

HAMILTON'S CONSTABULARY & POLICE, FROM ITS FOUNDING TO THE COLD WAR

Information from town meeting and police records,
town reports, and other public records
unless attributed otherwise.

By Tom Juergens

In the northwest corner of the Hamilton Town Hall basement is a lockup, a cell of granite and brick roughly eight by ten feet. It is as solid today as it was when it was completed in 1898, but it doesn't hold people anymore. Its swinging gate is still lockable though, and if the cell had to hold prisoners again, all that would be required would be to rebar its high, small window and lock the gate.

But a different granite cell was Hamilton's first lock-up. That one went up on Cutler Road (then Farms Road) somewhere near Bay Road (today's Route 1A), when Hamilton was just incorporated and that neighborhood was the heart of town.

Electing constables and building the first lock-up -- called 'the pound' -- were among the first orders of business at Hamilton's first town meeting in 1793. As the town's first public works project, the pound's construction was put out to bid. Its specifications are spelled out in the first book of Hamilton town meetings in the fine, flowery hand of an eighteenth-century scribe:

"Twenty-eight feet square on the inside, the thickness of the wall at the bottom to be not less than three feet, nor less than twelve inches at the top and six feet high from the surface of the ground," surrounded by "a trench to be four feet wide and ten inches thick, with one foot of ground to be taken off and fitted with small stones under the bottom of the wall," with "the house William Ayres lives in to make one side with the gate."

Those specifications, modest overall yet downright medieval in thickness, likely resulted in a measure of four feet by seven: barely enough to swing a cat, but just enough for someone to stretch out and cool their heels. The pound was on Cutler Road, behind the Congregational Church and opposite the farm of George Brown (1825 - 1901), who was pound-keeper from 1853 until his death. It was purchased by Albert R. Merrill, owner of the property beside the meeting house, in 1919.

CONSTABLES' FIRST ORDERS

The Hamilton constables' first orders were 'warning out' orders, executed during the winter of 1794. Warning out – municipal eviction by fiat -- cleansed a community of social and economic liabilities, and undesirables of all types, and was used throughout New England. Any number of reasons could lay behind such warnings, but basic to all was some sort of consensus that those warned -- who could be individuals or groups -- were regarded as some sort of liability.

"It simply went without saying that aliens were not welcome" in a town. Newcomers did not simply move to a town, they "applied for admission." Economics certainly played a part, and warnings out were sometimes used "to escape undue expenses in the support of paupers." The law further provided that those "who were once warned were not counted as inhabitants entitled to support in case of poverty merely because they continued to reside" in a town, even if "assessed for local taxes" after being warned. In some towns outsiders "could not even be entertained by inhabitants unless such inhabitants obtained the permission of the town." ¹

Warnings out also stemmed from philosophical or religious differences, and were used to extradite suspects, fugitives, and persons who were simply evading their responsibilities. The extradition-type of warning out is the only type mentioned in *The Constable's Pocket-Book*, which straightforwardly notes that those warned "doth intrude on this town contrary to the law," and that to execute the warrant a constable was to "attach" (arrest) and then "convey and deliver" the wrongdoer to the constable of an abutting town, and so "from constable to constable" until they arrived "where of right they belongeth." Yet another reason for warning out was to clarify local property ownership: the bother of dealing with questionable, if not outright fraudulent, ownership claims could be pre-empted with a warrant to evict persons without rock-solid ownership credentials. . Written by veteran Boston constable Nicholas J. Boone, *The Constable's Pocket-Book* was, he wrote, for constables "not learned in the law." Subtitled "A Dialogue between an Old Constable and (a) New, the book is extremely rare.

Hamilton's first warning out warrants contain few clues as to why they were issued. They are dated January 6 and February 19 of 1794, from which dates those warned -- dozens of them -- had two weeks to pack and go. The January 6 warning instructs constables to put "all persons not citizens" on notice that they were to "depart" the town. The February 19 order simply applies the order to warn to a list of persons who, like those in the first, are identified by non-Hamilton addresses. Several on the second list are further identified as spinsters, who usually relied on family members for support. Those evicted came from nearby towns and from New Hampshire. Many of them were employed, with occupations as diverse as weaver, laborer, and doctor. One intriguing fact is that the last name of some of the dozens of evictees matches that of one of the selectmen who signed the warrants: Poland. The warrants instruct the Hamilton constables to give notice "that all the above-named persons depart the limits of this town to their respective towns and counties with wife and children and others under their care within fifteen days."

