

HISTORY OF THE DALLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

With respect and gratitude for the men and women who worked tirelessly to put together the Commemorative Edition for the Department in 1982 and again in 1988, this section is being reprinted from the past. This will benefit all who did not have an opportunity to acquire prior publications.

The years that followed have been capsulated and added to bring their arduous task of yearbook making together with recent history making moments to provide an up to date reflection of events our agency has experienced over the years since.

History of Dallas County Sheriff's Department

- By Dick Hitt

Researched by Deputy Nancy Stout
(Commemorative Edition, 1982)

Defense was a worrisome necessity in the frontier wilds of Texas in 1846. Many Texans will be sensitive and, well, defensive to admit it, but Texans have always needed defending from: hostile Indians, from Mexico, from various marauders, from each other. Texas needed so much defending that when it was annexed to the United States of America in 1845, it immediately swallowed up almost half of the standing U.S. Army. The U.S. established 19 forts throughout Texas, the ex-nation turned 28th State; and to garrison so many forts required up to 4,000 troops.

In 1846, the creation of the city of Dallas was still a decade away. But shortly after the annexation, on March 30, 1846, the first State Legislature created Dallas County. The town already known as Dallas, though still to be incorporated, was designated as temporary county seat.

There were more than a hundred permanent citizens in the town by then, and several towns that scattered across the area embracing the three forks of the Trinity River. Nine Indian tribes had disputed the access to those murky, undistinguished three forks with the white settlers and each other.

As a civilization, the County had a mediocre location. It was situated at the foot of the petering out of plains, but not yet part of the escarpment country; it was neither hill nor dale. There was bad drinking water, a profusion of natural obstacles, a susceptibility to natural disasters, floods, prairie fires, and always the Indians. There was never to be a Texas-OU weekend half as damaging as the forays being made into Dallas County in

its first two decades by the racing bands of Choctaws, Chickasaws and Kickapoos coming down from Indian Territory for the weekend.

Many of the communities in Dallas County were being settled at about the same time, by about the same kinds of people. They were mostly farmers and their families, here from Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Virginia, Louisiana, and Mississippi, together with newly landed Germans and French, and the forebears of Poles and Czechs.

It was necessary to farm. Those who came from other states as physicians, lawyers and merchants had to scabble as farmers first, and ply their professions second. Despite the drawbacks of geography, the land was lush.

The settlements along the river grew, and as their economies became more sophisticated, so did the problems of crimes where people gather. The primary problems in those days were cattle and horse thieves, various disturbances and disagreements among gentlemen, and the statutory need for maintaining for the county a place of incarceration.

These were the matters that most required the attentions of **John Huitt**, who was elected first Sheriff of Dallas County on the same day the County was proclaimed.

In December 1850, the County let contract for the first jail – a 16-by 16-foot cedar log structure. Its outside walls were eight inches thick with one door, three and one half feet wide and five feet high. It had one window covered with slab iron bars.

Huitt had been an early farming settler, one of the first inhabitants of what was then known as the town of Cedar Springs. He brought with him his slave, Al, who is perpetuated by archivist Sam Acheson in *Dallas Yesterday* as the first black to have been brought into Dallas County.

Al wouldn't have had a last name, and if he had it would be irretrievable, somewhere in the musty stacks of Dallas County courthouse records, along with the date on which the first Sheriff, John Huitt, died in office. Die in office he did, sometime, it is believed, in the second year of his term, 1847. In January of 1848 his brother **Rowland Huitt**, was sworn in as Dallas County's second sheriff, to serve out the unexpired term of his brother.

The next sheriff was **William Jenkins**, duly elected in 1848. It is an irony of the profession that Jenkins, elected during a hot frontier August of 1848, served a full two-year term and may have administered his duties so smoothly and unexceptionally that nothing was left for his administration to be remembered for. There weren't even any hangings; the first one didn't occur until 1853, under another man's tenure. No shootouts or Redskin incursions of note, no jailbreaks or indictments or recorded peccadilloes to scratch the surface of history. The implication is frightening: to be a good sheriff, keep your nose clean, and nothing will be remembered of your term of office?

The Jenkins administration was apparently innocuous enough not to be re-elected, too, for Dallas County's third elected sheriff in 1850 was **Trezevant C. Hawpe**.

He is remembered in brittle ledgers and circumstantial documents as an overbearing man who may have drunk to excess. As sheriff, he presided at the county's first legal hanging, in 1853. The condemned was a black woman named Jane. She was convicted of splitting open with an ax the head of a widower named Wisdom, who had hired her to keep his house and take care of his children. It being the sheriff's traditional duty to oversee all public events, Trezevant C. Hawpe presided at the hanging. One decade later, on the same courthouse lawn, he would be murdered over an auction dispute.

Somehow it taints the vision of the hangman machismo that the first hanged was a black woman. But this was the frontier, and this was the South.

