

History of the Laconia Police Department 1855 - 1933

In 1855, Laconia was incorporated as a town from lands at Meredith Bridge, Lakeport, Weirs and from a part of Gilmanton. At the first legal town meeting, the town votes James S. Hoit, Hugh Blaisdell, Augustus Doe, Horatio N. Burnham, and John C. Davis as constables. Constables were citizens elected by the community to enforce laws and serve warrants, but little else is known about them.

Constables at this time were called out as needed and paid for their services, but were not considered paid town officers. Payments for police services included coverage of special events like July 4th and these citizens may have acted as "special officers" on just those occasions. One man, A.J. Hart was paid \$100.00 for services as police in 1876, however, it is unclear whether or not Hart was simply called often for his services or he was paid a set fee to act as a night watchman.

Paid Morrill & Silsby, for record book,	2 50
" J. R. Champlin, for labor on street lamps,	10 00
" E. E. Cutting, for services as police,	15 00
" D. H. Lewis, services as police July 3d and 4th,	5 00
" C. J. Smith, " " " "	5 00
" C. Woodburn, " " " "	3 00

J. Judkins, services as night watch, in part,	\$ 25 00
J. Judkins, services as night watch, in part,	25 00
J. Judkins, services, as night watch, in full,	90 00
	—————
J. Judkins, services as policemen, one year to March 1, 1881,	\$140 00
S. D. Glidden, services as policeman, in part,	50 00
S. D. Glidden, services as policeman, bal. to March 1, 1881,	25 00
	—————
S. D. Glidden, services as night watch,	\$ 50 00
	20 00

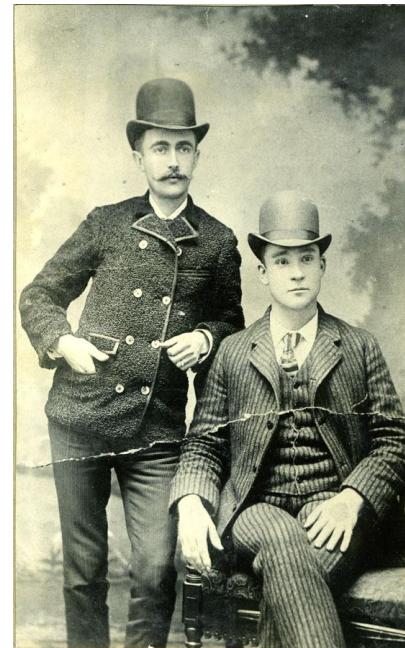
In the Laconia Annual Report for 1879, lists services for police for the first time under the heading of "Paid Town Officers." Again, A.J. Hart is paid \$100 for services as Police for one year, along with E.B. Harrington (\$44.42) and A.J. Farrar (\$75.00). It should be noted that many of the men who provided police services to the town also were also paid for other services to the town. These years were a time of great growth and much work was done breaking

roads and building bridges, etc. Men like E.B. Harrington also provided masonry work and lumber while James Judkins, who was the town's first night watchman, also worked for the steamer for the fire department. Judkins is first listed as the night watchman in the Laconia Annual Report for 1881.

Prior to 2010 it was believed that no written history of the Laconia Police Department existed. This is partially true as no published written document had ever been uncovered that gave an account of the Department's origins and its people. However, in the fall of that year research conducted for a historical display by the Laconia Historical Society uncovered a newspaper clipping in scrapbook donated to the Society.

The newspaper article was a recounting of the history of the police department as given by John M. Guay, who was Laconia's Police Chief from 1890 to 1893 and from 1905 to 1907. Guay also served as a Police Commissioner from 1913 to 1934. The article was likely written in about 1924 or 1925.

