2
THE HISTORY OF THE POLICE IN AMERICA

Police Spotlight: Policing in the Early Days

According to *The First One Hundred Years,* a publication of the Milwaukee Police Department,

On October 4, 1855, the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Police Department began functioning. William Beck was chosen chief of police by the mayor. His salary was set at $800 a year. Privates were to get $480 a year.

Six policemen were chosen by Beck; they were picked for their size and fighting ability.

To arrest a man in those days, it was nearly always necessary to whip him first. The first policemen in Milwaukee were consistently seen with black eyes, bruised cheeks, and split lips. They earned their $40 a month the hard way. Murders were reduced to practically nothing; thugs quit prowling the streets at night lying in wait for prosperous looking individuals, and citizens began writing letters of praise about the battered and bruised policemen and the fine work they were doing.[1]

As described here, formal policing in Milwaukee (and other cities) had very humble beginnings. As we will discuss in this chapter, while some aspects of policing have dramatically changed over time, others have changed very little. In particular, police use of force and the relationship between police and crime control remain central facets of the policing function.

Source: Milwaukee Police Department. 1955. *The First One Hundred Years.* Milwaukee: City of Milwaukee, p. 3.

CHAPTER 2 chronicles the history of the police in America. It begins with a discussion of how the police first came to exist and ends with a brief discussion of modern-day policing. The chapter serves as a foundation for the rest of the chapters that focus directly on policing as it is conducted today.

Objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

2.1 Explain why an understanding of police history is important

2.2 Identify and discuss the four eras of policing and the reasons why each era began and dissolved

2.3 Discuss the role of constables, watches, slave patrols, and sheriffs during the pre-police era

2.4 Describe how the first police departments in the country operated

2.5 Compare how the reform era of policing differed from the political era

2.6 Discuss why the 1960s were so significant for the police

2.7 Evaluate the critical concepts associated with the community problem-solving era

Fact or Fiction

To assess your knowledge of police history prior to reading this chapter, identify each of the following statements as fact or fiction. (See page 35 at the end of this chapter for answers.)

1. One of the first things the colonists did when they arrived in America was set up a network of relatively sophisticated and well-run police departments.

2. To understand issues involving the police and race relations today, it is important to understand the policing of racial minorities in the past.

3. So-called black codes and Jim Crow laws were never legal, nor were they ever officially enforced by the police.

4. The first women were hired as police officers in the late 1800s and were assigned similar duties as policemen.

5. The first black officers were hired in the late 1800s and were often more educated and qualified than their white counterparts.

6. Photographs of criminals, Bertillonage, the third degree, and the dragnet roundup of suspects were common investigative strategies and tactics used during the political era of policing.

7. The reform era of policing was an attempt to remove politics from policing and make police officers more professional.

8. Coproduction of crime prevention was the centerpiece of the reform era of policing.

9. One aspect of policing that has not changed over time is how frequently the police use batons in force incidents.

10. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, immediately led to the creation of new laws and redirected law enforcement concerns, but the effects of the attacks have proven to be short lived.

WHY STUDY THE HISTORY OF THE POLICE?

There are at least three reasons why understanding the history of the police is useful and important. First, in order to better appreciate how the police in America have changed over time, it is necessary to understand what policing looked like when it first began. Some aspects of policing have changed a lot, some have changed little. Most crucially, some of the reasons why the police are controversial today are rooted in why the police were created in the first place. Overall, knowledge of police history will assist in developing a more complete understanding of the police today.

Second, police history identifies persistent policing problems and the "solutions" that were applied to those problems but did not work. Consequently, if we are aware of these ineffective measures, we can avoid duplicating them when trying to address age-old problems today. In addition, an understanding of history can help us recognize and more fully comprehend the problems that seem immune to solution, such as police misconduct.

Finally, it is useful to study police history because it may provide insight into the future. Some people say that because history is cyclical we can actually predict the future based on knowledge of the past. Although the more specific the prediction, the more likely it is to be wrong, history can be used to identify general trends and patterns that may extend into the future. This can make it possible to predict the future based on the past.

POLICING COLONIAL AMERICA

The first explorers crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the late 1400s, and the first Europeans settled permanently in America in the late 1500s and early 1600s. The most prominent settlers were the British, who created the thirteen colonies in what eventually became the United States of America. Many of the colonists had fled their homeland because they wanted religious freedom; thus, freedom became a central feature of the new government when it was created.

The colonists had a difficult time in the new land. The economy of the colonies was based almost entirely on the land and farming. Without the benefit of any modern equipment, the work was hard. Starvation and diseases were rampant. Medical care was primitive. As laborers were needed to work the land, indentured servants were first used. Many of these people were poor teenagers from England who received a free boat ride to the new colonies in exchange for years of labor.

In colonial America during the 1600s and 1700s, there were four primary policing entities: constables, watches, slave patrols, and sheriffs.

CONSTABLES AND THE WATCH

In the early days of colonial America, there was little need for law enforcement. The colonists were God-fearing, hard-working people who took responsibility for their own actions and the actions of their neighbors. As settlements turned into towns, **constables** were the first appointed law enforcement officers. The duties of the constable varied depending on the size of the community, but generally the post was responsible for dealing with everything from stray cattle and dogs to misbehaving children. In some towns constables even enforced church attendance.[2]

constable: The first appointed law enforcement officers in colonial America. They often organized and supervised the watch.

In larger villages, constables were responsible for organizing and supervising the **watch**. The watch consisted of men who would watch the town, especially at night. Looking out for fires was a major responsibility of the watch since fires had the potential to destroy entire villages. The watch was also responsible for being on the lookout for suspicious persons. In the 1630s, Boston formed a watch that consisted of one constable and six watchmen.[3] In other towns, the watch assignment rotated among the men in the village. At first, men who worked on the watch were unpaid volunteers; later they were paid, but the pay was minimal. Members of the watch patrolled on foot. When necessary, members of the watch could summon the other men in the village with what was known as the *hue and cry*. Whistles and wooden clappers or rattles were also used to alert townspeople of danger and to summon assistance.