They were vibrant years along this backwater of the Trinity, more and more settlers peeling off from the great westward migration. The communities of Dallas County grew apace. There was immovable object and irresistible force: the fey pressures of the frontier, pulling against the stabilizing factors of a community that could now offer fulltime work for merchants, gamblers, river rats, ministers, cats-paws.

The main problem of defense and survival in Dallas County remained the Indian raids, although there were inevitable increases in horse stealing, robberies of

all kinds and magnitudes, and homicides among the settlers.

Adam C. Haught, an Illinoisan who had served as county commissioner, became sheriff in 1854. His department was part of a swarming infrastructure of law enforcement and defense which included the federal troop constabulary, U.S. marshals, and Texas Rangers, troops of cowboy Cossacks raised by the Governor in the early 1850's to supplement federal protection and Indian defense.

Now, too, the torrential tides of politics were swirling around the citizens of Dallas County: Abolition. Slavery. Secession. Again, the irresistible force and immovable object.

At the age of 19, **Burnett M. Henderson** was elected sheriff of Dallas County in 1856. He served one term. Henderson was not destined to become a prodigy. After leaving office, the ex-sheriff was arrested as a "Secesh" – that is, an agent of the secessionist movement – and was tried by a federal tribunal and sentenced to death by hanging. He was shot to death during a jailbreak attempt.

During the term of the young Burnett Henderson, the City of Dallas became incorporated. Its law enforcement was detached from the responsibility of the county sheriff. It went to a town marshal system of law enforcement.

Wormley Carter, a Virginian and farmer, succeeded to the job of sheriff in 1858, at the age of 42.

He was followed in 1860 by **Allen Beard**, a Tennessean who had previously held other positions in county government before becoming sheriff.

N.O. McAdams became sheriff in 1862 and was the first to hold a record of tenure in office of more than one term. He was reappointed during the later part of the Civil War under the provisional government and served until 1866. He is buried in a small Oak Cliff cemetery near Illinois and Zang. He performed the many curious duties of office during the parlous years of the Confederacy: the Texas Legislature in the winter of 1861-62 divided the state into 33 brigade districts, ordering each able bodied man between 18 and 50 to enroll in military companies. The Confederate Conscript Law of April 1862 brought into active service the men between 18 and 35 who could not get exemptions or hire substitutes. Texas sent upwards of 65,000 men off to serve in the Confederacy.

It had been on the courthouse square in August, 1863, that the former Sheriff Trezevant C. Hawpe, then a Confederate colonel, was stabbed to death by a citizen named Dan Caster. Hawpe is said to have harassed

Caster, while in his cups, over a livestock auction deal in which Caster had bested him by being able to bid in gold. The taunts continued until Caster drew a knife and stabbed Hawpe “seven or eight times.” Caster then threw the knife into the well on the courthouse lawn.

There was a mounting confusion, concern and lawlessness at war’s end but the county nevertheless duly elected another sheriff in 1866, **Jeremiah M. Brown**. He served until being removed from office in the wave of Reconstruction and replacement by carpetbag appointees.

The result, Dallas County’s first Republican sheriff, **Norval M. Winniford**, said to have been one of the toughest men on this frontier. A Kentuckian, he had settled in Dallas County after success in the California gold fields in 1850.

One of the most unpopular aspects of Reconstruction was the state militia force of 250 men organized by Reconstruction Gov. E.J. Davis.

The militia’s powers, and depredations, extended into every Texas County. The Governor could impose martial law at will and could assume command of sheriff’s constables and police departments of cities.

The bedraggled Rebs were the first of several generations of American veterans to be coming home to instability and uncertainty. There was hatred of Reconstruction. There was resentment over emancipation. There was restlessness and anger and vengeance, and a dramatic rise in outlawry.

Real elections were held again in 1870. **Jeremiah M. Brown** was re-elected to the term that had been interrupted by Reconstruction in 1867. He served until 1873.

They were roistering years. The new Democratic Legislature abolished Davis’s disliked state police force, repealing many of the laws enacted by the radical legislature. The first railroad, the Houston & Texas Central, came into Dallas County, bringing with it new commercial vigor, boom and bluster – and more and different kinds of crimes.

James E. Barkley, elected in 1873 was the first Dallas County law officer to be confronted with the problem of moving against the sizeable outlaw community that flocked to the Dallas area after the Civil War.

A new resident, for instance, was Myra Belle Shirley, who settled in Scyene after moving with her family from Missouri. She was later known as Belle Starr. She lived in Dallas for a time and operated a livery stable, which reputedly served as a front for stolen horses on their way to Indian Territory.

Her first husband of record, Jim Reed, was a horse thief and holdup man. After he was killed, Belle moved on to Indian Territory on the Canadian River – and much wider fame with a flourishing outlaw career.