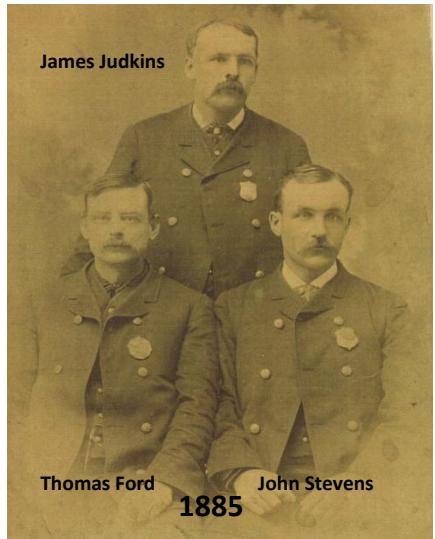
John M. Guay was born in St. Agatha, Quebec, September 18, 1861. He moved to Laconia in 1880 at age 19. After serving as Chief of Police from 1890 to 1893 he became a letter carrier for 5-1/2 years and then resumed work as a painter and decorator. He ran for Sheriff in 1902 and lost. He was appointed City Marshal in 1905 and held that post until 1907 and became a Police Commissioner from 1913 to 1934. In 1935 he became the first U.S. Marshall from New Hampshire. He was a member and held positions of leadership in the Laconia Lodge of Elks, the Knights of Columbus and the Rotary Club. He was married to May Murphy in 1889 and had two children; a daughter, Irene (Spaulding), and a son, John A. He died February 1, 1949 at the Laconia hospital at age 87.



On the back of this picture the caption reads, "Sartorial Splendor in 1885. Will Buswell, Desk Sergeant and John M. Guay." However, no one named Will Buswell has ever worked for LPD. It is probably C. William Buzzell who was an LPD Officer from 1919 to 1942 and held the rank of Sergeant during his career. Buzzell would have been about 18 in this picture and Guay would have been about 24.

Chief Guay recounts the Department's early history from 1880 until the early 1920s. The following is his narrative, punctuated with additional facts and photos. He is a skillful storyteller with a genuine voice full of humor and praise for the city and the police department that he loved.

"My knowledge of the police of the old town of Laconia prior to my coming here in 1880 is all hearsay and very likely inaccurate, therefore I shall confine myself to the period commencing with that year.



At that time the force consisted of a night watchman, whose name was Judkins. As I remember him he was a man of rather forbidding aspect, who today would probably be called hard boiled, for he certainly was all of that. In all his battles, and he had a great many, he always came out on top and, as far as I know, never failed to land his man. He lived over the old fire engine house on Water Street and when needed in the daytime had to be called, but as the officer at that time received the fees for making arrests, he didn't have to be called twice¹.

An incident of which I happened to be an eye witness will be illustrative of his methods of enforcing the law.

A fair was in progress on what is now known as the Opechee Playgrounds. Judkins was on duty and in making his rounds among fakers, he found one standing on a box and selling soap from a basket suspended from his neck by a strap. His method was to place bills of various denominations -- twos, fives, and tens -- in the little package and he'd retail them to the crowd for one dollar each.

Needless to say, he did a thriving business. Judkins pulled him down, escorted him to the gate and told him to 'get.' Nothing daunted, the fakir got another box and resumed business just outside the gate. Judkins was notified and again drove him away. That evening this fellow, who had more courage than good judgment, secured a barrel and set it up in front of the old watering trough which stood off the sidewalk in front of the present Boston Shoe Store.

Business was good with him from the start, but destined to a short life, for just then Judkins turned the corner from Water Street, took in the situation at a glance, leisurely walked up to the rear of the soap merchant, and delivered the most accurate kick that I ever saw, midway of the barrel, with all the force that was in him. The blow was so swift and so powerful that one moment it seemed as though the man was standing on nothing, but finally the law of gravitation had its effect, and he lay sprawling on the ground, with packages of soap strewn all about him and the boys all scrambling for cakes in the expectation of finding a fortune in some of them.

Broke Jaw with Fist

The most notable special policeman of that day was E. B. Harrington, who was then in his prime and the most perfect specimen of manhood I ever saw. It was told of him that in making an arrest the offender had put up such a strong resistance that in order to

¹ There was no daytime police force at this time and police services were rendered on an on-call basis.

subdue him 'Eph' was obliged to use force, and forthwith broke his jaw with one blow of his fist.

Ephraim B. Harrington

Special Officer Harrington's strength might be attributed to the fact that he was a lumberman and mason by trade. Laconia Annual Reports record payments made to E.B Harrington for labor done breaking roads in the 1870s, a time of enormous growth in the city. He had lived in Laconia for 65 years at the time of his death on February 12, 1927 and resided at 193 Pleasant Street.

