were lots of changes in organization and methods, but nothing further developed until O. W. Wilson became superintendent.

AES: The transferral of all communications had to be done at one moment. The night they changed over from the old system, there was great excitement to see whether the system would work or not. Tell them how you tested it.

DCS: Arnold Miles decided to play a prank, which he timed exactly when the transfer was to take effect. He made the first call and reported that there was a dead horse in front of 1128 State Street. This was the

DCS: address of police headquarters. This got dispatched to me. I reported a false complaint on the new form.

GEC: Was the city at all concerned about the cost of developing these kinds of communications systems? These reorganizations in the police department were expensive. I know Cincinnati now worries about every dollar it spends, as well it should. Was Chicago worrying about every dollar it was spending on communications or reorganizations?

DCS: I know we had to scrape aound in the budget, and I think we got a little supplemental appropriation by city council.

GEC: It was not a real problem.

DCS: We did work out quite a few savings. There were a lot of things we abolished, including the dog bite reports.

AES: I think you changed the kinds of automobiles that they were riding around in. There weren't many in those days.

DCS: Oh no, they had a lot of squad cars. They would have four men riding around in one squad car.

AES: To protect each other.

DCS: We got them down to two.

AES: Well, of course these were the days of Al Capone.

GEC: Prohibition -- There was a great deal of corruption about, I would assume. That's why I was wondering if there was any kind of concern -- You were talking about reorganizing the police department at the same time there was a great deal of suspicion that the police department was involved with corruption.

DCS: The department wasn't held in very high esteem. As far as corruption was concerned, we have no knowledge of specifics. We just saw how loosely a lot of things were handled.

AES: I just had a little personal experience during that time. Professor Sutherland, a criminologist at the university, was making a study of second generation Americans and four or five categories of crimes. The assumption in those days was that all the gangsters were Italian. We were studying Swedes and Norwegians, Germans, Italians, and maybe another group. The problem was to get somebody who couldn't be "bought off" to go through the records to classify them. They finally found me and were overjoyed. I was searching through for these different categories and their nationality. An indication of how many problems there were was how many you found misfiled, all misfiled on purpose, of course, to lose the records. It was a record system in a huge city

AES: and all you had to do was to have the card put in another spot and that person had no record. Every day I found numbers of them and it was pretty exciting. The people I turned these over to were even more excited! Even though it was just a routine check.

GEC: A historian, Mark Haller, has tried to classify this period in the 30's in Chicago, and said that there was a group of people who were moral reformers, and that there were civic reformers. He really described the civic reformers as being interested in improving the quality of city government, the structure of government. The moral reformers were opposed to the vice and so forth. There were almost two camps. I gather from what you've said that there wasn't a lot of moral outrage about the quality of policing in Chicago in the 30's, either on the university campus or in the kinds of circles that you knew. They were not upset by the corruption. It was just part of the way the policing was done.

DCS: Well, most persons outside of the groups that were working on these social studies were pretty much aloof from the whole stream of city life. They lived quite independently of City Hall. Most of them wouldn't have known where City Hall was.

AES: You mean people out of 1313, for instance?

DCS: People in the different parts of the university, other than this group of researchers.

AES: It was called public administration.

GEC: The people at 1313 -- Were they fairly well detached from what was going on in the city as well?

DCS: Most of them had no more connection with the City of Chicago that they did with San Francisco or Denver or any other place. Their members were national. Their constituencies were national. The City of Chicago did not provide very much leadership in these national associations because it didn't have the quality of administration that cast up leaders. Commissioner Allman had no role of significance in the IACP. In the public works field, this wasn't true. There were several officials there that were members of national organizations, were officials of them. As a matter of fact, Chicago had a lot of good public works performed, despite the corruption.

AES: This is at the end of the Big Bill Thompson era. Just, I think, as it changed.

DCS: Certainly, there was local leadership in the civil service, personnel field.

Insularity of the Police

GEC: My own experience many times in dealing with policemen, and of many other academics who want to deal with policemen, is a sense that police officials are defensive. I've known some academic people who try to put them at ease and let them know they are not critical of the way the policing is done, in order to maintain contact. Otherwise, policemen have a suspicion that people are looking down upon them. You were a civilian working on police records and dealing with policemen. As you said, you were not an academic, but you were an outsider. Did you have to deal with a certain amount of suspicion?

AES: You were young. That was your advantage.

DCS: Yes, this is a very interesting question because it was out of this, and then other experiences, that I learned the enormous difference in the cultures of the police, the engineers and the social workers. I came to find out that there is more commonality in the culture of police officials across national lines that there is between the police or engineers in their own country, for instance. There are distinctive characteristics of police chiefs. They're very insecure. They have a great sense of inferiority. Most of them came out of social and cultural backgrounds where there was a great struggle to establish themselves. Because of their positions they are thrown in contact with leading people in many fields and have a sense of inferior social relationship. To compensate, they try to reassure each other that they are great persons. If you want to witness a group that is self-adulating, listen to a group of police chiefs. When you get them together they testify to the greatness of all the rest. Therefore, you share in that testimony yourself, and so pretty soon you have talked yourself up into being something pretty significant. This is a process I have seen on many occasions.

AES: It doesn't change much either, does it.

GEC: Did you say that Vollmer and Wilson ---Let's take them in order. Was Vollmer very typical?

DCS: No, they were totally untypical, you see. And because they were so untypical, they were never quite viewed as legitimate. They were outsiders in all of this. I was an insider because I did some chores for them and I had kind of grown up with them.

GEC: You were young and not critical?

EHC: You describe the changes you shepherded through the Cincinnati Police Department. Those were big changes and big things to implement. Did you find yourself bumping into stone walls, unable to get cooperation?

DCS: A man, the chief detective, named Eugene Weatherly became police chief. He was a flexible fellow. I did two or three things that helped him and he got some credit for it. From then on I was in.

EHC: If he had been against you, you don't really think ---

DCS: ---I would not have gone very far. Because of this trust, other appointments, such as the captain put in charge of records and the training chief, were persons I helped to recruit. They were eager for assistance. I couldn't have had any better support.

EHC: Did they have anything like a PBA that organized patrolmen to be against you, or against change? They didn't have that kind of organization on the lower level?

