

Growth And Proficiency

Walter Williams, named superintendent as 1935 opened, made minor changes in district territories and personnel. The map of his operations before actual installation of radio equipment is similar to present districting. However, the state was divided along the existing "hard roads" rather than assigning specific responsibility for coverage by county.

With the new superintendent on duty, manpower was increased to 350 as provided two years earlier. Programs under study were pushed to completion.

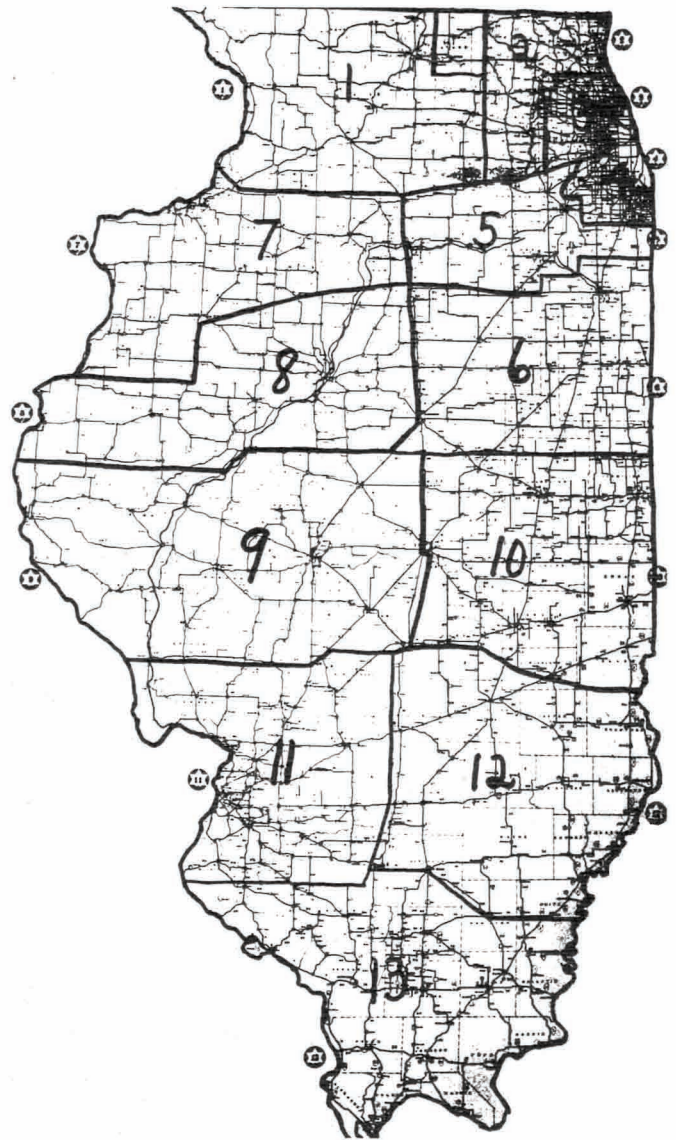
Horner had asked that Williams make the state police a first class semi-military organization. After review of the Taylor, Trautsch and Nofs records, he promoted them to assistant superintendents and asked for a military drill and pistol expert. He found it in Captain Howard Bentley, a National Guard officer, who began traveling the state in 1934.

Nofs retained the position of inspection officer and with the close cooperation of Bentley the efficiency of the force improved. Bentley's travel schedules were carefully worked out under orders to make his appearance without a regularity that could be spotted by law violators. The entire district helped to keep his visits secret.