These constables, as they were properly called, were appointed by the Board of Selectmen, but in order to give the voters an opportunity to express their will in the choice of constables it had become the custom to vote for them at the annual town meetings, the selectmen afterward legalizing this action by appointing the men thus chosen, but this applied only to the choice of the night watchmen.



Another notable special officer at this time was John N. Stevens, who had gained considerable notoriety in connection with the Law and Order League².

Judkins held sway until 1888 when Thomas F. Ford became a candidate for his position. The second Tuesday of March 1888, is always referred to by the old timers as the date of the big snow storm. There had been such a fall of snow the previous night that after the sidewalks had been plowed one could barely see the tops of the buildings on the opposite side of the street. Although the voters from up-town could not come in to vote the battle was hot and furious. Several ballots were taken, and the ballot that defeated Jim Judkins was being counted when the old town clock tolled the hour of midnight.



The following year [1889] the selectmen established a day and night force³ by the appointment of John Wells, the father of the late Dr. Wells, as a regular police officer, and in conjunction with Ford did alternate day and night duty. Mr. Wells, who has been dead several years, was a splendid old gentleman, but hardly fitted by reason of age and temperament to cope with the conditions which obtained at that date. About this time a man named Dunham of tremendous size and strength, who could easily take an ordinary man under each arm and walk away with them, was appointed to the force, but owing to illness gave up the job after a short time.

² The Law and Order League was formed in Chicago, IL in 1877 to enforce laws pertaining to liquor-traffic and sales of liquor to children and youth. It caught on with such fervor that it eventually led to Prohibition.

³ This was most likely the advent of daytime foot patrols as we know them.

Used Big Stick

In 1890 street fights and brawls became so numerous that the selectmen decided to take drastic action to restore order. Consequently, they appointed Charles Dolloff and Michael J. Whalen. They were as good men for the job as could be found anywhere. They were not afraid nor at all squeamish about using their clubs which were the regular police night stick in vogue at the time in all police departments. They were of hickory, 24 inches long, and to make them more effective they bored holes in the ends and filled these holes with lead. The selectmen gave them orders to clean up the town and they went to it with a will. I daresay there were more broken heads in Laconia the year following their appointment than in all the previous history of the town.

Chief Dropped Dead [This is inaccurate – Charles Dolloff was not the Chief of Police at any time]

Charles Dolloff dropped dead on the sidewalk in front of Mallard's Drug Store, after having returned from the Fair Grounds where he had quelled several wild free-for-alls which might well be called riots. Channing McLaughlin was appointed in his stead.

On July 18, 1889, while on patrol, Charles H. Dolloff, age 45, died of an apparent stroke or aneurism while on Main Street. As reported in the *Laconia Democrat*, Officer Dolloff had been on duty that afternoon at the races held at what is now Opechee Park. Just before leaving the grounds he was called to "quell a sudden outbreak which required vigorous and rapid work." When he resumed his patrol on Main Street he remarked, "What makes me feel so?" and sunk to the ground. In 2011, Officer Dolloff's name was added to the Roll of Honor at the New Hampshire Law Enforcement Memorial making him the first recorded officer to die in the line of duty in New Hampshire.

A little less than a year later [1890] I was added to the regular force, and six months later was made chief, McLaughlin resigning and Thomas F. Ford was again appointed a regular. This was the force in existence when Laconia was made a city.



This photo was taken circa 1891 based on the fact that it pictures John M. Guay, left, and Thomas F. Ford, right. The only other full-time police officer at that time was Michael J. Whalen who could be the officer seated in the middle.

I want to say just a few words regarding the conditions that prevailed then and the difficulties policemen had to contend with. There was no telephone⁴ or electric lights. To be sure, we had a few gas lights, but we had to turn them off at eleven o'clock and then it was the moon and the stars that gave us light. So you can imagine what it was like on a cloudy night.

No doubt some of you, particularly the young men, may think that the clubbing which I have described was unnecessary, but it should be borne in mind that the unruly element had been subjected to scarcely any police restraint, that when the police attempted to curb their riotousness or commanded of them to move on, he was insulted by someone who felt his rights and personal liberty were being curtailed and was at once full of fight. Besides, it was a fighting period, a time when with a certain element the real test of manhood was one's ability to fight, and the policeman who couldn't or wouldn't fight had no business on the police force.

