

HISTORY OF THE
RAYTOWN POLICE
DEPARTMENT

1950-1981

AS WRITTEN BY
MARION P. BEEGER,
RETIRED CHIEF
OF POLICE, IN THE
YEAR 2008.

DEDICATION TO

Chief of Police Harry Lewis who was appointed Raytown's first Chief of Police/Marshal, July 17, 1950. The Chief served with honor, dignity and compassion until his death July 17, 1958.

To the Raytown Historical Society whose members worked with dedication and determination to make their dream come true. Without those involved, none of the city's history would have ever been recorded and preserved.

To my wife Leanna who put the scrapbook together, typed, edited and attempted to correct my errors. Who stood by me through the years, both good and bad times. She was my strength and confidant and never let me feel sorry for myself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following people for their support and guidance. Though I have already mentioned her name in this history, my wife Lea, for her patience and inspiration. She typed, edited, corrected my spelling and many mistakes. Sometimes there was loud discussion and gnashing of teeth but as always she kept me on the straight and level path. The scrapbook she put together is a great source of information and without her typing and computer skills this project would not have been accomplished.

To:

Raytown Chief of Police Jim Lynch for photographs and information which was greatly appreciated. Former Raytown Chief of Police Kris Turnbow, now Chief of Police at Raymore, Missouri who brought things to my attention that I had forgotten. Captain Floyd Collins (retired) who helped remember names and incidents. Lieutenant Carl Bradley (retired) who never faltered when requested with photographs or information. Corporal

Vic Springhower (retired) who did a lot of the leg work. Captain Bill Carmack (retired) Uniform Police Reserve for the photographs and names of so many former reserves who served.

Since I am physically impaired it would have been difficult to obtain much of the information needed. I am grateful for those who were there to assist.

PREFACE

Let me preface my remarks by expressing my appreciation to the members of the Raytown Historical Society, requesting that I write a brief history of the Raytown Police Department during the years (1950-1981).

Lea and I would like to express our thanks to Jodi Ruisinger for her help, friendship and guidance.

In my opinion, the early years were the best. Everyone in the city worked hard and unselfishly to insure the growth and progress of Raytown. Trying to encapsulate a complete history of the police department in those early years would be impossible. To recapture all of the incidents, the highs, lows, dates, times and places would take about the same number of years as those being written about.

One of the first men I had the pleasure and privilege to meet and work with over the years was James Luther Robinson, Sr. What a gentleman and scholar he was.

The Robinson family dated back several years before the city was incorporated. J. Luther and I had many discussions about the early days. He told me a story as only J. Luther could, about the "Old Raytown Bank" just north of 63rd Street on Raytown Road, being held up. Seems the lone robber held up the bank, escaped on a hand car, north on the railroad tracks toward Kansas City. Several citizens were in hot pursuit, firing their shotguns. They missed the culprit, he escaped and the crime was never solved. J. Luther and I agreed that crime came early to Raytown. He later served as a state Representative and was responsible for passing legislation that was of great assistance to law enforcement throughout the state of Missouri.

My wonderful wife, Lea, (God bless her) has saved many clippings and photographs over the years. As we reflected back, there was a sadness to observe that so many of the officers who devoted their efforts to help lay the foundation for the department, are now deceased. Now past my 80th year, I find that of those I had the pleasure to work with, I am the only one left of the original group.

In writing this history, and in the scrapbook, it is my intent to mention as many names as I recall. No doubt I will leave someone out. If so, let me just say, it was not my intention. Just remember that when you are past 80 everyone is supposed to overlook your shortcomings.

I would also refer you to the scrapbook my wife put together. There are many pictures and clippings depicting events that occurred down through the years. It includes the names of many officers who served our city and police department with dignity and honor.

After the death of Chief Lewis in 1958, my family and I moved from Ruskin Heights to Raytown where we lived until my retirement in 1981.

During this writing names, dates and years may be redundant and repetitious. This is only a product of the writer's views and memory of the structure and operation of the Raytown Police Department.

THE EARLY DAYS

Raytown's first Chief of Police/Marshal, was a gentleman named Harry Lewis. He was appointed by the Circuit Court when Raytown became a city July, 1950. Missouri Statutes provide for an elected Marshal whose term expires every two years. (Now every four years). The statute also provides that the Marshal shall be the Chief of Police. (The word shall, by definition of law means mandatory).

Chief Lewis was 60 years of age and knew everyone in the city on a first name basis and was related to many. Well thought of, devoted to duty and he was a strong advocate for police training. He was one of seven chiefs across the state to form the Missouri Police Chiefs Association . It is now one of the largest law enforcement groups in the state.

His trademark was to have one or two sacks of candy for the kids who flocked around his police car after school. They liked to laugh and joke with him and

found that he was easy to talk to. So far as I know, cigars were the only bad habit he had. He purchased several boxes a month. I never ever saw him light one. (Just chewed on them). The ash trays in his patrol car were always full of chewed cigars but then it would not have been Chief Lewis without them. He loved horses and would disappear every Tuesday to a horse auction out on Noland Road. He and Mayor Cox rode their horses and led all of the Raytown parades.

The Chief and his wife Jenny, lived across the street from the Raytown High School. He was a close friend of Chief Louis Howell of the Independence Police Department. They, in turn, were both friends with a gentleman in Independence by the name of Harry Truman, who later became President of the United States. After he left office, President Truman would meet and greet dignitaries from all over the world including present and former presidents

In his office at the Truman Library. His office at the Truman Library is a replica of the oval office in the White House. On several occasions the Chief and I were invited and honored to meet with President Truman. He always talked with Chief Lewis about the days when they were young men and put up hay together. Being a Mason, he signed my Masonic card and autographed the two books that he had written.

I came to Raytown by way of the Jackson County Sheriff's Patrol. Raytown was in my district. Chief Lewis and I became friends. At the time, the Raytown City limits were North to the old Railroad overpass on 59th Street, South to just south of the old wooden railroad bridge on Raytown Road, West to the old Missouri Public Service office and East to the old Post office on 63rd Street. Wildwood Lake was a large park just East of the city limits. They had a large dance pavillion and served excellent food. The park was rented to a number of organizations during the years. When several unions shared the

park together, the beer trucks flowed in and on a hot summer day, the fights started. The Sheriff's Patrol was called and we loaded many a patrol wagon full and let them cool off at the county jail. Though the park was not in Raytown, the traffic to and from the park used 63rd Street or Blue Ridge Blvd. Chief Lewis had no officers to assist him, so if he needed help the Sheriff's Patrol responded as his backup. Any one arrested in Raytown was transported to the Independence jail or the Jackson County jail in downtown, Kansas City, Missouri.

In those early days, I was called upon to investigate a business bombing, later to be determined, underworld connected. The owner of the business was a man by the name of Leroy Cox. The name of the company was J. L. Cox and Son Pipeline. It was a large company recognized throughout the United States. The bombing was a warning to Mr. Cox that he not give testimony at a Senate sub-committee hearing in St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Cox was not a man to be intimidated. He grew up in the oil fields of Kansas

and Oklahoma. His reply to those who threatened him was "Go to hell". He testified. The case was then turned over to the F.B.I.

Mr. Cox was appointed Mayor of the City of Raytown by the Circuit Court when the City was incorporated July, 1950. He was a charitable man who promoted and sponsored many ball teams, bowling teams and a professional basketball team known world wide and won many championships. He served as Raytown's Mayor for seven years.

My association with Mr. Cox became close during the investigation and he advised that soon there was going to be an opening for an Assistant Chief of Police. He could foresee that Raytown would grow and prosper and with the annexation plans that he had in mind, there would be a need for a large police department and he wanted the best.

