

Rough crayon lines drawn by John Stack showed his men their first patrols. Roads began along federal routes; the Waukegan road to the north, the Lincoln Trail from Chicago west, the Dixie Highway south to Danville, the National Trail running east from East St. Louis and the St. Louis - Chicago road via Springfield, Peoria LaSalle and Joliet.

Illinois State Police 1922

New Men On The "Hard Road"

Governor Len Small, Kankakee banker and farmer, elected in 1920 in a memorable barnstorming campaign, promised to "take Illinois out of the mud". Small's Director of Public Works and Buildings, Cornelius J. Miller, reported almost 1100 miles of paved road in service December, 1921, the first year of the administration. The roads, however, were being broken by trucks loaded beyond the design strength of the highway.

On June 24, 1921, the 52nd General Assembly authorized the Department of Public Works and Buildings to hire "a sufficient number of State highway patrol officers to enforce the provisions of the Motor Vehicle Law". A part of Illinois' new road system was ready for patrol. An amendment to the 1919 law provided especially for truck traffic regulation which became the primary function of this new enforcement group.

The Illinois State Police began service to Illinois with the appointment of John H. Stack, former Kankakee Police Chief, and the first eight men as highway patrol officers on April 1, 1922.

Political sponsorship was needed for appointment. Steve Waters, Jr., Small's pilot in the campaign was among the original group, with R. H. Musick, one of Small's personal guards. O. W. Kempster, a guard in January of 1922, was released for State Police duty that summer.

Stack's superior, Fred W. Tarrant, Superintendent of Highways, set the first meeting of all officers for April 6, 1922 in the office of Clifford Older, Chief Highway Engineer.

A five-page list of 19 rules and instructions for the officers was discussed. Emphasis in this document was highway protection first with speeders to be arrested later on. Officers were quoted the Motor Vehicle

Law, Chapter 43^{1/2}, which gave them limited authority to make arrests "for violations of this act".

Rule Number 1, reporting to Stack at his Kankakee address, placed operational control close to numerous highways and nearer the center of population.

There were instructions on the use of portable scales. Trucks were allowed 24,000 lb. Gross Vehicle Weight, a maximum of 16,000 lbs. per axle and 800 lbs. of weight per inch of tire surface resting on the road under that axle.

The rules also contained other instructions for officers to be "firm but courteous" with violators and "be ready . . . to aid lawabiding travelers with directions, conditions of the roads, and locations of garages".

Then, like other people in the state, the officers boarded a train to go home. From Springfield the "hard road" ran only to Peoria and St. Louis.

After motorcycles arrived from the Bureau of Machinery, the officers got local help to master the machine on home ground.

Patrols began from five locations; Peoria, LaSalle, Kankakee, Danville and Granite City (see box). Chief Stack later appointed Mrs. Stack as his secretary and only office employee at Kankakee.

The press carried news of the start of the state police in April with estimates of 75 men to be added soon.

A citizen from near Danville wrote in June of 1922 to volunteer his assistance in stopping speeders, wrecks and "bold, daylight robberies". He said, "Most every man you meet has a revolver". Superintendent of Highways Sheets declined his request for "a commission", explaining that policy authority was given only to officers in full time employ of the state.

Two citizens of Joliet "arrested" a Chicago man

Precedents:

The State Police concept had as precedents the Texas Rangers in 1835 and the Massachusetts Constabulary of 1865. Pennsylvania in 1905 and New York in 1917 began true state police organizations. Michigan converted its wartime constabulary to State Police in 1919 but with bitter opposition. The label "strike-breakers" was used to discredit the idea in Illinois and other states.

An Illinois bond issue had been approved November 5, 1918, providing issuance of \$60,000,000 of bonds to build a 4800 mile highway

system linking all principal cities and passing through every county. It was augmented by \$27,500,000 given to the state on two small federal bond issues for good roads. The 1911 Motor Vehicle Law and the 1913 Roads and Bridges Act had provided 161 miles of earlier roads.

The Illinois Motor Vehicle Act of 1919 regulated vehicle traffic in Illinois, and provided for license fees to retire the bonds. It authorized the Secretary of State to appoint special representatives to investigate automobile and motor bicycle registration, but specified that they serve without pay.

The Illinois Legislature side-stepped bringing the State Police

into being in 1919. Automobile traffic and car thefts continued to increase.

Plans and preliminary construction expended over \$5,000,000 in 1919. The first year of license fees was 1920 with more than \$6,000,000 produced against expenses.

However, costs were soaring above estimates. Governor Frank O. Lowden halted all construction in 1920 to the great disappointment of the public.

