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# New Frontier

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## WINNIPEG'S FIRST OFFICIAL LAWMEN

The City of Winnipeg came into existence because of its location at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in the fur trading area which had been granted to the Hudson's Bay Company and was called Rupertsland. In 1835 the Hudson's Bay Company produced the first written laws for the Red River Settlement. The company appointed several men as Justice of the Peace to enforce those laws. There was also provision made for a volunteer force to be called upon if necessary but they were not effective.



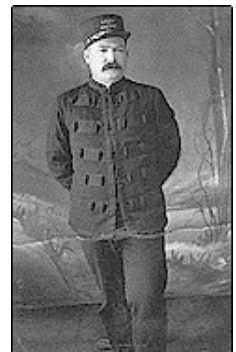
Winnipeg - 1870

The first official law enforcement body was created in 1870 soon after Manitoba became the "postage stamp" province. Captain Frank VILLIERS of the 2nd Quebec Rifles stationed in the settlement was given 10 soldiers from his regiment and hired 10 local men to form an instant Mounted Constabulary Force (MCF). These men were required to cover the entire area of the province and to work seven days a week which was not

uncommon at that time. They were also responsible for transferring prisoners back and forth from Winnipeg to the first penitentiary located at Lower Fort Garry. The name of this Force was changed to the Provincial Police Force (PPF) and finally to the Manitoba Provincial Police (MPP). The duties of this Force changed over the years but they continued to serve throughout the province until 1932 when their duties were taken over by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Winnipeg was a rapidly growing community and the Provincial Government decided to grant it the status of a "city" without going through the usual steps of becoming a "town" first. The elections in January 1874 selected the first Mayor and Aldermen. These gentlemen quickly set about to hire key officials including a Chief of Police.

**John S. INGRAM** became the first Chief of Police for the City of Winnipeg. He was appointed on February 23rd, 1874 and this was confirmed by By-Law #4 signed in Council the next day. The search then began for two Constables to round out the size of the first authorized Force. The force.



Chief John Ingram

The term of office for Chief Ingram was rather short and filled with bickering between the Chief and the Council. In particular, Mayor Cornish was



not impressed with the Chief who had a reputation as quite a scrapper and was also known to have a weakness for wine and women which eventually lead to his downfall.



Winnipeg Police Badge #3

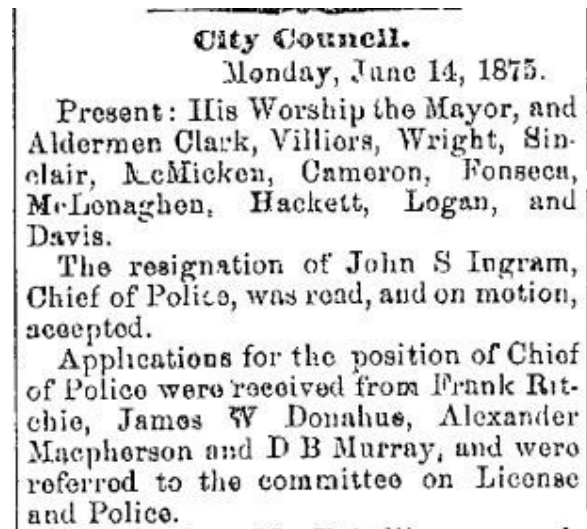
Council was very concerned with the reputation Winnipeg had as a wicked city and demanded that the police crackdown on the brothels and the saloons. At this time it must be remembered that Winnipeg was the end of civilization in western Canada and the open space known as the North West Territories lay beyond the city. If you wanted to party or have the pleasure of female company, Winnipeg was the last place to do it.

There were some problems within the police department at this time anyway, but one July evening in 1875 Constables **MURRAY** and **BYERS** were making their rounds of reported houses of ill-fame when they entered the home of Ella Lewis and found a male visitor inside.

After a brief pause, the male appeared and was

identified by the two constables as Chief Constable John S. INGRAM. The officers laid a charge of "frequenting a house of ill-fame" against the Chief and he appeared the next day before Mayor Cornish who also served as Magistrate for the city. The Mayor/Magistrate fined the Chief \$8.00 and he was suspended. There is no record of what Ella may have changed but it was certainly an expensive visit in the end. The Chief submitted his resignation to Council the next week and it was accepted which saved the Council the embarrassment of firing him.