William M. Moon, elected in 1876, was born in Missouri, came to Dallas and worked as a clerk in the general merchandise store of Gold & Donaldson.

Moon had a busy career in law enforcement. He served as a deputy under the star-crossed Burnett Henderson. He served one year – 1858- as Dallas city marshal, the third man to hold that position.

During his first term as sheriff, he may have walked over to Elm Street on occasion for a meal at the new saloon in town, the Blue Front. It is still in business, a block from its original location.

Moon served two terms as sheriff, until 1882, and then served as deputy under Sheriff W.H.W. Smith (1882) AND Sheriff William Henry Lewis (1886). He also served on the fledgling Dallas police force for four years.

William H.W. Smith, an Alabamian, took a job in a hardware store when he got to Dallas in 1873. In 1882, he was elected sheriff, then re-elected in 1884, defeating W.P. Cochran by the largest, to that point, majority ever given a county candidate. He served as town marshal of Oak Cliff when that community was incorporated.

The Sheriff’s Department now was growing. **William Henry Lewis**, elected in 1886, had 11 men on his staff. He was the first sheriff of Dallas County ever elected to three terms.

Dallas, and the county, was recording growths that mirrored the need for a growing department. The Exposition was evolving into the State Fair of Texas. The biggest attraction at the Fairgrounds was the race track. In Dallas and other towns in the county, there were more and more saloons, gambling houses and bordellos. In 1886, electric lights were being installed at the Fairgrounds. The businesses along the railroad tracks, now Pacific Avenue, were shoulder-to-shoulder saloons.

In 1887, a statewide Prohibition election was held on August 4. Dallas County went wet by a big margin.

On July 4, 1891, the various Independence Day events were upstaged by another, grislier function. A.L. Rogers, the first white man to be sentenced to death in the 45-year history of the County, was hanged. He was the 14th person to be hanged by the county. He was convicted of the rape of a child.

The sheriff in 1892 was **Ben Cabell**. He was patriarch of a family that would be a familiar name in

Dallas County far into the next century: as dairy store, ice cream label, mayor and congressman.

Born in Arkansas, Ben Cabell as a young man raised cattle on what was called the Crockett Farm, then 2 ½ miles east of Dallas. His father was Confederate Gen. William L. Cabell. In 1885, Ben Cabell was appointed deputy U.S. marshal, under his father, and was assigned to duty in Indian Territory. As sheriff in 1893, Cabell enforced the County Attorney's new ban on dice, dominoes and pool tables in saloons. Sheriff Cabell served four terms until 1900 before he resigned and was elected as Mayor of Dallas. **Lee H. Hughes** served as sheriff upon Cabell's resignation.

The 1909 edition of Philip Lindsley's *The History of Greater Dallas & Vicinity* extolled Ben Cabell in the courtly manner of the times' journalism: "He has served as sheriff and mayor (many claim to have been the best chief executive Dallas ever had), as well as in other official positions, and his incumbency of each has resulted in a progressive strengthening of his character in its best qualities..."

J. Roll Johnson took office in 1901. Born in Lancaster, he was the first native of Dallas County to hold the office of sheriff. He was re-elected in 1902.

Johnson's successor was **Arthur L. Ledbetter**, the second native of Dallas County to serve in the post. He was born the son of a farmer in 1863, served as one of Cabell's deputies for seven years and joined the Dallas Police Department in 1900. He served three terms as sheriff beginning in 1905.

Through the decade of the 1890's, the confluence of the Trinity forks was reaching a zenith. There was a citifying boisterousness, and the attendant problems of higher crime drawn by the presence of so many new opportunities: trains, banks, post offices, merchant stores. Dallas was the largest city in Texas, with 38,067 citizens.

Dallas County had a new courthouse destined to become a landmark in Texas history. Out of the ashes of a fire that had destroyed its predecessor rose "Old Red", so named by later generations because of the red stone. It was started in late 1891 and completed in 1893. This time the county tried to make sure that it was fireproof.

According to historian A.C. Greene's *Dallas: The Deciding Years* as the 90's opened, Dallas had 300 saloons and beer halls and 572 streets. Some of the streets – Columbia, Walnut, and Calhoun – were closed for rail yards.

The first skyscraper in town was the seven-story Linz Building, built in 1898. The First Baptist Church was erected in 1896. St. Paul Hospital opened in 1898, with room rates \$1 a day.

At the turn of the century, as Ben Cabell switched from sheriff to mayor, the population of the county seat was 42,000.

County government was growing as it could to meet the pace. **Ben Brandenburg** was elected sheriff in 1910, and in 1914, under the tenure of Sheriff **Will K. Reynolds**, the new County Criminal Courts Bldg. was opened. Reynolds' department was the first to occupy the building.