A Question to Consider 2.1

Reflections of the Watch in Policing Today

Do you see any similarities or parallels between the watch in colonial America and policing today? Explain your answer.

SLAVE PATROLS

As the economy of the colonies continued to grow, so did the need for laborers. This led to the advent of slavery. Africans began to be transported to the colonies in the 1600s, and by 1860, approximately 450,000 had been relocated there.[4] With births far outnumbering deaths, by 1860 there were four million slaves in the country.[5] **Slave patrols** were established shortly after the mass importation of slaves began and were in place in several colonies by the mid-1700s.[6] The law typically required white landowners (slave owners) to serve on slave patrols. Because it was not a desirable duty, by the 1800s members of slave patrols usually included people who did not own slaves or land, and they were paid. The pay was about the same as that given to members of the town watch, which was about one dollar per night. In addition, when runaway slaves were captured, the slave patrol members shared the reward. The patrols typically consisted of seven men who were assigned to an area of about ten to twelve square miles.[7] In 1837 Charleston, South Carolina, had a slave patrol that consisted of more than a hundred officers.[8]

The purpose of the slave patrols was multifaceted. They patrolled the roads and stopped slaves to make sure the slaves had passes to be away from their plantations. They also were on the lookout for slaves who gathered for illegal worship. Members of slave patrols also had the authority to enter plantations and search the living quarters of slaves for stolen property, runaway slaves, and weapons. They also looked for books, paper, and pens, as it was illegal for slaves to learn how to read or write.[9] In some villages, the slave patrols worked alongside the watches, and some patrol members went on to serve as members of the watches. During the Civil War, the slave patrols became more active, and slaves were even more closely monitored. For example, in Atlanta, Georgia, slave patrols were authorized to arrest any blacks who were on the street after 9:00 p.m. They also prevented blacks from gathering unless members of a slave patrol or the police were present.[10]

> **watch:** Men in larger villages in colonial America who were tasked with guarding the town, especially at night.
>
> **slave patrols:** Patrols tasked with looking for runaway slaves, policing the whereabouts of slaves, and making sure slaves were not in possession of weapons or property they were not allowed to have.

Photo 2.1

Slave patrols provided an important form of policing in the pre–Civil War era. These patrols represented the first example of racial conflict between police and blacks in America.

@North Wind Picture Archives/Alamy Stock Photo

THE SHERIFF

The **sheriff** was another important policing figure in early America. The idea of a sheriff was borrowed from the old English system. In England, a *shire* was the American equivalent of a county; a *reeve* was an officer who functioned as a constable. A sheriff was the American version of a reeve. Normally, a sheriff was appointed by the governor and worked in a less populated area than a watch did. The primary responsibilities of the sheriff were to apprehend criminals, assist the justice of the peace, collect taxes, and supervise elections. As settlers moved west into the territory of the American Indians, the sheriff continued to have an important role. U.S. marshals employed deputies who also served as sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, or constables.[11] In some places, the sheriff could summon a posse, which was a band of armed male citizens, to assist in apprehending criminals and dealing with other violent threats. The Texas Rangers were formed as a militia to defend against Indians.

A Question to Consider 2.2

The Historical Roots of Police–Minority Conflict

Do you think the early history of the police can help explain why there are often tensions and conflict between some people of color and police in the twenty-first century? Explain why or why not.

THE FIRST AMERICAN POLICE DEPARTMENTS: THE POLITICAL ERA OF POLICING

In the early and mid-1800s, three developments converged that led to the creation of the first formal police departments in America: the **Industrial Revolution**, the rise of major cities, and the abolishment of slavery. These developments are important to consider because they provided the perfect mix of ingredients for the creation of police departments.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE CREATION OF CITIES

With the creation of various technologies, such as electricity, the steam engine, steel, industrial equipment, and the assembly line, the focus of the economy began to move from the land more toward the production of goods. Factories were built. America was experiencing massive immigration, and these newcomers wanted jobs. Many of the jobs were in the new factories, and people tended to settle in close proximity to where they worked. As a result, new cities formed and already existing ones got much larger. For example, in 1820 Boston had a population of approximately 40,000. By 1870 it had a population of about 250,000.

Cities created a slew of new job opportunities, but they also created problems, particularly with regard to ethnic conflict, housing, sanitation, and health and medical care. Extraordinary wealth was created during this period—at least for some. Others, especially those who were unable to work, lived in poverty. Crime became a major concern, specifically among the wealthy. There were riots in many American cities, most of which were related to poor living standards, poverty, and ethnic conflict. The watch was simply no longer capable of providing the security that citizens demanded.

THE ABOLISHMENT OF SLAVERY

Slavery was officially abolished at the end of the Civil War with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. The former slave owners and other pro-slavery whites now had a problem uniquely their own: a "free" black population. According to authors Jerome Skolnick and James Fyfe, "The post–Civil War South faced the enormous problem of absorbing a population of former slaves

sheriff: A police figure who typically worked in a less populated area. In early American policing, the primary responsibilities of the sheriff were to apprehend criminals, assist the justice of the peace, collect taxes, and supervise elections.

Industrial Revolution: A period during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries marked by new manufacturing processes and a transition from rural means of production to urban ones.

while maintaining the dominance of the white caste."[12] The emergence of the Ku Klux Klan was part of the solution to this problem for the pro-slavery Southerners. The Klan's mission was to strike terror into the freed slaves and their sympathizers in order to keep them in a powerless position. Lynching was a common tool of the Klan: From 1882 to 1959, it is estimated nearly 5,000 lynchings occurred in the United States.[13] The activities of the Klan went on largely without interference from officials.