The search for a new chief lead to various names being submitted by aldermen but none could get sufficient support and eventually, Constable **David B. MURRAY** was proposed and selected as the second Chief Constable for the City of Winnipeg.



Chief Murray worked hard to improve the police department and managed to get a small increase in manpower with the addition of two more constables to bring the force to five. He was also responsible for drawing up the first Rules and Regulations which were on four handwritten pages of foolscap paper approved by the Council in 1876.





Chief Murray also led the department into the boom years of the city in the early 1880s as the railroad pushed its way west and opened up the prairies. It brought hundreds of jobs to the city and a great influx of immigrants. It also brought an increase in crime. The city responded by increasing the police department several times and by 1882 there were more than 30 officers in the department. The pay was poor when you consider the men worked 7 days a week and 12-hour shifts so the turnover of personnel was a problem.

The police force had started out using a small area of the original City Hall but the building was poorly built and they were forced to move to a temporary location on Main Street and then into the Market Building behind the city hall. These accommodations were too small and according to newspapers the living conditions and the condition of the cells were not fit for humans.

Chief Murray fought for more men and better accommodations and the city finally built a new police station and courthouse at James Avenue and King Street in 1883. (The Mandarin Building now occupies this location). This station served as police headquarters for twenty-five years.

The boom years of the city tapered off by the mid-1880s and the city cut back on personnel reducing the police force to twenty-four officers and then by 1887 to only fourteen officers. Chief Murray protested the reduction and at the same time was faced with claims of corruption concerning payoffs from operators of houses of ill-fame. The hearings exonerated Chief Murray but did cause the dismissal of the detective accused of being the middleman. The pressure of the office finally caused Chief Murray to resign after twelve years of guiding the force from its early beginning to a well-organized department.



# The Early 1900s

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## CHIEF DONALD MACPHERSON



The next Chief Constable was **Donald MacPherson**. He had been the Deputy Chief Constable and was well qualified for the position. Chief MacPherson continued to modernize the department and was responsible for establishing the first School of

*1*Chief Donald MacPherson Instruction in 1912. He also arranged for the department to purchase its first mechanized Patrol Wagon or "Paddy wagon" in 1913 along with an ambulance. The police signal system came into use the same year so that the beat patrol officers could communicate with the station or receive calls from the station.

In 1913 the Winnipeg Police Department was honoured with the awarding of three King's Police Medals. This high award was created in 1909 and given throughout the British Empire. The award could be for either long and distinguished service or gallantry. At that time only one KPM had been awarded in Canada and it was for long service to a Chief in Ontario. The 1913 awards all came to Winnipeg with a distinguished service award to retired Chief Constable John C. McRae and the first gallantry awards in Canada to Constables **William TRAYNOR** and **Hugh BROWN**. Unfortunately, Constable Traynor died of typhoid fever just two weeks before the ceremony so the medal was presented to his widow.

## Krafchenko Makes Sensational Escape

The beginning of 1914 was to bring one of the dark times in the history of the department with the Krafchenko affair. John Krafchenko was arrested in Winnipeg for the murder of the bank manager in Plum Coulee and was detained in the Rupert Station although the case was the responsibility of the Manitoba Provincial Police. His lawyer persuaded one of the police guards to smuggle in a gun and rope with which Krafchenko escaped. Unfortunately for him, the rope broke as he tried to climb down from the third-floor window but he did manage to get away although injured. He was eventually captured, tried for the murder and executed. The investigation of the escape led to the arrest of one of the jailors, Constable **Robert James REID** who was sentenced to 7 years in the penitentiary while the lawyer got 3 years. REID and another prisoner were killed just a few months later in an accident at the prison. The lawyer was eventually reinstated to the bar after his sentence.

The First World War from 1914 to 1918 brought a heavy strain on the department with a reduction in manpower due to men taking leave to join the military. Some 152 members left to serve and 29 gave their lives in the bloody trench war in Europe. Of the survivors, only 78 men returned to the department and some of them did not last long due to their war injuries and poor health. Many of





the officers had received battle awards and honours.

The department was involved in an unusual riot in 1916 that became known as the "Army Riot" and was aimed directly at the police. It started with the arrest of some drunken soldiers on Main Street who were brought to the Rupert Avenue Station and detained. Word spread and a great number of other military personnel came to the station to demand their release. The police officers were able to barricade the station but the rioters managed to smash every window on the front of the station before extra military troops arrived to restore order. The irony of the situation was the fact that the original arrests had been made by military police and the offenders were just being lodged in the city police cells until taken to Fort Osborne Barracks. This did lead to the huge metal gates being installed on the front doors of the station in case such a thing might occur again.