Len Small, a Kankakee banker and farmer completing a second term as State Treasurer, ran for Governor in the 1920 election campaign.

speeding on the Channahon Road and demanded a \$25.00 bond on July 4, 1922. The violator was brought to a hearing in Justice of the Peace Eib's court in Joliet, and on July 22 the case was dismissed. Stack appeared at the time and demanded warrants from the state's attorney to arrest the two "constables" for impersonating an officer and for speeding.

This made the Joliet Herald's front page, the story reading, "Constables serving in the department of constabulary of the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals and apprehension of horse and automobile thieves have no authority to arrest violators of the state motor vehicle act, according to . . . head of the organization." Stack's appearance and request for warrants helped to establish public awareness of the force, for the story was widely reported.

World War I surplus puttees, breeches, belts, caps, and a few pilot's helmets were used by Stack's men. There was no uniformity. By September of that year a decision was made to style their uniforms similar to Cook County Sheriff's Deputies. The Sheriff indicated a good uniform would cost \$35.00, plus accessories.

New motorcycles were talked about, but war-surplus "bikes" were used for the first several years. Their acetylene headlight was lit by a match if night driving was warranted. The weight of the portable scales in their side cars helped the officers navigate the slick roads that first winter.

Manpower was 20 officers by the year's end. Twelve new sets of portable scales were ordered by Fred Tarrant, Engineer of Maintenance who negotiated a trade-in allowance on the old "unimproved" models in December, 1922. Delivery of uniforms and scales was set for the following spring.

The 1922 accomplishments of the Illinois State Police showed 925 trucks weighed, 213 of which were overweight; 898 speeders warned; 420 arrests for Motor Vehicle Law violations; and 109,705 miles traveled. The miles traveled covered each mile of road less than 100 times in the year, or about once every two or three days. Most of this work was done by the early appointees as the others did not go on duty until later in the year.

By spring of 1923, manpower was up to 25 officers. Stack scheduled his first three-day training school at the state fairgrounds in Springfield in June. Officers were fitted with the first uniforms. New men were given instructions by motorcycle instructor Steve Waters. Duties and practices were evaluated in discussions led by Chief Stack and legal counsel.

Since the men had neither seen each other in uniform, nor had the time to discuss together exactly what an officer should be doing, the training session was a morale builder, according to Waters and Kempster.

Opponents to the idea of additional "highway police" still felt they would be used for strike-breaking and other action. A political compromise was effected in the General Assembly to create the "Illinois Highway Maintenance Police". This was approved June 29, 1923, as a separate organization with authorized strength of 100 men. Badges and credentials were to be changed to this identity, but the law of 1921 remained on the books.

Full police powers were granted by the new law, and additional motor vehicle regulations were administered as the force grew.

Salaries were set at a maximum of \$150.00 per month. The law provided that the state be divided into

First Public Information

The Superintendent of Highways sent information to inquiring motorists and civic associations, who asked about the State Police. A letter of May 3, 1922 said in part:

"Below you will find the names and headquarters of the chief highway patrol officers, and the field officers; together with the counties in which the latter operate over the improved highways:

