

HISTORY OF THE IOWA STATE SHERIFF'S & DEPUTIES



The first Sheriffs' Fall meeting in 1863

Iowa became the twenty-ninth State in 1846. But law enforcement was present in what was to become Iowa back as far as 1836. In that year, George W. Cummins was elected by the citizens to be Sheriff of what was then known as the Dubuque Mines, and then Dubuque County. Dubuque County encompassed all of the land of present day Iowa north of a line which ran due west from Rock Island, Illinois. All of the land south of that line was known as DeMoines County. In 1837, the larger Dubuque County was divided into the present day counties of Northern Iowa.

In 1882, the Iowa State Sheriff's Association was formed with about twenty Sheriffs and Deputies present. Sheriff R. T. St. John, of Mitchell County, was elected as the first President of the Association. The original objective of the Iowa State Sheriff's Association was to promote closer cooperation among the Sheriffs of the area. Growth of the Association after this seemed to parallel with growth problems of the Middle-west. Sheriffs realized that there had to be a closer liaison between them, and that new techniques in law enforcement would make it necessary for schooling. Although the Sheriffs continued to meet on a regular basis, schooling was addressed for a number of years.

The Iowa State Sheriff's Association met in 1924 with officials from the State University of Iowa to try and sell them on the idea of providing a school for the Sheriffs and Deputies. The idea however, was turned down, and the Association was forced to organize and finance their own school. The concern of the Sheriffs was how they were going to finance such a school on the low salaries that they were being paid. On December 20, 1928, the Sheriffs held

their First Annual Convention. Shortly after the convention, in February of 1929, the Association established and published the first issue of "The Iowa Sheriff". The advertising revenue from "The Iowa Sheriff" would become the lifeblood of the Association. This revenue would also start financing the development of the Annual School of Instruction.

The years that followed showed a great increase in the number of schools provided for Sheriffs and Deputies. The Annual School of Instruction grew to where it became recognized as outstanding across the nation. In 1931, the 44th General Assembly of Iowa recognized the value of such schools, and passed an Act authorizing an Annual School of Instruction and Conference. Many states patterned the Association's School of Instruction for training in their states. As years progressed, a number of regional and county training schools were held so that everyone would have an opportunity to receive instruction. As the demand and interest in law enforcement training grew, the Iowa State Sheriff's Association, the State University of Iowa, and others finally jointly sponsored a Peace Officers' Short Course of one week duration in 1937.

Training, however, was only one of many topics and concerns that the Iowa State Sheriff's Association dealt with. In 1932, "The Iowa Sheriff" started publishing a weekly Criminal Bulletin. This publication was sent to every law enforcement agency in the state. The Criminal Bulletin immediately started aiding in the apprehension of criminals. The Criminal Bulletin was started partly because of a very serious increase in crime across Iowa.

By 1930, Iowa had good roads in the state, and this



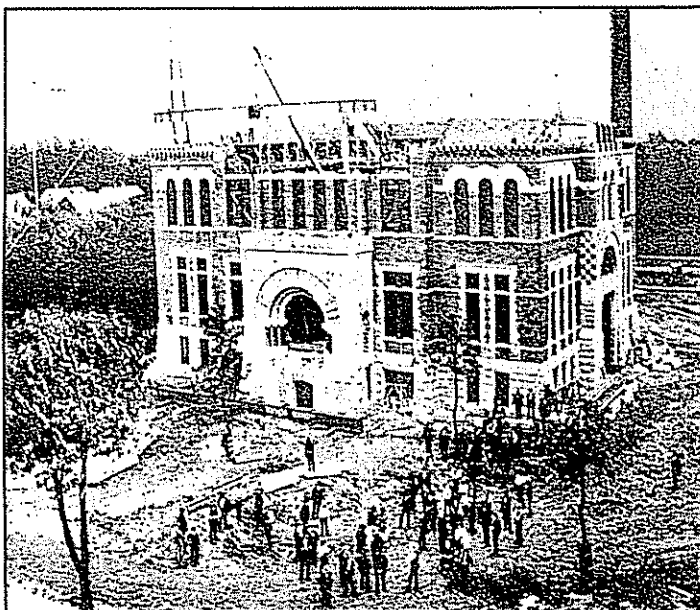
Des Moines County Sheriff, William Garret 1857-1861