*Mary Dunn*

The Police Commission at this time received delegations from local groups demanding that policewomen be hired on the department and in December 1916, Mrs. **Mary DUNN** became the first official "Woman Police Constable". She was assigned to the Morality Department and her duties were described as "aiding women in distress" and "wayward children". She worked only in the station and was not issued a uniform or equipment except for keys and such. The pay scale for female constables was set below that of the most junior recruit and for the next fifty years, no female officer was allowed to attain the rank of the first-class constable. A second female was appointed in

January 1917 and for many years the department authorized only 2 female constables.

The next major occurrence in this period was the murder of Constable **Bernard SNOWDON** in April 1918. He was working the night shift on a beat on Main Street when he came upon a break-in. He entered the building unaware that there were two men inside and a lookout outside who followed him in. He was shot in the back and died instantly. The failure of Constable Snowdon to make his hourly call on the police signal system caused other officers to check his beat and his body was discovered. The quick response of the whole detective department soon led to the arrest of the three responsible males. Two were eventually executed and the third who was a youth was sentenced to prison.



*Bernard Snowdon*

The final occurrence in the career of Chief MacPherson began in 1917 when most of the members of the department formed a union. This was not only in contravention of a police notice prohibiting a police union but the members also associated themselves with the Winnipeg Trades and Labour movement which meant that they could technically go out on a sympathy strike that involved some other union. Chief MacPherson did not act against this breach of discipline which would prove to cost him dearly in the future.

In 1919 as the soldiers were returning from the War unemployment was very high and working conditions for those with jobs were poor with long hours and low pay. There was also a lot of resentment across the country by many who felt that foreign immigrants had taken over all the



available jobs. The result of these conditions led to the demand for a general strike in cities across the nation. It was only in Winnipeg that the unions were strong enough to bring the city to a standstill for several weeks beginning in May. There was concern that the police were in sympathy with the strikers and because their union was affiliated with the other unions they may strike themselves.

The Police Commission refused to deal with the police union and although the union officers stated they would never go on strike or sympathize, they were given the option of getting out of their union or face immediate dismissal. A deadline was set and on June 9th and 10th Chief MacPherson called each officer and staff member into his office and requested that he sign the oath of allegiance to the department and the city and to reject membership in a union.

Altogether 252 members were dismissed on those days while 22 signed the oath. This in effect wiped out the entire police department and another black period came over the police force.

**Chief of Police MacPherson Dismissed;  
Deputy-Chief Newton to Reorganize Force**

The next day, June 11th, the Police Commission instructed Chief MacPherson to take a leave of absence but he refused. The Police Commission then dismissed Chief MacPherson. This action later led to his demanding a reason for his dismissal but he was never given the satisfaction of an answer although at one point he was given a letter of reference and received a financial settlement.

One of the 22 members who signed the oath was the Deputy Chief Constable who was appointed acting Chief Constable. The City Council asked for government help and several members of the Royal North West Mounted Police were brought to the city and several local military units were ordered to assist the local government. Also, Council authorized hiring numerous "Special Constables" at \$2.00 a day. At one point there were 1,400 Specials employed and Council authorized an increase to 2,000 if necessary. There was no time to put these Specials into uniform or properly equip them so they were issued white armbands, badges and rough wooden clubs or batons. Some of the Specials who had served in the military formed a Mounted Special Unit for quick response throughout the city if necessary.



# The Early 1900s



Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## CHIEF JOHN C. MCRAE



*Chief John McRae*

The next man to serve as Chief Constable was **John C. McRAE** who was then a sergeant on the force. Chief McRae had a distinguished career and was a very respected officer. In 1885 he was shot and wounded during the escape of a cattle rustler. The bullet lodged in his groin and could not be removed. This reminder stayed with him for the rest of his life.

When Chief McRae took over the department the morale was low but his leadership brought it back to a well-organized force. As the new century got closer the city continued to grow in size and population and so did the police force. Chief McRae was responsible for introducing the rank of a Sergeant- Major into the force in 1900 as his assistant. At this time there were only the ranks of constable and sergeant along with the chief. In 1904 Chief McRae also established the rank of Inspector of Police and this became the first officer rank of the force. The Sergeant



Major continued to serve but was under the Inspector and acted more as a disciplinarian.