My wife and I discussed Raytown and its prospects for the future. One day, I stopped to talk to Mr.

Cox and he asked me to come to the council meeting that night. I was present with two other police officers from different departments. Each of us made our pitch as to what we could contribute to the city. I found out later that the next day, Mr. Cox contacted Sheriff Arvid Owsley and my boss Col. B. Marvin Casteel and they both apparently gave me a high recommendation. I was placed on special assignment with a sheriff's vehicle to assist Raytown in their endeavor to build a police department.

Chief Lewis and I had a meeting in the Mayor's office and we were told that we were to organize a police department, recruit officers, establish rules and regulations, policies and procedures. Of course, this was to be done in accordance with what the city budget would allow. The Mayor told us, "I will back you all of the way". (He stood by his word). It was a special time for me, I was young, ambitious, had a beautiful wife who supported me and two lovely children. It was another great moment in my lifetime.

Chief Lewis and I being given the same mandate by the Mayor, looked at each other and tried to figure out where to begin. We were standing in front of the Jennings building which was just North of 63rd Street on Raytown Road across the street from the old Robinson Motor Car Company (later Ray Smith Ford) that served as the second City Hall. Chief Lewis asked what I thought about the Mayor's ideas. We had no forms, no filing cabinets, no telephones, no office, no desks, and no budget. My reply to the Chief was "We've got one hell of a mountain to climb" and we had a good laugh. We did have two police units - One a 1950 Chevrolet, radio #935 and my Sheriff's Patrol Unit, radio #913. In those days we were all on the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department's radio system. We both had our side arms and two shotguns. The law had come to Raytown.

Since we were all on the same radio frequency, we were cognizant that if a call went out for assistance we could depend on help from all surrounding law enforcement agencies. In the early days all law

enforcement agencies cooperated one hundred per cent with each other. We never had a need to call those agencies but it was nice to know that they were there if needed.

At a later date, the City Hall had a telephone which was manned by Mrs. Iela Kenagy. She was the wife of C. Lee Kenagy, the City Collector appointed by the Court in 1950. Both Mr. and Mrs. Kenagy served the city for many years and were truly wonderful people.

Phone calls were made to Chief Lewis at his residence during the night by Kansas City Police Dispatchers. We did get an old metal hallicrafter point to point receiver to monitor State Highway Patrol calls. It worked well but the only problem was on a wet or stormy day, the thing would shock hell out of anyone who came near it.

We converted forms used by the Sheriff's Patrol to our use and set up a card index file pertaining to

criminal, traffic and routine calls. Crude as it was, it served our purpose.

One of the major problems was livestock running loose in the streets. Chief Lewis knew where the owners of the livestock lived and could call them by name. Many were related to him. He always carried a halter, saddle and lots of rope in the trunk of his patrol unit. He knew where the fences were down because of the frequency of the calls. This bit of irony was difficult for me as a young officer to learn. Chief Lewis worked the day shift and I worked evenings or until all of the businesses were closed.

There was a young man by the name of Ralph Robinson who was a night watchman for the merchants of Raytown. After the Chief and I went home, Ralph watched the business buildings. He later came on the department and retired as a Patrol Lieutenant many years later.

Francis Fox had a drug store on the corner of Gregory and 50 Highway. He would be in his store from midnight until 2:00 A.M. stocking and taking inventory. We would go by and shine our spotlight and he would wave and we knew all was well. He later moved the drug store to 63rd and Raytown Road. It was for years a gathering place for city officials, businessmen and others to have coffee.

Across the street, Muir's Drug Store was another spot for men and women to meet for coffee to discuss world affairs or anything else that came to mind. Lea and I were setting in Fox Drug Store the morning President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Francis Fox and his wife and the Muirs were all wonderful people.

We started a training class of volunteer reserve officers. The class consisted of eight men. Three of the eight men were commissioned. Howard Bence, John Miller and Lester Cridlebaugh. These men provided a great service to the city as they received no

salary. We continued to grow, prosper and learn from our mistakes.

From 1953 on we continued to employ and train more and more reserve officers. Over the years many reserve officers became regular police officers and a large percentage retired from the Raytown Police Department. Some went to other departments or government agencies and retired. At a later date we were able to furnish uniforms for the reserve unit and the name was changed to the Raytown Uniform Police Reserve. During that same period they were led by a Captain, a Lieutenant and three Sergeants. The total authorized strength of the Reserve was 50.

In 1954 we employed Ralph Robinson as a police officer of the regular department. Ralph was an instructor in first aid and later an EMT. He assisted in training all officers in first aid which was a strict part of our training program. We also called on instructors from the Missouri Highway Patrol, Kansas City, Missouri Police Department,

Independence Police Department and the Jackson County Sheriff's Patrol. In later years we called on the F.B.I. to assist us in our training programs.

Perhaps this would be a good time to explain our employment procedures. We did not accept someone walking in off of the street and stating that they wanted to be a police officer, regular or reserve. To be eligible to become an officer of the department, one had to fill out an application which was followed by a rigid background check then take a written exam and appear before an oral board made up of veteran officers from other police agencies who would evaluate the applicant as to his qualifications. In later years a medical and psychological examination was given and the officer was placed on probation for one year and could be terminated without cause for violation of the department's rules and regulations.

1955 dawned with a new brightness, a new City Hall was on the horizon. The building belonged to Southwestern Bell Telephone Company and was

located on 62nd Street between Blue Ridge Blvd. And Raytown Road. The building was purchased by the city. The police department had a room in the front of the building and an office in the rear for Chief Lewis and me. One day the Chief and I were sitting in our office when he said "why don't you take care of the training and I'll take care of the politics". One has to realize that part of enforcing city ordinances means that you have to curtail speeding, running stop signs and careless and imprudent driving. This is something that had never happened before in Raytown because there was little or no law enforcement and some people complained bitterly because they were stopped and some ticketed. Chief Lewis said that he would take care of those people too.

I continued our training program and during that time Patrolman R. J. Moore and Patrolman A.M. Spencer were employed. With the Chief and I, we now had five regular police officers. Pat Coffee, a former Sheriff's investigator was employed part time to assist us with crimes which were starting to occur.

Three aldermen were appointed by Mayor Cox to oversee the operations of the police department. They were H. H. Hinrichs, Frank Lambrecht, and E. C. Fegert.

Training was ongoing and we brought the uniform reserve up to ten officers and the regular force to eight patrolmen. The additional officers were: Patrolman Lyle DeHues, Patrolman Kyle Hunt, and Patrolman Floyd Taylor. The foundation was now taking form.

Chief Lewis introduced the graduating classes to Mayor Cox and the Board of Aldermen. Mayor Cox gave them their oath of office and they were commissioned.

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen started discussions about annexation and those areas discussed were patrolled by the police department in order to familiarize them with street locations and other data necessary concerning response time to calls.

The employment of personnel and the purchase of equipment was done over a period of several years. There obviously were budget constraints because the demand for city services other than the police department were in constant demand. The construction of new businesses and homes, including the Raytown Plaza, added to our responsibility of safety and protection against crimes that were ever increasing.

During our training and planning Chief George Smith of the Raytown Fire Department was as strong an advocate of training as I was. He assisted us in our training on arson and lifesaving at fire scenes. The fire department also had a water rescue squad and a boat which was used on more than one occasion, not only in Raytown but in Jackson County at various lakes. Chief Smith and his wife became close friends to Lea and me. George retired in September, 1974. He celebrated his 94th birthday on February 26th, 2007. He died August 18th, 2007.

