



THE U.S. POLICE FORCE- THE BEGINNINGS.

In his proclamation President John F. Kennedy dedicated the week of May 15th as "National Police Week" and stated law enforcement officers have been protecting Americans since the birth of the nation.

According to Gary Potter, a crime historian at Eastern Kentucky University the U.S. police force is a relatively modern invention, sparked by changing notions of public order, driven in turn by economics and politics.

Policing in Colonial America had been very informal, based on a for-profit, privately funded system that employed people part-time. Towns also commonly relied on a "night watch" in which volunteers signed up for a certain day and time, mostly to look out for fellow colonists engaging in prostitution or gambling. (Boston started one in 1636, New York followed in 1658 and Philadelphia created one in 1700.) But that system wasn't very efficient because the watchmen often slept and drank while on duty, and there were people who were put on watch duty as a form of punishment.

Businessmen in the late 19th century had both connections to politicians and an image of the kinds of people most likely to go on strike and disrupt their workforce. So it's no coincidence that by the late 1880s, all major U.S. cities had police forces. Fears of labor-union organizers and of large waves of Catholic, Irish, Italian, German, and Eastern European immigrants, who looked and acted differently from the people who had dominated cities before, drove the call for the preservation of law and order, or at least the version of it promoted by dominant interests. For example, people who drank at taverns rather than at home were seen as "dangerous" people by others, but they might have pointed out other factors such as how living in a smaller home makes drinking in a tavern more appealing. (The irony of this logic, Potter points out, is that the businessmen who maintained this belief were often the ones who profited off of the commercial sale of alcohol in public places.)

The first publicly funded, organized police force with officers on duty full-time was created in Boston in 1838. Boston was a large shipping commercial center, and businesses had been hiring people to protect their property and safeguard the transport of goods from the port of Boston to other places, says Potter. These merchants came up with a way to save money by transferring to the cost of maintaining a police force to citizens by arguing that it was for the "collective good."

Along with social scientists, experts in the newly evolving field of criminology began to advocate for centralized, professional, and well-trained police forces. Foremost among these advocates was

Sir Robert Peel, former Prime Minister and Home Secretary of the United Kingdom from 1822 to 1846.

Known as the "father of modern policing," Peel established the Metropolitan Police Services in London in 1829. Then as now, British police officers were called "Bobbies" in honor of his first name.

Sir Peel is credited with establishing the three core principles of policing, which remain as essential today as they were two centuries ago:

- The goal of policing is preventing crime, not catching criminals. Effective police departments have low arrest rates because their communities have low crime rates.
- To prevent crime, police must earn public support. If the community trusts and supports the police, all citizens will share the responsibility of preventing crime as if they were a volunteer police force.
- To earn public support, the police must respect community principles. Police earn a good reputation by enforcing the laws impartially, hiring officers who reflect and represent the community, and using force only as a last resort.

In general, throughout the 19th century and beyond, the definition of public order — that which the police officer was charged with maintaining — depended whom was asked.

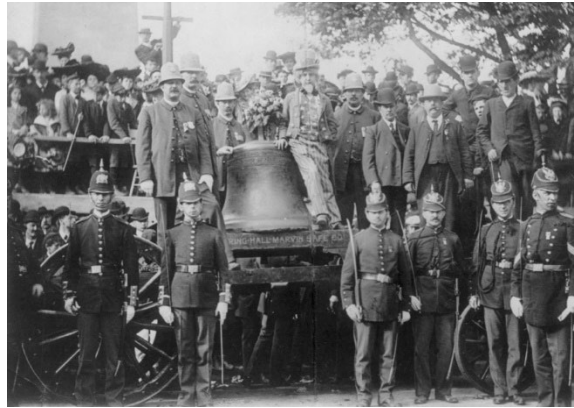
Which bring us to the 21st Century As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, the role of law enforcement is rapidly evolving to meet ever-changing societal needs. Central to this evolution is the concept of the pillars of 21st century policing - a strategic blueprint designed to guide law enforcement agencies in the 21st century.

The Task Force established these six pillars to enrich the dialogue and mutual understanding between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

The 6 pillars of 21st century policing include Building Trust and Legitimacy, Policy and Oversight, Technology & Social Media, Community Policing & Crime Reduction, Training & Education, and Officer Wellness & Safety.

For the complete article go to [Exploring Pillars of 21st Century Policing for Improved Law](#)

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Boston Police watch over the Liberty Bell circa 1903. Library of Congress / Getty Images



New York City Police Officers 1890-1900's