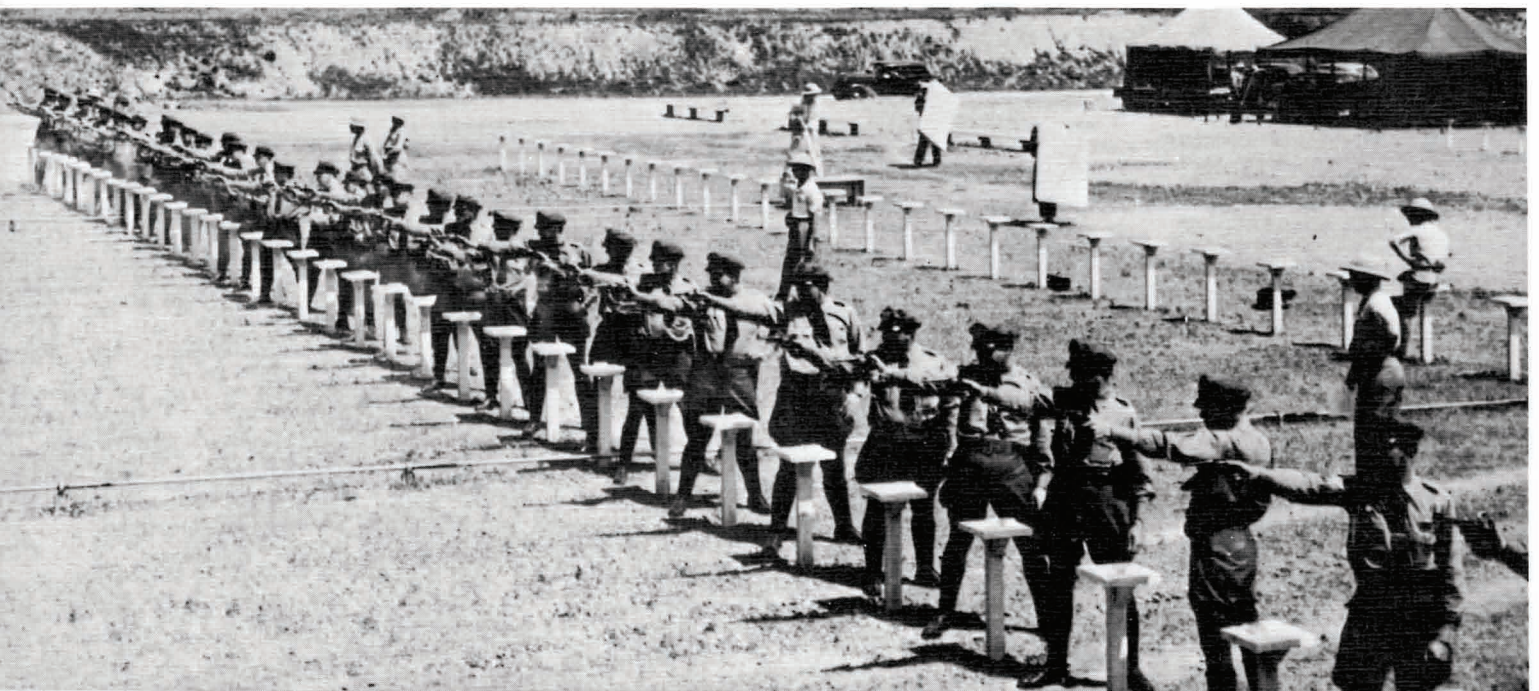
The men practiced close-order drill, mounted-drill on motorcycles, and marksmanship with their pistols through the years of Williams command. A natural liaison with the National Guard was developed for use of range facilities and meeting spaces. Bentley helped develop the pistol training into state-wide competition within the State Police. Three-day training sessions drew them to Camp Lincoln in Springfield where the first State Police pistol team emerged in 1935.

National matches at Camp Perry were entered within two years. One of Bentley's trainees, Tulio Verna, of Benld, returned to train others in later years.

