

BCSD History Compiled and Edited by Deputy M. Henderson in 2010

The Bartholomew County Sheriff's Department was created by an act of the Indiana State Legislature in 1821. Indiana was part of the Northwest Territory and became a state in 1816. At that time the state capital was at Corydon, located on the Ohio River in the southern part of the state. Little settlement had begun north of the 10 O'clock Treaty Line. General's Joseph Bartholomew and John Tipton surveyed and purchased land at the confluence of what became the Driftwood and Flatrock Rivers that formed the East Fork of the White River approximately 75 miles north of Louisville, Kentucky. Several other pioneers joined in their venture and Bartholomew County was laid out and organized, being named in honor of General Bartholomew. Originally, Bartholomew County was larger than it is currently, owing to a western area of the county being taken in 1836 and combined with a portion of Monroe County which bordered Bartholomew County to form a new county named Brown. The County Seat was originally named Tiptona in honor of General Tipton but a small disagreement led to the town being renamed Columbus. Interestingly, during the first session of the Circuit Court held in the new county, the second case heard was one involving the new Sheriff, Joseph McKinney. The grand jury indicted Sheriff McKinney on a charge of assault and battery against Luke Bonesteel. The Sheriff plead guilty and was fined five dollars with the fine earmarked for the use of county seminaries. Later that same year Sheriff McKinney was also fined twenty dollars for an undisclosed contempt of court charge. The first pair of handcuffs were purchased in March of 1828 for \$2.50.

The Bartholomew County Sheriff's Office is an arm of the county government dedicated to public safety and service. Founded with the appointment of the first sheriff in 1821 by the Governor, the office has developed into a modern professional agency. A lot has happened since that first sheriff was appointed. In 1821 Indiana was on the western frontier of the nation. A few rude cabins and homes scattered along the confluence of the White, Driftwood, and Flat Rock rivers have given way to a dynamic and affluent community. Known internationally as a center for architecture and multi-national corporations, there is little left of those pioneering days. Strangely, the growth of the sheriff's office did not mirror that of the county. Through the 19th century and well into the middle of the 20th, the office of sheriff was little changed from its inception. The Sheriff went about his duties with little or no assistance. Deputy Sheriffs tended to be a very scarce resource and when available they were temporary and/or volunteer. It was not until the post World War II era that the office began to take on a form that is recognizable today. Slowly, deputies were added to the department. Very slowly indeed, because by 1970 the office still had less than a dozen employees.

While Bartholomew County was not a cow or boomtown of the type popularized in film, it was witness to the period of lawlessness that was common to the frontier in the 19th century. The world's first train robbery occurred in 1867 only an afternoon's ride from Columbus. The infamous Reno gang set the pattern for all of the outlaw gangs that would follow. Larger and more feared than any gang before or since, they held sway over a large portion of the state. Even the frontier custom of lynching and "legal hangings" was not unknown to the area. On June 11, 1831, Sheriff John McKinney escorted two condemned men to a location on the northern outskirts of Columbus (near the present day intersection of Jackson and 7th St) with an armed escort of militia. The condemned were led from the jail with drum and fife and executed on the gallows that had been constructed for the

occasion. The Sheriff at the time, John M. Gwin refused to perform his duties and resigned from office. John McKinney was then appointed Sheriff. At the appointed date and time, Sheriff McKinney marched the condemned men, accompanied by Fife and Drum and escorted by a contingent of State Militia sent by the Governor to assist, to the gallows which had been erected for the occasion several blocks north of the jail and carried out the execution.

Sixty years later another outlaw from Indiana and his gang reinvented the outlaw image and popularized the term "gangster". John Dillinger, from nearby Mooresville, Indiana went from juvenile offender to erstwhile criminal and eventually to be the very first Public Enemy #1. The threat posed by the Dillinger gang was very real indeed. Robbing banks and raiding military armories for guns were the stock in trade of the gang. Police agencies were poorly prepared to deal with this menace. Sheriff's in particular could count on no assistance if they confronted the Dillinger "super gang". The sheriff of Bartholomew County perhaps was luckier than most, he had his own Thompson sub-machinegun, with which to face the likes of Dillinger, Pretty Boy Floyd, Baby Face Nelson and Homer VanMeter. Like all well-known outlaws, they soon faded from the scene but only after considerable bloodshed. Of course, the day to day activities of the sheriff rarely called on him to chase train robbers or face gangsters; rather he usually had his hands full with the more mundane tasks. These less glamorous tasks included keeping the peace, investigating theft, burglary, and even the occasional robbery and murder. This is to say nothing of serving the courts criminal warrants, civil papers, and looking after a jail full of prisoners.