AES: Well, they didn't feel that threatened. Some of the precinct captains were uneasy. But I tried to do all of this in a way that was reassuring. First, I had been fortunately tutored in the notion that you don't spring things on people if you want to maintain their support. I practiced that all my life -- that you must arrange for much participation. In designing the records system, I went around and talked to dozens and dozens of persons: What do you think, and how would you make this and this kind of record work? By the time you got the system developed, they had all been parties to it. That's really the heart of Rensis-Likert's participatory management system.

GEC: You didn't have that kind of difficulty in maintaining contact with police even though you were an outsider, because you were not threatening to what they were about.

DCS: I think there was some threatening in the Cincinnati business. Lots of people were insecure, uncertain. There was a new government, a new city manager, lots of changes wherever they end up. I can recall lots of insecurity.

However, you must remember that there was strong support from city officials and the public for making improvements. After years of poor government people wanted everything fixed overnight. Mayor Seasongood and county prosecuter Charles A. Taft had great interest in the police project. That climate of interest and encouragement naturally rubbed off on the police force.

GEC: During the 1960's, many of the problems people saw --- the problems of the cities --- were directly related to race and directly related to policing. The problems of the cities in the late 20's and 30's didn't focus as much, I guess, on the police as an institution or as a part of the city bureaucracy.

DCS: Well, you had a very substantial change in the whole national situation through the '60's. The Federal government began to accept responsibility

DCS: for all kinds of urban and social problems. The grant-in-aid business developed very rapidly. So many efforts began to be focused on, things like housing, urban renewal and other programs that broadened the base of public attention beyond police. Police became viewed as an element in a far bigger complex than in earlier times when municipal functions were quite limited.

GEC: I guess what I was trying to get at was that people saw the police in the 1960's as something that you should change. In the 1930's I was wondering if people saw the police as something that you could change. You could try to make it more efficient, but it really wasn't the cutting edge of the changes in city government. We're not in the police department, we're in other aspects of accounting ---

DCS: In the '30's, everybody was preoccupied by taxes and how you could keep municipal costs low. I remember many speeches we made justifying public expenditures, the philosophy of public expenditures, and defending public employees were generally censured as being payrollers. You still hear this in Pittsburgh. Every dollar spent by government was a dollar sent down the drain. Every kind of public expenditure was a blight on the economy. I remember making many speeches trying to get some understanding of the economics of whether you spent your dime on a public bus or a private bus. It made no difference as far as the economy was concerned in what the consumer got.

GEC: You dealt with police records, you were concerned with a few police studies, and then you really moved off into a whole other area.

AES: Garbage disposal.

DCS: I kept working on case studies for the next ten years. Public Administration Service made many studies. O. W. Wilson worked on some of these, and Ray Ashworth -- Does that name mean anything? He came out of the Vollmer system. He was Wilson's deputy in Wichita. Then he ended up with IACP before he died. One of the thing we got Kelly to do was the appointment of a person who really was good.

AES: What year did the IACP move to Washington? And you and Arnold were no longer their unpaid volunteers.

DCS: That was about 1936.

##

Arnold Miles was on the staff of the American Municipal Association, now the National League of Cities. AMA was interested in improving police administration. I was working for all of the organizations because PAS was a subsidiary of all the 1313 groups. I did almost the same thing in the public works field. Brought two organizations together to form the American Public Works Association, purely in a voluntary effort.

EHC: Did you have a feeling in those days that there was almost a vacuum to fill, in that these agencies of police and public service agencies were so inefficient and didn't even begin to utilize things that you knew worked in other places?

DCS: You knew there was a vacuum, and we had gotten a picture of what was possible. I must say that the change that has taken place over the years in most of these public service fields in the improvement of technology and the improvement of personnel is exceedingly significant.

Recollections of Bruce Smith

GEC: I just wanted to ask you a little bit about Bruce Smith. You knew Smith as a graduate student and you worked for him. All I have are his books, something about his ideas about policing, the thrust of his ideas.

DCS: He was an interesting and colorful person. Smith went to Wesleyan University and got kicked out. There was compulsory chapel, and he used to time the prayers that took place in the chapel. One time when it was sixteen minutes long he got up and said, "Boys, it's a record!"

AES: Is that when he got kicked out?

DCS: That's when he got kicked out. Then he ended up going through Columbia Law School. I've forgotten how he got connected with Luther Gulick and the old New York Bureau of Municipal Research. He got into that somehow, and they needed a man in the police field and he got hooked up with Raymond Fosdick -- just how, I have forgotten. Fosdick then became his mentor. So he worked with Fosdick on a number of things in the New York bureau, which by this time had become the Institute of Public Administration. It was making surveys of cities, states, and so on, and police were involved in it. Smith became their professional for police work.

AES: Very. At the same time, he had very strict standards of performance.

DCS: It was a little traumatic to get out from under his clutch and go do something else. This made you a traitor to the cause.

AES: It was his whole life, and of course, his son has gone into this.

GEC: I gather that the thrust of his ideas in terms of police was that he wanted the policeman to be a professional, detached from the local political apparatus as much as possible. Really delivering crime fighting efforts. That's also, from what I gather, what Vollmer really thought: A policeman should be involved in fighting crime and as far away as possible from local politics and local concerns.

DCS: He and Vollmer share a lot of views in common.

GEC: O. W. Wilson, while he had those same general thrusts, was much more interested in trying to improve the technology of policing.

DCS: That's right. Smith avoided the nitty-gritty of his field.

AES: That's why he had to be so demanding of his staff.

DCS: Smith would lay out in general something to be done. He would never get down and work it out. He would have been no good as a manager where you had to see that things really got carried through and done. He didn't do installation work. That is what PAS did that was different from most of the consulting firms. We focused on installation. Not a lot of surveys; anybody can write big volumes of stuff, report what they found, and make some suggestions. It's carrying the systems through and making them work and living with them until they work. Actually, that's what I added to his work in Cincinnati. I did the installation work, the systems, the operational side of it.

GEC: Vollmer was an opponent of the death penalty. You can put people into different categories: Are they pro or con capital punishment? Most policemen, and O. W. Wilson, were great supporters of capital punishment.

DCS: Smith would be.

GEC: Smith was a conservative.

DCS: Smith was a hard-bitten person. There was very little --- there was nothing, you could say, of the social work orientation in Smith. He didn't believe in any nonsense, and he was critical of a lot of the things that persons with social concern were doing, such as ---

AES: Rehabilitation.

