

COLERAIN TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

From the beginning of time, civilization has sought order, safety, and security. Down through the centuries, this has always been true. We lock the doors and windows of our home, we lock our cars, and provide safe keeping for other valuables. We feel safer knowing that we have taken precautions to protect the people and things important to us.

Early on people relied primarily on themselves and those close to them. But as the population increased, people needed assistance in the area of protection. Perhaps we sought out those who were bigger and stronger than us. Those who could step in when help was needed. Down through the years, the enforcing of law and order and protecting life and property has taken various forms.

When we are in need of a police person; we look to those in our community who have the jurisdiction to take care of matters that are beyond our control.

In Colerain Township, we are fortunate to have Police Protection at the highest level; 24 hours a day – 7 days a week. **The Colerain Township Police Department evolved as did the Township.**

From Colonial times into the 1800s, the enforcement of laws was handled by a Constabulary. Webster's dictionary defines a Constabulary as "the organized body of Constables and watchmen of a particular district or county". Protecting a community relied on a "watch system" which was composed of community volunteers whose primary duty was to warn the public of impending danger. The night watch was not a particularly effective crime control tool, as watchmen often slept or drank on duty. A system of Constables augmented the watch system. Constables were appointed or elected at the local level for specific terms. They were not paid and many did not wear a uniform. Constables were considered official law enforcement officers, usually paid by the fee system for warrants they served. In addition to supervising night and day watchmen, Constables had a variety of non-law enforcement functions to perform as well, including serving as land surveyors and verifying the accuracy of weights and measures. It wasn't until the 1830s when the idea of a municipal police department emerged in the United States. There are still communities in the United States and even Ohio that still appoint Constables.

In 1910, the largest Township in Ohio, Colerain Township, was sparsely populated with about 4,000 people. It was primarily a farming community. By 1950, the population had doubled to almost 8,000 people. But after WWII, the number of people living in the Township, exploded to almost 30,000 by 1960.

In the 1950s, Colerain Township's law enforcement was still being handled by a Constabulary. CHARLIE LOSACKER is said to have been a part-time Constable in 1951. A future Police Chief of Colerain Township, BILL TERRELL, who was Charlie Losacker's son-in-law, joined him as a Constable in 1957 at the princely sum of \$1.00 an hour when on duty. When a major problem arose, or the Constables were off duty; police from neighboring jurisdictions and the Sheriff's office helped to cover the Township. One major problem was the jurisdiction of a Constable was limited. They could not write any tickets on State highways such as Colerain Ave. They were only permitted to write tickets on County roads for DUIs and vehicular homicides!

As the Township grew, the need for definitive jurisdiction became more and more apparent. CARL KESSEN, who was a part-time policeman in North College Hill, joined Losacker and Terrell in patrolling Colerain Township. DON FINLEY was next to join.

In 1970, BILL TERRELL went to the Township Trustees and asked for a defined police jurisdiction. It was granted. BILL TERRELL became the first Police Chief of Colerain Township. In 1977, when Bill retired, the Colerain Township Police Department had 15 officers (8 full time and 7 part time). BUTCH FREY was Acting Police Chief for 9 months after Bill Terrell retired. Frey was the first full-time Police Officer hired by Colerain. The Township then hired ROGER JOHANNES as Police Chief. While Johannes was Chief, the Department had some CETA people as Officers; but when the federal money ran out, the burden of funding was on the Township. The Township had limited funds and could not afford to keep all of the officers, so some were dismissed.

In January 1986, by vote of the Township Trustees, the Colerain Police Department was disbanded. It did not take long, after disbanding the Police Department, for problems to arise. A combined resident-government-sheriff's office review committee was formed. This committee concluded that Colerain Township was just too large to rely on the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department and neighboring communities for law enforcement. The Trustees voted to put a Police Levy on the ballot for Colerain residents to decide.

Voters passed the first Police levy in November 1986.

And in January 1987, ED PHILLIPS was hired as Police Chief. What a difference a year makes! ED PHILLIPS "succeeded" Roger Johannes as Chief and served from 1987 to 2001. Phillips was charged with rebuilding the Police Department.