Resisting the warnings would have meant facing Hamilton first constables, Charles Tuttle and Colonel Robert Dodge. Little is known of Tuttle. Colonel Dodge, at the age of fifty in 1794, had a record of fighting the revolution with distinction and another thirty years of life before him, including a state senatorship.

Hamilton found one of its own on the *receiving* end of a warning out in 1808, when town meeting resolved to "procure a man to go to Damariscotta [Maine] to see if Thomas Lamson was warned out." Whatever the circumstances were that brought the town to that decision remains a story yet to be retold; perhaps Lamson was simply not a bona fide resident of Damariscotta. (Johnathan Lamson was a member of the original board of selectmen, and the Lamson family has served Hamilton in a variety of capacities throughout its history.)

Five substitute constables worked in Hamilton between 1795 and 1849. Hamilton's constable roster ranged from two or three in its early decades to a high of five or six at the end of the 1800s, when law enforcers began to be categorized as both constables and police officers. Prior to the formal establishment of the police department, town meeting regularly passed over the question of appointing an 'inspector,' which is a police rank just below 'superintendent', which carries authority in several (or all) precincts, as opposed to a constable's parish- or precinct-specific appointment.

Constables who served in Hamilton prior to 1907 were all elected. The position of constable had always been a springboard into town politics and higher office. (Nominating constable candidates who were absent from town meeting occurred in Hamilton as late as 1934, when Hollywood bombshell Mae West was nominated.) The motion to discontinue the *election* of constables and instead have them *appointed* by selectmen first came up in Hamilton in 1940. The motion was initially carried by voice vote, but was subsequently defeated by a standing vote of 75 to 67. The election of Hamilton constables ended in 1951, following a 1950 vote to rescind the 1793 vote to elect them.

One comforting aspect of keeping the colonial peace was that emergencies were considered everyone's responsibility. When a constable saw an "affray" or "any other criminal matter" the law let him deputize by-standers, who were expected to take orders without question, including, when necessary, joining the chase. When and how to give chase is spelled out in the *Pocket-Book*:

"If affrayers be in a house with doors locked and bolted the constable may brake (sic) them open, though none have taken hurt, and if they get into another house, you may, upon such pursuit, brake into that house to apprehend them, and so till they shall be taken," says the Old Constable. However, if and when a constable arrived on the scene *after* an affray, seizure of any alleged offenders was prohibited without a warrant "unless some are dangerously wounded, and much blood drawn."

Another task for the constabulary was special transport details. In 1795 Hamilton constables were paid nine shillings apiece for getting 165 pounds safely to Boston, where the legislature was overseeing financial settlements between Hamilton and Ipswich. From time to time Hamilton constables brought dogs' heads to Boston to check for rabies.

Collecting taxes, fines and rates (ministers' salaries) fell to Hamilton constables as late as 1874, even though the tax collector's position appears in the town record much earlier and started to appear regularly beginning around 1833. Constables were handed lists and made the collection rounds twice a year.

A CRIMINAL RECORD

Murder victims were discovered from time to time in and around Hamilton's woodlots, swamps, ponds, the Miles River meadow, and other secluded places, according to Austin Brown, a Hamilton farmer and selectman. Brown was born in 1820 and chronicled nearly every day of his life from 1857 to 1908. Usually the bodies were those of out-of-towners, he writes. Two bodies were found in 1921, according to Hamilton police records.

A variety of other crimes speckle the Austin Brown diary. A man was knocked down and robbed on Bridge Street one night in 1857. Another was tied up in his home on Sagamore Road and robbed. Arrests were made for non-support, and for thefts of tools, equipment, and livestock (often fenced to Gloucester butchers). Drunkenness and rowdiness were regular offences, and constables were called again and again to particular homes and neighborhoods.

The first recorded assault in Hamilton appears in the town meeting record and was filed by Nicholas Woodbury, a fenceviewer for the town, against Stephen Brown, Jr., on May 16, 1811. It is unknown whether or not it was *as a fenceviewer* that Woodbury was assaulted, but fenceviewers were prone to endure rancor due to their policing of property lines, made necessary by land grabs: mysterious nocturnal movements of stakes, boulders, fences, and other markers. Sixteen years later, in 1827, the next mention of a crime appears in the town meeting record; it was decided, by open vote, without explanation, to remit to Robert Annabel, Jr., a fine he had paid for "keeping a disorderly house." That charge, according to *Black's*, implies activities that are a nuisance to the neighborhood, ranging from fighting, quarrelling, and swearing, to lewdness and bawdiness. The disorderly house charge can still be found in newspapers today.