From the late 1800's to the opening of the Criminal Courts Building there was a jail described to have been clean, comfortable, well lit, airy and with its own hospital ward. It was located on Houston Street near what is now the Union Terminal Station. Just outside the jail were the gallows where public hangings were carried out. Across the way where the Dallas Morning News building and a small plaza now stand, spectators gathered to watch condemned men swing.

The shows ended when the prisoners were moved to the newly completed Criminal Courts Building Jail down the street at Houston and Main Streets. Hangings were still carried out for the next decade, but behind walls and witnessed only by a selected few.

The "Death Cells" - three of them - though unused, are still in place as they were when they were built 93 years ago (from date of this current publication).

The first to die on the inside gallows were "Muddy" Walter Stephenson and "Fluky" Leonard Dodd. A third man sentenced to hang with them was spared by the governor and was discovered years later to have become a preacher and raised a large family. The sheriff got \$25 for a hanging which, it was said, he customarily donated to charity.

The state took over executions in 1925 replacing the gallows with an electric chair to become better known to those who were strapped in as "Old Sparky".

1914: Southern Methodist University was under construction, the Ford Motor Co. opened an assembly line plant in Dallas, and Reverchon Park was renamed from the former Woodchuck Hill. WAR CLOUDS ERUPT IN EUROPE.

The post war years became the domain of Sheriff **Don Harston** in 1918. The war was over, and here came the veterans again, restive. Prohibition went into effect in 1919. So did bootlegging. And bank robberies. There was also an undercurrent of baser politics abroad: the Ku Klux Klan came into favor. Candidates virtually ran on the Klan ticket. Harston was a pro-KKK sheriff, and he had many sympathizers, or fellow Klansmen, throughout county government, including judges and the District Attorney's staff. It was a quiescent Klan. The last

previous lynching had been in 1912, from the window of a courtroom in the Old Red Courthouse. With the adoption of Women's Suffrage on August 20, 1920 the first woman to vote in Dallas County was a jailer's wife. Emma Peek, who lived on the fifth floor of the jail with her husband, Boone Peek, cast her vote in the general election on November 2nd that same year in a ballot box on the main floor of the Criminal Courts Building.

It was a time of great problems in law enforcement everywhere in America. Prohibition was the problem. There had to be heavy guarding against corruption, and the temptations of all that hooch money. Allowing for inflation, it was the Drug Money of its time.

In his University Park home, **Schuyler Marshall Jr.** recalls in vivid images what it was like being a Dallas County Sheriff. Pushing toward 90 (at the time of the 1982 publication), he was the last of a raw breed of lawmen from the 20's.

Don Harston had worn the sheriff's badge for six years when Marshall outpolled him and seven other candidates in the general election of 1924. "I riled him a good bit. I said he had been sheriff too long, had a deputy in every cemetery in the county and had never smelled powder or heard a gun go off," Marshall told an interviewer in 1979. "I fired Harston's deputies and put in men I could depend on and trust. Men who didn't vote for me didn't belong there." Four months after taking his oath, Marshall, the ex-dairy farmer from the Mesquite area, faced-off a mob which had gathered on the street in front of the Criminal Courts Building, vowing to lynch two black prisoners under death sentence for rapes and murders of whites. The sheriff won. Marshall would say many years later in understatement that he found it difficult to talk to a mob when they were shooting at him. When the shooting stopped, one in the mob lay dead and four were wounded. The two condemned prisoners were driven to Huntsville the next morning and electrocuted.

Tom Mix, the cowboy film star of the time, gave the hero-sheriff one of his wide-brimmed western hats on a visit to Dallas. Marshall still had the hat at the time of the interview in 1979.

A young man named Bill Decker had been working as an elevator operator at the county courthouse since 1919.

In 1926, Sheriff Marshall was defeated by a write-in vote for Harston's chief deputy, **Allen Seale**, an unprecedented and in 2007, an unmatched feat.

Seale took office in 1927 and died in office on May 16, 1928. He was succeeded as sheriff by his wife **Lula**, a homemaker and mother of nine. A son, Denver

Seale, would serve as county commissioner 40 years later.

In 1929 an experienced deputy, soft spoken and businesslike-looking **Hal Hood**, was elected sheriff. He served two terms. One high moment came on October 8, 1929, when Hood and his deputies discovered a suspected underground storeroom for liquor extending under a corner of the State Fair Auditorium. The sheriff said there was reason to believe that unlawful beverages were being sold to Fair patrons. Although no actual spirits were found in the raid, there were several empty barrels, cartons and bottles.

Through the years the County Jail had been tested severely. It was usually full. Despite lack of money, the county fed prisoners two meals a day. The main meal had been of butterbeans and bread or red beans and bread with bread and molasses for breakfast. Uniforms for inmates were still years away as were uniforms for deputies. In 1932, Federal Bureau of Prisons Inspector S.W. Finch of Denver made a tour of the Dallas County Jail and said improvements had to be made to meet federal standards. The Sheriff's Department still made its payroll through the "fee system". Then came the "Audit of 32" revealing – to the outrage of the public that officials, among them, the sheriff, derived high salaries from fees.