Along with the use of terror as a tool, another tactic of the pro-slavery faction was the creation of so-called **black codes**, which articulated black citizens' "rights and responsibilities." For example, blacks were prohibited from renting land in cities, and vagrancy was punishable by forced plantation labor. Other rules prohibited "insulting language," "malicious mischief," and preaching the Gospel without a license. South Carolina required that blacks be farmers or servants unless they paid a special (and unaffordable) tax.[14]

Photo 2.2
The Industrial Revolution led to the creation of cities, which in turn led to rising concern about crime and the formation of formal police departments. @iStockphoto.com/ilbusca

The black codes were made illegal as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. In place of the black codes came **Jim Crow laws**, which mandated racial segregation in public facilities. Interestingly, Jim Crow laws actually first appeared in the North before being widely adopted in the South. These laws existed until the 1960s. The black codes and Jim Crow laws are particularly relevant when considering the history of the police because although these laws were not created by the police, the police were expected to enforce them. It is also important to remember that at this time, the police were exclusively white. It was not until the late 1800s that any blacks were appointed as officers.
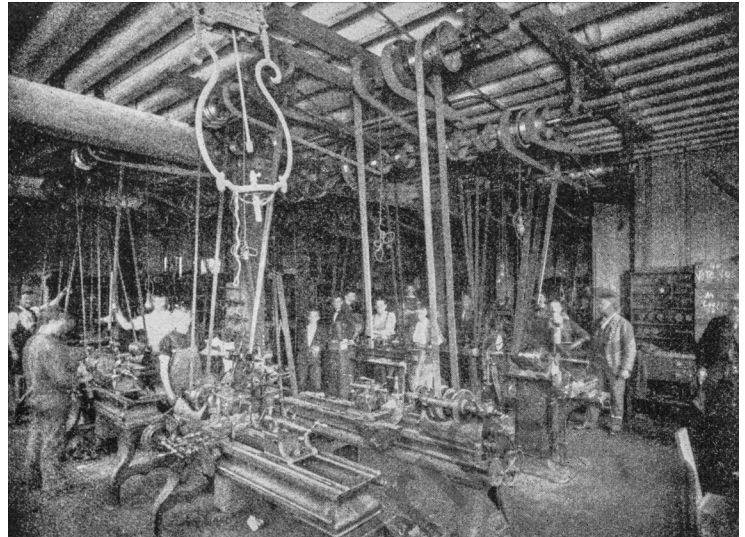
THE LONDON METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT AS A ROLE MODEL

The events that took place in the early to mid-1800s in the United States were not limited to that country. In fact, the United States trailed England in the unfolding of the Industrial Revolution. In 1829, the London Metropolitan Police Department (LMPD) was created. At this time, London had a population of approximately 1.5 million people. Londoners had made do without a formal police force as long as they could. Soon after its creation, the LMPD had 1,000 officers. It served as the model for police departments subsequently created in the United States.

The problem for the English was that although the need for a more effective means of policing was obvious, how to go about providing it was not. It was decided that the police department would exist in order to prevent crime, and this was to be accomplished through patrol. The reasoning was that by having officers patrol on foot throughout the city, their presence would deter would-be criminals from committing crimes. It was also decided that the structure of the LMPD should resemble that of the military. The person who is most often given credit for the creation of the LMPD is Sir Robert Peel. It is for this reason that British police officers are today still often referred to as "bobbies."

The founders of American police departments subscribed to the theory the English had already established: Crime prevention through patrol and using a military structure seemed reasonable. The creators of American police departments also wanted policing to be a local responsibility. With local control of police departments, there was little role for the federal government in law enforcement. Indeed, when the first police departments were created in the

black codes: Codes designed to limit the rights of freed slaves in the post–Civil War South.

Jim Crow laws: Laws that mandated racial segregation in public facilities.

mid-1800s, there were few federal laws and thus no need for federal law enforcement agencies. Early police departments operated at the local level and were controlled by citizens who lived in the towns and cities. Another important facet of the initial operations of police departments was that police power was limited by law. The Constitution made this clear.

THE CREATION OF THE FIRST AMERICAN POLICE DEPARTMENTS

As noted, the Industrial Revolution, the creation of large cities, and the abolishment of slavery set the stage for the creation of the formal police departments in America. The first police departments were created by combining the night watch with the day watch. In the South, the former slave patrols became the core of the new police departments. Although the dates are difficult to precisely pinpoint, Boston created its police department around 1838, New York City around 1845, Chicago around 1851, and New Orleans around 1857.[15]

The mid-1800s to the early 1900s is known as the **political era** of American policing.[16] As its label suggests, policing at the time was all about politics. Politicians, especially the mayor, controlled everything related to policing, including who got hired, who got fired, and what policemen did while they were on the job. There was little or no training. There were virtually no selection standards except for political party affiliation and connections. As politicians moved in and out of office, so did policemen and police chiefs. For example, in Hartford, Connecticut, the process went like this: Democrats and Republicans each created lists of their fellow party members that were deemed suitable as policemen. Democrats then crossed names off of the Republicans' list and vice versa. From there, the policemen were selected. The chief of the department was usually directly appointed by the mayor and was of the same political party as the mayor. Police officers were generally also of the same political affiliation as the mayor.[17]

DIVERSITY IN THE POLITICAL ERA OF POLICING

Black policemen were first hired in Selma, Alabama, in 1867 and in Houston, Texas, in 1870. In New Orleans, there were 177 black officers by 1870. Chicago hired its first black policeman in 1872. Interestingly, the black men who were appointed police officers were often better educated and qualified than their white counterparts. Nevertheless, the appointment of blacks as officers was controversial. Some cities experienced riots because of black officers taking action against white citizens.[18] Consequently, black officers were more likely not to wear uniforms and to be assigned to black neighborhoods. Some cities did not allow black officers to arrest white citizens. In Miami, blacks were called *patrolmen* while white officers were designated as *policemen*. In the late 1800s, the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was ruled unconstitutional, and later the Supreme Court upheld "separate but equal" laws. As a result, black officers lost their jobs in droves. This was most evident in New Orleans, where the number of black officers dropped from 177 in 1870, to 27 in 1880, to 5 in 1890, and to none in 1910. It was not until 1950 that another black officer was hired in the largely African American city.[19]

