Cincinnati Police Department History – 1850 to 1874

The Greater Cincinnati Police Museum

“Preserving the History of Law Enforcement in the Greater Cincinnati Area”

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Cincinnati Police Department History – 1850 to 1874				
1850	29-Mar	–	Day Watchmen elected, by ordinance; six from each ward, wages similar to Night Watchmen	4

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1850	22-Apr	–	Police Chief and 6 Lieutenant positions established, by ordinance, to be appointed by Council, and to serve a year each; 4 lieutenants at night and 2 during the day, with 5 watchmen at night and 1 during the day in each ward. Night watchment were to report one hour after sunset. The roll was called at the beginning and ending of each shift. Day watchmen served to sunset.	4
1850	22-Apr	–	Lieutenant established	4
1850	22-Apr	–	Police Chief established	4
1850	–	–	Population – County – 156,844	–
1850	–	–	Cholera killed 4,832	2
1850	–	–	Population – City – colored 3,172	2
1851	25-Jun	–	Sergeant established	4
1851	25-Jun	–	Complement: Reduced by ordinance to one lieutenant and three assistants and adding one watchman from each ward to act as sergeant.	1, 4
1851	–	–	Boundary – bounded north and northeast by Millcreek and Fulton Townships.	2

Cincinnati Police Department History – 1850 to 1874				
1851	–	–	Population – City – 115,438, including 112,266 whites, the most stationary white populations of the 30 towns in the Great Valley (New Orleans to Quebec) and fifth in the US, and 3,172 colored. While the original settlers were from various other states, during the Indian Wars the armies of Harmar, St. Clair, and Wayne left a variety of persons. Later, Germans came and were the quickest to assimilate to the great masses. Then the Irish, then the English, Scotch, and Welsh arrived. The African population consists mostly of emancipated slaves and their offspring. No marriages of Africans to Whites are reported, but there are many mulatto, griffe, and guadroon complexions.	2
1851	–	–	Population – County – 156,850, including 153,356 white and 3,494 colored	2
1851	–	Early, Peter; Hoke, David; Coutch, John C.	Captains of the Watch	4
1853	–	Keifer, Jacob	Chief (1st) appointed by Mayor David T. Snelbaker and dismissed three weeks later	3

Cincinnati Police Department History – 1850 to 1874				
1853	–	Looken, Thomas	Chief (2nd), 8 months, blamed for the Bendini Riots and fired by Mayor David T. Snelbaker	–
1853	25-Dec	Bedini, Cardinal	First Bedini Riots – During 1848, a rebellion was put down in Germany. Some of the rebels immigrated to Cincinnati and were called the "Forty-Eighters" or "Society of Freeman". They got word that Father Bedini was to arrive at the cathedral as the Pope's Nuncio. The priest was considered a traitor to the rebellion. The Forty-Eighters met and went to 8th and Plum Streets. The mayor sent the police to quell the mob of 500. After an officer was shot, the chief ordered his men to use their clubs. Several men were injured and one died and was buried after one of the largest funerals in Cincinnati history. The police, mayor, and police chief were taken to task for over reacting. Those involved in the murder of the police officer were tried on the following Friday and their cases dismissed. Though the actions of the chief "were entirely justifiable, [it] aroused bitter feelings against the police, and the major was obliged to dismiss Chief Looken, who had done nothing more than his duty."	1, 4

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1853	–	Hoke, David	Chief (3rd), 1 year, 8 months	–
1853	–	–	Complement: One policeman for every 1290 (1:1290) citizens and average salary of $639. NY had 1:563 and Boston 1:303 and much higher salaries.	–
1853	–	–	District 2 established on east side of Hammond; Patrolled Main to Hunt, to the river, to Washington Street, to Fulton, to corporation line, to Main again.	–
1853	–	–	Election of watchmen discontinued	–
1853	–	Dunker, John; Cassidy, Joseph; Phillips, William; Simeon, Rouse; Cramer, Xavier; Housman, F.	Lieutenants	4