JAILS



1821



1832



1842



1870



1963

Log Jails were built in 1821 (at a cost of \$112.75) and 1832 (at a cost of \$1,188.). The second jail had a foundation of 18'x18' and made of white oak timbers placed one foot below ground level and then crossed with other timbers and the spaces then filled with 4" of gravel. The first story was 10' high with double walls. The second floor was likewise constructed and each floor had two small windows and a door grated with iron bars. They were followed by a more substantial structure that lasted from 1845 until 1870. This building was constructed at a cost of \$2,575. By 1870 it had been replaced with a brick structure (at a cost of \$45,000.) that matched the new County Courthouse. This building was demolished and replaced with a modern jail of contemporary appearance in 1963. Finally, because of overcrowding and no means of expansion, a new jail was constructed away from the traditional jail site. In 1991 the new jail was occupied. Its facilities represent the latest thinking in confinement and reform. The new jail also lives up to the reputation that Columbus enjoys as a center for architecture.



Above, on top, is a view of the Jail area of the Bartholomew County Sheriff's Department with the bottom view showing the Administrative section of the building. Erected in 1990, the Jail was designed by Don M. Hisaka. It included 5 cellblocks containing a total of 60 cells. It has a Medical Wing with an Examination Room, Suicide Prevention Room, Infirmary Room, and 2 bunks. A Holding area includes 5 cells and a Booking Area and can house 26 temporary inmates.

Beginning in 2007 an addition was added to the current facility with space to house Work Release inmates, Community Corrections and Staff, with the top floors dedicated to regular inmates. After the current population was moved into the new facility, work got under way on renovating the existing Jail area and updates made to the front office areas. Phase 1 was an addition to the original facility at 543 Second St. Phase 2 began the renovation with a new freestanding garage and Phase 3 saw the completion of all the renovations in 2011.

With the additions there are now 362 beds in the facility. Staffing the Jail are 39 full time Corrections Officers, 6 full time Maintenance employees, 3 full time Food Service employees, 1 full time Clerical, 1 Registered Nurse, and several part time Corrections Officers.

Modern Office

1971 was a watershed point on the development of all sheriffs' offices in Indiana. The Indiana legislature passed a law that reformed the old policy of political appointment with a merit system and the appointment of a board to help professionalize the office. The creation of a law enforcement academy and standards for all officers, also made for dramatic changes. Other changes had already occurred by this point. The advent of police radios for many agencies occurs in the late 1940s and the early 50s. Together with the automobile in the early part of the century, changed public safety as nothing has before or since. For many years, the sheriff drove his own car when engaged in his official duties. This continued until the late 1950s when the first county owned and marked patrol cars were put into service.

Currently, the Sheriff's Department has 38 sworn officers. 12 of these officers are either Administrative or working within the Detective Division. There is 1 full time D.A.R.E. officer and 1 assigned to the Warrant Division. The rest operate out of the Road Patrol Division. There are 2 Majors, 3 Captains, 2 Lieutenants, 7 Sergeants, and the rest Patrolmen. These officers are supported by 19 Reserve officers. Counting all employees with the Sheriff's Department, there are well over 120 men and women dedicated to providing the best in service to the residents of Bartholomew County.