There were no women police officers until late in the 1800s, and even then, there were very few. Police officers were simply referred to as policemen. The first women employed in police departments were called **police matrons** and did not have powers of arrest. Their duties were generally limited to handling female prisoners. Although the historical record is incomplete and inconsistent with regard to the employment of women in police departments, it has been offered that the first fully sworn female police officer was hired in 1891 in the Chicago Police Department; her job was to enforce child labor laws. The first female African-American officer was appointed in 1916 in the Los Angeles (CA) Police Department.[20] Most large police departments did not employ any women until the 1920s, and it was not until the 1970s that women had the same authority as male officers. It is accurate to say that in large part the political era involved white male leaders appointing white male officers to police white and black citizens.

political era: The period from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s during which policing was heavily influenced by politics.

police matrons: Female police department employees whose duties usually involved only female prisoners.

THE ROLE OF THE POLICE DURING THE POLITICAL ERA

The capabilities of the police at the time were minimal, although officers were on duty twenty-four hours a day and police departments were better staffed than were the watches. In many cities, the first policemen wore designated hats and carried wooden clubs, but they did not wear uniforms. Not until the late 1800s did police officers begin to routinely carry firearms. In large cities, officers were assigned to extensive beats and they patrolled on foot. Some areas of cities were not patrolled at all. There was no system of communication between citizens and the police or between the police officers themselves. There were no means by which police supervisors could supervise their officers; as a result, there were very few supervisors. Needless to say, seldom were citizens able to find the police when they were needed. This situation created an environment where politicians could easy influence and control the officers' activities and the police department in general. Cities were typically divided into wards; each ward had an elected ward leader, and the police in each ward were accountable to that leader. Many police activities were political, including campaigning and, at times, assisting in rigging elections.[21] Indeed, corruption among politicians and their police forces was rampant. Payoffs and bribes were an unquestioned aspect of policing at the time. Officers accepted bribes not to enforce laws; officers paid bribes to get promoted. Chiefs and political leaders were in on the action as well, demanding a portion of the bribes accepted by officers.

Street-corner call boxes were put in place in the late 1800s. A call box was a metal box on a pole with what amounted to be a rudimentary telephone inside the box. Call boxes provided a means by which officers could communicate with supervisors at the police station, and they allowed supervisors to monitor the location of officers on the beat. However, call boxes were often vandalized by officers. They represented a first attempt to control and improve the police, if a rather unsuccessful one.

Beyond serving the interests of politicians, the police were primarily engaged in providing services to citizens: They ran soup lines, provided lodging to immigrant workers, and assisted in finding work for immigrants, all upon the direction of political leaders.[22] Something that the police did not do very often was make arrests. More than half of all arrests made at this time were for public drunkenness.[23] This was an offense that beat cops could easily discover with no investigation necessary. The police simply did not have the capability to respond to and investigate crimes. When an arrest was made, it was usually as a last resort. Making an arrest in the late 1800s presented some serious logistical difficulties; officers would literally have to "run 'em in" to the police station or, when arresting a drunk, use a wheelbarrow and wheel him into the station.[24] So-called **curbside justice** with a wooden baton often became an alternate means of dealing with drunken citizens and other law breakers.

A Question of Ethics

Changes in Ethical Standards

What historical aspects of policing could be criticized today as being ethically wrong? Why do you think ethical standards of conduct change? Do you think there is anything about policing today that is viewed as ethical (or unethical) that may be viewed differently in the future? Explain.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DURING THE POLITICAL ERA The need to improve methods of criminal apprehension was not lost on the police of the political era. Police officers known as detectives began to appear in the late 1800s, largely in response to public concern about the increasing amount of crime. As an illustration of this increase, for most of the early to mid-1800s, there were no homicides recorded in Suffolk County (Boston), Massachusetts. Between 1860 and 1869, however, 70 homicides occurred. During the 1870s, 107 homicides

curbside justice: The use of force by police rather than arrest to deal with law breakers.

TECHNOLOGY ON THE JOB
The Police Baton

Invented in the 1800s and first used in English police departments, the police baton was one of the few tools available to officers to assist them in controlling and arresting criminals. In its original form, the baton, also known as a billy club, sap, blackjack, or truncheon, was approximately twelve inches long, made of wood, and heavy. It was meant to be used as a striking instrument. There were few if any limits on how the club was to be used; most effective was when a subject was hit in the head and knocked unconscious. It was a relatively inexpensive weapon and easy to use. Over time, the baton was made longer and incorporated other features. As batons become longer, they became more difficult and cumbersome for police officers to carry. In the 1960s, the use of batons became synonymous with police brutality, and officers were frequently shown using batons on rioters.

Side handle batons, commonly known as PR-24s, were introduced in the 1970s and are still used in some police departments today. With the addition of a side handle, the baton became a more versatile tool that could also be used like a shield to protect from an attack. Collapsible batons, also called expandable or telescopic batons, were introduced to American police departments in the 1980s. In most police departments today, this type of baton is standard issue and is carried on the officer's duty belt. For most models, when collapsed the baton is less than ten inches long and can expand up to thirty-one inches. It is extended with a forceful quick swing. These batons are made of metal and are lightweight.