The audit was triggered by the discovery of the "Donut Deal" – a scheme through which the donut supplier for the county's Sunshine Home paid twelve cents a dozen, added a "0" to the total and reaped big profits off the county. Thus the county purchasing department was born and a salary system was not far behind.

Smoot Schmid was the sheriff, having succeeded Hal Hood in 1933. Smoot Schmid would be in office longer than FDR: until 1947.

Smoots thirties were the outlaw decade, the days of Bonnie and Clyde, and the Hamilton's, who with Miss Parker, Barrow and Raymond Hamilton robbed the Reinhardt State Bank east of Dallas on November 3, 1932. The trio was also wanted for killing a deputy and wounding another at Atoka, Ok., for kidnapping a deputy in New Mexico, for the slaying of a gas station attendant in Hillsboro, and for other bank and service-station holdups. Either Barrow or Hamilton was believed to be the robber of the First State Bank of Cedar Hill, taking \$41,000.

In June of 1934 Schmid put armed deputies on all roads leading into Dallas following Bonnie and Clyde's springing of Hamilton from the Eastham Prison Unit.

Figuring the bandit trio would head back toward home, Schmid was quoted as saying: "The way they drive, they could make it here in three hours."

On May 23, 1934, Schmid deputies took part in the Arcadia, La. ambush of Bonnie and Clyde. He was 26. She was 21.

Schmid promised and instituted the patrol division in 1933. The deputies provided their own cars and were subsidized for mileage by the county. Uniformed deputies first appeared at this time, but the deputies had to pay for them – on the installment plan. The rudiments of a criminal identification system were begun.

CAME THE WAR YEARS, 1941-1945, and the sheriffdom strained under the exodus of able bodied deputies for the military and a what-the-hell public spirit.

In the vacuum created by a drained Dallas Police and Sheriff's Departments, gang warfare began to flourish over the control of gambling. There was a crime machine. There was the Benny Binion faction against rivals such as Herbert (The Cat) Noble, a gambler who survived repeated attempts on his life until he was blown up by a hidden bomb at his mailbox.

In 1946 the machine became one of the problems of **Steve Guthrie**.

Schmid, who had served seven terms by the end of the war, was denied re-election and Bill Decker, Schmid's chief deputy for 14 years, turned his badge in with his boss' defeat and began laying strategy for the next election.

Guthrie capitalized on his wartime service to rally the support of returning Dallas County servicemen who were not required to pay a poll tax to vote.

Guthrie pledged a crackdown on gangsterism ...he vowed to "wear out the Dallas County Jail" unless the criminals changed their lives or left the county. He told a Dallas Kiwanis Club, "I won't be able to halt these sinister things without public cooperation. If the people of Dallas County want gambling and continue to patronize the back rooms and clubs, our department will be at a disadvantage." Guthrie estimated the policy racket in Dallas County alone netted its operators upward of \$2,500,000 annually.

The Dallas County Sheriff's Posse of 60 members had come into being under Sheriff Guthrie in 1947. It was patterned after the El Paso Posse.

Bill Decker defeated Guthrie and another candidate without a runoff and for the next 21 years and eight months – up to his death on August 29, 1970 – served unopposed. For the reason he never drew an

opponent, Decker would often say in later years that he had the office "so screwed up no one wanted it."

Decker was a stiff-necked, high-collared, dapper-hatted man whose one good eye always looked as if he had just been startled by a flashbulb. It saw everything. He was living legend, and quietly aware of it. He leaped from his car with a shotgun to capture a German spy around the corner from the Blue Front. Within minutes after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Decker met with FBI agents inside paneled freight cars on the tracks behind the Texas School Book Depository.

He banished Gypsies and led raids. He modernized. In 1947 the Sheriff's Bureau of Identification was authorized. Decker oversaw the continued expansion and modernizing of the department and its equipment. On February 1, 1949 Sheriff Decker put new squad cars into service. They were 1949 Ford sedans equipped with radios, sirens and red lights. All radio transmissions still came through the Dallas Police Department's radio. This was the first time in the department's history that the county had provided cars. The deputies had always provided their own.

On April 13, 1951 the Sheriff's Patrol Division was receiving calls from its own communication system and dispatchers.

The Dallas County Jail was averaging 358 prisoners per day, or about 28 prisoners more per day than average. Decker told Commissioners Court that the three meals a day fed to prisoners cost the county 52 cents per man per day. The budget for the Sheriff's Department had reached \$381,400.