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1853	–	–	Complement – 136 – 1 chief, 6 lieutenant, 3 assistants, 16 sergeants (1 from each ward), 96 watchmen (6 from each ward), 6 river watchment, 2 canal watchmen, 2 watch house keepers, 2 Hammond Sreet station house keepers, and 2 Bremen Street station house keepers	4
1854	15-Jan	–	Second Bedini Riots – The Forty-Eighters met on a vacant lot on Elm Street and marched to the archbishop’s residence. Father Bedini was burned in effigy. Marshal Ruffin, Deputy Sheriff Thomas Higdon, and several other officers tried to disperse the crowd. Higdon was stabbed to death and Ruffin was knocked to the ground and clubbed.	5
–	–	–	Detective Bureau organized	3

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1855	April	–	Know Nothing Riots – Bitter feelings existed between foreign-born citizens and the American Party, known as the "Know Nothings", with frequent clashes between them. In the predominantly German 11th Ward, the Know Nothings attacked the polls. William Brown, one of the Know Nothings, shot and killed the foreman of Link's Brewery. Chief "Hoke summoned his police and after a turbulent experience dispersed the mob." The ballot box was destroyed and the election thrown into question.	1, 4
1855	–	Hopkins, Edward H.	Chief, elected	4
1855	–	–	Complement – 101	3
1855	–	–	Population – City – 135,000	–
1855	–	–	Detective established. 3 appointed for special investigations	–
1855	–	Craven, Marshal William	Appointed City Marshal, to 1857	4

Cincinnati Police Department History – 1850 to 1874				
1855	–	Ertel, Benjamin; Hudson, William S.; Hazen, Lawrence M.; Parker, L.; and Rose, G.W.	Lieutenants	4
1856	–	–	Uniforms adopted. Before then, only badges were used for identification.	–
1856	–	–	Complement included 72 watchmen besides the keepers of the watch house at the Ninth, Pearl, and Hammond Street station houses	4
1857	–	–	Complement – reduced to 90	3, 4
1857	–	Ruffian, James L.	Chief (5th), for 2 years	3
1858	–	Robinson, Marshal Benjamin	Appointed City Marshal	4
1859	–	Gano, Marshal John S.	Appointed City Marshal, to 1859, Last Marshal appointed	4

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1859	14-Mar	–	Statute enacted Board of Commissioners to appoint the Police Chief, lieutenants, as many watchmen as were needed, and two station house keepers per station house and to formulate rules and regulations and to hear and determine complaints against its members. The position of marshal was abolished and his duties went to the police chief. Board consociated of Mayor and 4 board members appointed by the mayor, police judge, and city auditor.	1, 4
1859	–	–	Salary – Police Chief paid $1,500, $1000 from the city and $500 from the county	3
1859	–	Wilson, Lewis	Chief (6th); appointed by mayor	3
1859	–	Robinson, Benjamin	Chief (7th); appointed by Board of Commissioners	–
1860	–	Wilson, Lew	Police Chief; reinstated – Board of Commissioners repealed due to question of constitutionality	1
1860	–	–	Population – County – 216,410	–
1861	–	Dudley, J.W., Col.	Chief (8th); 1 year, 10 months	–
1862	–	Hazen, Lawrence M., Col.	Chief (9th); 2 months	–

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1862	Summer	Hatch, George, Mayor	Civil War: At a town meeting at the 5th Street Market, it was decided to arm the police force with muskets, form them into a body of infantry under the command of the police chief, Col. Dudley, and send them to fight in Lexington, Kentucky the Confederate Raider, John Morgan. An extra force was sworn in and served for ten days until the regular force returned.	1, 5(1)
1863	–	Harris, Col. L.A., Mayor	Mayor required military drill and prohibited officers from taking any part in politics. Violations meant immediate discharge. Whenever possible, he would hire discharged soldiers who were accustomed to obey, were drilled, and disciplined, and out of politics.	1
1863	–	–	Registration of persons arrested established for the purpose of releasing the data to the citizenry in the hope that it would serve to impress upon the population that the public quiet of the city was still intact.	5
1863	–	Harris, Col. L. A., Mayor	First attempt at discipline. Introduced military discipline.	1