Fire was nearly impossible to fight without a water system and proper equipment. It was sometimes attributable to lightening, sometimes not. Whatever the cause, Hamilton houses, outhouses, barns, sheds, haystacks -- and at least one schoolhouse -- all went up in smoke. Private arson investigators were employed should a case prove both difficult and worthy enough. One Hamilton arsonist was a boy (age not given) who, in 1877, set a series of what came to be known as 'the tea party fires'. The boy, John Ingalls, was "from a poor family often in trouble" and "mad with his mother," writes Brown. During an evening tea party in the church vestry, Ingalls lit his mother's house and barn, and then the barns of two neighbors. He was caught on his way back home to try and light his mother's house again, having succeeded in destroying only her barn. After a stint in Salem jail, he went to the Worcester Lunatic Hospital, where he spent several years, during which there were repeated annual town expenses for his room, board, clothing, and reimbursements for his destructions of hospital property, one of which is simply "breaking glass, etc."

Ear croppings, notches, and slits in livestock were common, and sometimes augmented by the insertion of half-pennies. This practice stemmed from the fact that unmarked animals were all too easily stolen, slaughtered, and sold in the very marketplace to which their rightful owners would have brought them. Hamilton elected a Clerk of the Market (sometimes two) until at least 1851, and Hamilton town records abound with entries of animals found and identified by such markings.

Hamilton's first arrest book, a big six-column ledger, consists of a string of entries beginning in 1907. The book is oversized but the entries fill only a few pages, and it was abandoned after just a few years. Its columns simply list names, dates, and various offences like fights, vagrancies, AWOLs, wife beatings, gambling, and drunkenness. The columns don't ask for gender because most offenders were male, but a close reading of the 'name' column shows some females. Sentencing details are sprinkled in when a sentencing was the outcome.

PAUPERS, TRAMPS, VAGRANTS & GYPSIES

Hamilton's financial settlement with Ipswich, made soon after its establishment as a new, independent town, totaled 908 pounds. Part of that amount (the record does not provide subtotals) was for Hamilton's share of the cost of caring for paupers. The warrant for a special town meeting in 1808 read explicitly "to see what instructions the town will give to selectmen respecting several paupers who claim a settlement" with the town.

Public assistance took many forms, and constables nearly always had a hand in its management. By the nature of their work they were usually the first to recognize need, and it was natural to keep them involved in the management and oversight of meeting that need. Constables, and selectmen (who often started their town government careers as constables) sat on Hamilton's Board of Overseers of the Poor from its beginning in 1817.

The gratitude with which assistance was received no doubt gave constables a welcome counterpoint to the usual tenor of their duties. Those in need of assistance lived in their own homes when practical, or with relatives or neighbors. Firewood, nursing, washing, groceries and, ultimately, coffins and grave clothes were either paid directly by or reimbursed with town funds. By 1873 indigent care was costing Hamilton as much as it cost to school its children, or to clear its roads of snow: over a thousand dollars per year. Constables served on the board, which came to be known as the Poor Department, up to the early years of the 20th century.

Giving Hamilton assistance to Hamilton residents was one thing. Assisting needy out-of-towners was entirely another. Reimbursing constables and residents alike for paying for tickets so out-of-towners could get out of town was standard policy, and the town meeting record shows repeated entries of "assistance to poor travelers" and "tickets for poor travelers." For indigents *in* Hamilton but not *from* Hamilton there was no poorhouse, as there was in Ipswich and other larger towns. But housing was made available, and the Hamilton overseers alternated between two methods of providing it. In some years they arranged for shelter at their own discretion. In others they let the job of providing quarters out to bid.

The bid method kept strangers from "finding their own quarters in barns and outbuildings." Town records show that Emerson A. Whipple, who owned a 50-acre farm at 375 Bridge Street, often won the bid during the mid nineteenth-century. In those days a night watchman at the train depot waited "with dog and shotgun" for tramps riding the rails.²

The Board of Overseers of the Poor came to be known as the Poor Department. A few samples of its spending -- some annual and a few individual -- are listed below.