The increase in manpower caused overcrowding in the police station and the Chief started to campaign for a new station. Chief McRae also had the foresight to ask for sub-stations around the city. In 1907 when the population of the city grew to 115,000 the department had 90 members. City Council finally approved the construction of a new station on Rupert Avenue and it was opened in 1908. The police force had grown to 108 members by the time the station opened.



*Rupert Street Station*

Although Council eventually agreed to construct sub-stations it was not until 1911 that one was built in the north end and one in Fort Rouge.





The stations were designated "B" Division for the south or Fort Rouge station on Jessie Avenue and "E" Division for the north end station at Magnus and Charles Street. The city had purchased properties in Elmwood and the West End on Arlington Street for sub-stations but these were never erected. It appears that the missing designations of "C" and "D" Divisions would have been used for these divisions.

Chief McRae was also responsible for other advancements in the department. He was able to convince the Council of the need for a police signal system with which patrolling officers could communicate with the station both regularly or in emergencies when they needed help. The Seimens Corporation developed the system and Winnipeg became the first in North America and the third in the world to use this system when it was installed in 1913.



*E Division - Magnus Ave & Charles St*

Early in his career Chief McRae had purchased bicycles as the first means of transportation for the use of the detectives and the sergeants. All other officers walked the beats. The first car was purchased in 1906 but was for the use of the Chief and the detectives. The next means of transportation was the purchase of motorcycles in 1910.

It was also during the long and distinguished career of Chief McRae that the Winnipeg Police Force suffered the loss of the first policeman killed on duty. Constable **John BEATTIE** had only been on the department for 27 days when he was accidentally electrocuted at the scene of a fire at Water and Main Street on April 13th, 1911.

Chief McRae retired in November 1911 but was honoured in 1913 with the award of the King's Police Medal for his long and distinguished service.



*B Division - Jessie Ave*

# The Early 1900s

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## CHIEF CHRIS NEWTON, 1919 - 1934



*Chief Chris Newton*

Following the dismissal of Chief MacPherson, the appointment of a Chief Constable was needed immediately to retain control over the remaining policemen who did not an oath of allegiance to the police force and the City of Winnipeg and to reject membership in a union as well as the Special Constables hired to assist with the strike. Deputy Chief, **Chris H. NEWTON** was appointed as the fifth Chief Constable of Winnipeg.

The strike had been well controlled by the unions who asked their members to stay at home and not cause trouble. There were small problems and on June 10th a large gathering took place at Portage and Main where the crowd roughed up some Special Constables. On June 21st, now referred to as Black Saturday, another large crowd was gathered on Main Street at William Avenue in front of the city hall when a streetcar tried to drive by southbound. The streetcar was being operated by a non-union man and the crowd stopped it by pulling the trolley off the wire. The crowd then tried to roll the streetcar over and set it on fire.

At this time a contingent of Royal North West Mounted Police officers came down Main Street on horseback and tried to disperse the crowd with

batons. It was later claimed that the officers were met with a hail of stones and other objects as well as some gunfire. They were forced to turn their horses at William Avenue where they regrouped and then came charging back onto Main Street in front of the city hall with revolvers in one hand and batons in the others. Shots were fired into the crowd and one man was killed instantly, another was seriously wounded and died the next day and a number of people were wounded or suffered injuries in the melee but the street was cleared. Then a large number of Specials took to the street and blocked it off so the fire department could put out the streetcar fire.

This sudden outbreak of violence and death seemed to bring the city to its senses and the strike wound down and ended soon after. Most of the "dismissed" police officers were permitted to rejoin the police force if they were now willing to sign the oath and quit the union. There was a list of undesirable officers whose conduct during the strike was such that they were not to be rehired and except for three who were returned soldiers they were not rehired.

To read more of the strike visit Winnipeg in Focus at <https://winnipeginfofocus.winnipeg.ca/1919strike>

The morale in the department was very low at this time and Chief Newton set about rebuilding the department both with manpower and with pride in the Force. One of his first concerns was to permit the formation of the Winnipeg City Police





Athletic Association. This was intended to promote athletics within the department and to arranged social functions for the members and their families. This turned out to be the origin of the present Winnipeg Police Association which did later become the legal bargaining agent of the rank and file police officers.

The other project that Chief Newton was instrumental in getting started was the Police Pipe Band in 1920. Over the years this band has become internationally known and is still recognized as an excellent ambassador of the city. The department also had a dance band for a short time which played at police socials and other functions but this eventually disbanded.

