

I first met handsome in my early years with the Cincinnati Police Department. Handsome was moved around from the Fraternal Order of Police to the Cincinnati Park Department and finally to The Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society. During his travels he also stopped at the Cincinnati Public Library for Police Week.

The legend of “Hansome” if more than a legend it is history. This history has been passed down in the family of Handsomes partner, Officer James O’Neil.

Upon arrival at the GCPHS “Handsome” was placed in the area where visitors would view “Handsome” in real life. Enclosed in a protective housing “Handsome” watches all of the visitor’s to the GCPHS.

To the right of his house there is a photo of Officer James O’Neil and another unknown police officer.



Handsome – “THE POLICEMAN’S PAL”

Handsome was as Handsome did, and what Handsome did is police history. Handsome was one of the best “policemen” Cincinnati ever had.

He was only a dog, but his life was with the police. The complete biography of Handsome would make a book in itself. No officer in the history of the police department could perform his duties as simply as did Handsome. He made no reports; he prosecuted no cases, was never called on the carpet, never received any reprimands and never needed a uniform. He served in the second district out of the old Hammond street station, and later in the Broadway police station (District Two) for the full fourteen (14) years of his life. During this time, he patrolled one of the toughest beats in the city, known as “rat row” along the Ohio River bank in the Cincinnati “bottoms”. The average length of service for patrolmen is about 12 years, so it can be seen why Handsome endeared himself to the members of the department.

It was on a bitter cold winter night long ago when patrolman James O’Neill was patrolling the riverfront beat, that Handsome first came to the attention of police. Patrolman O’Neill, better known as “Big Jim,” heard a pitiful, pleading sound like a small baby whimpering. He followed the sound and there in a doorway, seeking shelter from the bitterness of the night, the patrolman found what looked like a little bundle of fur. It was Handsome!!! “Big Jim” picked up the shivering, abandoned puppy. He was only a few weeks old then. “Big Jim” took him into a warm

place and fed him. From that time on, “Big Jim” and Handsome were friends, real friends.

The pup and the policeman became inseparable, and as the warmer days came, Handsome grew big and strong. Early on, he became known and recognized as the great “policeman” he was. He would eat only when fed by a policeman in uniform, or by “Mother Morgan,” who ran a restaurant on Broadway near the river. He slept only when the officers changed reliefs at roll call or when the officers with whom he was working went into the “hole”.

Handsome assisted in hundreds of arrests. He plodded along several feet in front of policemen, with his head to the ground. On and on he plodded, hour after hour, day and night, year in and year out. He worked unceasingly.

Detective Captain Patrick Hayes told a story of Handsome with whom he was working as a rookie patrolman. Hayes related that he and his brother officer were patrolling the “river beat” one night, when they noticed a man hurrying along in the shadows. Hayes became suspicious of the man, who was across the street and some distance from them. He told Handsome to “get him”. The dog raced after the fugitive, who had begun to run. Soon, they were out of sight down in the “bottoms”. Hayes and his partner then heard Handsome barking on the river bank. They hurried down the hill, and there they found Handsome. The man was completely disrobed. The dog was standing over the prostrate thief, baring those long fangs and growling at the man’s throat. Jewelry and watches were scattered all over the pavement. Handsome had caught another burglar! The prisoner confessed that he had broken a jewelry store window “uptown” and removed the window’s

contents.

On another occasion, a murderer slipped through a police net. He had fled to the dives on the riverfront. The police squads closed in. Handsome did not like these outside police. They had no business on *his beat*, he thought. For a few minutes, Handsome left the strange police officers and went off by himself. It was not long until his partners heard the faint sound of Handsome's barking. They left the other officers and traced the barking sounds. Handsome was located in a dark hole under the main deck of a steamboat. He had his man at bay. The murderer pleaded with the officers to call off the dog.

Then, one day, Handsome fell ill. He tried to go on, but he just could not. The best veterinarians in the city were called, but they could do nothing to help the dog. Their best efforts were in vain. Handsome was beyond aid. He died on his beat!!!

This "Tale of Handsome" was originally written in the early 20th Century, when Handsome passed away and was memorialized in this case. Handsome's friend, Patrolman Jim O'Neill, was killed on duty in 1915, just a few years after Handsome attended his final roll call.

Handsome has been the subject of several newspaper articles. Shown below are some examples.

OPINIONS

OTHER POINTS OF VIEW



Today's opinion maker

Cindy Kuszewski, 47, who has been battling ovarian cancer for five years: "All of this has brought me to my knees. ... Every kiss means something, and I stop what I'm doing to appreciate life because I can't ignore the blessings around me - there is never a bad day."

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New police museum has shaggy dog story

"Handsome" won't win any American Kennel Club dog shows unless there's a category for "Mixed Breed, Taxidermy." His fur is dull dusty beige, like a shag carpet in the smoking section of a bus station. But for a mutt that died 107 years ago, he's as lifelike as Roy Rogers' artificially preserved horse Trigger.