DCS: Yes, rehabilitation is a good example.

GEC: Vollmer was interested in a system to deter crime.

DCS: There was a lot of that.

EHC: A lot of what Vollmer wrote was about the mission of policing. His idea of professionalism involved the policeman as a person who could prevent crimes in a community and be really a very superior person, which was his ideal, very unrealistic. I take it that Bruce Smith worked more, not just in the technical aspect, but that he was more straightforward and didn't quite have that idealism that Vollmer had.

DCS: More formal systems of police methods and processes, discipline.

EHC: He didn't get too involved in the ethics of policing, in the larger sense.

DCS: Smith would say, sure you need policewomen; but in terms of how the police deal with juvenile delinquency and the complex of social crime --- he wasn't much interested in that. It was more of the repressive aspects of the police.

GEC: One of the tings that we have speculated about among ourselves about Vollmer was that he was interested in this missionary aspect of policing, and that the academics around Berkeley latched on to him because he did carry them the mission. One of his early articles was called "The Policeman as a Social Worker." I don't believe that O. W. Wilson would have written the same article.

DCS: Smith would have been hung first before he would have had his name attached to that.

AES: I'm trying to think whether or not it grew out of Vollmer's concepts: somewhere in the background was a paraphrase of the 24th psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." I think it was through Vollmer that there was the concept, "The policeman is my friend, I shouldn't worry!" This was the kind of thing he wanted to get across, particularly to the ghetto, slum youngsters. I don't know where that came from, but as we sit here it sort of comes back. I might have heard it from him.

DCS: Well, the Berkeley department isn't quite in that pattern anymore.

GEC: It was an idea of policing that wasn't very practical, for Chicago or Cincinnati. It might work where you had particularly concerned citizens.

Transcriber: Michelle Stafford
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INDEX -- Donald C. Stone

Regional Oral History Office
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Berkeley, California

August Vollmer Historical Project

Fred E. Inbau

SCIENTIFIC CRIME DETECTION: EARLY EFFORTS IN CHICAGO

Interview Conducted by
Gene Carte
in 1976

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Fred E. Inbau

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Fred Inbau has been active in scientific crime detection and criminal law in Chicago since 1932. He was closely involved with the development of polygraph testing during that period. He was interviewed in connection with his understanding of the movement to bring scientific methods into criminal investigation.

Interviewer: Gene Carte.

Time and Setting of Interview: The interview took place in Mr. Inbau's office at Northwestern University, Chicago, on April 2, 1976.

Editing: Elaine Carte edited the transcript for continuity and spelling. Mr. Inbau then reviewed and edited it for accuracy.

Narrative Account of Mr. Inbau and the Progress of the Interview: Mr. Inbau was a professor of law at Northwestern University from 1945 until his retirement in 1977. Before that time, he served as director of the Chicago Police Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory. He has written extensively about criminal law and scientific evidence. He has had a long involvement as editor-in-chief with Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science and Journal of Police Science and Administration.

The interview begins with an account of Mr. Inbau's early years as a law student at Tulane University and as a fellow in criminal law at Northwestern University. He quickly became interested in the scientific crime detection laboratory at the university. Mr. Inbau discusses the people who worked at the laboratory and their areas of expertise. He recalls organizing an exhibit about the laboratory that was displayed at the 1933 World's Fair.

Mr. Inbau talks about Leonarde Keeler, who was a Berkeley "pioneer" in the technique of the polygraph. He describes the conflict that developed between them when the laboratory became part of the Chicago Police Department and Keeler was passed over for the job as director.

Mr. Inbau talks about his decision to conduct research into interrogation techniques. The conversation returns to Keeler's role in the development of the polygraph, and the personal problems that interfered with his success. Mr. Inbau's book, including his co-authorship with John E. Reid, are discussed.

Recalling a visit by Vollmer to Chicago during that period, Mr. Inbau describes his impressions of him. He remembers the deference that Keeler showed toward Vollmer. The interviewer talks about the detailed correspondence that both Keeler and John Larsen had with Vollmer.

The interviewer raises the question of the reaction of the Chicago police to the new scientific crime detection laboratory. Mr. Inbau recalls the hostility that senior officers had toward the innovation, at a time when brutality was common in obtaining confessions from suspects. Staff at the laboratory worked hard to gain acceptance of their techniques, and Mr. Inbau discusses a notorious murder case in which police brutality against an innocent man led to a lawsuit. He says that brutality as an interrogation technique finally ended when O.W. Wilson was made superintendent.

The interview ends with a discussion of disillusionment among those who work for police reform. Mr. Inbau talks about the gradual improvements that have been made in training and promotion standards. He recalls his own discouragement in lobbying for reform legislation. He describes his role in forming Americans for Effective Law Enforcement, an organization working to educate the courts and the public about law enforcement needs.

Fred E. Inbau
April 2, 1976
Interviewed by Gene Carte

Carte: Let me describe what I've been trying to do as I've had time. I was involved in doing some oral interviews about August Vollmer. You didn't really know Vollmer?

Inbau: I knew him, but not well. I met him here in Chicago and we spent a couple of jovial evenings together, several of us. I also had correspondence with him.

Carte: As we have been trying to understand Vollmer, we learned to understand something about what was going on in Berkeley in the twenties and I couldn't help but get interested in the "lie-detector," or the polygraph. Of course, you've been actively involved in criminal investigation and criminal law for many years.

Inbau: Since 1932.

Carte: So I'd like to take this opportunity to talk to you a little bit about it. But first, what about O. W. Wilson?

Inbau: I trust you saw the article in the Journal of Police Science and Administration about him?

Carte: Oh, yes. We interviewed O. W. as part of the Vollmer project, and his wife agreed to give all of his papers to The Bancroft Library. So we have all of O. W. 's papers already with the Vollmer papers. But his wife is [also] giving all his correpondence, so we in fact have all the letters while Wilson was in Wichita, and they really are very interesting. Al least they are interesting to me and I think to others interested in policing, because you can really see Wilson as a person. You knew him, and of course I just knew him from oral history. He comes across as a very personable individual.

Inbau: Yes. I knew him quite well. He was a very likeable person.