The roaring 20's brought a lot of excitement to Winnipeg as well as to the rest of North America and many notorious criminals came here as well. Fortunately, no officers were killed during this period although several were shot and wounded. In 1924 Percy Moggie committed a bank robbery and got into a gun battle with Detectives **Fred BATHO** and **Robert FRAYNE** wounding both officers. He was captured and sent to prison but continued his criminal ways for many years after.

In 1926 bank robber, Wilfred Bonnin killed a bank official and then shot and wounded Det. Insp. **George SMITH**. Bonnin was also wounded but recovered and was convicted and executed.

In 1928 several drug stores were held up and one druggist was killed by Carl "Gunner" McGee. When detectives tried to arrest him he shot Det. Sgt. **Charles McIVER** before being killed by the officers. It is interesting to note that both George Smith and Charles McIver later became Chief Constable as did another officer who was wounded some years later while another officer whose partner was killed also held that office.

## Spectacular Arrest of Wanted Man When Special Police Train Arrives

One of the most sensational murder cases in North America was brought to a conclusion in Winnipeg in 1928 with the execution of one of the first recorded serial sex killers, Earle "The Strangler" Nelson. This man came from San Francisco and travelled across the northern United States in 1926 and 1927 killing as he went. He then hitch-hiked to Winnipeg where he murdered a young girl on Smith Street and then a woman on Riverton Avenue. He fled the city and went to Regina briefly then came back into Manitoba heading for the United States when he was arrested south of Killarney by members of the Manitoba Provincial Police. He was turned over to Winnipeg Police who did an excellent job in the investigations which lead to his conviction and execution. Newspapers and magazines all over North America published articles on the crime and put Winnipeg on the map. Nelson was identified in 24 of the American murders as well as the two in Winnipeg and there were other similar murders where identification could not be made.

Chief Newton continued to keep the Winnipeg Police Force at the forefront of new police technology with the introduction of the first radio-equipped patrol cars in Canada in 1930. Radio at this time was limited to one-way broadcasts and because it was operated by a number of batteries it could only be used twelve hours a day so the batteries could be recharged. When messages were given out the officers would either respond directly or use a call-box to confirm the message. The importance of this radio system proved itself in 1934 when St. Boniface Police Sergeant **John VERNE** was shot and killed behind the C.N.R. station while chasing a robber. The license number of the getaway car was called into the police and



broadcast within minutes. One of the radio-equipped cars was on Main Street at Bannatyne as it was broadcast and the wanted car passed right in front of them crossing Bannatyne. A very short chase ensued and the killer was captured. It was not until 1939 that two-way radio was introduced in Winnipeg.

The Depression of the '30s saw unemployment soar and even the employees of the City were in danger of losing jobs until an agreement was worked out where all employees would take a cut in pay of 10% in 1931 and a further 10% in 1932. No hiring was permitted. These conditions remained for several years.

Chief Newton was not able to lead the department out of the Depression as he got involved in an altercation reportedly following a traffic accident in 1934. The altercation led to blows and the other man complained of assault. Newspapers showing the injured man caused an uproar and while the Police Commission considered dismissing Chief Newton, he avoided the possibility by submitting his request for retirement. His resignation was approved and when he did go to court over the assault it was as an ordinary citizen rather than a police chief.



# The 2<sup>nd</sup> World War

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## CHIEF GEORGE SMITH, 1934 - 1947

The year 1936 began with tragedy when officers responded to the hold-up of a service station at Donald St. and St. Mary Avenue and Constable **Charles GILLIS** was shot and critically wounded. He succumbed to his injuries three weeks later. His partner, Constable **George BLOW** managed to arrest the gunman who was later convicted and executed.



for many more years.

One of the most appreciated things to happen at this time was the replacement of high-necked tunics with the open-neck style in the summer of 1937. The high-necked tunics remained as winter dress

In the late '30s, the members were able to win back some but not all of the pay cuts they had taken and the department finally started to hire additional men.

In 1939 Winnipeg hosted a visit from King George and Queen Elizabeth shortly before the outbreak of World War Two.

The year 1940 saw the death of another member of the Force when Constable **John McDonald** was shot to death during a stake-out. His partner, Constable **Norman M. Stewart** was wounded. The

officers were inside a building on Fort Street when three safe-crackers entered and began to attack the safe. The officers tried to arrest them but one man, Mike "The Horse" Attamanchuk opened fire hitting both officers. Attamanchuk killed himself a couple of days later when trapped by police officers and the other two men were arrested and imprisoned.