STEVE SARVER was selected as Police Chief from a pool of 20 candidates. He was with the Cincinnati Police Department for 25 years, and served as Chief of the Amelia Police Department for 1 year. Sarver served from 2001 to 2007.

DAN MELOY was promoted to Police Chief in January 2008. Dan was a graduate of Colerain High School, was a paratrooper in the U.S. Army, then rose through the ranks in the Colerain Police Department to become its Chief. Meloy then served as Township Administrator.

MARK DENNEY is the current Colerain Police Chief. Mark was raised in Colerain and graduated from Colerain High School. After serving as a Cheviot Police Officer, like Chief Meloy, Mark Denney also rose through the ranks to become Chief in January 2014.



John Willsey, a fur buyer, worked part time as a constable, transporting prisoners to the Hamilton County jail. On these occasions, he would hire a partner to accompany him on the trips.

Often, his partner of choice was Orville (or Isaac) Ogg. During August 1918, on one of these trips, Constable Willsey discussed with Ogg the fact that he had recently sold his home and that the proceeds from that sale were inside his house.

On August 15, 1918, Ogg entered Constable Willsey's home and hid behind a door. When Constable Willsey walked in, Ogg shot him in the back of the head, killing him. Constable Willsey was survived by three children, Rachael A. (31), Lida M. (29), and Raymond (15). He was buried in the Willsey Cemetery on Eagle Creek Road in Colerain Township.

Ogg was arrested and charged. During his trial, he threatened the lives of the Willsey family. Ogg was found guilty of second degree murder and sentenced to prison.

Twenty-six years later, during 1944, Ogg escaped from prison and, while the Willsey family lived in fear for many years, he was never heard from again.

During 2008, Colerain Township Police Sergeant Angela Meyer submitted sufficient proof to the Ohio and national memorials to have Constable Willsey recognized. His granddaughter, Mary Jane Sefton, aged 82, of Guilford, Indiana, attended his induction ceremony at the national memorial.



Constable John H. Willsey's grave site in Willsey Cemetery.

If you have information, artifacts, archives, or images regarding this officer or incident, please contact the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum at memorial@policemuseum.org.

TODAY

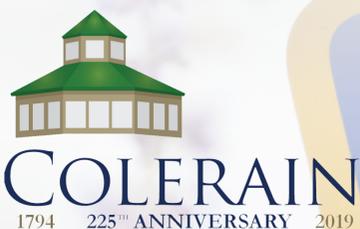


Down through the years there have been tremendous changes.

LOCATION - For many years, the Police Department was located in a back office at 4725 Springdale Road – present home of Police Impound Lot and Coleraine Historical Society. They had one small room in the back garage before expanding to the second floor. Expansion continued and the Police Department moved into a small one room office trailer with a "holding cell" made of fencing. Next came a larger 2 room trailer before moving to shared quarters with the Dunlap Fire House at Kemper and Old Colerain. What a palace the "new" Administration Building must have felt like when they moved into the east wing in 1994.

COMMUNICATION – Communications began with the Township Police having their own low band radio in their patrol cars. This band also tied the Police, Fire and Maintenance Departments together so they could talk to each other. Inside the Police offices, you could not communicate with the dispatcher from just anywhere; you had to move around to make contact. Next came portable radios. Still on a low band system with short antennas, which really did not work well. Communications improved with the change to high band radios with 8 channels. When computers were put in the Police Station and patrol cars, it was no longer necessary to go through a dispatcher for everything. Now from patrol cars, officers can receive run information and check license plates.

UNIFORMS – In the beginning, Township Trustees provided the police uniforms: 2 summer and 2 winter; but the care and maintenance was up to the individual officer. The State and County told the Township the makeup and colors of the uniform. The Township issued officers a .38 caliber hand gun; but most officers bought and carried their own weapon - a .38 or .357. Officers today carry gMM handguns. Officers must be bonded to carry a firearm; but the Township covers the special liability insurance.



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