

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES
ON
THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY

by
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(Editor's Note: Captain Petty of the United States Air Force and Society member is a graduate student in the School of Public Administration at the University of Southern California. He has prepared this article from the official files of the Society. Information voids, covering certain periods of the Society's activities, will be noted, and members who can complete the missing links are urged to communicate with the President.)

The American Society of Criminology will be eighteen years old next December 30th. The needs for professional standards which lead to its formation are still, to a greater or lesser extent, with us. Considerable progress has been made toward professionalization of the work in American police and corrections. Standards have been formulated. Curricula in junior colleges, state colleges, and universities has reached some degree of uniformity. Solutions to theoretical and practical problems through ongoing research are being found. This ideal of professionalization in American police work and correctional administration remains the coordinative principle behind all collective efforts in the advancement of the goals and objectives of the Society.

August Vollmer, Chief of Police, author and educator, was a zealous pioneer in the drive for achievement of high professional standards in this field. He believed that subsequent performance of professionally acceptable work was directly dependent upon the educational opportunities made available for prospective police and correctional workers. Thus, it is not surprising to learn that this venerable patriarch presided over the first meeting of a group which could be called an antecedent of the present Society. He called the small group to order in his home at 10:15 A.M. December 30, 1941 at Berkeley, California.

These individuals had come together at August Vollmer's home for the twin purposes of furthering college police training and standardizing the police training curricula of junior colleges, state colleges and universities. The group adopted the title of the National Association of College Police Training Officials.

At this first meeting, August Vollmer was elected President Emeritus and O. W. Wilson, President. The group decided that membership was to be restricted to persons actively engaged as officials and teachers in college and university police training programs. Various committee appointments were made and the work of the Society was underway.

The Third Annual Conference of the National Association of College Police Training Officials was called to order by President O. W. Wilson at the Durant Hotel in Berkeley, California on December 29, 1948.

This was truly a working conference. In addition to a lot of hard work on the Preamble, Constitution, By-laws, membership qualifications and Committee Reports, lengthy discussion of a name for the organization became the primary characteristic of this meeting. From the many names submitted, the following were voted upon:

- (1) National Association of College Police Training Officials.
- (2) Association for Education in Criminology.
- (3) Criminological Education Association.
- (4) Association for College Police and Criminology Training Officials.
- (5) Society for the Advancement of Criminology.

After a protracted debate of the issues and definitional problems involved in the selection of a name for the organization which would be truly descriptive of its purposes, acceptance by a majority vote, officially created the Society for the Advancement of Criminology.

From the beginning, Annual Conferences or Executive Committee Meetings have been held. These conferences and meetings are held each year at a time and location designated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. The President called an Executive Meeting during March 1957 at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. During this meeting, a change in name from the Society for the Advancement of Criminology to the American Society of Criminology was recommended and subsequently adopted by a majority vote of the membership.

pmm The American Society of Criminology was founded for the following purposes: (1) To bring together persons actively engaged or who have been actively engaged, in teaching and/or practice in the field of criminology; (2) To foster training and research in criminology in institutions of higher learning and in law enforcement and correctional agencies; (3) To encourage understanding and cooperation among those engaged in criminology; and (4) To serve as a clearing house for collection and dissemination of criminological knowledge and skills.

The Society has initiated an information service on police training and curricula for criminologists, both abroad and in the United States. It assists in the placement of its members and advises them on the publication of articles and monographs of criminological interest. The Society publishes a Directory of University and College Criminological Programs, a Newsletter, and distributes occasional brochures, research reports, professional papers, and other items of interest as they become available to its members.

In recent years, the Society, now a national organization with membership from the faculties of universities and colleges teaching in the police and correction fields, and practitioners, has focused their attention on the need for improved teaching and research as the demand by government and the public grows for competent workers in these fields.

AFFILIATIONS:

The Society is affiliated with The American Correctional Association (formerly the American Prison Association). The Association publishes many stimulating committee reports of interest to Society members. In many instances, Society members have provided cooperative assistance on projects of mutual interest and have served on Association committees.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science, since June 24, 1950, has recognized our organization as an Associated Society in its Social and Economic Sciences Section. Each year, the Society receives an invitation to participate in the December meeting of the Association, with the options of a full program, a regional session or co-sponsorship of suitable programs. The American Association for the Advancement of Science publishes Science and The Scientific Monthly.

The Society has assumed international standing since it was voted the American Member of the International Criminology Society at the Second International Congress held in Paris on December 8, 1950. President Kenney and Dr. Marcel Frym attended the International Criminological Conference in Great Britain in 1955, as the official representatives of the Society.

It is the policy of the Society to join with other organizations for mutually beneficial exchange of ideas and research findings in international, national, regional and local conferences. Cooperative endeavors are carried out wherever possible, with organized professional societies in allied fields. These include the International Association of Chiefs of Police, The American Academy of Forensic Sciences, The National Probation and Parole Association and other professional societies working toward the development of human knowledge in criminology.

PUBLICATIONS:

The American Society of Criminology encourages its members to develop and submit articles to such periodicals as: Police, The Police Chief, Police Review, Law and Order, The Prison World, and the National Probation and Parole Journal. The Journal of Criminology, Criminal Law and Police Science, and Police, published by the Northwestern University, have been designated as the official publications for Society papers. The official announcement of arrangements with The Journal was made at the bottom of the title page of the March-April 1953 edition of the Journal and Police was added at the 1957 Conference.

Recent publications by members are given the widest possible internal and external publicity, commensurate with the capacities and limitations of Society structure.

LEADERSHIP:

The Society has been most fortunate in securing able leadership in its Presidents over the years. The names and institutions with which they are identified and associated are as follows:

PRESIDENTS

August Vollmer	Chief of Police, Berkeley, California University of California
O. W. Wilson	University of California
Douglas M. Kelley	University of California
Richard O. Simon	Deputy Chief, Los Angeles Police Department
Frank Boolsen	Fresno State College, California
William Dienstein	Fresno State College, California
Richard O. Hankey	College of the Sequoias, Visalia, California
John P. Kenney	University of Southern California

These distinguished gentlemen would be the first to assert that the real life blood of the organization has consisted of the cooperative effort and active participation given them by the membership at large. During 1957, the Society had fifty members in good standing, with nearly everyone involved in a Society project of personal and professional interest.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:

Incorporation proceedings as a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of California are underway. A Publications Committee has been appointed to bring needed correction in the erratic publication of the News-Bulletin. Preliminary steps have been made toward a grant of funds for an exploratory research survey of academic programs in police and corrections. A permanent business address for the Secretary-Treasurer is under advisement by the Executive Committee. This will tend to cut down confusion and give more continuity. A listing of job opportunities, available trained teaching personnel and programs in police and corrections in universities and colleges, is the purpose of just one project which Society members now have in process. The initiation fee has been abolished. Dues in the Society are five dollars per year. A concentrated membership drive is now underway throughout the United States among individuals actively engaged in teaching and research in criminology.