Seven voice transmission radio stations added new



Territory assignment in 1935, before radio communications, still followed the "hard road" in the pattern of 1929's thirteen districts. State-wide pistol competition became a high point in the year's training, beginning in 1935, under Superintendent Walter Williams. (picture below)



dimension to Illinois State Police operations. The first four stations were started or under contract in 1935, at Springfield, DuQuoin, Effingham and Pontiac. Springfield's WQPS was dedicated by the governor June 15, 1936 and immediately went into operation. The others began operation that year. The Chicago (DesPlaines) and Macomb stations followed with Sterling the final one in 1937. All were 1000 watt AM transmitters and served areas larger than one district, operating on 1610 kilocycles.

In the first winter ice storm of 1936 emergency messages got through via state police radio. The first weather warnings relayed by this medium were welcomed that same year by motor clubs, trucking firms and the rest of the inquiring public.

Receivers were carried in 195 Chevrolet and Ford automobiles and 337 motorcycles. As each station went into service, the receiver was ready for final adjustment by district radio technicians. The first lot of motorcycle receivers were replaced by the manufacturer because they did not survive road vibrations.

A police network for interstate or inter-agency long distance messages also developed across the U.S. The Illinois State Police joined this network using CW (continuous wave) transmission with messages in Morse code.

Three mobile repair and emergency transmission units traveled the state for radio service to state police districts and for emergency use during floods or civil disturbance. All radio personnel and operations were coordinated through the Chief Radio Engineer's office in Springfield.

Resources of the entire force were placed at the service of the local peace officers when necessary upon request to the governor.

Aids and services to motorists increased with

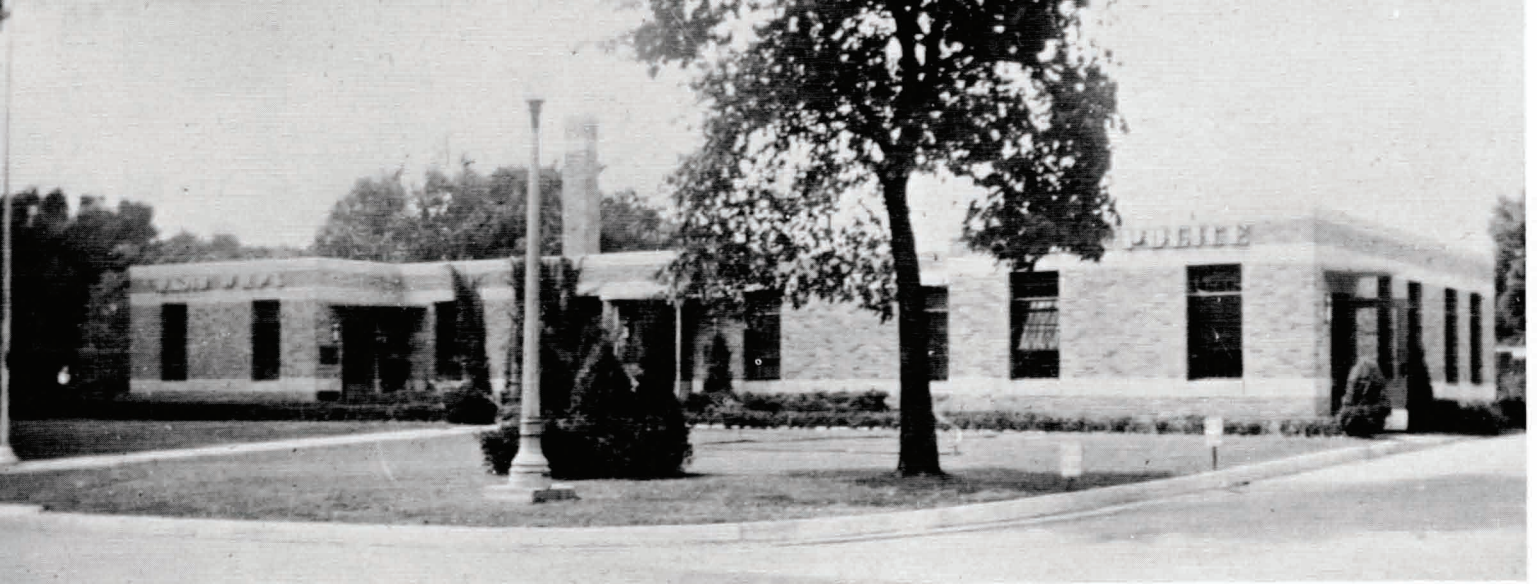


Springfield Radio (top) in 1939; Henry Trapp, today Supervisor of Training and Inspection, Communications Section.