The death of Constable McDONALD led to claims of incompetence in the department, favouritism and low morale. These charges made in City Council lead to the appointment of a Royal Commission. The report of the Donovan Commission cleared the department of these charges.

The outbreak of World War Two in September of 1939 created the same problems faced during the First War with qualified officers taking leave to join the military services. This time the number was not as high but the shortage of manpower required that the department suspend their standards and hire men who were over-age or did not meet the height requirement. These men were all hired as "Special Constables for the duration of the war" and were called the "war babies". This war was fought much differently than the first trench war and therefore the casualties were not as bad. Five officers gave their lives in the service, one in the army and four in the air force.

Major crimes did not increase noticeably during the war years although one stood out because it



was the murder of a young girl by a man, Albert Westgate, who had already been convicted of an earlier murder. In 1927 Westgate killed a woman and was convicted and sentenced to death. His appeals not only got the sentence commuted but he only served 15 years and was released. Soon after he struck up an affair with the young girl that resulted in her death. This time when he was convicted and sentenced to death the penalty was carried out.

Shortly after the war two sex-pervert murders terrorized the city and baffled the detectives for some time. An innovative idea was tried out when the detectives borrowed an army mine detector and were successful in locating bullets from both murders. These turned out to be army ammunition fired by a Browning automatic. This information was withheld from the media but was given to all police departments in the event they seize a similar gun. Michael VESCIO, an ex-soldier, who had stolen the gun returned to his hometown of Port Arthur and was arrested for a robbery using the gun. It was sent to the RCMP lab in Regina and found to match. VESCIO was convicted and executed. This unusual procedure at that time was written up in police journals and once again the Winnipeg Police Department was recognized as a leading Force.

Chief George SMITH retired in 1947 with over 42 years of service. He was awarded an M.B.E. by King George in recognition of his valuable service against subversive agents during the war.



# The '50s and '60s

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## CHIEF ROBERT TAFT, 1953 - 1965

Chief Taft had taken leave during the war to serve with the Canadian Provost Corps and was kept on active duty after the war to help organize the new German police forces. These duties helped when he took over the Winnipeg Police as he set about to modernize the department.

One of the first things the Chief did was to hire several Commissionaires on contract to enforce parking by-laws and then to take over the serving of summonses. These changes freed officers for regular patrol duties and also reduced the friction between the driving public and the police.

In 1959 the Chief authorized the reorganization of the police record systems into a modern and efficient Central Registry. This year also saw the establishment of the first "999" Emergency Telephone System in North America through the efforts of Mayor Steve Juba. The calls for police, fire, ambulance and eventually the poison centre became the responsibility of the police to answer.

The size of the force grew to over 400 men and still, there was a need for more so Chief Taft began a system in 1960 of hiring "police cadets". These were young men 18 years of age who performed non-active and clerical work in the various divisions gaining experience so that they could apply as constables on reaching the age of 21 years. This system also allowed for more officers to work on the street rather than inside.



The last thing that Chief Taft fought for was a new police station to replace the aging Rupert Avenue building as well as the two sub-stations. Plans for the Public Safety Building were begun before Chief TAFT retired in 1965 and was replaced by his Deputy Chief, **George S. BLOW**

# Into the '50s

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## CHIEF CHARLES MCIVER, 1947 - 1953

The next and seventh man to become Chief Constable was **Charles McIVER** who was the Deputy Chief at the time. Chief McIVER continued to direct the department as it grew to 300 men in the post-war era. The population grew as did the crime and traffic problems. The surrounding cities and municipalities also grew with new housing developments all around Winnipeg.

In 1949 the police department was once again faced with a Royal Commission to investigate the charges of police brutality and complaints of prisoners being held incommunicado. Once again the findings of the Commission cleared the department of any wrongdoing.

The famous flood of 1950 put all the residents of Winnipeg as well as the police department to the test. Never before had such a large city been faced with the task of mass evacuation while fighting to contain the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. It is a credit to all the citizens that both crime and traffic accidents decreased during the crisis.

1950 was also a year that the police department would lose another officer in the line of duty. Detective Sergeant **Edwin "Ted" SIMS** was shot to death at the scene of a domestic dispute on Argyle Street. The murderer, Henry MALANIK, was convicted and was the last man executed in Manitoba.



