

Police in Culver From 1894 to 1976

In 1836, the Maxinkuckee area was still part of a territory, and the sheriff was Adam Vinnedge. As Marshall County became a governmental district, it became responsible for law enforcement in the county. Abner Caldwell was the first county sheriff but only for a short time. In 1838, Union Township was organized, and Patrick Logan was elected to the post, and, in 1844, Union Town was platted. Jacob Hupp, an operator of a sawmill on the Yellow River, was the next county sheriff. Seth Hussy was sheriff in 1850 until the appointment of William Edwards. Following him was John F. Van Valkenbert, who was also the postmaster.

According to the Twentieth Century History of Marshall County, by Daniel McDonald, Marmont became a town on July 5, 1894, and had the first election. John F. Cromley was on the ballot for sheriff and was the winning candidate. The Board of Commissioners decreed that Cromley did not have the qualifications to be town marshal. The Commissioners then appointed Ozias "Bub" Duddleson. He could not furnish the bond, although it was felt he had good qualifications to be an officer due to his parents' firm belief in education. The children were given more advantages than most had at the time. The board then appointed Nathaniel Gandy, who qualified and served. In the town's second election, May 6, 1896, Nathaniel Gandy was elected town marshal and the town gained a new name, Culver City.

Nathaniel "Than" Gandy was a businessman and a pioneer of Marshall County. His family had moved to the county in 1846, when they began farming in Union Township. Nathaniel was born in that year. He helped on the farm until enlisting in the 33rd Indiana Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, Company F, and served in the Civil War. He was honorably discharged as the war ended and came back home to agriculture. In 1887, he sold the farm and opened a livery establishment. In 1897, he disposed of the business to give himself some independence. He was known for his unfailing morality.

John F. "Neighbor" Cromley found his place in police work by becoming a constable for 15 years. He was described as a rugged individualist, enthusiastic and a skillful fisherman. His family came to Marshall County in 1854 when he was 10 years old. He was drafted into the military April 11, 1865. After the war he

became a butcher and owned a meat market. He lived to be 96 and was believed to have been the last member of the Grand Army of the Republic in Marshall County.

In 1903, Ulysses S. Burkett was elected marshal with a margin of 19 votes.

In 1905, G. W. Smith became town marshal. On the front page of the June 23, 1904, Culver Citizen appeared this warning: "Whoever puts, throws, dumps or leaves any tin cans, old iron, brush, boxes, machinery rubbish, debris of any kind or character whatsoever in, upon, or within the limits of any public highway, road, street or alley is guilty of an unlawful act, and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in any sum not to exceed fifty dollars.

"F.W. Smith, Town Marshal"

In 1906 the Town Council temporarily appointed Irwin Fisher to be the village marshal. He was appointed again the following year, his service having proved entirely satisfactory. This news appeared in the 1906 Culver Citizen, "The new calaboose which was erected last May was dedicated on Thursday when the marshal picked up a drunk lying by the side of the walk and 'packed' him to the Hotel de Fisher. The man was a Logansporter. He must have brought his jag with him; nothing intoxicating is sold in Culver."

Culver organized a centennial celebration for the State of Indiana to take place June 22, 1916. In charge of the Township Church and Sunday School Organization was the town marshal, Claude Newman. The afternoon program began with a parade with J.W. Riggins as the parade marshal. Included in the day's festivities was a song written by Mrs. Eugenia McDonald, "Romance of Maxinkuckee."

Early in December 1916, the Culver Citizen head-



DON MIKESELL
As a Sailor During World War II

line reported, "Raid by Thieves." Items were stolen from many of the local merchants who called for more police protection. Pharmacy owner Rector incurred expenses endeavoring to run down the perpetrators of three robberies at his store. A collection was taken up for him as partial compensation for this loss, giving him \$100.

William Murphy served in 1919-1927. On Jan. 13, 1921, the Culver Citizen reported, "Five carloads of gypsies passed through town yesterday morning at full speed at the invitation of Marshal Murphy, who had received several calls from the East Shore where the gypsies were 'pursuing their trade' and he soon had them on their way."

In 1932, Marshal Edward R. Cook caught a prowler peeking into a local home. He announced, "Another offense would mean certain arrest. That statement holds good for any person prowling around Culver."

Marshal Cook was killed in the line of duty July 19, 1932, as he was helping a motorist repair a tire at a business across from the town park. His revolver fell out of his holster and discharged, killing him. Marshal Cook's name appears on the Indiana Officer Memorial in Indianapolis.