According to legends and news clippings (which are sometimes the same thing), Handsome patrolled a beat in Cincinnati every night for 14 years. He was credited for several arrests, and could only be fed by the Cincinnati cops who found him as a puppy, lost and abandoned among the gin joints and flop houses in the wild riverfront "bottoms."

The cops loved him so much that when he died on the job in 1899, they had him stuffed. He guarded the lobby at police headquarters until 1970, then went into storage. Now he has been re-



Peter
Bronson

and greet visitors at a new Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society museum on Eighth Street, just west of Interstate 75.

The museum will open in mid-March, thanks to Detective Richard Gross, retired Lt. Pat Olvey, Lt. Alan March and former FBI agent David Lichtenfeld. Olvey has collected badges and artifacts since 1960. Uniforms, equipment and photographs have been donated by police agencies and sheriff's departments throughout the region.

There's a Roll of Honor certificate for policeman William C. Boers, who stopped a runaway mule and saved three boys in 1900. Nearby is the 1918 dress uniform that triggered a police strike when cops refused to buy costly dress blues they were ordered to wear for annual police parades.

The first cartridge pistol adopted by the police in 1888 looks like a toy. It's a .32 caliber revolver al-



Cincinnati Police Department

Handsome is as Handsome was: The stuffed version of the police dog who died in 1899 is on display at the Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society museum.

most too complicated to reload - hopelessly puny compared with the Peacemaker Colt cannons used by Wild West lawmen like Wyatt Earp.

"They didn't need firearms before that because nobody was using them here," Gross explained.

Most cops relied on their batons - a 36-inch bat of hardened hickory. They used it to tap on the curb to get backup before call-boxes and radios, or to whack bad guys. But citizens didn't like to see cops carrying sticks, so the big batons were allowed only at

How you can help

Donations are needed to finish and expand the police museum. Engraved bricks are for sale at \$50 each. Call the museum at (513) 300-3664 or Dick Gross, (513) 352-3543. Donations can be sent to the Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society, 959 W. Eighth St., Cincinnati, OH 45203.

ter dark - which is why they called it a nightstick.

The museum has blackjacks, saps and iron Claw "come-alongs" used to haul prisoners to court by their vice-gripped wrists. And there's the police issue .38 Special that caused another strike in the 1970s, when officers locked their cars with lights flashing at City Hall to demand bigger guns after a wave of police killings.

Council gave them a more powerful cartridge and a practical joke called the Ballistics Clipboard - guaranteed to stop slugs if a cop could move faster than a

speeding bullet to use it as a shield.

Local police history is a fascinating lineup of lurid crimes, popular chiefs, heroic cops who gave their lives, riots, outlaws and even a local shaggy dog story. The museum is a great idea.

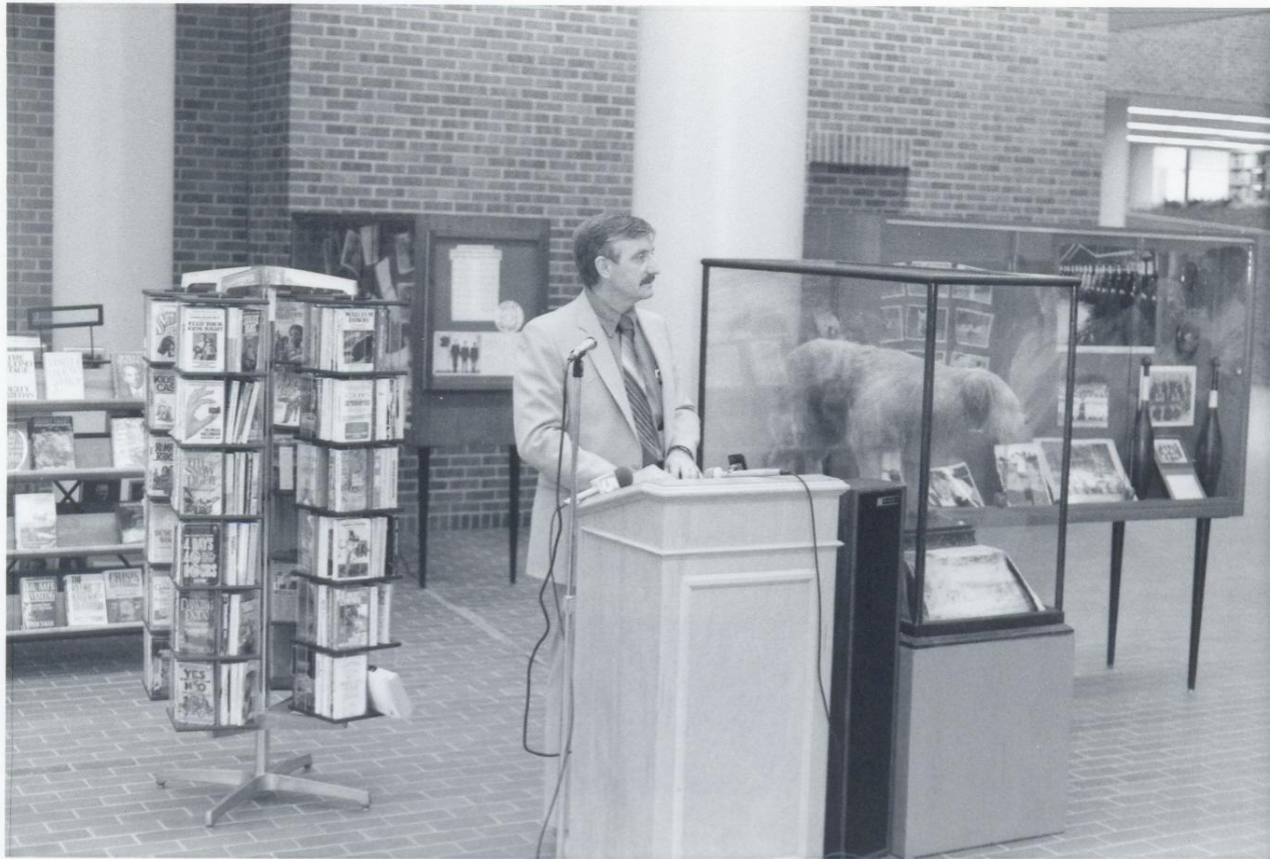
"This took on added meaning after the unpleasantness of 2001," said Gross. "We need to tell the police story in the community. We're not an army of occupation. We're here to help."