Carte: People have said to me that he always was sort of reserved and confident. But in the correspondence between Vollmer and Wilson at Wichita, you can really see him working through the kinds of problems that any modern police chief has to work through in trying to be a police chief in a city--dealing with the political and social pressures that are on a chief, especially in the twenties and thirties.

How did you get involved in this business? May I ask you that?

Inbau: Sure. My involvement came about in a rather peculiar way. I received my B.S. at Tulane University. I majored in zoology, although all the time I intended to go into law school.

Carte: Were the people in your family interested in science or interested in law?

Inbau: No, no. As a matter of fact, I was the first one in my family who went to college.

When I went into law school, there was a professor on the faculty by the name of Newman F. Baker. Although he was teaching contracts rather than criminal law, which was for a long time my principal interest in law school. However, I did very well in Baker's class. Also while I was in the law school, there were a couple of elderly aunts of Baker's who were visiting in New Orleans, and they wanted to go to Baton Rouge. They had to be transported there one weekend and Baker asked me to take them there in his car. He paid me $5.00 to do it. That was good money in those days. The ladies gave Baker a favorable report on me and Baker and I became good friends after that. I would drop into Baker's office every once in awhile for a chat. Then he told me that he had received an appointment to teach criminal law at Northwestern University. He knew of my interest in criminal law. He also knew there was a fellowship available at Northwestern in criminal law. So he inquired as to my interest in the fellowship. I told him I was very much interested. Although I had another opportunity upon graduation, I wasn't quite sure whether I should take that or go to Chicago. The opportunity in New Orleans was as law clerk to a federal judge, and the pay was very good.

Carte: This was the Depression, about 1933?

Inbau: This was 1932. Well, the fellowship up here was $1,500, which was awfully good, although out of that I had to pay tuition.

Origins of the Laboratory

Inbau: So I came to Chicago, and by virture of my having been a zoology major,

Inbau: coupled with my interest in criminal law, I was very much intrigued with the scientific crime detection laboratory which was then a part of the university, part of Northwestern University School of Law. It was established by John Henry Wigmore, the famous authority on evidence. He was the one who really got it going, although the need for such a thing was occasioned by the St. Valentine's Day Massacre here in Chicago, when seven hoodlums were machine-gunned on Clark Street by a rival gang. A couple of the killers wore police uniforms, and there was some question as to whether they were or were not police. There was a need for somebody to examine the bullets removed from the bodies and the walls of this garage and check them against police machine guns. For this purpose the coroner's "Blue Ribbon Jury" arranged for Colonel Calvin Goddard to come here from New York. He was an M.D. but his primary interest was firearms. He conducted examinations, and concluded that the fatal bullets did not come from any of the police guns.

Well, this case aroused interest in the community toward establishing the facilities for similar scientific examinations in future cases.

Carte: Wigmore was particularly interested, wasn't he?

Inbau: Yes. At that time he was dean emeritus of the law school. He induced Burt Massey, who had been on the coroner's jury and who at the time was vice president of the Palmolive Peat Company, to put up the money to bring Colonel Goddard here. Wigmore promised to provide him with facilities at the law school so Goddard could get started on the crime laboratory. He occupied a large office on the other side of this law school building. This happened in '29. Goddard was at the laboratory in the law school for about a year; larger quarters were secured over on Ohio Street. It was known as the Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory of Northwestern University School of Law.

The laboratory was a growing concern when I came up in '32 to do my graduate work in the law school. I decided to write my master's of law thesis on scientific evidence. I used to spend a lot of time at the crime lab trying to find out as much as I could about the various scientific procedures that were being used. By the way, that was the first scientific crime detection laboratory in the United States. It preceded the F.B.I. one. The F.B.I. had a fingerprint bureau but no crime lab. Anyway, I found myself at the crime lab more than in the law school library!

Carte: Some of the people who were employed by that lab were --

Inbau: Colonel Goddard. There was also Leonarde Keeler, who was one of the pioneers with the polygraph technique; a fellow by the name of Charles Wilson, in firearms identification; Clarence Muehlberger, who was then

Inbau: the toxicologist on the staff of the Cook County Coroner's Office. Then there was a fellow by the name of Seth Wiand, a retired Army major. He was working with Goddard in the field of firearm identification. So that was the essence of it. They had a photographer there, but that's all he was.

My main interest was to proceed with my thesis, writing about firearms identification, the detection of deception, fingerprint identification. Later, all of this was published in a series of articles.

Carte: Were people interested in what you were doing? Was the law faculty interested?

Inbau: Oh, only casually so. Newman Baker, of course, had an interest but not too deep a one; for a period of time, however, he served temporarily as director of the lab after Goddard left when the lab funds ran out. He did not get involved in the techniques at all.

As I was getting near the time when I was going to get my master's degree, the World's Fair was about to open in Chicago. Although the lab staff was interested in my becoming associated with it, there were no funds available at that time, so I thought of going back to Louisiana. But an opportunity arose that would permit me to hang on until then. I was told that funds might be available in the Fall. The World's Fair had some unpurchased display space, and an offer was made to the university to put on an exhibit, a crime detection exhibit, at no cost to the university. This was a good ad for the university and for the whole cause of scientific crime detection. Enough money was kicking around to sustain me over the summer to set up that exhibit and take charge of it. So I worked at the World's Fair on that exhibit.

Carte: What year was that?

Inbau: That was in '33. In the Fall of '33 I joined the lab staff, first as research assistant, then as an instructor in police science, and finally as an assistant professor of law in psychology (from '36 to '38). I worked primarily at the lab, but also taught a course in scientific evidence for law students.

Carte: As a research assistant, what were you responsible for?

Inbau: Well, my primary responsibilities were working in the field of lie detection. Now we refer to it, of course, as the polygraph technique. I was actually conducting cases and doing some research, primarily on interrogation techniques.

Carte: You must have been working very closely with Leonarde Keeler.

Inbau: Yes, I did work very closely with him. Of course, he was the most important pioneer in this whole area and he taught me the technique--how

Inbau: to run the test and conduct interviews and get confessions from guilty suspects.

Carte: Did you know him personally and socially as well?

Inbau: Oh yes, we were very good friends. Unfortunately, at a later time -- and it was slowly developing, he became a frustrated individual and began to look with some degree of envy on the success that I was achieving in case investigation and with my writing. After all, he was the man in the field and here was this upstart Inbau coming along now. So there were times when people would call and want some examinations made, and it didn't make any difference to them whether it was Keeler or Inbau. It was unfortunate, and he also had what I didn't realize fully at the time, a marriage that wasn't too satisfactory.