We held training classes at the fire department to instruct his firemen on what to look for at the scene of a fire in event a crime had been committed and to show them how to preserve evidence. This proved to be a success in conviction of an individual in one of our major fires in Raytown.

At our new city hall I had a discussion with Mayor Cox regarding a communication plan to install a radio system along with the fire department. It would allow us to dispatch police and fire units around the clock and to end our dependency on the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department. Mayor Cox thought the program had merit but since the city and the Fire Protection District were separate tax entities, it would be better if we had our own radio system and in the long run present less trouble. I was authorized to contact Communications Engineering Systems in Kansas City to get a survey conducted for Raytown and a cost estimate. The estimate was approved by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen and for the first time, July 15th, 1955, we could dispatch and receive

calls to our own units within a 50 mile radius. (Boy were we proud). I would like to recognize a man by the name of Ivan Ebbe of Missouri Public Service who set up a 70 foot communication pole and the necessary hardware to allow us to make our communication program a complete success. He did a great deal for the City of Raytown. He was a great man to work with.

As a side note, about this same period of time, a young juvenile was taken into custody by the Independence Police Department. He was brought to Raytown and I questioned him about a burglary at our Catholic Church. He admitted not only to the Church burglary but to fourteen other burglaries that he had committed in Raytown and Independence. He committed numerous thefts in Branson, Missouri and at the School of the Ozarks. He was homeless and living wherever he could. I said to him "Patrick what am I going to do with you"? With a straight face he replied "I don't know Chief, that's your

problem". He was turned over to Jackson County Juvenile Authorities.

We continued to grow. Officers were sent to the University of Missouri for short courses in law enforcement. I was requested to instruct a course at the Missouri Highway Patrol Academy at Rolla, Missouri. The course was Police Communications which was well received as departments across the state were growing the same as Raytown.

During this time frame the Raytown Hardware store on 63rd Street was burglarized by six men. Two were arrested by the Missouri State Highway Patrol in Joplin, Missouri in a stolen vehicle. Another vehicle was found by the Missouri State Highway Patrol just off Noland Road. Both vehicles were believed to have been used in the Raytown theft. Three of the men involved were arrested by the Missouri State Highway Patrol for burglaries in another county. I, along with Patrolmen A.M. Spencer, R. J. Moore and Ralph Robinson, served

a search warrant at 5:30 A.M. at a house in Raytown. We arrested an individual who was involved with those in the Hardware burglary. During our interrogation we found he was also wanted in Andrew County for numerous crimes. He was turned over to Sheriff Carl Field and Prosecuting Attorney Alden Lance with a hold on him for Jackson County. Their charges were more serious. He received, along with the other five men involved, sentences ranging from 15 to 20 years in Jefferson City, Missouri. Crime was coming to Raytown.

The cooperation between Raytown and Independence was very good and on one occasion Chief Lewis assigned all off duty officers to duty at the Independence Police Department. We manned their patrol units and I dispatched their units for about 3 hours while their officers attended funeral services for one of their Sergeants who passed away of a heart attack at the age of 55. Good officer, terrible loss.

There were many things that happened during those early years. Far too many to write about. We did find one of our first bombs in a railroad car which they were unloading on a siding under the old railroad bridge on Raytown Road. Sergeant Bill Myers of the Kansas City Police Department, a demolition expert, discovered the bomb was a cylinder with three six inch fuses. It had a small amount of powder and could cause a flash but was rendered harmless. We thought it was done by some youngsters experimenting. A dangerous thing to do. Over the years other bombs were found and defused. The most serious, a pipe bomb found in a stolen vehicle parked in Raytown Plaza. Thankfully, no one was injured.

In February, 1956 an explosion and fire occurred at a grocery store on 63rd Street next door to Fred Yeo's Jewelry. The explosion blew out the front windows onto 63rd Street. The Fire Department arrived immediately and put out the fire. Two youngsters had been riding their bicycles on the sidewalk in front of the store just before it exploded.

Luckily, they were at the far end of the street when the explosion occurred. We determined the cause was arson and started to gather evidence. Chief George Smith and I requested assistance and the Board of Insurance Underwriters sent Special Agent Bill Fish. Insurance Carriers assigned Special Agent Bill Hopper. Both of these men were former F.B.I. agents. We worked the case for two years and after two separate trials, the owner was convicted and sent to prison. Chief Smith and I agreed that working with those two Special Agents was a learning experience in arson investigation.

1957 was a banner year. We moved from 62nd Street to the school building on 63rd Street. The police department was given the basement and a large room on the main floor of the building. Our custodian, Emil Vollmer, a retired cabinet maker, did most of the remodeling for the police department. Emil was very strict about his work. (Those were the days when quality and workmanship were the pride of the builder).

Our Record Bureau was really expanding as well as the Municipal Court Records. My wife, Lea, was employed by the court to set up a records system for both the police department and the court. She did an excellent job and set up the system in a professional manner. She was formerly employed by the Highway Patrol giving written tests for drivers license and records clerk. She was employed by the city for five years and for a short period of time at Raytown Federal Savings and Loan. She was then employed by Yellow Freight Corporation as an Executive Secretary until she retired.

Jim Hayes worked with Lea at the Highway Patrol. She observed that he was a records technician, retired from the Air Force. I brought Jim on board to work in our records section. One of the best moves I ever made. Between Lea and Jim Hayes, we had the best records section for a department of our size in the state.

Though 1957 was a banner year for Raytown, it was a tragedy for those in Southern Jackson County. My wife and I and two children lived in Ruskin Heights, a subdivision located at 110th and Blue Ridge Ext. I had just ended my tour of duty and parked the Sheriff's patrol vehicle for the evening. Police dispatchers had been tracking a serious storm from Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. We were pretty sure the storm would be close but never did we imagine that a tornado of that great magnitude would spawn a one half mile tail and stay on the ground for as long as it did. It missed our home by one block. My wife and children were spared thanks to God's blessing. I immediately went to the A & P Grocery store located at the south end of the shopping center. It was demolished. I called for all police, fire and ambulances in the area.

A Kansas City police officer who lived in Ruskin Heights also responded. We set up a temporary command post in the parking lot and began looking for survivors. There were few. The first three bodies I

took out of the debris of the grocery store was a man, his wife and child. I had grown up and went to school with the man and his wife in Savannah, Missouri. Crowd control was non-existent. Looters were many. I worked 36 hours straight through as many of us did until we had all of the injured and dead recovered. The National Guard and Red Cross arrived and we were finally able to restore some order. There was no power in the area but we had gas at our house. My wife, bless her heart, started cooking. Our deep freeze was full of deer meat and antelope steaks plus lots of hamburger. The neighbors brought in food. There was a constant stream of police units coming and going from the Beeler residence to get a good hot meal. The Raytown American Legion took donations of clothing to be given to those in need. They distributed the clothing from our garage to the needy. They deserve a lot of credit.

The year 1958 started the same as all others. Training was continued, routine calls answered, preparing for the 4th of July events. Things in

general were going well until they were all overshadowed on July 17th, with the death of Chief Lewis. It was kind of ironic that he was out on 50 Highway the night before visiting with district officers. He told them that he was going up to Katz Drug store to purchase a box of cigars. He then went home to bed and was found the next morning by his wife Jenny.

My wife, our children and I were in St. Joseph and Cosby, Missouri visiting our parents. Sergeant Ralph Robinson contacted me and we immediately returned to Raytown. When we arrived we visited with the Chief's wife and brother Roy Lewis. They requested that I make the arrangements for the services insofar as law enforcement was concerned. A brief memorial was held for the family and friends at the Fegert Funeral Home. I was honored to speak to those gathered and later a funeral service was held at the Baptist Church. A large number of officers attended from the metropolitan area. Chief Lewis

was laid to rest with his many relatives and friends in Brooking Cemetery.