The Dallas Sheriff's Department is believed to be the first department in the state to adopt and put into use the new portable chemical gadget known as the Toximeter. The Toximeter is for use by on-the-scene officers when they encounter a person, especially a motorist, whom they suspect of having gargled too much jitter juice.

Decker was elected in 1949. He was never contested in election through his death in 1970. Much of the world had seen his image during the Ruby Trial. He was enraged and embarrassed by the jailbreak during the massing of media at the Criminal Courts Building during the trial. The departments honor was saved by an administrative deputy, who bounced across bumpers in a parking lot to apprehend the fugitives near the courts building.

He insistently asked Commissioners Court for additional jail space in 1954. He said the jail, built to accommodate 285 prisoners, housed a daily average of 627 prisoners.

To keep the traffic moving in the transfer of County Jail prisoners to the penitentiary, Decker sent carloads of prisoners to prison instead of holding prisoners until a truckload was formed.

In 1954, Sheriff Decker assigned two deputies to work traffic and enforce laws in Richardson. Richardson had no police force, but was working toward hiring a police department before the end of the year.

The Summer Decker was a trim silk suit, a jaunty stride, a citified straw hat with a bright striped band. And Camel cigarettes, summer and winter. The deputies closest to him carried his brand.

On May 19, 1967, Decker's staff had moved 1,145 prisoners into the new Dallas County Jail (600 Commerce Street).

Decker saw the need of a backup group of trained volunteers to assist the regular deputies in emergencies. The Sheriff's Department Reserve force that today plays an expanding role was formed in 1951 from a class of 50 Reserve Texas State Guardsmen under Colonel Harold Younger.

The Reserve deputies, who receive the same police training as regular deputies, are called into action on manhunts, lost persons, jailbreaks, public events, disasters and patrol duties. Dallas County gets all this extra security from more than 100 men and women members on the Reserve force – for free. It's their dime, their time.

The Herculean challenge of directing the Sheriff's Department after Decker, in a decade of drastic change for law enforcement, was handed to **Clarence Jones**.

Jones, a deputy since 1957, was appointed at a special meeting of the Commissioners Court and immediately had to gear up a campaign to hold the job in the next election, then only three months away. Jones, campaigning on the theme of maintaining the office "in the tradition of Bill Decker" handily defeated his Republican challenger.

Liquor-by-the-drink went into effect on April 20, 1971. Jack Ruby had been dead for four years. Eighteen-year-olds were allowed to vote and drink ... Jones had been in office less than seven months when an unimaginable event struck the department ... "The Trinity River Massacre". The press would dub it "Black Monday". On the evening of February 15, 1971 plainclothes deputies Samuel Garcia Infante, 32, and William Don Reese, 31, and A.J. Robertson, 55, a deputy from Ellis County, were executed by two gunmen on the Trinity River banks in West Dallas near Westmoreland.

Two other would survive to describe the grisly executions. Dallas County Deputy A.D. McCurley eluded the gunfire by flinging himself over an embankment. Ellis County Deputy Wendell Dover, 49, recovered from a chest wound.

The five deputies were taken hands bound behind their backs to the river after being taken hostage in a West Dallas house where they found stolen goods. In one of the largest manhunts in Dallas County history, the killers were captured hiding in an East Dallas rooming house at 4627 San Jacinto.

The two assailants were tried and convicted at their trial in the Bell County Courthouse in Belton. Each was sentenced to serve four life terms – stacked.

The year would not end before the Dallas County Jail had experienced its worst riot. Five hundred inmates rampaged for three hours before deputies, joined by Dallas Police officers, quelled the uprising. Although there had been pitched, hand-to-hand combat, miraculously, no one was killed. But damage to the jail was extensive.

The riot had been foreshadowed even as Jones took office a year earlier. The jails population had been rising to a breaking point.

In the 1972 elections, Jones outpaced his only serious challenger, Ted Hinton, a Smoot Schmid deputy and former federal marshal, to win his first full term.

The turbulence entered a new magnitude in 1974, when U.S. District Judge Sarah T. Hughes, who has sworn in a wan President Johnson aboard Air Force One, ruled that the facilities at the almost-new County Jail were inadequate. She ordered sweeping improvements in the facilities, and compulsory progress reports every 60 days.

And there was the bail bond scandal. Out of a Dallas County grand jury investigation, came a push for a gratuity law and the creation of a special bail bond board.

In 1976, the incumbent Sheriff Jones was defeated by Republican **Carl Thomas**: the first Republican since Reconstruction's ex-gold-miner, Norval M. Winniford.

Thomas was serving what was to be his only four-year term. It became a stormy one. There was rancor at Commissioners Court. There was hostility with the media.

In 1978 there was a raid at a Red Oak wrecking yard, which yielded the largest drug haul in the department's history: 5000 lbs. of marijuana with an announced street value of \$800,000.