Judge Harry E. Trapp, in his tribute to John Guay upon his death in 1949, noted, "As a young man he was a patrolman; and a good one. I understand that in his younger days he was quite a scrapper, and when walking his beat he would just hope that somebody would start something. If they did, John could finish it."

There were 22 open saloons. On holidays the mills and shops would close, but the saloons would remain open. We had orders from the selectmen to keep a watchful eye and when we judged the crowds were drunk enough they gave us authority to close the saloons. At the appointed time, usually between three and four, the crowds were turned out and for an hour or two the police had their hands full in stopping impromptu fights, and in clearing the streets.

The bulk of our work was that incidental to drunkenness, and we made a great many arrests for the latter offense, although we were severely criticized if we arrested a man without first giving him a chance to go home. In this connection I recall a rather amusing incident. One day, I met a fellow at the corner of Hanover and Main streets, who was in a fit condition to be sent home. Knowing that he lived on Beacon Street, I turned him around and told him to go home.

Twenty minutes later I met him on Mill Street, and I said to him, 'How is this? Didn't I tell you to go home?' And he replied, 'Yes, but you hain't tole me stay there.'

⁴ The first telephone was installed in police headquarters in 1894.

Discipline Rather Lax

As you may well imagine, discipline was rather lax. Every officer had more or less political pull and it was not always expedient to be too firm with him.

At this time in history, not just in Laconia, but everywhere in the country, the position of police officer was a political appointment; so it wasn't *what* you knew, but *who* you knew that got you the job. Having friends in high political places paid off in the form of a decent blue-collar job that paid at least twice as much as working in a mill or factory. If the Chief was a Democrat and had a patrolman who was appointed by a Republican then the Chief had to be careful about being too firm and losing popularity, as he could easily be appointed right out of a job at the next election.



Mill Street. c. 1880-1890

The following incident is a fair example of the sort of discipline that prevailed. A complaint had been sent to the chairman of the board of selectmen that some of the saloon keepers were keeping their places open after hours. Thereupon, he instructed me to see that they closed at the right time which was ten o'clock. On this particular occasion one of the regulars was off duty and a well known special was subbing for him. As the hour of ten approached, I told him I'd take care of Mill Street, where most of the saloons were located and directed him to look

after those located at the lower end of Main Street. After the saloons at my end had closed and everything being quiet, I took a walk down the line to see how the special was getting along. As I passed one of the saloons I could discern a light in the rear. I walked around the block entered the rear door of the saloon and found the officer seated at his ease, and drinking a bottle of beer.



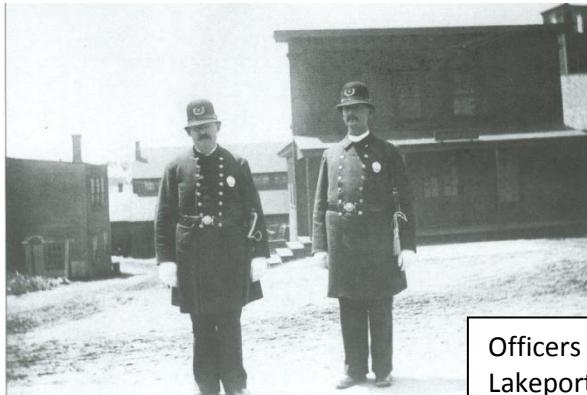
Gerald Chapman's Hangman

Henry K. W. Scott⁵, now warden of the Weathersfield Connecticut state prison, whose duty it will be to hang Chapman⁶-if he is hanged- was the first city marshal of Laconia, under the new city charter [1893]. The police force was appointed by the mayor and the city council.

The following were the patrolmen, Frank A. Bailey, Amos Wheeler, Calvin Foss, Walter Felch, and Samuel J. Dixon. A year later Frank Bailey was made assistant marshal.

⁵ City Marshal 1893-1905

⁶ Gerald Chapman was convicted of killing Connecticut Patrolman James Skelly and was, in fact, hanged on April 26, 1926 by Henry K. W. Scott who was the warden at Weathersfield Prison at the time.