While batons are still standard issue in U.S. police departments, they are very seldom used by officers in force incidents as their use often results in serious injuries to subjects.[25]

Photo 2.3
The wooden baton, sometimes knows as the billy club, was one of the first tools used by the police. Over time, the police baton became more technologically advanced. Today, most officers carry an expandable baton but seldom use it against subjects.
Shawn Patrick Ouellette/Portland Press Herald via Getty Images

were reported.[26] The most important quality for detectives to possess was a familiarity with criminals and their tactics; many detectives were selected from the ranks of prison guards, and some were even reformed criminals.[27] Since they held this specialized knowledge, detectives received more pay than beat cops. Detectives also received extra compensation through witness fees or compensation for providing testimony in court. Detective work was often a clandestine activity, and detectives were sometimes considered to be members of a secret service.[28]

It was also around this time that criminal identification systems began to be developed and used in police departments. The first of these systems involved photography. By 1858, the New York City Police Department had on file a collection of photographs of known criminals called a **rogues gallery**.[29] However, photographs were extremely limited in their usefulness because the appearance of criminals could be altered either deliberately or simply by the aging process. Of course, for photographs to be useful, authorities first needed to know who committed a crime and then have a photograph of that person.

The **Bertillonage** system was considered a major improvement over the use of photographs. The system consisted of eleven measurements (e.g., length and width of the head, length of the left foot, length of the left middle and little fingers) that could be used to differentiate one person from another.[30] However, by the early 1900s, the deficiencies of the system were obvious. Besides being cumbersome and error prone, it had essentially no capabilities in identifying unknown offenders who committed crimes.

rogues gallery: A collection of photographs of known criminals.

Bertillonage: A system wherein physical measurements were used to differentiate suspects.

In addition to these identification methods, detectives during this period also used various "investigative" tactics to deal with crime and criminals. One common strategy was the **dragnet**, which involved the police "rounding up the usual suspects." The dragnet was often paired with the **third degree**—the brutal interrogation of suspects.[31] The third degree included beatings with a rubber hose,[32] placing a suspect in a sweat box for hours or days under constant questioning,[33] drilling teeth, burning flesh with lit cigars or cigarettes, and beating with blackjacks or batons.[34] Many accounts suggest that the use of the third degree to obtain confessions was commonplace into the 1930s and possibly even later.[35] However, in 1936 the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Mississippi* that prolonged beatings used to extract confessions were no longer a legally acceptable police practice.

EARLY 1900s TO 1960s: THE REFORM ERA OF POLICING

Another swell of change began to sweep through American society in the early twentieth century. By 1920, automobiles were being widely used, as were radios, telephones, and other technologies. Along with advancing living standards for many, the new technology also placed increased demands on the police. Due to the use of automobiles in particular, criminals could commit crimes in one jurisdiction and easily flee to another, causing great difficulties for the police. In addition, automobiles created a need for traffic enforcement, a responsibility assigned to the police. Another element of technology that significantly affected the work demands of the police was the telephone, which turned police departments into twenty-four-hour agencies that were just a call away.

The police were also confronted with new demands unrelated to technology. Concerns about crime became a major issue. With the 1920s came a rise in serious crime—in perception if not in fact. Kidnapping, gangsters, and bombings attributed to communists were front-page news. Prohibition and the Great Depression also placed significant new demands on the police. In the face of these developments, the police were once again in the midst of a crisis.

REFORM AS ANTI-POLITICS

The new demands and technology of the early 1900s led to the **reform era** of policing.[36] Forward-thinking police leaders, such as August Vollmer and O. W. Wilson, advocated a new philosophy and methods of policing (see Exhibit 2.1). The new philosophy focused on the idea of the police as experts, police professionalism, and getting the police out from under the control of politicians. Technology was an important element of the reform era. Automobiles allowed the police to institute preventive patrol as a means of deterring criminals and to respond quickly to crime scenes in order to make more arrests. The two-way radio allowed police supervisors to be in constant communication with officers and to have supervision over them. It also allowed patrol officers to be directed to places where they were needed. With the telephone, citizens could easily summon the police when needed.

THE CREATION OF FEDERAL AND STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

In the face of corrupt and ineffective municipal police agencies, state enforcement agencies were created to assist local police departments with the new demands they faced. In 1905, Pennsylvania created the first state police agency. It was designed to provide a police presence throughout the state, to assist the local police, and to provide police services in less populated rural areas.[37] In 1935, the Texas Legislature created the Texas Department of Public Safety, which consisted of the Texas Rangers and the Texas Highway Patrol. The Bureau of

dragnet: A historical reference to the process wherein when a crime occurred, the police would bring in for questioning all the suspects usually associated with that type of crime.

third degree: A historical reference to the physically brutal interrogation of suspects by police.

reform era: An era in policing that centered on removing the police from the control of politicians and making departments more professional and efficient.

EXHIBIT 2.1

August Vollmer and O. W. Wilson

August Vollmer and O. W. Wilson were two prominent police leaders who ushered in the reform era of policing.

August Vollmer was appointed police chief of the Berkeley, California, police department in 1907 (for two years prior he was the town marshal). He transformed the Berkeley department into a premiere, professional agency that was the role model for others worldwide. He hired police officers with college educations and recruited female and African American officers. He developed the country's first university criminology program at the University of California, Berkeley. Vollmer instituted automobile, motorcycle, and bicycle patrols in his department; was responsible for putting two-way radios in patrol cars; and developed the first crime laboratory in a police department. He saw policing as a profession rather than just a job, and he was extremely concerned with how police chiefs could be easily removed from office on the whims of politicians.

In 1923 Vollmer was appointed police chief of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). He had limited success in reforming the LAPD given the widespread corruption that existed in the city at the time. In 1924, he returned to Berkeley. In 1931, he was the primary author of the *Wickersham Report*; the Wickersham Commission, which generated the report, studied Prohibition enforcement and related police practices and corruption. Vollmer retired in 1932 and died in 1955. He is known as the "father of American law enforcement."