Under Thomas, the innovative inmate classification system was introduced which would serve

as a model for the other detention institutions. The idea of Dallas County deputies patrolling and answering calls for the smaller suburbs, in effect serving as the communities' own police force, under contract with the county, was introduced by Jones. The contract arrangement was implemented by the Thomas administration, bringing the suburbs of Seagoville, Sunnyvale and Wilmer under the constant protective cover of the Sheriff's Department.

In January of 1981, **Don Byrd** (R) took over the department which one hundred years before had been run by William Moon.

Byrd, recently retired as Dallas Police Chief and a breeder of Arabian horses in south Dallas County, brought the image of administrator and criminologist to the department.

Byrd began his first year with a flurry of changes that would reach into every corner. The fast striding momentum of re-gearing the department as a modern, highly trained organization, commanding respect throughout the North Texas Region, was underway. The biggest change was the introduction of civilian detention officers into the jail. As they began moving into the Dallas County jails, deputies moved out to fill other critical gaps in the department. By the spring of 1982, the detention service officer operation was proceeding so smoothly that the staff at the Woodlawn minimum security facility was almost exclusively civilian detention officers.

The year 1981 also would go down in history as a monumental triumph for the Dallas County Sheriff's Association, which had been formed within the ranks a decade earlier.

For eight years the Association had struggled against heavy opposition to bring deputies and civilian employees under civil service protection that would remove them from the decades-entrenched political spoils system. Now suddenly the push for a civil service law caught fire, and was passed by the 67th Legislature.

Now, in the ninth decade of the twentieth century, in the one hundred and thirty-sixth year of the department's existence, we can look at the order of progression. At first, rugged individualists with no foundation in law enforcement moved into the territory and served two-year terms dealing with conventional frontier problems: horse thieves, bad men, bawdy women, gambling and booze.

In due time, native Dallas County citizens replaced the Old Guard. Horses were replaced with cars; then came the telegraph and the radio. Fingerprinting replaced the Bertillon system for identification. The

frontier lawman gave way to the professional law enforcement officers.

We are in a new era of technology. Education has become the hallmark of a new deputy.

We look at the future. The most imaginative cannot with certainty predict the next breakthroughs: what will come along to improve organizing, training, funding, transportation, communications, records, incarceration. The list is endless.

For some, the only regret is they won't be around for the next fifty years to share in the events of our department. Perhaps the best we can hope for is to develop the department, the staffing and its traditions to insure that tomorrow will be better because we are here today.

The text prior to this point is extracted from the 1982 "Commemorative Edition" publication. There were minor adjustments to adjust time span references. From 1982 until present, the following is now added. This is just a glimpse of things that have transpired over the past 25 years.

Here we are now, 25 years later, 2007. It has been a quarter of a century since the "Commemorative Edition" which gave us a look into the past history of the Dallas County Sheriff's Department.

The Department published an excellent yearbook in 1988 which included remarkable historical detail in similar fashion, from the birth of Dallas County. Rather than going back in time to recount those stories as written in the second volume, we will bridge the gap dating from 1982 until present from this point forward.

Sheriff Don Byrd was taken at the polls by **James C. Bowles** (R) effective January of 1985. Bowles had served in the Navy late in World War II and the Air Force during the Korean War. After 30 years with the Dallas Police, he retired to join Sheriff Byrd as one of his Chief's.

During what was to become a 20-year (5-term career as Sheriff), he continued developing the Detention Service Officer program which he had been involved in as a Chief serving under former Sheriff Byrd. Another development was an improved radio system, providing additional channels for car-to-car communication. There were other technological advances as well, as law enforcement was trying to keep pace with changes. For street officers, there was the MDT (Mobile Data Terminal) a wireless in-car computer. In the

Identification Section, new fingerprint technology emerged, AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System), which searched fingerprints electronically beyond our own files, into TCIC/NCIC fingerprint files as well. For the jail clinic, Bowles obtained funding for an X-Ray machine.

He coordinated with County District Attorney Henry Wade an effort to have the proposed Frank Crowley Courthouse redesigned and built as the full 11-story structure it became rather than the 4-6 floor structure it was planned to be. Both the Sterrett and Crowley projects were finished ahead of schedule and below budget with his on-going efforts in meeting with contractors.

As the population of the jail worsened, plans to build the North Tower were authorized and the Cook-Chill kitchen facility was established.

Our Department suffered the loss of two officers in the line of duty over the 20 year span of Bowles service as Sheriff (which is referenced in greater detail in that section of this book): Suzanne Kays, in a violent attack upon her near the lobby of the Sterrett facility, and Robert "James" Allman, who was involved in an accident while responding to a call while on patrol.

Part of the jail population problem of the mid-nineties was relieved by the acquisition of the Ford "New Holland" Tractor Plant which was converted into a jail and named The Suzanne Kays Detention Center.