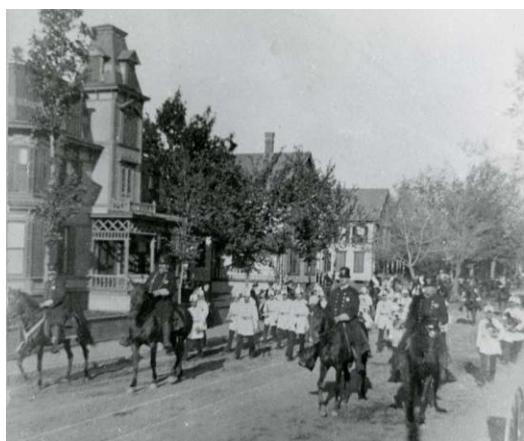


In March, 1895, Marshal Scott suspended two patrolmen for a serious breach of discipline and preferred charges against them. They resigned immediately and a petition was circulated for their reinstatement, and the probable overthrow of Scott.

Officers Walter Felch and Frank Bailey,
Lakeport Squire, abt. 1893

The legislature being then in session, Col. S. S. Jewett drafted a bill authorizing the Governor to appoint a Board of Police Commissioners for Laconia, thereby taking the control of the police from the mayor and city council. Col. Jewett personally took the bill to Concord where it was passed under suspension of the rules, signed by the Governor, who appointed as Commissioners Frank E. Busiel, John W. Ashman, and George W. Thompson.

As reported in the *Laconia Democrat*, Friday, February 15, 1895, Officers Calvin H. Foss and Amos G. Wheeler were suspended from further service on the police force for alleged neglect of duty. The City Solicitor had apparent need of police services late in the evening and was not able to find anyone on duty. The two officers were found in the back room of a saloon. **“The solicitor at once instituted a vigorous ‘kick’ in regard to this state of affairs and informed the city marshal that if no Republicans could be found who would attend to the duties of patrol, it might be well to wipe out the present force and put some Democratic officers in their places.”** The Chief was also in fear losing his job due to an unpopular disciplinary action. This incident and undoubtedly many other precedents (including the one reported by Guay himself) led to the formation of the Police Commission who took over control of the police department from the political influence of the City Council.



In the meantime the whole force with the exception of Scott and Bailey having resigned, the commissioners appointed the following: Marshal H. K. W. Scott; assistant marshal Frank A. Bailey; Patrolmen Chas E. Small, Archie Connor, J. B. Fernald and B. M. Hutchins.

Parade on Church Street, abt. 1895
L to R: Marshal Scott, Off. Burt Hutchins, Asst.
Marshal Frank Bailey, Off. Amber Conner.



Parade, Lakeport Square, abt. 1896, led by Marshal Scott. First - Frank Bailey, fifth – Burt Hutchins, sixth – Charles Harvell

In 1896 C. A. Harvell was appointed to succeed Connor [who] resigned. In November, 1905, Marshall Scott was appointed warden of the NH state prison. I was appointed to succeed him. Frank Bailey remained as deputy marshal until Sept., 1906, when he was appointed deputy warden of the NH state prison. Officer Harvell was appointed Asst. Marshal to succeed Bailey.

Legislated Out

In March, 1907, I resigned and Charles Harvell⁷ was made my successor with Bert Hutchins as deputy. In 1913, after the Democratic-Bull Moose catastrophe, all police commissions were legislated out of office and new commissions appointed. The commissioners of Laconia were M. J. Carroll, J. P. Morin and myself, who appointed Daniel Finn city marshal.

In March 1916, the Republicans having come back into their own, Harvell was reinstated in his old position. Claude W. Foster is his deputy⁸. At the last session of the

⁷ Charles A. Harvell, Chief of Police 1907-1913, 1916-1933.

⁸ Claude W. Foster was Deputy Chief from 1924 to 1926.

legislature the charter was amended, changing the title of the head of the department to Chief of Police.

With one exception, Laconia's marshals were good men. Scott became noted as a good officer and able detective, although he gained his greatest distinction in the management of penal institutions. After resigning as warden of NH prison he was recommended by Senator Hollis for warden of the Leavenworth penitentiary, but failed to receive the appointment for political reasons. He afterwards became superintendent of a reformatory at St. Cloud, Minn. He is now, as I stated before, warden of the Conn. State prison.