Some ill feelings developed on his part, and they were really greatly augmented in 1938 when the Chicago Police Department was interested in purchasing the crime lab from the university. The university was interested in unloading it because it was a financial burden. Previously, arrangements had been made for me to come back to the university full time--in other words, get away from the laboratory. But the police department, for a variety of reasons that were never fully revealed to me, did not want Keeler. They said they'd settle for Charles Wilson, who was the firearms man, to be director. Well, Wilson developed what was diagnosed then as multiple sclerosis. So he was unable to serve as director, and the whole deal was to fold up (as a matter of fact, this was before the finalizing of the purchase) unless I were able to serve temporarily as director of what was to be known as the Chicago Police Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory. The dean of the law school persuaded me to serve, and I did it.

Keeler, having developed some paranoia about me, thought that I had planned for this all along. In any event, he thought I had engineered this whole thing, which had no factual basis whatsoever, and that I can document. It was the last thing in the world I wanted. It turned out that at the end of the year, Wilson's health had not sufficiently improved [for him to become director]. The police department was satisfied with the way things were going at the lab and I was asked to stay on another year, and then it became a third year. I ended up staying three years. Then, when Wilson was able to take over, I left the lab and went into law practice. Shortly thereafter, war broke out.

Carte: You were practicing here in Illinois?

Inbau: Yes, I practiced law with a law firm downtown, doing trial work from '38 to '41. At that time my wife wasn't in good health, and also pregnant. Although I had previously applied for a commission in naval intelligence, somebody lost my damn application, so I was now in the same position as all the other young men scrambling to get a commission. I had to start all over with an application for a commission. Then some damn fool down

Inbau: in the naval office wasn't sufficiently impressed by my crime laboratory experience to warrant a commission. Although I had been obtaining confessions from murderers, rapists and other criminals, he wanted to know if I had ever conducted any "outside investigations." I said, "If you mean tracking people down alleys, no." He didn't think I was entitled to anything more than a lieutenant junior grade. Meanwhile, I had authored a book on lie detection and criminal interrogation. I figured I could be of some service to the government, but that's all he offered me. Well, with my wife sick and pregnant, and with one child already, I said "Sorry, I need a lieutenant grade and I think I'm entitled to it." I didn't get it from him, so I said, "I'll sit it out. The war will have to be won without me." Fortunately, it was!

In any event, I remained in practice during the war period and in 1945 I was invited to come back to the law school as a full professor.

Carte: While you were director of the lab, what kind of contact did you have with John Larsen?* Was he in Chicago?

Inbau: I only met Larsen on a couple of occasions. There again, he and Keeler disliked each other.

Carte: They both corresponded with Vollmer. I haven't read their correspondence. I've only read Vollmer's end of it.

Inbau: Well, Larsen thought that Keeler had stolen some of his ideas and whatnot, and that the instrument that later was developed and labeled the Keeler polygraph was really something that Larsen was primarily responsible for. So there was that ill feeling.

Carte: So they weren't close at all, even though they were both in Chicago?

Inbau: That's right.

Now, to get back to one of your earlier inquiries -- since my interest was in lie detection and in the interrogation of criminal suspects and witnesses, I looked around for material to read on interrogation techniques and there wasn't anything of any consequence. So what I decided to do was to conduct some research in the field and find out what made people confess. Whenever I or any of my colleagues obtained a confession from someone, and time and circumstances permitted, I would sit down with that person after he had signed a confession and chat with him and ask him what it was that persuaded him to tell the truth. I kept notes on this for a period of years and then ultimately decided I'd pull it all out and see what it added up to.

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*John Larsen, who worked at the Berkeley Police Department in the early 1920's, developed the first "lie detector" with the cooperation of Leonarde Keeler.

Carte: Was Professor Baker at this time urging you to do this? Was anybody encouraging you in this?

Inbau: No, no one put me up to it. This was an idea of mine alone. As a matter of fact, I ultimately proposed to Leonarde Keeler that he and I do a book together on lie detection and interrogation. He made it clear to me that he himself intended someday to do something along that line. But he was one of those people who said the only way he could do it was to get away from everything else, get on a round-the-world cruise and do it then. You don't do this sort of thing on a world cruise. So I decided I'd do it myself.

Carte: Did Keeler ever leave any papers about his experiences, particularly with Vollmer?

Inbau: To my knowledge, he didn't have or leave anything by way of personal papers.

Carte: What about Goddard and Keeler?

Inbau: Goddard was the one who asked Keeler to come to Chicago. After Keeler came, he arranged for Charlie Wilson to come to Chicago and join the lab staff. Wilson at that time was not so much in firearms but he got into firearms identification.

Carte: Keeler was a young man who was willing to go to Los Angeles with Vollmer in '23. I was just wondering if while he was there he developed some of those techniques that he brought with him here.

Inbau: Well, he worked in Berkeley, first with Larsen, and then Keeler put together an instrument which he called the "Keeler polygraph." Larsen did not like the idea. There's no question in my mind but that Keeler, with some help from Wilson, put together an improved instrument over what Larsen devised. So I think Keeler's entitled to the credit for that. After all, there's very little purely original that <u>any</u> of us do. With this book of mine, for instance, I learned much about interrogation from Keeler. He taught me how to interrogate people. To be sure, I expanded on that and developed my own ideas; then I had the incentive and made the effort to try to put this down on paper so that other people could use it.

Carte: It's interesting that most of the people that I've interviewed who knew Vollmer simply always referred to him as a personal friend who spurred them on. They gave a lot of credit to Vollmer. O.W. Wilson was very modest and was continually saying, "It wasn't me, it was Vollmer." But I gather Keeler was not that kind of person.

Inbau: Well, I'll tell you, I didn't know much about his early childhood. I have a feeling he had a father--in fact, I was told so--who expected that this son would do great things. That's why he named him Leonarde,

Inbau: after Leonarde da Vinci. Oh, Keeler toyed with the idea of becoming a doctor and so on and so forth, but he could never bring himself around to making the effort. He was in a field that fascinated people--the lie detector--and people would invite him to their homes. They'd have guests and Keeler would tell them all about the lie detector. Sometimes he'd bring it along and test it on them. His time was being overly consumed by that sort of nonsense. I tried to work out an arrangement with Keeler so that he could do some real research and writing. I said, "Why don't you go to the medical school? You work one day over at the medical school and I'll work at the lab that day. The next day, half-days, I'll work at the law school." In other words, I wanted him to fulfill the ambition that his father had basically set out for him.