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1864	–	–	Expenditures included 150 watchman's maces, 150 stars for special police, police button dies, numbers and wreaths (hat badges) and 56 stars designated for police.	5
1864	–	Ruffin, James L.	Chief (10th); in the capacity of lieutenant, 4 years, Mayor L.A. Harris assumed full command until 1871	–
1864	1-Mar	–	Complement – 209, half that of any other city in its class in the US. Chief Ruffin considered the 168 in patrol to be totally inadequate.	5
1865	28-Feb	–	Complement included police chief, 7 lieutenants, ward officers, river police, canal police, 3 detectives, 2 special policemen, and substitutes (part-time officers).	5
1866	–	–	Dial system of telegraph between stations and other public points established, first in US	–
1866	28-Feb	–	A sanitary squad performed duties involving health laws at the direction of the Health Officer and would be eventually relieved after a reorganization of the Health Bureau.	5
1867	–	Megrue, Robert	Chief (11th); 1 year, 2 months	–
1868	–	Ruffin, James L.	Chief (12th); 3 years	–

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1870	–	–	Dial system telegraph exchanges expanded to 167 street boxes and 8 patrol houses (New York installed call boxes in 1895).	–
1870	–	–	District 2 moved across the street on Hammond to leased property.	–
1870	–	–	Population – County – 260,870	–
1871	–	Bleeks, David M.	Chief (13th); had been a private watchman in the S.S. Davis banking house, 1 year, 10 months	1
1872	–	–	Negro appointed to Police Force; first black police officer in US	–
1872	–	–	Columbia and Cumminsville annexed	5
1872	–	–	District 2 property purchased; decision to erect a building more convenient for use as a station-house; temporary quarters established in the Fidelity Block on Sycamore below Pearl	–
1872	–	–	Complement included police chief, 11 lieutenants, clerk, 17 sergeants, 14 station house keepers, 246 patrolmen, detectives and other employees in 9 police districts and a headquarters. River police were assigned to District Two. Ten special officers were assigned to District One.	5
1872	–	–	Hours: On duty 12 to 12 1/2 hours out of 24	5
1872	–	–	Land purchased to build the 7th and 8th Police Districts	5

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1872	–	–	Crime: During previous 20 months, no report of highway robberies, garroting or important cases of burglary.	5
1873	18-Apr	Cameron, Wesley M., Hof, Gustav; Kessler, Henry; Campbell, Hugh	Police Board commissioned by State legislature to control police force; 4 members elected by the people; mayor as ex officio	4
1873	18-Apr	Kiersted, Jeremiah	Superintendent (1st); Police Chief abolished in favor of superintendent who was removed for one month, but reinstated, 1 year, 10 months	–
1873	18-Apr	–	Superintendent established	4
1873	18-Apr	–	Police Chief abolished	4
1873	–	–	Rogue’s Gallery established	–
1874	Dec	Kiersted, Jeremiah	Chief (14th), Police Board abolished; control vested in mayor.	–
1874	–	Thornton, Joseph; Langdon, Mark; Diehl, Eugene	District 2 lieutenants	–

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1874	–	–	District 2 completed; large, light, high-ceiling room, racks for the clubs and closets for changes of uniform; on west side of the room, a raised, railed platform and, on it, a desk of the lieutenant and sergeant and a case for the records	–
1874	–	Drout, Luke; Corbin, Samuel T.; Newman, Edward B.	District 2 Sergeants	–
1874	–	–	An large excess of arrests over 1873 occurred due to unusual events, numerous large and private meetings, the Exposition, the advent of the Crusaders, the financial mercantile and manufacturing panic, and numerous strikes in adjacent states and other causes precipitating thousands of seekers for labor, vagabonds and tramps upon the city.	5

<<Back	Index and References	Forward>>