Sheriff's and Terms of Office

From 1821 to 1951 the term of Sheriff was two years with no Sheriff being allowed to serve more than two terms in a six year period. Currently the Sheriff is limited to two consecutive terms but not disallowing them to serve more terms after sitting out at least one term. The longest serving Sheriff to date was Jimmie D. McKinney who served 2 consecutive terms, set out for 4 years, and then came back and was re-elected to a third term, serving as Sheriff for a total of 12 years. The training room at the Bartholomew County Jail was renamed the Jimmie D. McKinney Training Room in 2013. Following is a list of the past Sheriff's and the years during which they served our county:

Joseph McKinney	1821-1824
Gideon B. Hart	1825-1827
Daniel Zeigler	1828-1830
John M. Gwin	1831-1832
J. Hubbard	1832-1833
John F. Jones	1834-1835
John McKinney	1836-1837
James Herod	1841-1845
William Hobbs	1846-1848
N. O. Hinman	1849-1850
Wilkerson B. Horn	1851-1852
Samuel Stuckey	1853-1856
Richard Carter	1857-1860
Mahlon Hayes	1861-1864
Thomas J. Kennedy	1865-1868
Michael McGrayel	1869-1870
Francis Whittington	1871-1872
Daniel Lynch	1873-1874
William B. Davis	1875-1876
Tillman F. Everroad	1877-1878
William R. Spurgeon	1879-1880
Thomas C. Burgess	1881-1882
Miles S. Thompson	1883-1884
James S. Brown	1885-1888
William C. Smith	1889-1892
Isaac Lucas	1893-1894
Vincent Thompson	1895-1896

Thomas Cox	1897-1898
Henry Howe	1899-1900
Charles H. Wagner	1901-1904
William F. Dinkins	1905-1906
Irvin A. Cox	1907-1910
Edwin E. Miller	1911-1912
John W. Burns	1913-1914
Matthew T. Shaw	1915-1916
Milo Silver	1917-1918
Damas Essex	1919-1920
John W. Phillips	1921-1922
Arlie Arbuckle	1923-1926
Linza Allen	1927-1928
Alonzo E. Fitch	1929-1930
Dr. J. W. Foust	1931-1934
Elmer H. Nolting	1935-1936
Robert J. Urbahns	1937-1938
Elmer H. Nolting	1939-1942
Walter O'Neal	1943-1946
Richard Thayer	1947-1950
Earl Hogan	1951-1958
J. Walter Johns	1959-1962
Charles D. Nolting	1963-1970
Jimmie D. McKinney	1971-1978
Michael L. Coy	1979-1982
Jimmie D. McKinney	1983-1986
Rick L. Hill	1987-1990
David Mann	1991-1998
Kenneth J. Whipker	1999-2006
Mark Gorbett	2007 - Current



Francis Whittington 1871-1872



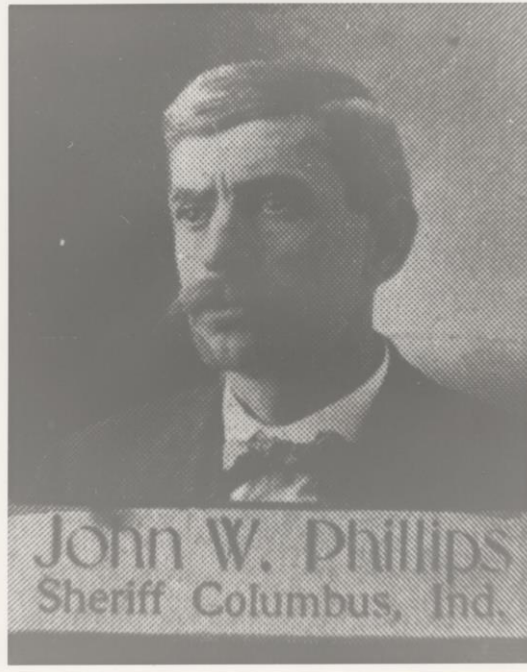
Charles H. Wagner 1901-1904



William F. Dinkins 1904-1906



John W. Burns 1912-1914



John W. Phillips 1920-1922



Arlie Arbuckle 1922-1926



Alonzo E. Fitch 1929-1930



Robert J. Urbahns 1937-1938



J .Walter Johns 1959-1962



Sheriff Thayer with 2 accused murderers, Price and Johnson, Deputy Earl Hogan, with Floyd Sanders in the rear. Taken on the front steps of the Jail that was located on the southeast corner of the Courthouse Square in the late 1940's.



This is the jail with the front porch where the prior picture was taken. This photo was taken around 1961 just a few years prior to demolition.



First marked squad car with Deputy Herman Darlage taken in 1956.