Carte: His father was a local celebrity. His father was a writer in Berkeley, as I remember.

Inbau: Keeler just didn't have what it takes to achieve something like that. You can't get in the clutches of people I've just described and do anything meaningful. You just don't have the time and the energy. But all this time, you see, he had this great expectation that should have been fulfilled and [which] he didn't fulfill. He ultimately got around to boozing it up and became an alcoholic. This got progressively worse and ultimately he died, and it was due to that, actually. Meanwhile, he and his wife were divorced and all the indications are she committed suicide in an airplane. She was a WASP aviator. When her plane cracked up she had a lot of her personal belongings. The only reason she had them with her was so that they would go at the time she would go.

All of these were unhappy developments. At least to me, one of the tragic parts of it was that Keeler and I were as close as brothers and his wife and I were good friends. The three of us would be together frequently (I'd have my own date). What really triggered the break between Keeler and me were some lab experiences I had while Keeler and his wife were on a Caribbean cruise on a yacht belonging to a wealthy friend of his. Keeler's doctor ordered him to do something of that sort.

During the time Keeler was gone, there were, just by coincidence, three important murder cases, two here in Chicago and one down in Peoria. If Keeler had been here, he would have worked on those cases. I worked on them and I obtained confessions from all three murderers. The one in Peoria turned out to be a real cause celebre because this guy not only had a rape-murder to his credit, but he had also committed eighteen rapes prior to the last one. When Keeler came back, here I was in the limelight just by reason of his not being around. He became very envious.

Carte: When you were an instructor in police science, who were the people in your classes?

Inbau: Law students, in a course on scientific evidence, for which I used my own selection of mimeographed case materials on the subject.

Carte: Was it for law students primarily; it wasn't for police officers?

Inbau: That's right. Later on, of course, when I left law practice to join the faculty of the law school on a full time basis I no longer did polygraph case work, except on a very few occasions. I did continue my interest in writing on the subject, however. After a second edition of Lie-Detector and Criminal Interrogation I invited John E. Reid to be co-author on the third edition. Ultimately, we divided the book into one entitled Truth and Deception: The Polygraph ("Lie-Detector") Technique, and the other Criminal Interrogation and Confessions.

Carte: When did you meet John Reid?

Inbau: When I was director of the lab, I had to recruit a staff. John Reid, a member of the Chicago Police Department, with a law degree from De Paul University, applied. I had rejected a number of police officers who wanted to get on the lab staff because I considered them unqualified. But I was impressed with Reid and accepted him. I actually trained him to conduct polygraph tests, and trained him in interrogation techniques as well. He ultimately became the country's foremost authority.

Impressions of Vollmer

Carte: There are two other things I'd like to ask you. One, you mentioned that you met Vollmer. Do you remember when you met him? You said you socialized with him on two evenings.

Inbau: Yes, he once taught at the University of Chicago. The university invited him to come to Chicago from California to receive an honorary degree. I've forgotten just what it was.

Carte: About when was this? Do you remember just roughly?

Inbau: This was around '34; it must have been '34

Carte: It was after he retired from Berkeley?

Inbau: While he was here, Keeler arranged to entertain him. There was also at that time a very bright, fine young man visiting Chicago from China. He had known Vollmer and he planned on hosting a dinner in Vollmer's honor at a Chinese restaurant. That evening the host went to the kitchen and directed the preparation of the meal, and a very delicious one. We even had "bird's nest" soup!

Inbau: That was my first meeting with Vollmer. I had heard so many fine things about him, and he measured up to all I had heard. He impressed me as being a fine individual and one who obviously could inspire other people. He was also a very sentimental person. He was asked to give some sort of speech in Chicago at the time this honor was to be conferred upon him. He declined, and the reason he did so--and he admitted this--it would be too much of an emotional experience.

Carte: Did Keeler often speak of him and was he very deferential when they were together that night?

Inbau: Oh, yes. Keeler had a great admiration for Vollmer. There was no question about that.

Carte: Did he treat him like a father?

Inbau: Yes, that was it.

Carte: In their correspondence with Vollmer, both Larsen and Keeler--many people, especially O.W., were writing for financial instructions, kind of the way you write home: talking about financial reverses and what is a fair salary. There was a great deal of personal correspondence about what job do I take, what salary should I have--sometimes almost carping that they weren't getting enough, that sort of thing. So I wondered if that one night this personal tie with Keeler was apparent.

Inbau: Indicative of this was the fact that the Keelers bought a German shepherd dog, a highly pedigreed shepherd, which they named "chief" after Vollmer.

Changes in the Chicago Police

Carte: The other thing that I wanted to ask you about was the general climate at the time that the laboratory was being set up here. I've asked before whether the law professors were enthusiastic. Did they see this as a new wave of something that really was going to change law enforcement, or were you perceived as kookie people who really didn't know what law enforcement was all about?

Inbau: Well, this was looked upon with a great deal of skepticism in those days. As a matter of fact, when the laboratory was sold to the Chicago Police Department, I arranged with the commissioner of police to have the officers in command positions come to the lab in small groups to see this laboratory so that we could explain to them how we could assist. I have never met such a hostile group in my life. I just about got on my knees and said, "Gentlemen, this is <u>your</u> laboratory. We didn't ask

Inbau: you to come in here to instruct you. We just want to show you what you now have that you didn't have before. Here are microscopes that can be used to match bullets. Here are microscopes that can be used for examining soil specimens. Here is the polygraph." And so on and so forth.

The ones who had some feeling of understanding or sympathy about it were afraid to even ask questions. They didn't know what image this would create among their colleagues who professed that they could do the job without all of this jazz. Moreover, in those days too it was commonplace to beat a confession out of suspects. Why use a polygraph? Beat the hell out of him. If he tells the truth, he's guilty; if he doesn't, he's innocent. Incidently, that policy changed.