O. W. Wilson had been a student of Vollmer's at Berkeley and was a police officer in Berkeley when Vollmer was chief. Wilson later became chief of the departments in Fullerton, California, and Wichita, Kansas, and during these tenures, he took many of Vollmer's ideas and extended them. He was just twenty-five years old when he was appointed chief in Fullerton in 1925. He then served as a professor of police administration and as dean of the School of Criminology at the University of California, Davis, from 1950 to 1960. He wrote the book *Police Administration,* which was widely viewed at the time as the "bible" of police administration. Wilson recognized and advocated the value of motorized patrol and rapid police response in effective policing. In 1960, he was appointed chief of the Chicago Police Department and was given wide latitude to reform and improve it. He retired from the department in 1967 and died in 1972.[38]

Photo 2.4

August Vollmer was one of the first leaders of the reform era of policing and the "police professionalism" movement. He is now referred to as the "father of American law enforcement." @Bettmann/Getty Images

Photo 2.5

A former student of Vollmer's, O. W. Wilson became chief of the Chicago Police Department in the 1960s. Wilson advocated Vollmer's beliefs and sought to institute reforms, such as motorized patrol and rapid response to calls for service. @Bettmann/Getty Images

Investigation, later known as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), was created in 1909 and quickly became a powerful law enforcement agency. The FBI led the war against communists, gangsters, and kidnappers. The FBI developed a crime laboratory, collected crime information, greatly developed the use of fingerprinting as a method of identification, and created the FBI National Police Academy to provide advanced training to police leaders across the country.

DETECTIVES AS THE ULTIMATE PROFESSIONALS

During the reform era, detectives became an important tool in the efforts of police departments to enhance their professionalism and deal with crime. Detectives were the ultimate professionals. They were well paid and trained. The entertainment media at the time portrayed detectives as efficient and effective crime solvers. As a continuing attempt to provide organizational control over officers and detectives, detective work became much more removed from interactions with criminals. Due to scientific advances made during the period, more emphasis was placed on getting information using science (and from victims and witnesses) as opposed to from criminals. In 1910, fingerprints were used for the first time as evidence in a criminal trial.[39]

A Question to Consider 2.3

The Underrepresentation of People of Color in Policing

Throughout history and even to a large extent today, people of color have been underrepresented as police officers, especially in larger cities. Why? Although this issue is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, it is worthwhile to consider the question now.

THE REFORM ERA AND (LACK OF) DIVERSITY IN POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Many police departments increased the representation of minority officers during the reform era, although the proportion of minority officers was still small and seldom approached the representation of minority citizens in the city (see Figure 2.1). However, minority officers far outnumbered female officers at the time. As in earlier decades, female officers were still most often referred to as police matrons, and their duties related primarily to women and children offenders.

THEN THE 1960S HAPPENED

Throughout the 1950s, things were going smoothly for the police. By most accounts, crime was under control. The FBI reported that over 90% of homicides were solved by the police. Then things changed. Between 1960 and 1970, the crime rate doubled. It was the time of the civil rights movement and the related demonstrations, marches, and riots. The police found themselves on the front lines of the riots and demonstrations; often it was white officers facing off against African American citizens. It did not look good on television, in the newspapers, or in person. The predominantly white police forces became viewed by many as an "occupying army" in the low-income, minority ghettos of urban cities, and suddenly the police were viewed as racists and as "pigs." American society was in turmoil. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Later in the decade, senator and presidential candidate Robert Kennedy and civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. were

FIGURE 2.1

Representation of Minority Police Officers and Population in Select Cities, 1960s

These are estimates regarding the representation of minority officers in select police departments and the representation of minorities in those same cities late in the reform era. Minority officers were vastly underrepresented in police departments compared to their percentage of the general population.[40]
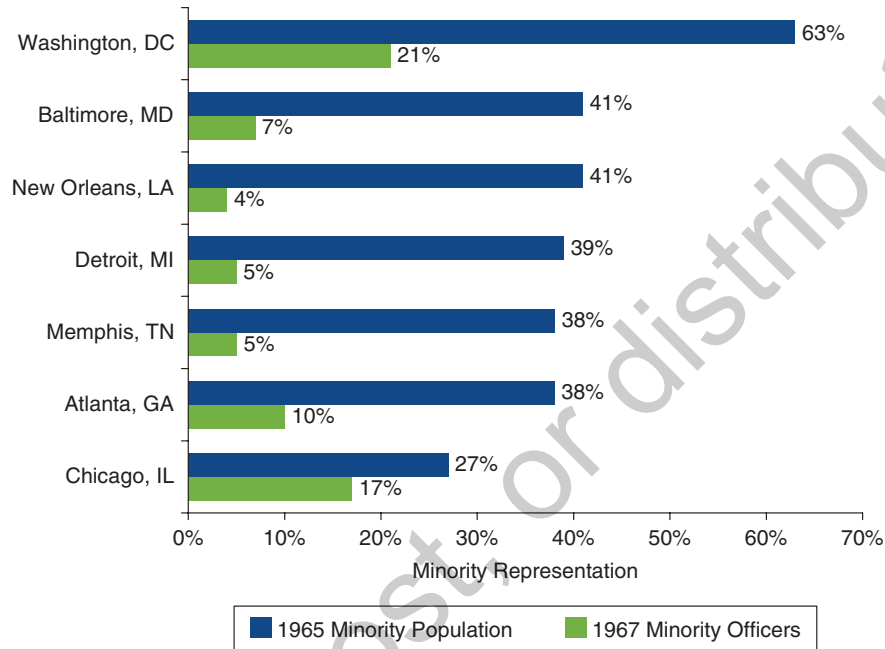
Source: Data from Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. 1968. *Report of the Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.* Washington, DC: National Criminal Justice Reference Service.

murdered. Helter Skelter and Charles Manson were making headlines, and fear of crime increased dramatically. America was in the grip of the Vietnam War and the attendant protests against it. Drug use, the hippie movement, and women's liberation were prominent counterculture movements. The Beatles sang "Revolution."