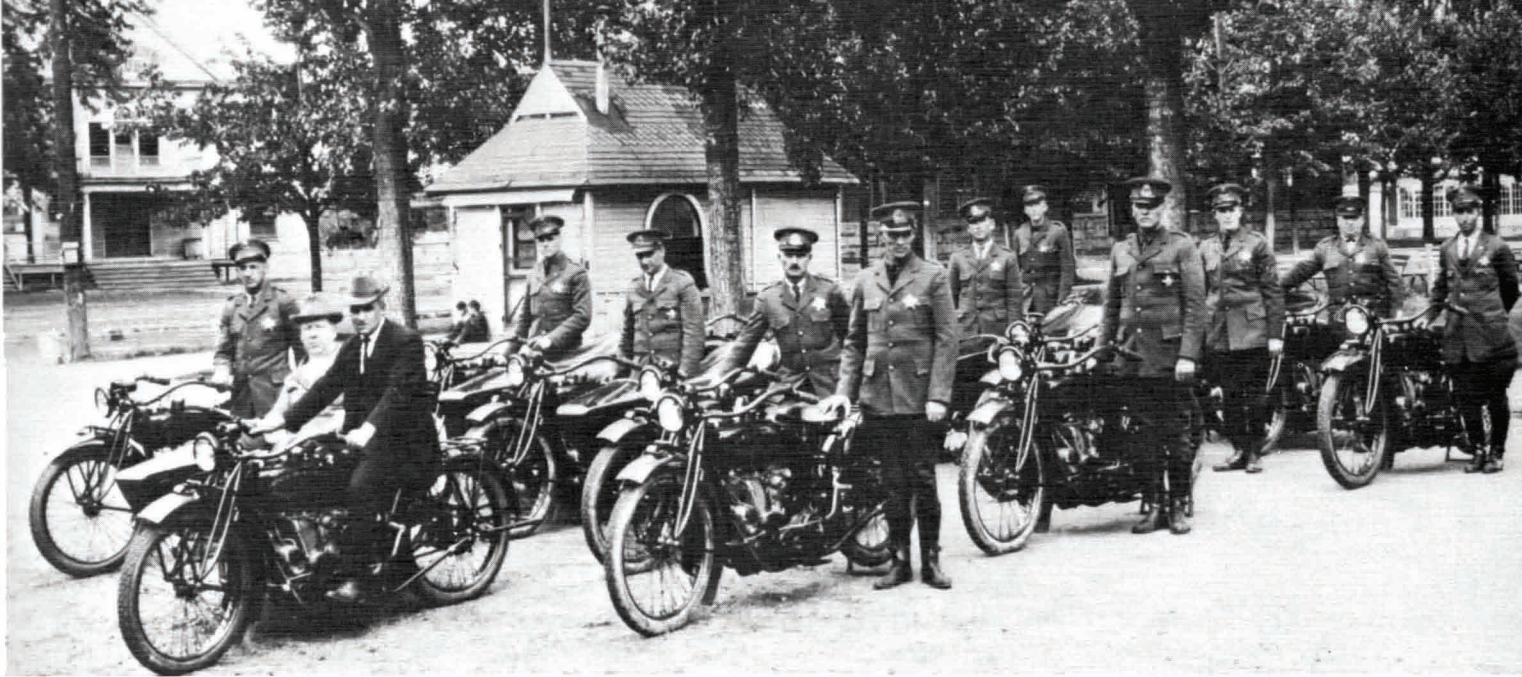
Name	Headquarters	Counties
John H. Stack, Chief	Kankakee, Illinois	
Terrence C. Martin	LaSalle	Lee, DeKalb Kane; DuPage Cook; Bureau LaSalle Kendall Grundy; Will
R. H. Musick and) James J. McGuire)	Peoria	Bureau; Putnam Marshall Woodford Peoria Tazewell Mason; Menard Sangamon
J. Arnie Baker) Ed Bricker)	Kankakee	Cook; Will Kankakee Iroquois Vermilion
S. H. Wilkin	Charleston	Vermilion Edgar; Clark Cumberland Effingham
Steve Waters, Jr.) J. D. Seibert)	Granite City	Macoupin Madison St. Clair; Bond Effingham

The foregoing are all of the officers that have been appointed to date.

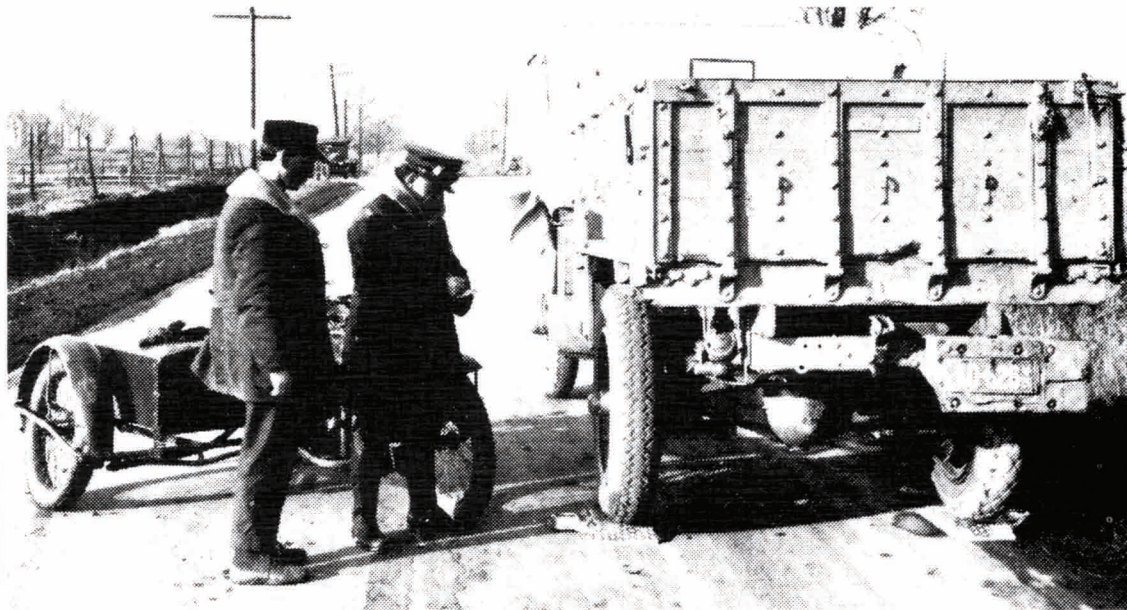
The patrol officers are equipped with motorcycles with side car attachments; standardized speedometers; loadometers for weighing trucks, etc.