Mobile radio unit at Ridgway during Ohio River flood in 1937; Earl Baumeier, today Radio Supervisor, DuQuoin.

First Aid instructor's class, June 1935, conducted by Illinois Bureau of Mines and Minerals, graduated 11 state police officers.





Radio units prompted overdue building program; Springfield WOPS, left portion built in 1935; District 9 headquarters right, completed in 1938.



Scene after a one-day police school featuring FBI and other instructors, a feature of the 1930's; meetings aided cooperation among all police agencies.



Williams added two First Aid and Safety men, who began traveling the state in 1936.

vehicle traffic. Safety and first aid became closely linked with the instruction of State Police in first aid by the Bureau of Mines in 1935. First aid instructors, qualified by the Bureau and rated by the American Red Cross, returned to their districts to begin instruction of all officers in these techniques.

Williams retained these instructors and dramatized safety and first aid with two officer specialists traveling the state in 1936, then three more in 1937. This unit was the forerunner of today's Information & Education Section.

Liaison with other police agencies and with the National Safety Council helped to focus attention on highway safety as car registrations continued to increase. Brake testing lanes appeared and were installed with the help of the Illinois State Police.

New, state-owned buildings were completed in 1936 for district headquarters at Sterling, Chicago, Joliet, Effingham and DuQuoin.

Operation of four northern districts under one supervising sergeant was tested in 1936. Reorganization of the state in this manner created new field ranks of captain and lieutenant in 1937, and brought closer liaison with Springfield headquarters. One captain was attached to the Springfield main office and three supervised operational areas.

Sergeants promoted to lieutenant rank commanded each district. Each had a sergeant as an assistant. All districts went to 24-hour operation. Total officer personnel was 350 supported by 40 radiomen and 59 others.

Central Office headquarters in Springfield was transferred to the first floor of the Armory Building in 1937. Adjacent to it was the fifteen employee Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation. Close liaison had developed with the state police.

A mine disaster in Centralia and floods along the Ohio Valley were the biggest events in 1937 for the Illinois State Police. Mobile radio transmitters proved their worth in these and other less crucial cases.

Radio was proving its worth in other ways. With 218,941 total transmissions in 1937, state police recovered 1,248 stolen cars with a value of \$499,200. The percentage of cars recovered was 72% of those known to state police. Successful apprehensions in 37% of the criminal cases and locating missing persons in 57% of the cases were startling new proof of the value of police radio.

Districts 4, 9 and 11, located at Harvey, Springfield and French Village (East St. Louis) moved into new buildings in 1938. Springfield's district headquarters was adjacent to its radio facility; the others remotely controlled the nearest transmitter. The radio system prompted relocation of headquarters over a period of time as budgets permitted.

The laws, roads and vehicles grew in number. The State Highway Maintenance Police had Vehicle Law, Traffic Law, and Road and Bridge Laws to apply to

violators. They enforced both traffic and criminal law. They were conservators of the peace with all the authority of sheriffs and city policemen, but were authorized to enforce the laws any place in the state.

There were 1,794,556 vehicles registered in Illinois in 1938. In six successive years increased gas consumption had shown the increase in travel. Illinois had almost 13,000 miles of roads under State maintenance. The minimum patrol equipment to cover these roads gave each officer approximately 100 miles a day to patrol.

A safety and public education campaign again driving accidents had reduced deaths on Illinois highways from 2,595 in 1936 to 2,461 in 1937 and 2,177 fatalities in 1938. Enforcement and safety education by the State Police helped to accomplish a part of this 16 percent decrease.