The police were experiencing a crisis, yet they were supposed to have the knowledge and capabilities to control crime successfully. If the situation was not bad enough for the police, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered several landmark decisions during this decade, such as *Mapp v. Ohio* and *Miranda v. Arizona*, that were seen as "handcuffing" the police. In 1967, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice issued a report that represented the first systematic analysis of crime and how the criminal justice system could be made more effective. Especially significant was its call for the incorporation of technology, data collection and analysis, and federal resources in crime fighting.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, several major research studies were conducted to examine the effectiveness of police operations. It was found that motorized patrols did not prevent crime,[41] detectives contributed little to solving crimes,[42] and fast police responses to crime scenes seldom led to the police making on-scene apprehensions. Given the conditions of society, many people were not surprised by these conclusions. By the end of the 1960s, it was clear that the current style of policing was not working well. The police were once again in the midst of a crisis as they struggled to deal with the demands of the new society.

What's "Good" Changes Over Time

Throughout this book, in the "Good Policing" feature, certain police practices and strategies are highlighted as examples of good police work. It is important to understand, however, that what was thought of as good policing years ago may not be good today and what is recognized as "good" today may not be thought of in the same way in the future. Notions of "good policing" are always changing and can be influenced by many factors. In particular, human values and morality can influence what is thought to be good policing. As an example, slave patrols used to be considered good policing, as was the practice of torture (the "third degree") to obtain confessions. As beliefs about human rights and values changed, so too did ideas about the best ways to conduct

police work. Research findings can also influence notions of good policing. For instance, reliance on preventive patrol and fast police response time used to be considered the ultimate in good policing strategy. Subsequent research has strongly questioned this belief. Good policing is also dependent on technology. Use of police body-worn cameras is considered a good practice today, but because they were not yet invented, their use years ago was not even possible. Good policing may also be situational dependent; what is good policing in one community may not be considered as such in another. Good policing depends on the views and needs of citizens. As you read the "Good Policing" features in this book, remember that what is "good" is time and situation specific.

THE 1970s TO THE PRESENT: THE COMMUNITY PROBLEM-SOLVING ERA OF POLICING

In the face of these concerns, the police realized that the old ideas of professionalism no longer worked. The police needed to get closer to the community to enlist the support and assistance of its members in fighting crime. With this realization, the **community problem-solving era** of policing was born.[43] As we will discuss in Chapter 13, early (and ineffective) attempts at getting closer to the community took the form of police-community relations bureaus and team policing.[44]

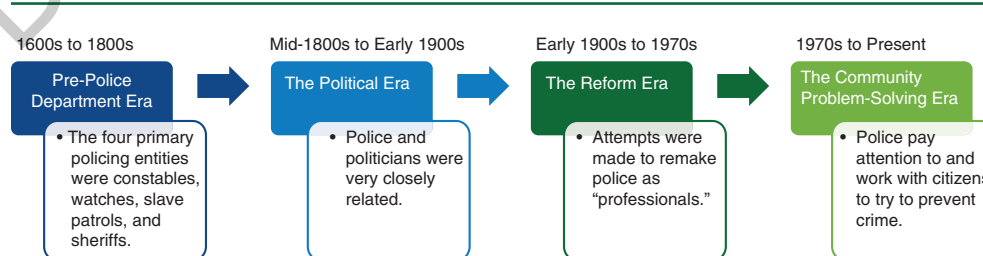### COMMUNITY AND PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING

Community policing and problem-oriented policing have a prominent place in the community problem-solving era of policing. Community policing represents many different things to many different people, but the core idea is that the police institute policies and practices that involve citizens in policing. The intent of community policing is to foster **coproduction**. With coproduction, the idea is that police and the community coproduce crime prevention. As such, community policing is about creating cooperative relationships with citizens; having

community problem-solving era: An era of policing that emphasizes the assistance and support of the community in fighting crime.

coproduction: A concept in which the police and the community work together to prevent crime.

FIGURE 2.2

Four Eras of American Policing

1600s to 1800s	Mid-1800s to Early 1900s	Early 1900s to 1970s	1970s to Present
Pre-Police Department Era	**The Political Era**	**The Reform Era**	**The Community Problem-Solving Era**
• The four primary policing entities were constables, watches, slave patrols, and sheriffs.	• Police and politicians were very closely related.	• Attempts were made to remake police as "professionals."	• Police pay attention to and work with citizens to try to prevent crime.

Source: National Institute of Justice.

Photo 2.6

The community problem-solving style of policing focuses on building relationships with citizens and citizens and police working together to prevent crime. @Michael B. Thomas/AFP/Getty Images

Photo 2.7

Police work today requires officers to use many different technologies and tools. @AP Photo/Ross D. Franklin

officers be in direct, day-to-day contact with citizens as much as possible; and having officers be in a position to listen to citizens and address their concerns. In areas where community policing is practiced, community meetings, community surveys, neighborhood watches, and means of patrol other than automobile (e.g., foot, horse, bicycle, and in some places even rollerblades and skateboards) have become popular.

Closely related to community policing is problem-oriented policing. With problem-oriented policing, the police become more concerned with identifying and addressing community crime problems and do so with the input and assistance of citizens. Herman Goldstein introduced the concept of problem-oriented policing when he argued that the police had succumbed to the **means over ends syndrome**, meaning that the police were more concerned with how things were done than with the goals they were supposed to achieve. He argued that the police should become more problem oriented and less incident driven.[45]

The community problem-solving era has been a time in which an extraordinary amount of research on police, crime, and criminal justice issues has been conducted. Prior to the 1970s, the number of major studies on the police could be counted on one hand. With funding from the federal government in the early 1970s to provide scholarships to individuals interested in studying police science and criminal justice, such programs began to appear in colleges, universities, and technical schools across the country. Scholars also began to receive federal funding to study police issues. Knowledge of policing has increased dramatically as a result, although gaps in knowledge still remain.