Cherokee County Sheriff George W. Banister 1858



Montgomery County Jail — 1875



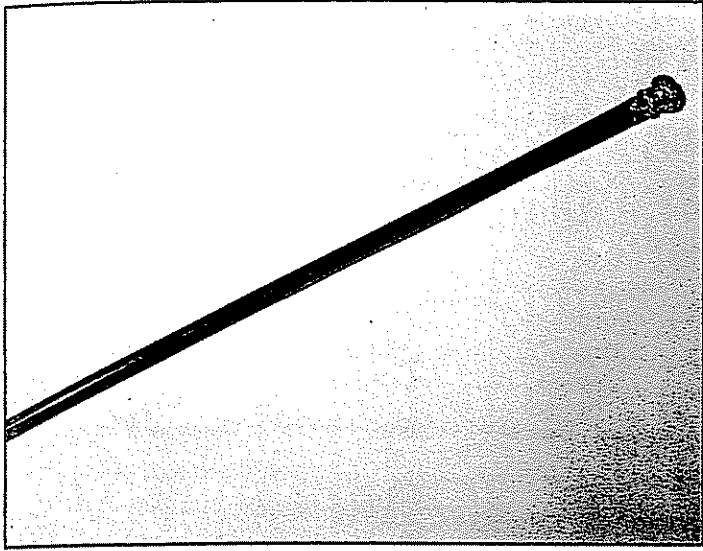
Construction of Franklin County Courthouse in 1890

aided bank robbers to escape. Iowa had twenty-five bank robberies in that year, and lost approximately \$100,000. It was also not uncommon for Sheriffs and Deputies to be shot and killed by criminals. In June of 1939, Sheriff W. F. Sweet from Washington County was murdered in the line of duty. The Iowa State Sheriff's Association started to take a stand on these offenses, and for the first time posted a \$1,000 reward for the person or persons responsible for Sheriff Sweet's murder. The increase in crime also resulted in the passing of a resolution at the Association Annual School of Instruction. The resolution called for the formation of a State Police of Highway Patrol and the establishment of a work farm. Lack of adequate equipment was given as the reason Sheriffs and Constables could not cope with the criminal gangs.

The 44th General Assembly in 1931 passed a bill which was strongly supported by the Iowa State Sheriff's Association making it mandatory for County Boards of Supervisors to install a radio in the Sheriff's Office and car. This radio was to have the frequency of the Iowa Police Radio System in it. Although the bill passed the legislature, there was no appropriations for it. The Iowa Bankers Association, however, became interested in what the Association had done, and paid for the first transmitting station which was located in the Liberty Building in Des Moines. The 45th General Assembly, in extra session, passed an Association-sponsored bill for \$15,000 to erect two additional stations.

The Iowa State Sheriff's Association also dealt with manpower and insurance issues. In 1932, the Association urged the adding of one Deputy to each Sheriff's Office. In 1933, the Association made available to its members life insurance and accidental death coverage for the first time, at a rate of \$2.50 per \$1,000 coverage up to a maximum of \$5,000.

In January of 1935, a salary survey was conducted of the Sheriffs and Deputies. Of the 99 Sheriffs, 92 of them were



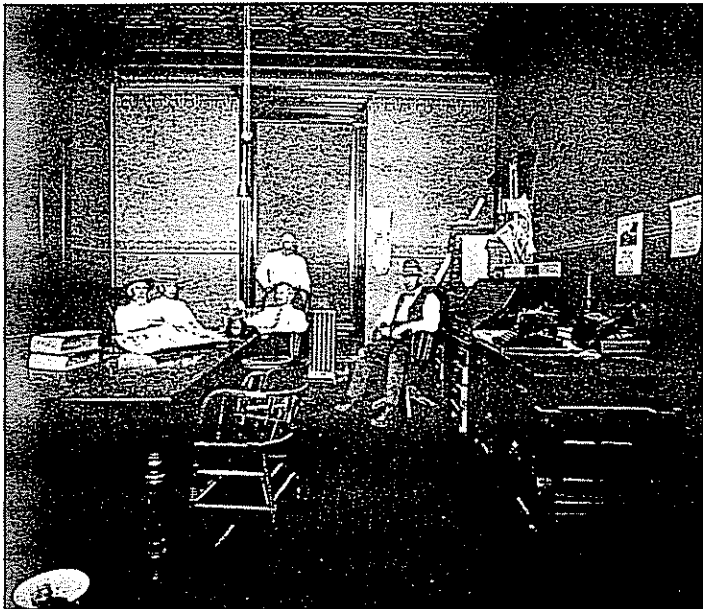
Cane presented to the President of the Iowa Sheriff's Ass'n in 1907