Charles Buffington, who served in 1932-1940, wrote of his experiences in the Marshall County, Indiana, Sesquicentennial 1836-1986. "In 1912 we moved to Culver. My father was a tailor at CMA. We lived at 451 Forest Place. I graduated from Culver High School in 1926. While in high school, I worked in Harry Medbourn's coal yard. After graduation I sold mail order clothing with my father's help.

"In 1928 I trained to be a professional boxer in Chicago,

Illinois, and had boxing instruction at CMA. I fought as a heavyweight in the Midwest for three years. I was in charge of security at the Crystal Ballroom at Bass Lake. It was there that I met my wife.

"After the accidental death of Ed Cook, I was appointed marshal to enforce the law and to keep the peace. I was subject to call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and was also a deputy sheriff of Marshall County. My salary was \$100 a month. I furnished my own car, gasoline, uniforms, weapons, handcuffs, office supplies and furniture. To expand my involvement with state and national law enforcement, the town board changed my title to chief of police. I still cherish the gold badge given to me by Walter Johnson and our pistol team. The only paid deputy I had was Monton Foss. I had several unpaid deputies that I could call when needed. I attended law enforcement programs with the Indiana State Police.

"In 1941 we moved to Indianapolis. As I look back on my life in Culver half a century ago, it seems like a dream. In thinking about the people I once had the privilege to serve, I wonder, did I serve them well and did I keep the peace?"

The Town Board named Verl "Mac" McFeely the next town marshal in March 1941. Previously he had been superintendent of streets, water and sewer, all at the same time. In his new position, he was told to take care of the problem of cars speeding in town. The Town Board instructed him saying, "We will back your every move in controlling the speed on Lakeshore Drive and Main Street. The state law governs driving on the other streets, including College Avenue, which had long been a speedway." He

was also to enforce the law in regard to driving to a fire. Cars were to stay 500 feet behind the fire engine and no one was to pass the fire truck.

Don "Mike" Mikesell was police chief for 22 years (1946-1968). He was honored with the Citizen's Award from the Culver Chamber of Commerce in January 1966. His contribution to the town of Culver was his dedication to his service as police chief. He was also the water commissioner, a Marshall County deputy,



Don Mikesell was named Citizen of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce in 1976. From left are John Wyman, Indiana Secretary of State John Bottoff, Mikesell and Roy Nicodemus.

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street superintendent, a member of the Fire Department and Lake Patrol. He helped many of the younger generation throughout their youthful days and steered potential juvenile delinquents away from trouble with patience, understanding and inspiring advice. He was a graduate of Culver High School and a veteran of World War II during which he served in the U.S. Navy.

He loved the kids, believed in Culver and wanted it to be a good place for kids. When the phone rang at home, the family knew he would be away for a while. Not only did they have a phone in the house; they also had the fire bell.

One Halloween night, some youngsters had fun rolling tires down a hill. Chief Mikesell was on duty, and he let them have their fun. The next morning he went to school and called out the names of the pranksters, telling them they must put the tires back as they found them, recalled Marlene Shoddy.

"Don Mikesell was a cop back in the time when kids feared cops. With him it was strange because he almost never arrested a kid. He found a way to make sure the kids knew that they shouldn't do it again, whether it was by taking them to their parents, or some other method," said Larry Berger.

Having firecrackers seems to be a temptation for teenage boys.

Berger recalled, "One summer day, David McCarthy and I were in Rector's drugstore. Dave had firecrackers, so when we left, we looked up and down the street. The street was completely deserted with not even a car parked on it as far as we could see. Of course, we triggered a firecracker. It seemed it had hardly gone off, when here came Mike in the police car. We ran where the Cove is now. I ran behind Easterday's Funeral Home, across the raised ramp that led to the garage, and then smack into a fence. I went back and lay down next to the ramp, because there wasn't time to go around. Pretty soon, I could see the toes of Mike's shoes sticking over the ramp. I have always been sure that he saw me down there but chose just to stand there and let me worry. He must have stood there for an

hour, in my mind, but I am sure now, it was only for a few minutes. Needless to say, this eliminated throwing firecrackers on Main Street as an option for fun."

"While in high school, four friends and I decided to go to Lake Shafer for some fun. A friend of ours lived along the highway on the way out of town. We decided we should say goodbye to him. We had little boxes full of cherry bombs," said Donald Wayne Mikesell.

"As we drove by his home, a cherry bomb was lit and thrown out on his driveway. It was getting dark as we kept going. All of a sudden we saw this flashing light and heard the siren behind us. Of course, it was my Dad. We soon learned his car had been parked in that driveway. The three others had a little debate on whether or not to stop. I said, 'We stop.' My father pulled us over and with a flashlight started pointing at each face, one by one. His son was in the back corner, and when the flashlight got to his son's face, he said, 'Now, YOU should know better!'"