Deputy Chief Burt M. Hutchins, seated left, and Chief Charles A. Harvell, seated right, top row, far right Ernest Fielding.

Harvell Bravest Officer

Now, Harvell-and I hate to say this in his presence- is the bravest officer Laconia ever had, and the remarkable thing about it is that he does not know it. His bravery is as matter of fact, so much a part of his make up, that he does not realize it. He has fearlessly faced death from armed men on several occasions. He was able, through his coolness, to come out on top and that was the end of the incident. Where others might with reason have sought publicity, he has preferred to let his deeds go unsung.

Speaking of bravery reminds me of an incident in my career which at the outset had all the 'makings' of a tragedy. Now, I've never been brave. I'm rather inclined to think that I am quite the opposite. One day I was notified that a well known character who was working on Dana Marsh's barn where the new Piscopo block now stands, had got

drunk and was running amuck. This man had the reputation of being the strongest man in Laconia at that time. I at once went to the scene and just as I got in front of the brick house, he came around the corner with an axe raised over his shoulder and came right at me. My first impulse was to turn and run, but there being so many about I was ashamed to do it. So, pride overcoming my fear I advanced and as I got near him I said, 'What are you going to do with that axe?' He lowered the axe and said, 'Nawthin.'

Finn's Keen Wit



If Harvell was the bravest, Dan Finn⁹ was certainly the most keen witted, and had I the time I could regale you with stories of this unfailing wit coupled with his natural acumen in ferreting out difficult cases, but I must relate one incident which is less an exhibition of wit than an example of his rigid sense of duty.

A complaint had come to him that a canvasser for crayon enlargements had insulted a woman when calling at her house. Dan instructed Officer Ouellette to find this man and send him up to the office for a line up. In the meantime, a young lawyer from Concord approached Ouellette and told him his name, that he was from Concord and belonged to the Knights of Columbus. Ouellette, also a Knight of Columbus, told him the chief was a

Knight and he had better call on him. All this time Dan was impatiently awaiting the arrival of the picture man. When the young man from Concord entered saying, 'My name is...I'm from Concord, and I belong to the K of C.' 'Hold on there,' said Dan. 'I don't care if you're a K. C., a K. P., or a Mason, you're not going around insulting women in this town!'

At the time of his death on April 28, 1941, *The Laconia Evening Citizen* published an article about Dan Finn and his contributions to the city. He came to Laconia at the age of 23 from County Kerry, Ireland and lived at 30 Fenton Avenue. He was reportedly a fine horseman and taught Governor Charles A. Busiel how to ride. He was also "a natural" as a policeman and "cut a fine figure in his uniform." The newspaper article goes on to say, "He had a marvelous way of getting persons to admit their guilt" and tells a story of a man who had stubbornly refused to pay his ex-wife support for their children. Marshal Finn tried to reason with the man, but after a time he had lost some patience. Finn reportedly, "went to the pencil sharpener. It was in the days of the crank telephone and he wound the sharpener handle vigorously. 'Scott & Williams?,' he asked. 'I want to talk about the pay of that man.' That was enough for the delinquent. He begged the marshal not to tell the factory about the case. It would cost him his job." The man paid his debt and never realized how he had been tricked by Finn.

⁹ City Marshal 1913-1916

I know of no vocation with a greater opportunity for service than that of the policeman. Although you will not find it in the records, scarcely a day passes that he does not render a service to some citizen in some form or other, or that he does not perform some kind act. If the truth was known, many young men have been led from the crooked path to a life of honor by the kindly advice and sympathetic assistance of some policeman.

I recall with a great deal of pleasure the case of a young man in this town who is today a hard working mechanic and the head of an interesting little family, who, through some boyish indiscretion had made himself liable to a term in the state industrial school. Fortunately, I was able to prevail on the court to place him on probation. We meet quite frequently and when opportunity offers he expresses his gratitude in the warmest terms as he realizes that had he gone to the reform school his life would probably have been wrecked.

Best Force in Country

I sometimes wonder if we think of the policeman's work and what it means to us. Do we realize that while we are sleeping he is guarding our property? Who can estimate in dollars and cents the value of the property saved by the vigilance of the alert policeman in detecting fires in their first stages?