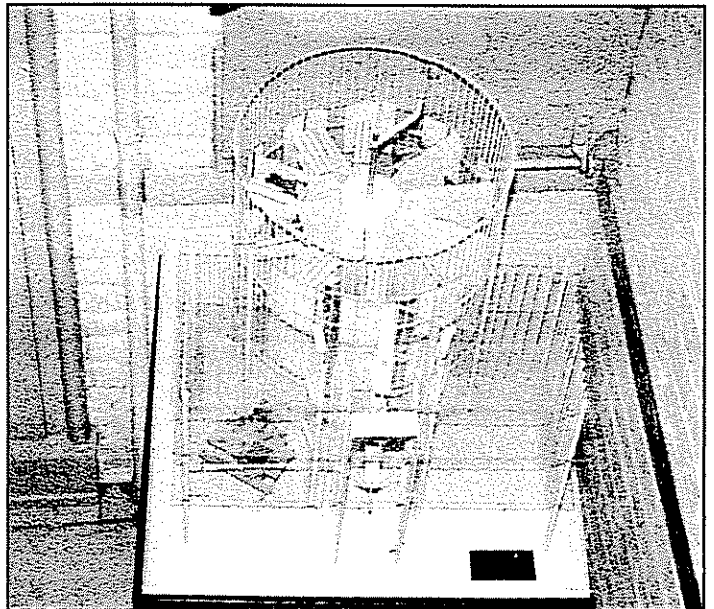
Head of cane presented in 1907



Ninth Annual School of Instruction, Iowa Sheriffs' Association, Dec. 13-15, 1933 in Des Moines, Iowa



Fremont County Sheriff's Office in 1915



Model of the squirrel cage jail at Pottawattamie Co.

receiving less than \$2,200 annually; 23 were receiving \$1,700 annually; and 7 were receiving greater than \$2,200 annually. Deputies were making between \$50 and \$100 per month. Salaries and pensions were also an issue that the Association discussed on a regular basis. In 1946, a mass meeting of Iowa Sheriffs called for a minimum salary for Sheriffs of \$3,000, the First Deputy to receive 75% of that, and all other Deputies 65%. The Sheriffs also called for an increase in fees for the care and feeding of prisoners. In 1949, the Iowa State Sheriff's Association had a major victory when the Iowa Legislature passed a bill establishing the Department of Public Safety Pension and Retirement Plan.

Drunken driving became a big problem for Sheriffs in 1939. Iowa Sheriffs began taking steps against drunk drivers and attended the first school of instruction for taking chemical tests to determine the degree of intoxication of motorists. This school was held at Wartburg College, in Waverly, Iowa. By 1949, a number of agencies were using a "Drunk-O-Meter" in OMVI cases.

Women started to become active in county law enforcement in 1942. During this year, several ladies were being appointed as Deputy Sheriffs in Iowa.

In 1968, the Association, along with a number of other organizations, supported a bill which established the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy. That bill did pass, and the Association donated \$10,000 to furnish one of the rooms at the Academy.

On November 9, 1970, a meeting was held at the National Motor Inn in Des Moines for the purpose of organizing the Iowa Deputy Sheriff's Association. Twenty-five Sheriff's Deputies met to discuss forming this Association, and to be explained the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. It was the feeling of Deputies at this point in time that the Iowa State Sheriff's Association was not representing them. Deputies could not hold an office or vote in the Iowa State Sheriff's Association. Also during this period of time, there was a strong interest with a number of Deputies that the state should pass a civil service law.

On November 17, 1970, the Secretary of State issued a Certificate of Incorporation establishing the Iowa Deputy Sheriff's Association, Inc. The first actual meeting of the Iowa Deputy Sheriff's Association was on November 19, 1970, in Marshalltown, Iowa. At this meeting, the election of officers took place. The first President of the Association was Deputy Jerry Koeber from Cerro Gordo County. During this meeting, the priorities of the Association were discussed. The members present felt that the Association should try to pass a civil service or merit system law. They also discussed the desire to pass a law establishing standards for license plates for county squad cars similar to what the Highway Patrol had. Finally they felt that there should be a standard uniform law.

During December of 1970 and January of 1971, George Griffin, who was the First Deputy of Linn County, worked on putting together the first draft of the Civil Service Law. For the next two years, the Iowa Deputy Sheriff's Association and the Iowa State Sheriff's Association worked with legislators to get the bill passed. The Civil

Service Bill was passed in 1973.