The Chief left many memories with all of us. I know the few years we had with him made us all better officers.

I might add here the Independence Police Department sent officers to man our patrol units during the Chief's funeral services.

The next day I met with Mayor Roy Cox and City Attorney Holmes Greene who advised that the Board of Aldermen would meet that night and I would be appointed Chief of Police to fill out Chief Lewis' unexpired term of office.

Realizing that the total responsibility was now mine and that the officers were waiting with questions of "where do we go from here", I called a meeting and outlined my plans. We all went back to work and it relieved some of the tension but never the memory.

Reflecting back, sometime in August, 1956, I was called to the Mayor's office and introduced to Special Agent Finis (Pappy) Sims of the F.B.I. Agent Sims had been talking to the Mayor and handed me an application to attend the F.B.I. Academy in Washington, D.C. Agent Sims advised that after a physical, the background check would take 2 to 3 years to complete. In those days admittance to the academy was rigid. Background checks were conducted on my parents, my wife's parents, brothers and acquaintances or anyone else who knew my wife or me. It did take 3 years. I was accepted. July 1st, 1959 Mayor Cox received a letter from F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover confirming my appointment. I was told to report August 17, 1959. I graduated November 4, 1959, 64th session.

To me, graduating from the F.B.I. Academy was very special, especially for a guy who came from a small town in Northwest Missouri. Only 5,000 police officers from the free world had been accepted at that

time. There was 92 officers in my class. I sent out invitations to my graduation but doubted anyone other than my wife, Betty and Bill Carmack would attend, but to my surprise Mayor Minor Smith and his wife made the trip. That made it all the more special to Lea and me. What wonderful people Minor and Helen Smith were.

Since that time I submitted applications for officers of my department to the F.B.I. Academy. They were accepted as listed: Major Joseph R. McCormick, Captain J.E. Harris, Captain Nils Magelssen, Captain Larry Overfield, (later Chief of Police of Raytown), and Detective Sergeant Timothy Fidler. Officers who attended at a later date are: Major Don Keith, Captain John Fox, Captain Robert Mulhearn and Captain Kristofer Turnbow (later Chief of Police of Raytown).

In thinking back to the year 1957, as noted in the scrapbook, on July 2nd, 1957, a meeting was held at the Raytown Police Department with officers from

Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas, Jackson County Sheriff's Patrol, Missouri State Highway Patrol, North Kansas City Police Department, Independence Police Department, Kansas City Missouri Police Department and Special Agents from the railroad law enforcement agencies. We were later joined by members of the F.B.I. and special agents from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau. We were also joined by Special Agents of the Bureau of Investigation of the State of Kansas.

The purpose of this meeting was to form an organization for the purpose of exploring the possibility of a common vehicle to combat the increasing crime in our respective communities. We were all in agreement that there was need for an exchange of information between all of the agencies. At a later date, a dinner meeting was held in Independence and over 250 officers were in attendance from 16 departments. That was the night the Heart of America Law Enforcement

Organization was born. I was honored to be elected as the first President that night. Other officers were: Chief Howell of Independence, Detective Sergeant Norman O'Hare of Kansas City Police Department, Lieutenant H. A. Wallace of Missouri State Highway Patrol, Major Doral Dennison of Kansas City Missouri Police Department (Crime Prevention Bureau), Captain Tom Lawrukiewicz of Johnson County Kansas Sheriff's Department.

We later formed and sponsored the Heart of America Boys Ranch at Nevada, Missouri. It was a place to send youths who were borderline juvenile offenders. They were exposed to hard work, learning to feed animals, putting up hay, going to class and church. They had the opportunity to express themselves rather than learn their trade from the streets of the metropolitan area.

As a result of this group, the Metro Chief's and Sheriff's Association was also formed as was the Metropolitan Major Case Squad or (Metro Squad

covering six counties). The Metro Squad was the brainchild of Chief C.M. Kelley, Kansas City Missouri Police Department. He was later appointed Director of the F.B.I. in Washington, D.C.

They were all wonderful organizations and proved to be extremely beneficial to all law enforcement in the metropolitan area and it all started with a meeting held at the Raytown Police Department. Chief Lewis and I had discussed the need for such a program for several weeks and we found the response to be accepted without question and the results very gratifying.

I placed a strong emphasis on continued police training. The reason is very simple. When I started with the old Sheriff's office in the 1950's, there was little or no training but more political appointments. When Colonel B. Marvin Casteel, former Superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol

became our commanding officer, he immediately terminated over 30 deputies and retained 8 patrolmen. I was one of the 8. He immediately started a training program for all new recruits. Those of us who were retained had prior training in the field of law enforcement or military police.

In setting up the structure and operation of the Raytown Police Department, it was difficult at best to follow the guidelines comparing local government in the City of Raytown to the masterful analysis of those who set forth a broad spectrum of government with heavy emphasis on larger cities such as New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, etc. Only little reference was made to small and local county governments. The formal training that I received and the number of books read concerning public and police administration and a smattering of public affairs indicated that in Missouri there were more third and fourth class of governments under statute than all other types. I point out these differences to illustrate that each type of government allows different laws to

be implemented. They cause a change in the structure, operation and methodology of each existing class of city. For example, under Missouri statutes comparing a third class city to a fourth class city (Raytown is fourth class) mandates that third class cities shall provide for an assistant chief of police which is not required under a fourth class city. The statute also provides that third class cities shall appoint key positions in their city including the chief of police which would change the structure of the operation completely.

In an article for the news media which I wrote titled *Elective v. Appointive*, I pointed out that propositions to appoint the Marshal/Chief of Police, Collector and Municipal Judge were placed on the ballot three separate times. They were voted down by the electorate. Also in three separate elections charter proposals submitted by charter commissions to change the structure of the city were soundly defeated by the citizens of Raytown who did not want to give up their right to vote for the various candidates of their choice.

WEARING THREE HATS

During Minor Smith's term as Mayor, I was appointed by ordinance as Director of Civil Defense and later I was appointed by Mayor Willard Ross as Director of Liquor Control for the City of Raytown.

After the tornado in Ruskin Heights in 1957, the City of Raytown started looking into the possibility of obtaining federal funds to install warning sirens throughout the city. Mayor Minor Smith received a letter from the state director of civil defense, stating that Raytown did not have their own director appointed. The state would not assist them. I was appointed and sent to Jefferson City for a number of training sessions after which I was duly appointed and certified by the state director, Frank H. Skelly.

The office of civil defense has changed its name a number of times. It started as civil defense, disaster

planning and operations, emergency preparedness and today, F.E.M.A. (Federal Emergency Management Assistance).

As mandated, I applied for and received funds for a survey to be conducted to meet state and federal requirements for the placement of warning sirens to be placed throughout the city. There were many forms and justification letters written to meet the standards and guidelines.

Because of the work load, the operations and training of the police department, I turned the civil defense reins over to Ivan Dumm. Ivan followed through as director and sirens were placed on the roofs of schools in Raytown. He requested and received the approval of the Board of Education and Joe Herndon, Superintendent of Schools. The approval was based on the provision that the City of Raytown insured the proper installation of the sirens.

Shortly after the installation was completed, Ivan Dumm passed away and I was again assigned as director, a job I held until I left office in 1981.

There was surplus property available to all civil defense directors. Large warehouses in Jefferson were crammed with property declared no longer useful to the armed services or other government agencies. I was able to purchase trucks, heavy equipment and many other items for the police department and the department of public works. I purchased 3 large generators, one of which we shared with the fire department for their emergency lighting and radio system. We used the other one for the same purpose at the police department. The third generator was held for spare parts.