He not only guards our property but also protects our lives and those of our families. He is the buffer who must stand between us and danger. Whether it be a mad man or a mad dog, we expect him to shield us from either.



1923. L to R: Daniel Clare, Sid Shastany, Bill Smith, Will Buzzell, Chief Charles Harvell, Dep. Chief Claude Foster, Bob Roberts, John Lyman, Arthur Caverly, Walter Tate. The boy is Robert Foster, the son of Claude Foster, who would have been about 2 years old.

Now, just one word regarding our police force, and I am done. I sincerely believe Laconia has the best police force it ever had. There is no jealousy or discord in its ranks. They work unitedly to uphold law and order and for the best interests of the city and the Police Department. In short, the splendid esprit de corps which prevails and which is so necessary in every organization working for a common object is a great credit to Chief Harvell and his able deputy, Claude Foster. In consequence, Laconia is freer from crime and serious offenses than any city of its size in the country, making it next to Heaven the most desirable place one could wish to live in."

Locations of Police Headquarters

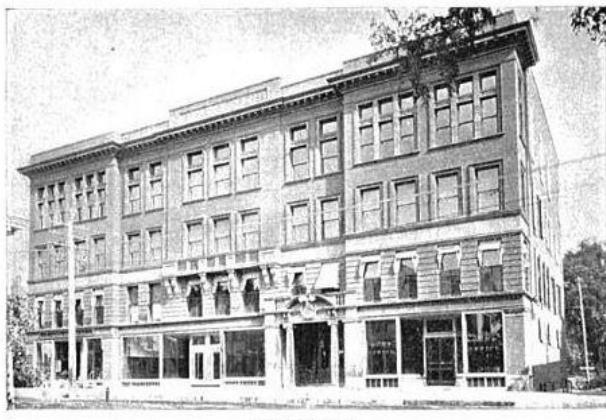


Prior to 1893 there is no documentation on the actual location of a police department. In the 1880s and early 1890s entries show payment for upkeep to either a "police room" or "police lobby," but no location is given for this office. The annual report for 1893 indicates that George F. Mallard was paid \$137.50 for rent of police court room. Provided the police department room was also located there, it is likely that the police department was located at the Mitchell & Mallard block on Main Street.

The 1895 annual report confirms that City Marshal H.K.W. Scott's office is located at 539 Main Street, which at the time, was the Mitchell & Mallard block. The police rooms were located on the third floor. Today, that block is where the Healthlink offices are located at 575 Main Street.



In 1900, a fire destroyed both the Mitchell & Mallard and Dinsmoor-Burleigh blocks, gutting the third floor and destroying furnishings and many valuable articles including papers relating to criminal matters and a "rogues' gallery." Marshal Scott was reported as having lost approximately \$200.00 worth of uniforms in the fire. After the fire, the police offices were moved temporarily to the small hall in the Moulton Opera House, also on Main Street.



Offices then moved to the Masonic Temple building at 653 Main Street, room 13. On December 6, 1902, a fire and explosion destroyed that building. Lost in that fire were a personal loss of \$300.00 to Marshal Scott, another rogues gallery containing 700 pictures and a case of valuable relics. Officers Bailey, Fernald and Harvell each suffered a loss of \$75.00 a piece.

After the fire, the police department moved temporarily into the newly built fire station. After the temple building was rebuilt on the same site in 1903, the police offices and court room were located in rooms 8 and 9 until 1923.

Interior photos of police offices in the Masonic Temple building, 1905.



Police Office Masonic Temple Building around 1904 City Marshal Scott - Deputy Marshal Bailey



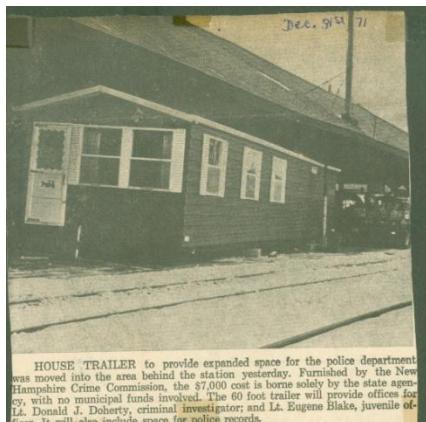


In 1923 the police department was moved to City Hall located on Pleasant Street. This building was razed during Urban Renewal in the early 1970s and its location is now occupied by the Laconia Savings Bank. Police offices were located on the second floor of the building. Police officers can be seen in the window in this picture on the right.