"They are not in uniform at present".

"They are provided with a badge (star); and with signed credentials including identification cards".



Men wore new uniforms and five point stars in this 1923 picture (top) with Chief John Stack and his driver, front, reportedly taken at the State Fairgrounds in Springfield.



Typical makeshift uniform of 1922 at left, was worn by O. W. Kempster in Sterling area. Trucks were weighed with pair of scales in 1925 photo, right.

districts. Appointment was without reference to civil service. Army mental and physical qualifications were adopted with preference to be given to veterans.

The Director of Public Works and Buildings kept the force as a single unit despite the two laws. Stack set up his manpower in 12 districts, but the outposts were Sterling on the north and Collinsville and Effingham in the south central area. Roads had not begun to penetrate south of the St. Louis area in 1922 and 1923.

By January, 1924, Chief Stack had 75 officers at work, and the force increased to 82 men during the year. Stack was using one officer to supervise personnel in each district.

In 1925, organization and supervision advanced as Stack appointed a sergeant to head each district. Training and discipline were largely in their hands, but Stack, who did not drive, traveled the districts regularly. His driver, Yvon Marcotte, doubled as mechanic.

Growth of the force and coverage of new roads

were Stack's concern as well as administration. His wife typed and helped in the office at Kankakee, but many of Stack's communications were in his own hand.

With permission of his superiors, Stack added manpower under the original authority of 1921 for "sufficient number" to enforce the law. His budgets rose from \$227,000 for 95 people in 1925 to \$348,000 with 159 people in 1927. His roster then included 1 chief, 12 sergeants, 140 officers and 6 mechanics. All motorcycle repairs were done in Kankakee, under Robert LaFountain, chief mechanic.

Stack's Chrysler coupe was replaced by a sedan in 1927, and the 12 sergeants were given Chrysler 70 coupes for patrol.

A state police officer and his wife were brutally killed as a result of the Birger and Shelton gang wars of 1927. Officer Lory Price had maintained contacts with both gangs to report on their activities, and to keep the peace. It is said that he warned one group of



Stack's twelve sergeants went to the Highways Building in Springfield in 1927 for new Chrysler 70 coupes. Present for Dis-

trict 1, O. W. Kempster; District 2, Herman Nofs; Districts 3,4,5,7, no record; District 6, Ed Bricker; District 8, James J.

McGuire; District 9, Frank Knuckles; District 10, Clarence W. Roth; District 11; Cecil McCracken; District 12, John O'Keefe.

an attack by the other. Sgt. John O'Keefe of the DuQuoin area was called to identify the victims.

The governor expressed his shock and sorrow on news of the killing. His later instructions to Stack were for thorough investigation and capture of the people responsible. Governor Small's additional comment to Stack is said to have been, "If they do this to one of my officers, they are doing it to me".

Stack faced the challenge with a team of five sergeants, including Clarence Roth from Champaign, Cecil McCracken from Greenville and O. W. "Buck" Kempster from Sterling. Their investigation and court action lasted for more than a year. Several sheriffs were active participants from the start. Others saw this as an intrusion, but local cooperation grew as the investigation proceeded.

Stack took his case straight to the suspects after he and his men had gathered sufficient evidence on many crimes of the gang. There was a famous confrontation with the Berger gang, who were "invited" to come and talk with Stack.

The former sergeants recalled the scene as Stack and his men talked privately with the gang at a hotel and let them know of certain facts. The gang left with rather downcast faces. Within the year all of them

were either on their way to jail or had been arraigned on charges. Their leader, Charlie Berger, was hanged for one of his crimes, but it was never proven that he was responsible for the slaying of Price and his wife.

Rights and duties of the state police were still argued in the legislature, but newspaper clippings of the time showed respect for the individual officer and for the organization.

Truck weighing and traffic control continued to have emphasis in patrol work. Caution against speeding was the predominant effort with individual drivers.

There were only 4,164 arrests by state police in 1927 compared to 65,000 warnings given for speeding and other causes. Public assistance, county fairs and funeral escorts were a part of their duties. Five lives were saved according to the summary of the year's activities.

A new accident reporting system was adopted in 1928. State Police had always aided at accident scenes, but a new form suggested by the National Safety Council was used to help gather data on accidents. This was not a mandatory system. Of the 565 total reports made that year, fourteen specific causes accounted for 85% of the cases. The total number of accidents on the highways was unknown.

Largest group picture of the era shows Stack and 116 men. This photo is said to have been made during the dedication of the State Armory Building, Springfield, in 1926.