At the November 26, 1972 meeting of the Iowa Deputy Sheriff's association, Dallas County Sheriff John Wright, and Public Relations Officer Lloyd Kowalski, from the Iowa State Sheriff's Association, addressed the Association concerning the consolidation of both organizations. In 1973, the Iowa State Sheriff's and Deputies' Association was formed, and the Iowa Deputy Sheriff's Association agreed that it was time to work under one organization. The Iowa Deputy Sheriff's Association noted at their December, 1974 Association meeting that the main purpose of the Association was to secure the passage of a civil service bill, and that had been done. The last meeting of the Iowa Deputy Sheriff's Association was on December 29, 1975.

Since 1975, the Sheriffs and the Deputies in the State of Iowa have all worked together under one organization the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association.



Des Moines County Sheriffs from 1874-1988



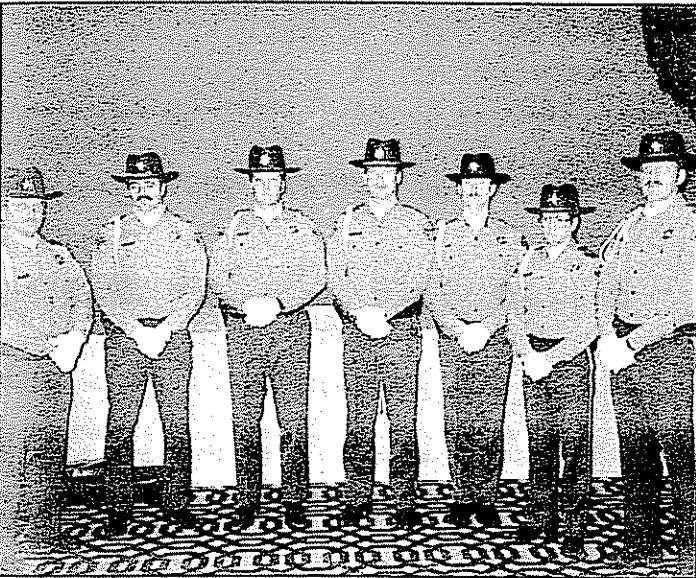
Decatur County Jail, built in 1884



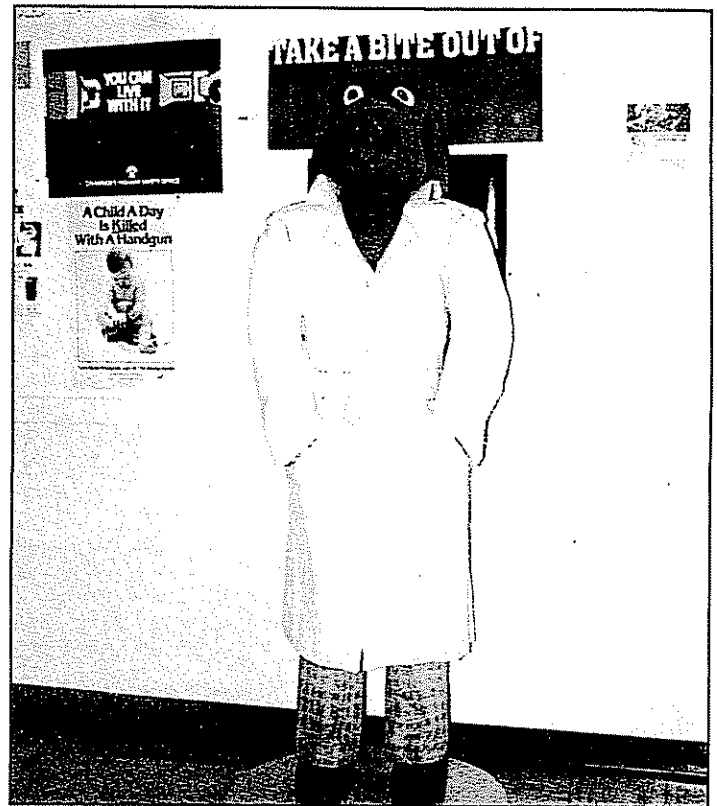
Story County Sheriff John Stark, swearing in Polk County Sheriff Bob Rice as the President of the National Sheriffs' Association for 1990-1991



Des Moines County McGruff-Mobile in 1986



I.S.S.D.A. Color Guard at Winter School in 1986



McGruff the crime dog, made by kindergarten through fifth grade students at West Burlington Elementary School



Today, the Iowa State Sheriff's & Deputies Association has grown to over 1500 members