This is an interior shot of the police department located at City Hall. Written on the back is "March 13, 1962."

Pictured on the right is Police Chief Charles Dunleavy shaking hands with Officer Daniel Clare. Officer Clare worked for the police department for 42 years, from July 2, 1919 to November of 1961.



In 1963, police headquarters was moved to the historic train depot in Veterans' Square. On December 31, 1971, a 60 foot house trailer was moved behind the depot "to provide offices of Lt. Donald J. Doherty, criminal investigator, and Lt. Eugene Blake, juvenile officer. It will also include space for police records," as reported in the Laconia Evening Citizen.



Chief Harold Knowlton (1962-1977) seated at his desk at police headquarters in the train depot, March 23, 1972.



In 1978, headquarters was moved to 51 Church St, the former Winston Building, giving the department nearly 10,000 square feet of office space, quadrupling what it had before.

Pictured to the right is the color guard from 1982. From left to right: Officers Russell Boynton, Bruce Davidson, Sgt. Shaun Sanborn, Off. William Sipes, Acting Lt. John Bieniarz.



Patrol area with Watch Supervisor's desk behind partition. Pictured: Det. David Gunter on left, Captain Larry Pond, seated, 1983



Dispatch center, pictured left, 1983.

In 2003, the police department was moved to its present headquarters at 126 New Salem Street.

FIRSTS

1920 - The first vehicle the police department owned was a 1920 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, purchased from Laconia Tire Co. for \$632.78.

We should give this department all the support possible that it may guard our city from any form of banditry or law breakers of the vicious type. It requires men naturally adapted for the work. Our Police Commission have furnished us many such men. I deem it only humane to give them one day off in eight. Is there a person here who would like to be confined to his work seven days in a week? Let us look carefully into our appropriations when we make them, and I predict we can safely cut things where it will never be felt; to fix their signal system as they want it, and furnish them with a suitable automobile. I believe we should do this, and commence to give them what they deserve, if you want to keep the right men on the force.

The Police Department has moved to the new City Hall, where they have ample quarters for many years to come. The one day off in eight, has proven to have been a great relief to the men, from a steady grind every day in the week.

Invite Citizens to See Signal System

Everything will be ship shape for the opening of the new police telephone signal system Wednesday night, it was announced today.

It is the desire of Chief Harvell and the members of the police commission that there may be a public demonstration of the usefulness of the new system, and, consequently, everyone interested is cordially invited to be present at 7:30 Wednesday evening when the official opening occurs. Chief Harvell will have a man stationed at every box to call headquarters at intervals immediately after the service is initiated.

The signal system marks a big step in the progress of the department, and with some one on duty at headquarters at the switchboard throughout the day and night complete protection in every emergency is assured.

The location of the call boxes is as follows:

1. Mill Street
2. Union Avenue and Court
3. Harvard Street
4. Church and Messer
5. Union Avenue and Stafford
6. Union Avenue and High
7. Court and Bowman
8. South Main and Pine
9. Pine and Highland
10. Main and Oak
11. Water Street
12. Union Avenue and Clinton
13. Elm and Fairmount
14. Union Avenue and Laurel

1925 - In his inaugural address, Mayor George E. Stevens recommends that police officers be given one day off in eight, that the signal system be fixed and an automobile be purchased for their use.

1926 - Mayor George E. Stevens inaugural address March 23, 1926.

1926 - On June 9, 1926 Chief Harvell unveiled the new police telephone signal system. Lights were mounted atop telephone poles outfitted with a call box. When the officer would see the light he would go to the call box and dial headquarters to receive his dispatch.

1933 - May 19, 1933, the police commission approves Chief Hubbard's recommendation for the purchase of a car. Prior to this, police officers used their own vehicles and were reimbursed for mileage. Chief Hubbard showed the savings and benefits of owning a vehicle that could be available 24 hours per day. The car was purchased from Cantin Chevrolet, Co. and cost \$747.00.