Sam Madonna followed as town marshal. With cooperating law enforcement from Marshall, Starke and Fulton counties, six persons were apprehended in connection with school break-ins. The 16- and 17-year-olds had taken records, radios and money.

Richard "Woody" Woodward was the town marshal/police chief in 1971 to 1976. His deputy was Jack Caudill.

The Police Department began winter water rescue in those years. Wearing a diving suit, Woody went 30 feet down in the icy water. It was necessary for him to go deep into the water to locate the hole in the ice. He said it resembled a big moon. The Fire Department and the Marshall County Sheriff's Department have since taken responsibility for water rescue.

Woody handled some of the juvenile minor offenses by sitting with young persons at his kitchen table and letting them tell him what had happened. He then asked them to write a letter telling about the event. The parents would read the letter. Woody promised them he would keep the letter private as long as they did not get into trouble again.

The compliment Woody most appreciated was when somebody said to him, "You're new, but you're doing just as good a job as Mike would do."

There were 12 fatal accidents the first year he was town marshal. He covered eight of them. During his tenure he had 13 runaways.

The yearly inspection of bicycles was one of the police chief's enjoyable events. Safety equipment and needed repairs were suggested. A number was stamped on the underside of each bike. Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6919 put reflective tape on bikes. The Maxinkuckee Auto Club gave six-foot-high triangular orange flags to whoever wanted one, adding to the safety of the cyclist.

The following year, the Junior Women's Club, VFW Post 6919 and the Police Department had a bicycle rodeo. After checking the safety of bicycles, races were run for various age groups.



CULVER BICYCLE INSPECTION IN 1973

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While Woody was police chief, a new radio system was installed. It allowed the police to have instant communications with the state police. They also received riot gear that never had to be used.

Woody often thought of his grandfather, George Riley Woodward, who was active in the early years of law enforcement in the township. In those early times, there were horses stolen, often including the buggy. A stolen horse would be sold to someone in a nearby community. When found, the horse would be returned to the owner, and the buyer would take the loss. There were various juvenile offenses. In 1935, Ed Cook arrested juveniles stealing gasoline from the Academy. The thefts "ran the gamut" from houses and cottages to the railroad, businesses, hotels and the post office. The bank robberies in 1920, with tragic loss of life, and 1933 were the most devastating to the community.

The responsibilities of law enforcement include the rescue of persons in accidents or those who are in danger wherever it takes place, on land or in water. Each of these officers swore to uphold the law and to assist those in need and to keep our community safe. Officers are required by the state to have a certain number of hours of additional training each year. The marshals, police chiefs, deputies and constables have memories of tragedies and near tragedies. We cannot know all they have done to

serve this Culver community.

– Jo Dugger

Sources –

The Culver Citizen
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 Our Town's Yesterdays, by Edwin R. Corwin
 The Pilot News
 Marshall County Historical Museum.
 Marshall County, Indiana, Sesquicentennial, 1836-1986
 Culver-Union Township Public Library
 Richard Woodward
 Richard and Marlene Shoddy
 Donald Wayne Mikesell
 Larry Berger

Editor's Note: There are many lapses in this history of the Culver Police. We would appreciate information that is lacking. We would like to know of those people who have served this community in this capacity. Please share your information to complete the history. Send your remembrances to Jeff Kenney at the Culver-Union Township Public Library, 107 N. Main Street, Culver, or jkenney@culver.lib.in.us.

Library Display Highlights Railroad Heritage of Culver

Visitors to the Culver-Union Township Public Library can relive some of Culver's railroad days by way of a display of artifacts related to the area's railroad, in the lower level display case at the library sponsored by the Antiquarian and Historical Society of Culver.

Earlier in 2006, a display of Culver area railroad artifacts could be seen on the library's upper level, but this summer's display – part of an ongoing, rotating display of Culver historical memorabilia in the Antiquarian Society's display area – but the present display is much fuller and more inclusive, and will be available for the many summer residents of Culver who may have missed last winter's display. Among the additions: an eight-foot wooden, 1920s baggage cart once used to haul luggage off incoming trains, models of popular trains that frequented area railroads, such as the famous "Doodlebug," an increased array of signals and other vintage memorabilia.

Area resident Jon Schmidt, a member of the Hoosier Valley Rail Museum of North Judson and an enthusiast of local rail history, has provided much of the material on display at the library, which includes original lanterns used by conductors and other rail employees, rail ticket stampers, a railway telephone, bills of sale from Culver's Vandalia Railroad and numerous photos.