Annual competition among state police pistol marksmen continued, and the first of the pre-war Annual Invitational Matches was held in 1938.

Five field captains were employed as "battalion" supervisors over two or three areas in 1939. Training, assignments to duty, and assignments of extraordinary responsibility in an area were improved by the arrangement. District headquarters at Sterling, Chicago, Harvey and Joliet were enlarged. Thirteen districts were operational. The Macomb radio station's nearest district contact was Rock Island or Peoria. It reached three districts and had been located for optimum radio coverage in the system.

The state police handled driver's license examinations when the newly enacted law became effective in December, 1938. In its first year the chief examiner and 55 people processed 60,049 applicants.

Accident prevention within the state police vehicle fleet had advanced by 1939, as had the highway safety campaign for the public. District 12 took honors that year - one accident in 561,121 miles of travel. Fleet accidents were 76 in 8,966,057 miles.

Operational cost had been continually rising until in 1939 it was \$1,500,148 compared to the \$846,000 of 1934. The operational figure included all expenses for 52 radiomen, 310 officers, 40 supervising personnel, clerical help and the driver's license group.

The 1939 legislature repealed the 1921 law governing the original highway patrol because in theory two forces existed. Full police powers for Illinois State Police were re-affirmed, for the 1921 and 1923 laws had not been consistent.

The training system in the districts continued into 1940. While certain officers had attended one-day police schools and seminars, the bulk of the training was "on-duty". Courtesy training of a "practical form" was added to the format of the weekly inspections at district level.

The 1940 report indicated the first tailor was employed at headquarters. His talents served 356 sworn

officers of the 560 personnel at this peak of Williams force.

The Safety Lane Section helped to test mechanical operation of 21,002 vehicles that year at facilities provided by cities, clubs, and commercial operators in the state.

The first aid and safety section carried on instruction in traffic and pedestrian safety at 371 appearances by officers of the five-man team.

Officers drove new green and black sedans with a state emblem decal on the door. There were still 338 motorcycles among the 589 vehicles used by the state police. Weekly inspection of the condition of the highway remained a duty as it had been with the State Highway Maintenance Police in 1923, but there were 14,000 miles of state roads in 1940. Requests for cooperation with other law enforcement agencies took them into all other aspects of police work.

The state police pistol team returned with 14 medals from competition at the U. S. Army's National Matches in September according to instructor Bentley's report.

A building for the Rock Island district headquarters was erected at its present location adjacent to Black Hawk State Park.

Governor Horner died October 6, just before the 1940 election. Lt. Governor John Stelle served for the unexpired term. Williams reported to Governor Stelle at the end of October that security rules under the National Emergency Act had been adopted. This precaution applied to all stations and particularly to radio facilities and equipment.

Dwight H. Green won the 1940 elections and a turnover began. Williams was asked by industry to advise them in staffing the war plants with security men. Many of his officers left for higher paid positions.

Stelle made appointments rapidly to keep the force at strength, but a manpower shortage developed within months as Williams left at the end of the year. Jesse H. Grissom, a former state police lieutenant at Effingham, was appointed superintendent by Stelle in January, 1941, but died after a month in office.



A "road blow-up" was a common hazard in the late 1930's.

Public education by state police included a driver reaction test, at state and county fairs (left), as well as a demonstration (below) of transporting handcuffed criminals to county jail.





State police officer at driver's door helped with a "Safety Check" on this 1938 car when civic club members set up equipment above.

Work with school boy patrol in grade schools produced this publicity shot in 1937 right.



Special detail in Springfield; 80-man motorcycle escort posed for this picture in 1940. Weapons instructor Bentley, front row at left, directed all large mounted escorts; Captain Ray May is sixth from left, Assistant Superintendent Herman Nofs, eighth, and Assistant Superintendent Harry Trautsch at right in front row below.

