Hamilton County Sheriff's Office History



The Greater Cincinnati Police Museum

"Preserving the History of Law Enforcement in the Greater Cincinnati Area"

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office:

The office of sheriff was first established in 1066 A.D. by the Normans. The word sheriff was derived from "shire" (the equivalent of today's county) and "reeve" (chief law enforcer). Thus, the term "shire reeve" was eventually shortened to simply sheriff. At the same time, the title of constable was also created, and this was the position of keeper of the reeve's stable of horses. Sheriff and constable were the first two titles for law enforcement officers in America, and each owe their origins to English ancestry.

In Ohio, a sheriff is elected by the people they serve in of each of 88 counties. It is the oldest law enforcement position in the United States. The term of office for sheriffs in Ohio is four years.

The primary duties of sheriffs in Ohio are to provide common pleas court services and corrections on a countywide basis and full police protection to the unincorporated areas of the county. Full police jurisdiction is maintained in all municipalities, townships and villages.

Road Patrol personnel were uniformed in the 1920s. Patches were worn on the uniforms of the deputies in the 1940s who were assigned to Patrol, indicating that they were the Hamilton County police; though the badges read “Deputy Sheriff.” In 1949, Sheriff Dan Tehan officially created the Hamilton County Police, and their badges and patches reflected that designation.

Ohio sheriffs and deputies have worn a standardized uniform since 1960 when the Ohio Legislature adopted new five-point star badges along with new patches, both using the term “Deputy Sheriff.”

Deputies are hired to perform different functions in lieu of the sheriff and, based on their functions, there are several styles of badges and shoulder patches. Sheriff’s vehicles in every county are also similarly painted.

The Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office is a full-service agency consisting of: Aviation, Marine, Road Patrol, Detectives, Computer Crime Section, Organized Crime Division, Regional Narcotic Unit, Dive Team, Information Systems, Internal Investigations, Court Services, Corrections, Records-Identification and Warrant Section. Ranks within the sheriff’s office are as follows: deputy, detective, corporal, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major, colonel, chief deputy and sheriff.

There are several interesting tidbits of trivia about our sheriffs: Asa V. Butterfield (1931-1934) was a candidate on two tickets (democrat and independent). George A. Lutz Jr. finished his father’s term (1935-1938). Sheriff Dan P. Tehan (1949-1972)

served the second longest term as sheriff with a total of 24 years of service and also retired as a National Football League referee. Sheriff Lincoln J. Stokes (1977-1987) had the third longest tenure of ten years. Sheriff Simon L. Leis’s was the longest, he having served from 1987 to 2013.

Sheriffs of Hamilton County

Name	Yr	to	Yr	Total Yrs
Brown, John	1790	to	1792	3
Ludlow, John	1793	to	1794	2
Symmes, Daniel	1795	to	1796	2
Smith, James	1797	to	1804	8
McFarland, William	1805	to	1806	2
Goforth, Aaron	1806	to	1810	5
Jenkinson, Joseph	1811	to	1812	2
Wallace, John S.	1813	to	1814	2
Hosbrook, David	1816	to	1816	1
Ruffin, William	1817	to	1817	1
Ayers, Stephen	1818	to	1822	5
Ruffin, William	1823	to	1825	3
Avery, John C.	1829	to	1829	1
Hulse, Ebenezer	1831	to	1834	4
Fostick, Samuel	1836	to	1838	3
Avery, John C.	1839	to	1842	4
Garrard, John H.	1843	to	1846	4
Weaver, Thomas S.	1847	to	1848	2

Name	Yr	to	Yr	Total Yrs
Cooper, Joseph	1849	to	1850	2
Smith, Charles W.	1851	to	1852	2
Higdon, Benjamin	1853	to	1854	2
Brashears, Gassaway	1855	to	1856	2
Mathers, Richard	1857	to	1858	2
Kessler, Henry	1859	to	1860	2
Armstrong, John B.	1861	to	1862	2
Long, William	1863	to	1864	2
Calvin, Richard	1865	to	1866	2
Schlotman, Henry S.	1867	to	1868	2
Weber, Daniel	1869	to	1870	2
Heart, Joseph E.	1871	to	1872	2
Ziegler, George W.	1873	to	1874	2
Springmeier, Ferdinand	1875	to	1876	2
Wallace, William P.	1877	to	1878	2
Weber, George	1879	to	1880	2
Bailey, Samuel, Jr.	1881	to	1882	2
Hawkins, Morton L.	1883	to	1884	2
Beresford, Samuel M., Jr.	1885	to	1886	2
Schott, Leo	1887	to	1890	4
Heim, Valentine H.	1891	to	1892	2
Archibald, Robert M.	1893	to	1897	5
Reichel, Chris	1898	to	1898	1
Taylor, Thomas A.	1899	to	1902	4
Jones, Salmon	1903	to	1906	4
Hamann, Henry W.	1907	to	1910	4

Name	Yr	to	Yr	Total Yrs
Cooper, Charles	1911	to	1914	4
Schott, George F.	1915	to	1918	4
Bader, Ferd	1919	to	1922	4
Witt, Richard B.	1923	to	1926	4
Anderson, William	1927	to	1930	4
Butterfield, Asa V.	1931	to	1934	4
Lutz, George A., Sr.	1935	to	1936	2
Lutz, George A., Jr.	1937	to	1938	2
Sperber, Fred	1939	to	1942	4
Handman, C. Taylor	1943	to	1948	6
Tehan, Dan P.	1949	to	1972	24
Fricker, Paul J.	1973	to	1976	4
Stokes, Lincoln J.	1977	to	1987	11
Leis, Simon L., Jr.	1987	to	2012	26
Neil, James	2013	to	2020	8
McGuffey, Charmaine	2021	to	present	