Among the photos is a montage of shots from a dramatic 1950s train derailment on the west side of Lake Maxinkuc-

kee. The photos, originally from the collection of local train enthusiast Bruce Albert, has been a part of the permanent display the the museum in North Judson. Schmidt had the photos professionally duplicated along with a montage of other local train photos and made into two framed displays that he is donating to the library's growing history room and museum's permanent collection.

The Culver area benefited immeasurably from the addition of the Vandalia Railroad line to the town in 1883, a move that facilitated the creation of the Culver Military Academy and a booming tourist industry that saw thousands of visitors flocking to the shores of Lake Maxinkuckee each weekend around the turn of the century. During the heyday of the railroad in Culver, Academy students went back and forth from Culver to home almost exclusively via the railroads. Passenger train service to Culver was discontinued in November of 1947.

The display will remain at the library, located at 107 N. Main Street, in downtown Culver, through the summer months and is visible during the library's regular hours.

– Jeff Kenney

Antiquarian & Historical Society of Culver Winter 2006 Newsletter
 News Editor: Agnes Bramfeld
 Feature Editor: Jo Dugger
 Production Editor: Fred Karst

Lighthouse Dedication Scheduled on August 12

The Antiquarian and Historical Society will join the Culver Park and Recreation Board for the dedication of the new lighthouse on Saturday, August 12. The lighthouse replaces the first reproduction after its shocking destruction by vandals during the winter.

The new lighthouse stands about 21 feet tall, and, topped by a handsome copper housing for the beacon, is a striking sight, visible from Lake Shore Drive. The first reproduction, installed by the Antiquarian Society, was vandalized shortly after it was donated to the park. Using the insurance money and a grant, the Park Board was able to recreate the original lighthouse. Many thanks are due to Dick Brantingham, Park Superintendent Kelly Young, Paul Bickel, Kurt Lucas and Bennett's Contracting, especially Leon, Todd and Cindy, for their tireless work on this project.

The dedication ceremony will be held at the park at 7:30 p.m., during an Ice Cream Social running from 7 to 9 p.m. on August 12. The Antiquarian Society will serve root beer and ice cream, and the Park Board has hired a band to play throughout the evening. It will be a social event well calculated to celebrate the addition of the lighthouse to the many other historical reminders of the past already in place in our community.

Members willing to help out at this event, serving root beer floats or any other necessary job, should notify Dusty Henricks soon.

— Agnes Bramfeld



The restored lighthouse in the Culver Town Park, upper right, is near the site of the original Lake Maxinkuckee Lighthouse, at right, in a postcard view from early in the 20th century. The new lighthouse also is surrounded by attractive landscaping tying it in with the other features of the park.



**SUMMER, 2006
NEWSLETTER**

**Antiquarian and Historical Society
P.O. Box 125
Culver, Indiana 46511-0125**

New Board Members

The Antiquarian and Historical Society is fortunate to have two new board members, voted in at our annual meeting on June 24. Ted Schenberg and David Zeglis are the newest volunteers on the 12-member board. Dick Brantingham has resigned from the board but continues his duties as chairman of the Facilities Committee. Unfortunately, we also had to replace Dr. George Wilkins, our recently deceased member and friend.

The rest of the board consists of Marcia Adams, Agnes Bramfeld, Jo Dugger, Fred Karst, Jeff Kenney, Bob Kreuzberger, Jim Peterson E.P. Severns, Frank Stubblefield and Dr. Leo Watson. This should be a productive board and is open to input from members of the society.

- Agnes Bramfeld

Dates to Remember

Meetings:

(Meetings generally begin at 10 a.m. and end by noon.)

July 22 – Fred and Susie Wurster’s cottage, 2480 East Shore Lane.

August 12 – Ice Cream Social and Dedication Ceremony, Town Park.

September 9 – Bramfeld Cottage, 1322 East Shore Drive.

It's Time to Pay Dues

We are well into 2006, and your dues are due and payable.

You will notice that we have asked for only one address to facilitate our mailing, but if you need a change of address in the summer, it can still be done.

We would also appreciate it if those of you who have e-mail would send us your e-mail address.

Thank you for your help.

YEARLY DUES \$20.00

Send 2006 dues to the Antiquarian and Historical Society, P.O. Box 125, Culver, IN 46511-0125

Name _____
Mailing Address _____
_____ Phone _____
E-mail _____
Make checks payable to Antiquarian and Historical Society, P.O. Box 125, Culver, IN 46511