Bowles prompted a federal law suit that alerted the governor and attorney general of the need for the state to build more prison space to deal with overcrowding across the state. The state conceded and facilities were built.

After jail population was relieved by TDCJ opening its gates wider, our department found a new way to keep the jail occupied - for a profit. It was "Contract Holding" of prisoners from out of state. We took prisoners from the states of Massachusetts and New Mexico. This also protected jobs for a lot of DSO's in the process.

Jail Inspections conducted yearly by the State Commission on Jail Standards, were successfully passed many of the years during Bowles tenure. The last two years however, we experienced negative attention from State Inspections.

Serving as one of Bowles Chief's was Danny Chandler. Chandler worked on many projects along the way to assist in bettering the department. Among those most notable were the gun range and the traffic program. Our Department entered into an agreement with the FBI to build a gun range on existing property owned by the

county near the Kovar Patrol Headquarters on Langdon Road. It was appropriately named the "Kenneth J. "Mitch" Mitchum Gun Range" after the Range master who worked so closely with Chief Chandler throughout the years to see it become a reality, and passing away prior to its opening.

The Freeway Management Plan was a multi-agency agreement that Chief Chandler assisted into fruition for Sheriff's Bowles, U.S. DOT, Texas DOT and local Police Agencies. Agencies throughout the county came into agreement to allow federal funds their cities were entitled to, be funneled direct through Texas DOT to the Sheriff's Department for freeway traffic management. The plan was to be implemented in three phases, periodically, to eventually leave the Sheriff's Department handling all freeways in the county. The Phase One was implemented and began to develop, involving a large portion of Interstate 20 and the Interstate Freeways (I-45, I-35) and U.S. Hwy 67 that extend south of I-20.

There was a bit of an undercurrent politically, however. The Republican Party in Dallas wanted to put another candidate on the ballot (due to unfavorable press that had arisen regarding management of the Jail). The Party's choice was Chandler. Chandler did not want to run against his boss. He agreed, eventually, to pursue candidacy but, not as one of Bowles own men. Chandler had been offered a position by the County Commissioners to fill a newly created position in Dallas County as Director of Homeland Security. (Note/ This position was part of the National Homeland Security strategy that followed the 9-11 Attacks.) It was from outside the Department, that Chandler began his campaign.

In summation, thirty years with the city and twenty-three years with the sheriff's department involved fifty-two exemplary years of public service. The last year was a bit difficult.

A surprise awaited in the general election, November 1994. **Lupe Valdez** (D) took the position of the highest ranking law enforcement officer in the County of Dallas, effective on January 1, 2005. Sheriff Valdez has been in law enforcement for over 30 years both Federal and State.

The first two years of her coming into office has been devoted to addressing the needs of the Department as diligently as possible.

Shortly after Sheriff Valdez took office, the jail drew negative attention from the State Jail Standards Commission and the Department of Justice regarding certain aspects of the Dallas County Jail.

As history reflects, this is not the first time there has been outside scrutiny of the jail. In 1932, under Sheriff Hal Hood, the jail was paid a visit by Federal Bureau of Prisons Inspector S.W. Finch. The jail was in his review, below standard. Improvements were mandated. In the course of so doing, an audit revealed the need for improvement in another area....salaries. So, with that being said, let it be summed up on a positive and hopeful note.

No matter how you slice it; we have more criminals to try and detect, arrest, house and prosecute, than any other time in history. And with census projections, it will only increase. We are out numbered and since it will always be a struggle to even the odds with manpower and equipment, we must continue to think smarter, not harder.

- and the beat goes on...

For all of the stressful attention that we as an agency are faced with, let us remain diligent in our efforts to hold true to our ethics and keep the hope that through this, we will find ourselves in better standing because of it. After all, the fire removes all the impurities, right?

As for our current – on-going – review by the U.S. Department of Justice goes, we are stepping up to the plate to meet the U.S. Department of Justice Standards. Our abilities are limited only by our resources. With the higher political powers prevailing, our resources may be increased to resolve the pressing issues. So, to remain up-beat on the matter: We will strive to move through adversity to become the example by which others will measure their success.

Just one last note, statistically. Dallas County has changed immensely over the years in every aspect. As you have read this history, you can perceive that change.

Consider this however: Based upon Census records taken in 1980, 2000, and 2004.

<i>Dallas County Population</i>		
1980	2000	2004
1,556,390	2,218,899	2,294,706

This reflects an increase of **738,509** “residents” of Dallas County in the **25** years of Vital Statistics alone, let alone all the non-residents, vagrants, drifters etc. that we encounter.

In researching our Departments “Total Authorized Staffing”, here are some interesting numbers as well. These figures are from the Auditors Office.

<i>Dallas Co. S/O Total Staffing</i>		
1985	1988	2007
1,137	1,278	2,068

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