? A RESEARCH QUESTION

What Is the Current State of Research on Policing?

In spite of the mass of research on policing that has accumulated since the 1970s, fifty years later there is still much that we do not know. And since new issues continuously emerge in policing, the list of issues on which to conduct research is ever-expanding. In 2004, a committee of the National Academy of Sciences examined the current state of research in policing. The group concluded that

There are many important subjects about which there is virtually no scientific research. By any metric—whether lives lost to crime, the costs and benefits of government expenditures on law enforcement, or

the moral obligation imbedded in the use of coercive authority—police research deserves more serious attention than it has received.[46]

Much research has been conducted since the work of this committee. While we know a lot about some police strategies, it is still fair to say that we know too little about many critical police issues.[47] As discussed in this book, police practices and policies are too often based on untested assumptions and conventional wisdom. At a minimum, it is important to recognize when police practices are based on research and when they are not.

The Community Problem-Solving Era of Today and Beyond

Although most scholars believe that policing today is still within the community and problem-solving era, much has changed in policing since the 1970s. For instance, many police departments have made strides in the hiring of minority and female officers. In 1970, only approximately 2% of police officers were women; by 2017, that percentage was nearly 13%.[48] In 1970, less than 10% of police officers were racial or ethnic minorities; now that percentage is close to 25%. Police departments have also greatly incorporated technology into their daily operations. This includes computers in patrol cars, DNA banks, automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS), license plate readers (LPRs), gunshot detection systems, weaponry less likely to be lethal (e.g., Tasers), body armor vests, squad car global positioning systems, cameras in squad cars, and body-worn cameras. With regard to technology in general, policing is quite different than it was just a few decades ago (Exhibit 2.2). Some of this technology is intended to better monitor the actions of officers and increase officer accountability, not unlike how call boxes and the two-way radio were used in the past.

Community policing and the community problem-solving era in general may seem like a "kind and gentle" police orientation. However, even in the era of community policing, crime control is still controversial. The police have not shed their primary responsibilities, nor is the use of force any less significant to the role of the police than it used to be. Even with a velvet glove, there is an iron fist.[49]

Some scholars have suggested the law enforcement changes that occurred and continue to occur as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, represent the beginning of the end of the community problem-solving era of policing. If this is true, it is possible that the new style of policing will represent a trend already firmly in place before 2001: the increased militarization of the police and the blurring of the lines between the police and the military. Chapter 15 explores this possibility in greater detail. The remainder of this book (Chapter 15 as a noted exception) provides a detailed discussion of the current state of policing.

> **means over ends syndrome:** When police are more concerned with how things are done than with the goals they are supposed to achieve.

Main Points

- The study of police history is important for several reasons. It can be useful to understand how much or how little things have changed over time and to be aware of what solutions to problems have been tried unsuccessfully in the past. Additionally, knowledge of history can help in predicting the future of policing.

- Prior to the development of formal police departments, policing was done by constables, the watch, slave patrols, and sheriffs.

- A watch was a group of men who oversaw the security of cities and towns during the night and day and could summon others to assist when there was a disturbance. Slave patrols captured runaway slaves and monitored the conduct of slaves.
- The first police departments in America were created around the mid-1800s, at least in part because of the effects of the Industrial Revolution and the creation and rapid rise of cities. This period has been referred to as the political era of policing, as politicians controlled virtually every aspect of the practice.
- The first police departments realized the importance of criminal apprehension and used the strategies of the dragnet, the third degree, Bertillonage, and photography.
- The police baton was the first tool of the police in the mid-1800s. It was made of wood and frequently used to injure someone or to otherwise induce compliance. Batons are infrequently used today but are still standard-issue equipment. They come in many different styles.
- The reform era, which ran from the early 1900s through the 1960s, emphasized police professionalism and capabilities. This way of thinking was spearheaded by progressive police leaders such as O. W. Wilson and August Vollmer. This era began as the result of an increase in high-profile crime and additional demands on the police. These additional demands were primarily due to increased usage of the automobile.
- The 1960s represented a crisis for the police and led to a new way of thinking. The community problem-solving era of policing began at the end of this decade, and most scholars agree that it is still the current era of policing. Other scholars suggest that the 2001 terrorist attacks signaled the beginning of a new style of policing.
- The community problem-solving era of policing represents the belief that citizens have something to contribute when it comes to crime prevention. Ideally, citizens and police should coproduce crime prevention.
- Much research on policing has been conducted during the community problem-solving era, but there is still much to be learned.
- Much has changed in policing since the beginning of the community problem-solving era; most notably, the diversity of police officers and the technology used in police departments. The remainder of the book provides a discussion of the current state of policing.

Important Terms

Review key terms with eFlashcards at **edge.sagepub.com/brandl2e.**

Questions for Discussion and Review

Take a practice quiz at **edge.sagepub.com/brandl2e.**

1. What is the value of studying the history of the police?
2. Before there were police departments, policing duties were performed by constables, watches, slave patrols, and sheriffs. What was the role of each?
3. What was the political era of policing? What did policing look like in this era? What were the problems with policing during this era?
4. What were the primary crime detection and criminal identification strategies used during the political era?
5. What was the reform era of policing? What did policing look like during this era? What were the problems with policing during this era?
6. How did the police car, two-way radio, and the telephone change policing?

7. What is the community problem-solving era of policing? How is it different from the reform era?
8. Upon what factors does the definition and identification of "good policing" depend?
9. What is the means over ends syndrome and what does it have to do with the community problem-solving era of policing?
10. How are the political era and the community problem-solving era similar? How are they different?

Fact or Fiction Answers

1. Fiction
2. Fact
3. Fiction
4. Fiction
5. Fact
6. Fact
7. Fact
8. Fiction
9. Fiction
10. Fiction

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