Carte: That was what I was going to ask you. Do you know roughly when that policy changed? Was it before Wilson came?*

Inbau: It was changing gradually. There were two factors there. One, we were able to demonstrate in a sufficient number of cases that we could tell whether a person was lying or telling the truth, when the police themselves weren't able to do it. I'm talking about cases where there was no brutalizing of suspects. Secondly, we were able to get confessions in a large number of cases and particularly a case involving a so-called emotional offender--a husband-wife killing situation, the hit-and-run driver, the rapist and other sex offenders. We were meeting with a high degree of success, and I followed the policy at the laboratory that whenever we got a confession from somebody we would not announce it to the press. We would give a report to the commanding officer and let him do it. It would be annoying sometimes because we would struggle to get confessions and then read in the paper that Captain So-and-So gave somebody apple pie a la mode and he would confess because of the nice way Captain So-and-So treated him! But what this did was to make them all the more agreeable to come to us for help, whereas if we had hogged the credit for this they would have been reluctant to come in with another case.

Carte: Was that policy--your willingness to accept this aspect of policing--changed by the time you left or was it not until after you left?

Inbau: No, it was changing while I was there. Then shortly after I left the lab to go into law practice, there arose this Degnau/Heirens case, where a small child had been kidnapped from her bedroom and her body was cut into pieces in the basement of an apartment building and thrown down a sewer. The police questioned a lot of suspects in that case. One in particular that they focused on was the janitor of the building in which

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* O.W. Wilson brought many reforms to the Chicago Police Department during his superintendency from 1960-1967.

Inbau: the body was dismembered. The janitor had a key to the basement, and therefore he must have done it! The police remembered a case when a janitor killed a young girl in a basement some years before this one. The janitor who was suspected in the Degnau child case was handcuffed and lifted over a horizontal bar with his toes touching the floor. This was known as the "trapeze."

The night the janitor was to be brought to the crime lab for a polygraph test, John Reid called me (because John was then chief examiner) and he said, "Fred, will you come on down because this is a real hot one and I don't want to run the risk of blowing it." I was at the crime lab that night when this janitor was brought into the police building, but he was not taken to the crime lab. We were waiting there for a couple of hours and I spoke to one of the captains of detectives whom I knew fairly well, and trusted. I said to him, "Look, if you want this fellow given a polygraph test, for Pete's sake arrange to bring him down here now and not after somebody works him over upstairs." I also said that if this fellow committed the crime, and he was apprehended a short while afterward, he may well have blood in his fingernail scrapings, blood on his clothing. There were all sorts of possibilities. We might be able to find some fibers from the child's clothing on him someplace. "So bring him in here and after we're through, whatever you want to do that's up to you men. I have no control over it."

Well, they proceeded to brutalize this janitor and why he didn't confess I don't know. Then they got a hold of William Heirens, an eighteen-year-old University of Chicago student. They brought him to the lab for a polygraph test and John Reid was instrumental in getting the confession from him, and Heirens was subsequently convicted.

The innocent janitor had all sorts of bruises on him when he left the police station, on his arms and everything, to substantiate what he later revealed in court. He sued and the suit was settled for a substantial amount of money. The poor fellow did not enjoy much of it. He died a few months later. Whether the brutal treatment contributed to his death, I do not know. The combination of our being able to demonstrate we could get confessions by other means and the embarrassment caused by the janitor's treatment resulted in a diminution of the extent of brutalization of criminal suspects in order to get confessions from them. This was gradually improving at the crime lab after I left. John Reid and his colleagues--were getting confessions, and their success demonstrated conclusively that they did not have to beat people up to get confessions out of them.

Then, of course, what really put an end to it here in Chicago (at least brutalization as a process of interrogation) was when Wilson came on the scene. One of the first things he did was to make it clear to those in command, "There is to be no brutality in the process of interrogation." The word went down the line.

Carte: That was fourteen years later, before it finally stopped, but at least the lab had started things going in that direction.

Inbau: The lab had been gradually demonstrating that confessions could be obtained without resorting to these practices. Then, too, the quality of the younger people coming on the police force was a bit better--but not too much, because it was so politicized in those days. The police had to pay to get promoted to sergeant; they had to pay to be lieutenant or captain.

All that was really needed to reduce interrogation brutality to a minimum was some word from Wilson implying that policemen who beat up somebody during an interrogation weren't going to get a commendation for solving a crime; and, in fact, would catch hell for it.

Carte: Wilson was able to bring to the public an awareness that, in fact, Chicago's police had changed. He made it clear to the police that they had to change. The groundwork was already there so he had something to offer in its place.

Inbau: Right.

Carte: But by the time you left the lab, that was--

Inbau: It was '41.

Carte: Already you had at least been accepted because of the Degnau case, you felt?

Inbau: The Degnau case and other cases.

Carte: You had at least the confidence that this was one technique that was available.

Inbau: Then, of course, you see we had the firearms unit, the microanalysis unit, and the document examination department, which were available to help solve cases. Prior to the advent of the lab, except for fingerprints, there was only one alternative: you get a hold of a hot suspect and if he doesn't talk right away, you slap him around a bit.

Carte: Just to get on from 1945, after you returned to the university you were a full-time law professor and you were interested in the legal aspects of this material, and you were still being called all over the country. You're now perceived to be the expert on the legal aspects of the polygraph.

Inbau: I also lectured extensively on interrogation techniques. I still do that, but I don't handle polygraph cases, nor do I interrogate. I don't have the time, for one thing, and I'm more interested in law.

Carte: But you're sometimes requested by attorneys to testify as an expert witness.

Inbau: No, because the courts generally do not accept polygraph test results, except upon a stipulation of admissibility by the opposing parties.

The Climate of Police Reform

Carte: When my wife and I wrote about Vollmer, we argued that there was a period of time when he and his colleagues were very optimistic that they were going to have a new kind of policing very quickly. Well, Vollmer never said that: he said it would be two generations. But they were very optimistic that policing was going to be turned around, that it was going to be much more scientific, the kind of policing that he envisioned in 1906 in Berkeley. There also seemed to be a period, however, when they became disillusioned, when they started confronting--the problem of L.A. and politics didn't go away simply because you were a good administrator and you brought in new techniques. But I gather from what you're saying is that the two generations Vollmer mentioned may be about to come up, and we may see some of those things happen.