"When we were children our parents said if something happens, go to the policeman, he's your friend. Now we have a whole group of people who no longer believe that."

A Sept. 16, 1957, Life Magazine cover shows Cincinnati Chief Stanley Schrotel and his "Model Police Department."

"A Really Good Police Force," the headline said. If Handsome could talk, he'd say it still is.

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This photo was taken during the police week exhibit at the Cincinnati Public Library. Cincinnati Police Auto Squad Detective John Taylor was the guest speaker. Handsome is to the right of Detective Taylor.

cheetahs, exotic birds and other North African animals needed for the June production during an unusual casting call at the Cincinnati Zoo Thursday.

1981

Library Display Recalls Police Heyday

8/18

BY J. FRAZIER SMITH
Enquirer Reporter

There's an 85-year-old dog named Handsome at the main branch of the Cincinnati Public Library on Vine Street. He's fluffy white, with black eyes waiting to capture the attention of visitors who venture his way.

Handsome, a well-preserved police mascot of bygone days, is part of the exhibit provided by the Cincinnati Police Division for National Police Officer Memorial Week.

He stands guard at the exhibits in the third floor room of the library, watching over the memorabilia that will reside there for the next three weeks.

Handsome, called a "policeman" by his friends in his days on the force, was a pup when found by police officer Jim O'Neill along the "rat row" area of the riverfront on a cold winter night long ago. The dog was once credited with capturing a robber by nearly disrobing the suspect and knocking him to the ground near the "bottoms" area of town.

HANDSOME WAS a particular dog who many times would not eat unless fed by a policeman or by Mother Morgan's restaurant.

He served a total of 14 years for the second district at the Old Hammond station and later at Broadway station. He later fell ill and, despite the services of the best veterinarians, died on his beat.

Other exhibits include police badges from around the world.

Awards Ceremony Will Follow Service

National Police Officer Memorial Week will climax today with a memorial service at 1 p.m., at the Plum Street side of Cincinnati City Hall.

Following the ceremonies, officers will go to District 1 headquarters, 310 Ezzard Charles Dr., for Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) memorial ceremonies.

The City Chamber of Commerce will present Police Achievement Awards, with Chief Myron J. Leistler presenting the division personal sacrifice medal to those officers wounded while on duty.

The 1980 award, a red ribbon trimmed in gold, will be presented to police Officer Marvin Johnson, now assigned to the vice control bureau.

owned by Sgt. Pat Olvey. Badges from Canada, Hong Kong, Britain, Salisbury and cities across the United States are on display.

The exhibit, prepared by the Community Assistance Section and the Youth Aid Section of the city police division, also has law enforcement equipment dating back to the turn of the century. A metal, wrench-like device called the Bertillon Identification method—dating back to 1892—is a predecessor to fingerprinting. Arms, legs, jaws and noses were measured with this device.

PHOTOS OF police bands, group photos from years ago, and a picture of the 1923 Cincinnati police force, entitled "Guardians of Life and Limb on Cincinnati Streets," are there.

Documents from 1904 tell how Col. William Copelan was "Making Cincinnati the most uncomfortable city in the country for evil-doers."

The force also had the distinction of being regarded as a model of a well-managed police force in 1957, and a *Life* magazine cover proves it.

In addition, a memorial recalls those officers who met violent or accidental death while in the line of duty.

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Rev 9-14-2010***