Later when the decision was made to construct the new city hall at its present location, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen requested that I apply for federal funds to construct the E.O.C. (Emergency Operating Center) that would house the police department. I

applied for the grant and the city received approximately one half million dollars. The premise of the E.O.C. was at that time to provide a place underground for city government to operate in event of a national disaster. There were underground water tanks and an underground gasoline tank for a large generator to supply emergency lighting and power to operate the communications center. There was also medical supplies, food packs, etc. stored for emergency purposes.

The Federal Government in Washington, in their wisdom, decided that if a nuclear bomb hit the railroad yards in Kansas City, Missouri, according to the size of the bomb and wind drift, those surviving could go to their emergency operating centers. They would be safe until help arrived. (of course there was no time table as to when help would arrive). Most of us realized that if such a tragedy occurred there would not be much to worry about - survival rate would be close to none.

At one of the meetings in Kansas City, a large contingent from Washington , D.C., met with all civil defense directors in the region. They presented us with four orange and black very large volumes of printed material. It was supposed to answer all of the questions we could possibly ask. I noted in one of those huge volumes that in event of an attack on Kansas City, all residents should be directed east to Columbia and all residents in St. Louis directed west to Columbia. Of course, I asked the silly question "what happens when they all get to Columbia". We are talking here of several million people converging on Columbia. I doubt those from Washington, D.C., had ever heard of Columbia and they were not used to some upstart asking those kinds of questions. One of them finally, after a long dissertation, said words to the effect "you are on your own". The second question I asked "what can we do with the mental hospitals, jails and hospitals in general?" By now the contingent was red faced, blustery and mad as hell. The short answer given was "turn them all loose or it is better to sacrifice a few for the benefit of many".

I had several more questions but at that point thought better of it. All of the other directors were laughing at their answers and we all agreed, whatever think tank drew up all of those volumes of information did not have the slightest idea about saving human lives.

As director of liquor control, my responsibility was to investigate all applicants who were applying for liquor licenses in the city. A card index system was put in place wherein a record was kept regarding the results of a complete investigation on any person employed, serving or dispensing alcoholic beverages. It allows the director to keep out those who have a criminal record or prostitution .

As director I could hold hearings on violations of our city liquor code. Much the same as the state director. On a number of occasions I called in state liquor agents to assist in checking those who violated both city and state laws. The state director was a gentleman by the name of Bob Stewart. Bob and I

went to high school together in Savannah, Missouri, so we had a very close working friendship.

As the city grew there was an increase in requests for liquor licenses and when I left office, there were 50 licensed businesses dispensing or selling liquor in Raytown.

Thusly, I wore three hats. Marshal/Chief of Police, Director of Civil Defense, and Director of Liquor Control.

KANSAS CITY RIOTS

At 9:00 A.M., April 9th, 1968, a call was received by me from Colonel Jim Newman of the Kansas City Police Department. I was advised that a full scale riot was breaking in Kansas City. Intelligence reports named Raytown as a target city as well as the Blue Ridge Mall.

A conference with the fire chief, George Smith and Mayor Robert Merrill was called immediately.

Mayor Merrill issued a direct order provided by Missouri Statutes governing fourth class cities to take whatever action necessary to protect the lives and property of the citizens of Raytown. He also issued the first of six administrative orders setting forth a curfew from 8:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. A new order was issued each day depending on the situation.

All Raytown officers were called to duty and placed on a 12 hour watch. Many uniform reserve officers had Raytown police radios in their personal cars with lights and sirens. By 12:00 noon on April 9th, we had 20 (4) man vehicles on the streets. Since we were limited to only shotguns in the regular patrol units, the reserve officers used their own weapons.

Two officers were placed at locations selling guns or ammunition. Regular patrol units made sure the Mayor's curfew was carried out.

We were called on to transport physicians to different hospitals. In more than one instance doctors were told to get down on the floor of the police vehicle transporting them. When our officers arrived within blocks of the hospitals they were fired upon, red lights shot out as well as windows. One officer received minor injuries from broken glass.

The officers both regular and reserves responded promptly and carried out their duties with bravery and dispatch.

Not one business or residence was damaged, no vehicles burned or turned over. We stopped many vehicles from coming into Raytown and assisted the Kansas City Police Department officers just outside our city limits.

We also assisted the Sheriff's Patrol at the Blue Ridge Mall.

I sincerely believe we could have had extensive damage to our community were it not for the training our men had received. Everything went according to plan.

RAILROAD INCIDENT

The morning of October 20th, 1970, Raytown officers were called to the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad tracks at a location just behind Wildwood Lake. The switching device had been tampered with resulting in trains 72 and 73 colliding. A brakeman was killed in the accident. Special Agents from the F.B.I., Railroad police and Raytown detectives conducted the investigation. A reward of \$5,000.00 was offered by the railroad for information leading to the arrest and conviction for those involved. Approximately one week later four juveniles were taken into custody by Raytown juvenile detectives and turned over to federal juvenile authorities for prosecution.

BANKS

In those early days Raytown had two banks. The Raytown Bank and the Laurel Bank. The president of the Raytown Bank was a wonderful man by the name of Earl O'Flaherty. Mr. O'Flaherty was extremely kind and cooperative. The second president of the Raytown Bank was equally as fine a gentleman by the name of Jim Brown. Both men supported the police department and we in turn held many classes with their employees preparing them on what to do in event of a bank holdup. They later opened a drive-in facility at another location and when possible, one of our district cars would be there when they opened and closed for business. I thought this a good preventive measure.

The President of the Laurel Bank was Pete Meuli. Mr. Meuli was also a member of the Police Commission at one time. He was also a strong supporter of the police department and we afforded the Laurel Bank police protection at their drive-ins. When he

retired, we lost a very good friend. Mr. Meuli's senior vice president was a gentleman by the name of Charles Ruisinger. Charles was very active in the Chamber of Commerce, the Optimist Club and many other organizational activities in Raytown. He always availed himself to any one who had problems and was extremely intelligent in matters of finance. Charles was named president of the bank and later chairman of the board and chairman of all three banks in the Laurel Bانشares system. Charles and his wife Jodi became very good friends to Lea and me and though we were on opposite sides of the political ticket, I think he might have voted for me secretly once or twice.

MAGISTRATE JUDGE

In the mid 70's I called a meeting in Raytown with all of the Chiefs in Eastern Jackson County and Grandview. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of obtaining a setting Magistrate Judge to hold court in each of our respective

cities. The idea was well received. It would allow us to arraign our criminal cases and other state violations without going to Kansas City to the Jackson County Court House and wasting manhours because of their crowded dockets.

A group of us met with the County Court to discuss our request. The court was somewhat receptive and took the request under advisement. We then contacted Harvey Jones, County Engineer, who was also President of the Eastern Jackson County Democrat Club. We met with Mayors from our respective cities and requested that they send letters to the County Court to assist us in our endeavor. Later I received a telephone call from the Eastern Judge, Joe Bolger, asking who I thought would be a good judge to represent our area. I immediately gave him the name Lou Davis whom I had met in Ruskin Heights. He was a lawyer from Rhode Island and very well qualified. I called Lou Davis and told him that I had submitted his name. He received a call from the Court and was appointed Magistrate Judge of

Eastern Jackson County. His setting one day a week saved us untold manhours and was a great benefit to the city's budget. It also proved very helpful to the Missouri State Highway Patrol who brought their cases into Judge Davis' court. Judge Davis was later appointed Associate Circuit Judge of Jackson County.