Chief McIVER retired in 1953 and was succeeded by his Deputy, **Robert T. TAFT**.



# Out With The Old

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## CHIEF GEORGE BLOW, 1965 - 1970

Chief Blow was the ninth Chief Constable and led the department out of the old Rupert Station into the modern Public Safety Building in 1966. This was the opportunity to show the public the police force had outgrown the image of the old policeman on the beat and was now a modern force. The City of Winnipeg hosted the 1967 Pan-American Games and the department came out in their new uniforms with light blue shirts and a crest-styled shoulder flash to replace the drab grey shirts previously worn.

Some old styles still proved their value when in 1966 the city was hit by the blizzard of March 4th that brought the city to a standstill but saw the officers out in full force in the traditional buffalo coats.

The increase of juveniles in criminal activities required a lot of time so in 1968 Chief Blow organized a new Juvenile Division to deal with the situation. These officers, both male and female, did all the follow-up work regarding juveniles.

1968 was also the year that motorists began to think twice about drinking and driving as the Breathalyzer was introduced and it was no longer just the opinion of an officer that could convict you in court.

In 1970 after 39 years of police service Chief Blow decided to retire following a disagreement with some senior officers in which he felt he did not get the proper support of the Police Commission.



# Into Amalgamation

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

## CHIEF NORM STEWART, 1970 - 1981

The tenth and in effect the last Chief Constable of the Winnipeg Police Force was Superintendent **Norman M. STEWART**. This chief served for eleven years and took the department through the transition of amalgamation and underwent a change of rank designation to "Chief of Police".

In 1969 Winnipeg Police joined other area police forces in paying tribute to St. Boniface Police Constable **Len Shakespeare** who was killed in the line of duty. In less than a year, June 1970, the Winnipeg Police Department lost one of their own with the murder of Detective **Ronald HOUSTON** who was stabbed to death during a stake-out for a vicious rapist. In both killings, the murderers were arrested and convicted and sentenced to death but had their sentences commuted.

January 1st, 1972 saw the amalgamation of the City of Winnipeg with one mayor and council. Not all functions within the city joined together immediately. The police departments now consisted of eight community departments each with their own radio systems, stations and distinct uniforms.

The departments that were affected in 1972 were North Kildonan which joined with East Kildonan, Old Kildonan and West St. Paul which joined with West Kildonan, Tuxedo which joined with Winnipeg, and the Charleswood/Headingly RCMP whose contract was cancelled so they could join Winnipeg. included Headingly.

The size of the Winnipeg department continued to grow with an expanding workload and in 1973 the authorized strength was 493 officers and 141 staff.



The final amalgamation of the police forces took place on **OCTOBER 21st, 1974**. At this time the remaining eight departments formed 6 districts:

- District #1 (former Winnipeg Inner City Police)
- District #2 (former St. James-Assiniboia Police)
- District #3 (former West Kildonan Police)
- District #4 (former East Kildonan Police & Transcona Police)
- District #5 (former St. Vital Police and St. Boniface Police)
- District #6 (former Fort Garry Police with parts of Winnipeg Police who were now patrolling Tuxedo, Charleswood and Headingly)





Effective January 1975 all officers were to be wearing the newly amalgamated shoulder flashes, "One With The Strength of Many".

When the final amalgamation took place the force nearly doubled with the authorized strength of 1975 at 921 officers and 171 staff for a total of 1,091. This did not include 35 Commissionaires for parking patrol.

1975 saw a noticeable increase in the number of female constables joining the department with three in the first recruit class that year and every class after that. This was also the year that the department initiated the employment of female police cadets.

The early years of amalgamation saw the establishment of several specialty units within the department besides the canine unit which began in 1972. An underwater recovery unit existed in the Fort Garry Police Department and was enlarged. A letter bomb explosion in the city brought about the creation of a bomb disposal unit. The possibilities of large disorders called for the establishment of a crowd control unit and the need for specially trained negotiators and weapons experts lead to the formation of an emergency response unit.

One of the big changes not only to the department but to the justice system occurred in 1977 when the jail facilities at the Public Safety Building were turned over to the province to become the Provincial Remand Centre. This change in responsibility also provided additional manpower back to street patrol.

In 1981 Chief Stewart handed over command of the force to Superintendent **Kenneth JOHNSTON** who was in charge of the Morality Division.