Inbau: Yes, there's no question about it. There's more training and an improvement in the selection process. You don't have in Chicago, for instance, what you use to have. You don't have to pay to be a sergeant, a lieutenant, or a captain.. The examinations may not be all they could be or should be, but at least in contrast with the past it is a big improvement. It was common knowledge some years back that unless you came up with the trump, you just weren't going to be a sergeant.

Carte: What we were trying to figure out was how these people were able to keep their optimism. As you mentioned, John Reid went into his own firm. A lot of people left policing or were less concerned with policing simply because they said it was--

Inbau: They became disillusioned--

Carte: It was an intractable problem.

Inbau: Well, I've gone through periods of disillusionment as regards to the legal profession--the legislative processes or whatnot. But I always comfort myself that it was worse before. So at least we're making some progress! I'll never forget that as a member of the Chicago Crime Commission, a citizen's group, we wanted to get some reform legislation which would permit a sitting grand jury to be extended beyond the statutory thirty-day period, so that in a real hot investigation involving a multiplicity of issues it could be extended another thirty days. Well, there was a group of legislators in the Illinois legislature, at

Inbau: that time referred to as the "Westside Bloc." They were fronts for the hoodlum element. In fact, some were hoodlums themselves. You could hardly separate them. They would always vote as a bloc and in close issues this bloc was controlling. If some legislator downstate wanted a bill passed for his own constituents, and there was some opposition, they could always tell this person, "Look, we'll vote for your damn bill but remember next time a crime commission bill comes up, you've got to go along with us, you understand?" Well, he didn't have any hoodlums in his community so he may say, "Why not?"

After being down there lobbying for some of these bills, I'd get on the train coming back and I not only thought the country was going to hell, I thought it was there already! Then I began to think, oh, it must be a whole lot worse in Russia and other places. So ultimately that depressed feeling went away. We no longer have a hoodlum bloc. So I can see some reason for hope.

Carte: One of the things we've been looking for is what would hold people to the task. As you mentioned, sometimes people either know it's worse someplace else or they draw on some inner strength. We've been trying to understand the motivation of a cadre of people who wanted to change policing in the twenties or thirties. Most people don't sit down and articulate it: "This is what I was really trying to do. I knew that in the long run the thrust of scientific evidence or the input of having a higher caliber of man would, in fact, convince people that this was the way we should go."

Inbau: Well, I'll tell you of something else on the horizon. In 1966 I founded, along with Wilson, James R. Thompson [later U.S. attorney and now Governor of Illinois], and several others, an organization, known as Americans for Effective Law Enforcement, with two primary purposes in mind. One was to educate the courts as regards the needs of law enforcement--proper law enforcement, and another was to educate the public of those needs. Wilson was very helpful and AELE has developed into a very influential organization.

The only reason I mention AELE is to show that some of us don't give up hope. Sometimes you're tempted to -- "Why should I bother?" -- but then you move on anyway.

Carte: You were trained in science. Although you said you always knew you would be a lawyer, you were trained in science. Was it something about the scientific discipline or that mentality? Vollmer had no formal education at all, other than he was trained in business. In New Orleans he went to a vocational school. O.W. Wilson, of course, was trained at Berkeley. Why did they persist? For instance, there was a serious period in O.W.'s career after he was chief in Fulton, California. He had decided to leave policing. He was a young man. He got himself in to a police department that didn't want things done right, they wanted it done their way, and he decided there were other things he could do. But he didn't.

Inbau: Incidentally, while he was in Wichita he had this police cadet system. I had my kid brother from New Orelans come up as a police cadet and he worked there for a year or two.

Carte: O.W. initiated a polygraph program in the Wichita police, didn't he?

Inbau: Oh, yes. I remember one time Keeler and I and somebody else went down there. We spent a few days lecturing to his police department.

Carte: You've had a very active involvement with the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology and with the new Journal of Police Science and Administration--

Inbau: Well, I'll tell you how I got involved in that. There was the original American Journal of Police Science, which Goddard established. Two and a half volumes were published and then funds ran out. I suggested that rather than have it just fizzle out, we could have a section of the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology devoted to police science. As a matter of fact, it's a good thing I had my master's thesis completed, because that meant we had something to put into the section on police science. Three more articles resulted, then we got more material, and later we changed the journal name to the Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science.

Carte: That was an important milestone in policing. Vollmer said so and other people have said so as well. As you say, you were active in both and involved in the issues that came through the journal up to the present time.

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INDEX -- Fred E. Inbau

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR AUGUST VOLLMER HISTORICAL PROJECT INTERVIEWS

1. What was your personal relation to Vollmer?

   How did you get to know him?
   In what capacities did you work with or see him?
   What impact did he have on your life, both your personal life and your professional development?

2. What kind of a man was Vollmer?

   How did he impress you -- what did he look like, sound like, etc.?
   How do you think he impressed others?
   What personal characteristics do you think he had that made him an influential man?

3. What anecdotes and stories do you recall from your own contacts or others' stories that give a particularly good idea of the kind of man Vollmer was?

4. How did Vollmer relate to the people he dealt with on a frequent and close basis?

   To friends?
   To employees?
   To professional colleagues?

5. In what ways was Vollmer influential in the community?

   In Berkeley?
   In Alameda County?

6. In what ways was Vollmer influential in and involved in events in the state?

7. What was Vollmer's professional impact?

   What were the major ideas and principles that Vollmer stood for?
   What were the major influences Vollmer had on policing, education, and training? On other areas?

8. Are there other people that had a significant relationship with Vollmer that you think would be available for an interview as part of this project?

APPENDIX B

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   How do you think he impressed others?
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8. Are there other people that had a significant relationship with Vollmer that you think would be available for an interview as part of this project?

APPENDIX C

AUGUST VOLLMER HISTORICAL PROJECT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

	DATE	SUBJECT
1.	March 16, 1972	Austin MacCormick
2.	August 24, 1972	V.A. Leonard
3.	April 4, 1973	John P. Kenney
4.	March 5, 1975	Donald C. Stone
5.	November 2, 1975	Donal E. J. MacNamara
6.	April 2, 1976	Fred E. Inbau
7.	December 27, 1976	Charles Gain

Vollmer in the early 1950s, working in his Berkeley home. He was active as a police consultant and writer during the years following his retirement from teaching and police work. Courtesy Bancroft Library.

Police Reform in the United States

The Era of August Vollmer, 1905-1932

by Gene E. Carte
and Elaine H. Carte

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