JUVENILE OFFICERS

I would certainly be remiss if I didn't give credit to two men who started our Juvenile Bureau. It was my duty early on to handle juvenile affairs along with many other duties. When R. J. Moore was employed and received his training, there was little question in my mind that he would make a good juvenile officer. He had been a resident of Raytown for many years and knew a lot of the kids and their parents. He was easy to talk to but strict to his word. He established a trust with the youth that he met. When Sergeant Moore retired there was no question he left a legacy to be followed.

March 10th, 1971, a young man by the name of Jim Coonce applied for employment with the police department and was accepted. He passed all of the written exams and graduated from the police academy with very high grades. Jim served his probationary period in a patrol unit and received creditable praise from his superior officers. He was a civil war buff and did black powder firing in competition at the Pioneer Gun Club where he was a member. Through his association with the Pioneer Gun Club, Jim enabled the police department to receive membership and a place to train our officers on all types of firearms. The first Raytown Swat Team was trained there by members of the F.B.I. Swat Team. That membership was of great assistance to all of our personnel and the police budget. Jim was religious, intelligent and a motivator. I talked to him about transferring to the juvenile unit. I made him understand that he was in complete charge to build the unit to meet our oncoming needs.

Jim never looked back. My desk was full of requests and all were good ideas. The biggest problem was trying to sell them to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. Jim established a close relationship with all of the schools in Raytown where he visited weekly. He was a lifetime Raytown resident and therefore knew all of the school officials and teachers. He worked very close with Joe Herndon, Superintendent of the Raytown School District, who was very cooperative with Jim and with my office.

By the time we finally moved to the present police department on 59th Street, Jim had been promoted to Sergeant. I assigned two juvenile detectives to assist him. Juvenile detective Nancy Gile and juvenile detective Bill Wright. Sergeant Coonce was responsible for setting up many programs (see scrapbook) that were adopted by county, city and state juvenile bureaus across the state of Missouri. I was indeed fortunate to have an officer of his desire and talent. As an individual and police officer, he was the best. I recommended him to be promoted to the rank

of Lieutenant but the promotion was rejected by Mayor Bob Grissom. Jim retired in 1996 and passed away March 20, 2007.

Remembering a few Highlights

As stated in the Preface, some of the statements made are probably redundant and repetitious. However, in my opinion they merit repeating. The scrapbook was kept up to date by the lady I met and married 60 years ago. It was one of the smarter things I have done in my lifetime. The scrapbook tells a more complete story with pictures, names and dates, where possible.

1950: Yes, on Halloween, someone did place E. C. Fegert's favorite milk cow in the hall of the Raytown High School. A number of someones filled the intersection at 63rd and Raytown Road with anything they could find including all of the yard furniture in Raytown. And yes, someone dumped a load of hedgeballs on Raytown Road just north of 63rd. (Very

slick). Yes, in later years some of those someones served as Mayor and Aldermen in our city government and became leading businessmen.

1952-53: Jim Ellison's Blue Jay Café was located on Raytown Road Across from Robinson's Motor Company. Jim was a great guy and what great food he served.

1954: The two Cerise brothers, both police reserve officers were killed on 40 Highway near Odessa, Missouri on ice covered roads. They were returning from St. Louis after delivering trailers for their Father who owned Universal Trailer and Manufacturing Company located at 59th and Raytown Road where the present police department is located.

1955: The Raytown shopping center broke ground and when it was completed, during the grand opening Dub Hobbs fired off his home made cannon. Broke or cracked over half the windows in the area. Of

course old Dub said later "think I might have had too much black powder in the load this time".

The city celebrated its fifth anniversary. In 1950 the city's population was 500 and five years later, it was 12,000. According to the Kansas City Star, Raytown was the fastest growing city in the state.

1957: Ruskin Heights tornado. Mayor Minor Smith received a plaque from the Hickman Mills Chamber of Commerce for the services that the Raytown Police and Fire Departments contributed.

Norton Hickman's Garage and Tow Service was located at 63rd and Raytown Road. He provided tow service for the police department for many years. Fox Drug is now at that location.

The Raytown Clinic was located at 63rd and Raytown Road. Dr. Dillard Eubank and Dr. Jack Davis treated many bumps and bruises of police officers involved in motorcycle and vehicular acci-

department and a true friend to Lea and me. What a tragic loss at such a young age.

1974: The homicide of an elderly service station attendant on 50 Highway. Within 24 hours Raytown detectives made one arrest and the subject was convicted of murder.

1975: A husband murdered his wife after a domestic dispute and came to the police department to surrender himself.

1977: My name came up again to take charge as O.I.C.(Officer in Charge) of a Metro Squad call out to Platte County where a high school student was murdered. The investigation covered several months with one arrest and conviction.

Raytown Police Explorer Post #2970 was organized. There was 30 young boys and girls who were members. They were under the direction of Lieutenant Don Keith. The purpose of this organization

was to allow the youth of our city to see the inner workings of the police department. They were allowed to attend classes, ride in some police units and take an active part in parades and public affairs.

A murder of a young housewife on 83rd Street. Investigation revealed that the case was drug related. (See scrapbook)

1978: Two young teenagers placed dynamite charges against the east wall of the police department on 59th street. Charges were pending against them and it was their theory that if they blew up that side of the police department, it would destroy their individual records. Damage to the building was minimal because of the E.O.C. (Emergency Operating Center) structure. The walls of the building are very thick and reinforced. Windows in the office of the Mayor and City Clerk were blown out. Both subjects were arrested by Raytown detectives. They were charged with 8 to 10 burglaries and armed robbery in Raytown and Kansas City. They were turned over to federal

authorities for prosecution for manufacturing and detonating an explosive device. Little did they know that the Records Bureau of the police department is located on the west end of the police department.

A pipe bomb was discovered in a stolen car located in the parking lot of the Raytown Plaza. Two arrests were made in Kansas City by Raytown detectives. The two subjects were turned over to Special Agents of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for prosecution of manufacturing and attempting to detonate an explosive device. One of the agents who responded to the initial call at the Raytown Plaza was a former Raytown police officer who had joined the A.T.F. Bureau.

I was honored to receive the states Outstanding Police Officer Award presented by the Missouri Peace Officers Association.

Sergeant Jim Torello and I were accepted to receive bomb training at Denver, Colorado. The class was instructed by Military Intelligence Officers, C.I.A.

Agents and instructors from Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. After the training in Denver, I sent a number of officers to Redstone Arsenal in Alabama for training in how to defuse bombs and all other explosive devices. It proved to be well worth the time and effort.

1979: One evening the Secretary of State Jim Kirkpatrick was speaking to a large group at a dinner meeting at Smith Brothers Hall. When he started to leave, he told the Mayor and I that his car was gone. It was determined that one of our police officers had parked the car for the Secretary and he thought it was stolen. The officer who parked the car retrieved it and all was well. I never let the Secretary forget the incident and we all had a good laugh.

We assisted the Kansas City police department on a raid at the Yellow Rock Barn. Several hundred students from Raytown, Lee's Summit, Independence and Kansas City were in attendance. There was many kegs of beer and some drugs found. Most of

those arrested were turned over to Kansas City and Raytown juvenile authorities. The promoters of the dance were turned over to the Jackson County Prosecutor.

1979-80-81: These years were a tragic time because Aldermen who were elected to continue to support the city and its programs instead chose to denigrate and tear down much of the progress that former Mayors and Boards had worked so hard over the years to achieve. Through their convoluted methods they set out to form a dichotomy within the rank and file of the police department. There was without question, a disruption by using some of the officers to do their dirty work. They were joined by a "yellow sheet journalist" who spewed forth to the public half truths, untruths and lies. He was given the proverbial key to the city hall and was allowed to see all records and business transactions private, pending or confidential. The Mayor at that time because of his personal friendship, forgot his responsibility and the meaning of his oath of office and also forgot his business acumen

which later led to his defeat. The Aldermen involved through their perverted methods permeated throughout city hall. Having achieved their purpose most of them were defeated in their bid for re-election by the wrath of the electorate. Most of them then moved out of the city. It is sad that the truth will never be known.

As I look back on those years I am reminded of a quote by Cicero, "A nation can survive its fools and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and he carries his banners openly. But the traitor moves among those within the gate freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears not a traitor; he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist. A murderer is less to be feared."

Note of explanation:

As a note of explanation you will note throughout the scrapbook and history of the police department that names involving homicide investigations were not mentioned. Some cases are still open and still pending.

In some cases police holds for our department were placed on those charged in another jurisdiction. When that jurisdiction is ready to release an individual they will notify our police department in order that the subject be returned for trial in Jackson County.

Cases worked by the Metro Squad must cease if there exists multiple investigating agencies. For instance, if the squad is working a homicide or the case leads to a parallel case being investigated by the F.B.I., D.E.A., A.T.F., or other federal agency, the case is relinquished to their jurisdiction. One of the reasons is that federal laws are more rigid and federal agencies have far more reaching abilities than the smaller police departments.

MAYORS

I served with ten mayors during my tenure with the police department. Those that I served with were for the most part unique and had their own agenda. Perhaps a memory or two would be in order.

Mayor Roy Cox: Roy was a man who had the vision to incorporate the city, strive to promote its potential and demand a professional police department. He knew the city would grow and that there would have to be a department to enforce the ordinances and protect the citizens. Mr. Cox was a personal friend to Lea and me.

Mayor Minor Smith: Minor had all of the same qualities of Roy Cox but one of his main projects was to build an even bigger and better fire department than he had originally initiated. (He created the first fire department). One of the smartest moves he made was to employ George Smith as Raytown's first fire

chief. Minor was a wonderful man to work with and made many contributions to the city.

Mayor Jack Fox: Extremely intelligent, a very high IQ and a member of Mensa. Jack was a former Captain in the marines, and wanted his orders followed without question. On his first day in office, all department heads, elected and appointed, received a memorandum from him requesting their letter of resignation. Those of us who were elected, Judge Bill Miller, Collector Laura Estep and I, sent the Mayor our reply. He did not like it. At one of the first meetings of the Board of Aldermen, he told the members how stupid they were and words to the effect that they could not compete on his level. He served one term and was defeated.

Mayor Don Williams: A good man with good intentions but whose thoughts were more on a corporate level than municipal government. He worked hard to promote the new city hall as it is today. We did not work well together. He wanted to reduce the

programs and projects in the police department. Those projects were included in the police department's overall plan and were funded by the federal government. Any deviation from those plans and the city would have been responsible to reimburse the federal funding agency. After a lecture and explanation from the regional director in Denver, Colorado, the police department's plans stayed on track. The Board of Aldermen held a meeting proposing some type of monument be placed in front of city hall with the names of all city officials who contributed to the new building. The mayor thought it was a good idea but said he would veto any ordinance for such a proposal with Chief Beeler's name on it. So much thanks to me for getting almost half a million dollars in federal funding to construct, furnish and equip the new police department. At that time I was Director of Emergency Services and Federal Funding.

Mayor Murray Boogher: Murray was a smart man who served the city as mayor and budget officer. Very sharp mind but left the feeling that all depart-

ment heads were subservient to him. While we worked together our relationship was very cool and cordial.

Mayor Bob Grissom: Bob served the city with honor. He was an engineer who always wanted things on paper proven to his satisfaction. We worked well together for several years until he let certain individuals sway his judgment. In my opinion Bob lost his perspective. In my case he turned his back when he could have helped. I feel he let his personal feelings override his fairness for the truth.

Mayor Bob Merrill: Great guy to work with. Always available day or night. He spent a lot of time at city hall and had an open door policy for anyone who wanted to come in and air their views or complaints. His leadership as our mayor during the Kansas City riots was excellent. During his tenure he made it possible for us to obtain a new modern radio system for our communications center which was badly needed. Bob tried to get Kansas City officials

to let us annex the land east of Woodson Road to Lee's Summit Road and from 40 Highway South to 95th Street. He had an idea for an industrial park. Sadly it was voted down. Bob really had the city at heart.

Mayor Bob Frank: Though Bob and I were on opposite sides of the political fence, we were friends and neighbors. He and I were both bullheaded. I had no problem working with Bob. We argued long and loud over budgets and programs for the police department but we could always reach a compromise. He would not sign the police pension ordinance which was one of the few times I got really upset with him. He did go hunting for two weeks and his mayor pro-tem signed the pension ordinance placing it in effect. (I think he might have planned it that way but he would never admit it). He ran against me for Marshal one year and I beat him. At Smith Brothers hall on election night Lea and I were getting ready to leave when Bob and his wife walked in. He came to congratulate me. I think it showed

the kind of person he was. Later his daughter served as mayor of the city with honor and dignity. I know Bob would have been proud.

Mayor Joe Shelton: Joe was a fine man. He served only a short period of time until he moved from the city. Joe was a former fighter pilot. When the riots occurred in Kansas City he put on a helmet, took a shotgun and rode with patrol units patrolling our boundaries. It was ironic some of the other aldermen took their families and left the city. When they returned they were critical of actions taken by the police department. Joe gave them a lecture on the council floor of first hand information concerning the incident. Afterward there was dead silence and many heads looked down when he finished. Nothing more was ever said. Joe and I argued loudly on items concerning the police budget. Some thought we might come to blows. Little did they know that we had lunch together several times a month at the Landing in Kansas City.

Mayor Willard Ross: Willard was a kind and gentle man who worked day and night to promote and improve Raytown. He was well liked by every one. I never heard a bad word about him. I know for a fact that had it not been for Willard Ross, Raytown would never have had a paramedic ambulance service. He made many trips to Jefferson City to meet with state officials to achieve this project. He started the meals on wheels program and delivered meals himself daily. He and I were criticized for supporting each other at election time. (He a republican and me a democrat). I was proud to call him my friend.

*Names of Mayors and terms they served are not in order. Some served more than one two year term and some terms were not consecutive.

ALDERMEN

There is no possible way I could remember all of the aldermen that I worked with. Some served only one term, one or two left before their term was completed

and only one still holds office as an alderman, so I guess he must be doing something right to get re-elected each term. The majority of aldermen are all good people and in their own way contributed much to the progress of the community.

THE END OF AN ERA

The readers of this history must be objective and not subjective and place things in proper perspective in order to digest its contents. A multitude of facts and personal feelings are contained herein. Any frustration detected comes from the writer's personal involvement. First as a law enforcement officer over three decades and later as a victim of decadence in a system of alleged equal justice but in reality nothing more than political subterfuge. It bitterness is noted, so be it. When a man and his family are put to mental stress and caused total embarrassment. When a career of long duration is devastated. When a man is shunned by fellow officers and workers alike (many of whom he helped and promoted to their ultimate status)

condemned by the news media and the city he served, a human with only menial understanding would become embittered.

And so, everything now comes full circle. As Assistant Chief of Police and Chief of Police, I have tried to epitomize some of those things that I have witnessed during the span of 31 years. Have I left things out? Without question. My loving wife reminded me on more than one occasion while typing this history "you are writing a summary, not a book". She was right. There are so many things that happened during that period. Some good and some bad. The memories of working with and knowing so many people in Raytown was a blessing to Lea and me. Our children attended and graduated from an excellent school district under the leadership of Joe Herndon. Raytown was a wonderful place to live.

The critics will undoubtedly find fault with the things I have said and the references made. Well, they are true and documented. Maybe the words sound cynical

and cold. They are meant only for those who attempted to use the city for their own personal gain. Both democrat and republican parties in Raytown suffered a few renegade members. Certain members of both parties came into Raytown and ran for office and once elected created havoc and then moved from the city. The one thing they failed to realize was that Raytown was resilient. There are some still residing in Raytown but I note when they tried to regain power, the electorate was not fooled a second time.

Let me hasten to add that I was not the easiest person to get along with (just ask my wife). When those mayors and aldermen tried to destruct and create problems within the rank and file of the police department because of their own proclivities and petty jealousies, I did become very upset. The men and women of the department did an outstanding service for the city. I was diametrically opposed to those who wanted to cut salaries, pensions and health benefits. The fight was long and hard. However, the

results speak for themselves. Raytown has a strong professional police department under the capable leadership of Chief Jim Lynch who knows well the battles we fought to maintain the status quo.

There is no question that I am deeply thankful to those citizens who helped me over the years. Lea and I are proud to have been a part of the history of Raytown. Looking at the building that now houses the police department and remembering how it all first started brings a lump to the throat. There is little doubt law enforcement in Raytown has come a long way. I only hope the men and women who occupy the police department today realize how hard so many police officers both regular, uniform reserve and civilians worked to establish the solid foundation on which they work today. I wish them all good luck and may God bless them.

I have made hundreds of talks over the years and always ended with these closing remarks: "when you see emergency vehicles rolling down the street with red

light flashing and sirens screaming, two things are happening. Someone is in trouble but better yet, help is on the way”.

Lea and I again want to thank the Historical Society for requesting that we bring back a few memories. It ‘kinda’ makes us both feel that maybe, just maybe we are still a little part of Raytown.

Goodbye, good luck and may God bless you each and every one.

*In 1977, I was requested by the news media to write an article concerning elective and appointive positions. The question was to be on the November ballot. The question of making the positions appointive was defeated. That article is included at the end of this history.

Elective vs Appointive
Choice of the People
By Chief Marion P. Beeler

The News Media have requested that I discuss the proposition to be voted on November 4th, in the General Election, the question of appointive versus elective status of the Marshal/Chief of Police and City Collector. In my opinion those questions should be left to the voter and not clouded with issues. Mrs. Estep Wilch and I have served the City of Raytown for many years (16 and 26 years respectively). I am sure we both agree to let our credits and qualifications speak for themselves. The ordinance passed by the Board of Aldermen, allowing the proposition to be placed on the November 4th ballot is legal under existing Missouri Statutes governing fourth class cities. I do not question the authority for placing the proposition on the ballot by the author of the ordinance, but I must however question his intent.

Whatever choice is made by the electorate November 4th, I pledge my continued support to the citizens of Raytown. If the voters choose to make the Chief's position appointive, I will, if requested, assist in setting up those guide lines necessary for the transition: preselection assessment of the police department, selections and qualifications, establishment of salary and fringe benefits, evaluation criteria, minimum qualifications for future chiefs of police, certification of candidates for chief of police, internal and external selection alternatives and retention procedures for the position. This data should be established by ordinance.

The present ordinance proposed setting up a commission and meager guidelines is ambiguous and though it does express some of my ideas, it has been diluted to the point of becoming ineffective and offers little to attract a qualified chief of police.

Many varieties of the selecting process for a chief of police prevail throughout our nation. They usually

fall into three or four general categories; political appointment, competitive civil service examination, appointment by non-political boards of individuals without a civil service type examination, (Boards of Aldermen), and some form of seniority system.

Although there is no general agreement about the best selective method, almost 100% of police chiefs and their superiors agree that a formal selection process should be used.

The appointment or election of a police chief usually alerts more public concern than does the selection of nearly any other public official. Because this selection is particularly important to the public and because qualities necessary for effective police leadership are unique and complex, the public should extensively evaluate their choice of the selective process and not be misled by suggestions or inducements offered by both the proponents or opponents. The propositions to be voted on November 4th, is the right of each registered voter

and should be cast only as their individual preference.

The police chief is one of the most important individuals in the criminal justice system of any municipality in America. Charged with protecting persons and property of all members of the community, the chief of police leads the most visible of public services.

There should be an established orderly method of selecting a police chief who is qualified for the particular job, there should be a systematic way of retaining a qualified police chief after selection and there should be procedures set out grounded on american constitutional notions of fairness and due process for removing an unqualified chief from office.

Politicians and appointees who serve at their pleasure, of necessity position their surfboard at the crest of every new wave of popular appeal. When

one wave diminishes they paddle out and look for the next one. A chief of police must be insulated in some fashion from politics or the enforcement agency will be pulled up and down like a yo-yo, depending what law enforcement will do or not do for a politician. The people are entitled to an even, reasonable and necessary enforcement of legal statutes. The policy of serving at the pleasure should be divorced as far as possible from the exigencies of current political moves and sentiments.

Stability of government - change without disruption- is a hallmark of democracy. Most states and municipalities in the United States move from one political administration to another with little more than the fanfare of a swearing-in ceremony or a victory dinner for the winners. In most states and municipalities, too, the transition from one police chief to the next is conducted in an orderly and proper manner. There may be less fanfare, but the event is nonetheless of enormous importance to the community. The qualifications of the person

selected for the position of police chief will have lasting effect on the quality of life in the community.

One of the most disruptive events in the life of a community can be the removal or premature resignation of a police chief. The selection of a successor can be equally unsettling. Some governments, including those in our area, regularly hire and fire their police chiefs. This happens because the public does not recognize the importance of leadership by a police department. The stability and continuity essential to effective police services is never allowed to develop when the leadership changes frequently. The community and the police department both suffer.

Just as critical a problem is the situation where a community has no realistic method of learning how effective a job their police chief is doing. On many occasions a newspaper or the live media will print or show only the adverse and omit the good, thus the competent police-chiefs are not recognized. A chief

of police may be required to work without sufficient authority under the appointive system, with little or no protection from arbitrary or capricious removal and be subjected to an environment fraught with pitfalls. Under this system the chief cannot implement even the most basic procedures or programs. Such conditions are usually dismissed as hazards of the job. The public too, seldom realizes the adverse conditions are extremely serious or that they exist at all.

The most serious situation and one that is perhaps least recognized by the public exists when a few local governing officials regard the police department as a private preserve of their particular political faction or philosophy. Such circumstances often bring about the intentional selection of a police chief who might be controlled more easily though less qualified to operate the police department. With a pliable police chief, the department becomes, in effect, a private police force for those politicians in power. After each local election a change in governmental

administration often occurs, which may result in a new private police force for the victorious political or special interest group.

I have found most police chiefs to be dedicated people who honestly serve their profession. They work to make the criminal justice system an effective instrument of government in their area. Their success usually is rewarded by continued tenure and the confidence of the citizenry.

I have complete confidence in the citizens of this community who have allowed me the honor to serve them for these many years. I believe we have one of the finest police departments in the midwest, not necessarily because I am chief of police but because of the diligence and dedication of the officers and employees who make up the Raytown Police Department.

(This article was written July, 1977. To my recollection the proposition to appoint the Marshal,

Collector and Municipal Judge was placed on a ballot three separate times. It was voted down by the electorate each time. In three separate elections there were three charter proposals to change the structure of the city. They too were defeated by the citizens of Raytown).