- \$412 for board, wood, and nursing, 1858.
- \$712 for 'general assistance', plus specific reimbursements to Constable John Trefry for taking on *additional* departmental duties, 1866.
- \$168 for one year's board and clothing for a Hamilton resident at the Essex County Receptacle for the Insane, 1870.
- \$75 to Charles Porter for providing for tramps, and \$14.21 to the Worcester Lunatic Hospital for clothing for a Hamilton resident there, 1877.
- \$10 to Constable A. A. Whipple for "care of tramps", and \$4.60 to James F. Gwinn for "journeys to Boston and Lynn on account of paupers" (to research individuals' histories and try and determine to where they might be rightly be returned), 1886.
- \$169.92 to the Danvers Lunatic Hospital for its care of a Hamilton resident, and \$205.52 to the state for support of an "insane pauper," each in 1888.

While the term *tramp* appears in the Hamilton record as early as 1877, it took a while for that word to fully eclipse *pauper* and *poor traveler* in earlier records. Tramps were in the habit of calling on peoples' homes for food and work. By 1900 they were a major concern. In Hamilton and many other towns they commonly spent the night at the stationhouse. The police department's first arrest book has a column for residence, which is often entered as a country, say, Poland, or Ireland. If no residential information was given, the entry is simply "tramp." A *Wenham-Hamilton Times* article of January 11, 1900, noted that "in some cases it is not safe for the unknown men who appear at the various farmhouses to be taken in and fed." Another article from that era notes that the annual springtime influx of tramps was again under way.

George T. Litchfield was Hamilton's first designated Tramp Officer. He issued 205 tramp permits in 1904. He reported that, of that number, 82 went to tramps "born in the United States," and the rest went to tramps from "foreign countries". 1905 tramp permits numbered 227, a number again broken down, in the xenophobia of the time, into 96 native born and 131 foreign. Tramps with permits were at least known to the police, who often directed them to short term employment and, in case of any trouble connected to them, at least had a name with which to start an investigation.

Idle tramps naturally found trouble sooner than others. In 1915 Hamilton Police Chief Merrill wrote that people who did little or nothing but "stroll about from place to place, and have been apprehended by me during the year, have been either arrested or given an opportunity to leave town." Maintaining the philosophy that policing should involve residents as well as the police themselves, Merrill added that "It should be a duty incumbent on every citizen, in regard to this class of persons, to notify this department and have them taken care of, thereby protecting the town from many misdemeanors, and oftentimes more serious troubles. This department would be very thankful for any information leading to the detection and apprehension of these persons."

Many itinerants took advantage of Merrill's opportunity to leave town. From 1915 to 1925, anywhere from a low of four to as many as 80 a year went on their way. Edna Barney, born in Hamilton in 1917, remembers tramps working on her grandfather's Highland Street farm. She and many of today's Hamilton seasoned citizens remember tramps as a common sight in and around town, especially under the Cutler Road bridge, where they tended to congregate. In 1921 a new category of tramp appeared -- persons arrested by railroad police and turned over to the chief. There were eight such arrests that year, which resulted in four fines and four trips to Salem jail.

In 1923, under Hamilton Police Chief Arthur Southwick, out-of-town itinerants with no visible means of support were further categorized into *tramps* and *gypsies*. In 1923 arrests of gypsies outnumbered arrests of tramps by 72 to eight. As the ranks of out-of-towners grew, police started to differentiate between tramps, gypsies, and vagrants, and to note how each was inclined to skirt the law.

ALCOHOL: FROM LEGAL TO ILLEGLE AND BACK

During the Civil War David Hoyt ran a store and post office at the south corner of Bridge and Main Streets. He was appointed the town liquor agent in 1862. That year, and in every wet year thereafter, in a nod to temperance *and* to the freedom to drink legally, the authorization from town meeting was carefully worded. It allowed the wholesale purchase and retail resale of intoxicants "to be used in the arts, or for medicinal, chemical, and mechanical purposes and no other," wording that led to many a drinker's creative interpretation.

An 1864 Hamilton Liquor Agency report itemizes stock on hand, liquor purchased, barrels sold, and the agent's salary. But the agency is referred to as 'late' in the dry year of 1868, when reference is also made to its left-over inventory of "5 gallons rum, 1 whiskey, 1 cherry rum, 5 demijohns, and 4 kegs" that "remain unsold in possession of the town." How this inventory was disposed of is not recorded. 1885 payments 'for the suppression of the illegal sale of liquor' totaled just over \$300, which included \$26 for 'spotters' from the Law and Order League. Two years later, payments included \$40 for legal advice. Brown's diary notes that in the dry year of 1888 Hamilton constables "captured a lot of hard liquor."

In 1908 an Essex man was fined \$75 for selling liquor in Hamilton. In 1909, 'keeping liquor with intent to sell' brought a \$50 fine. Also in 1909 a man was charged with being drunk and put away for six months.

Before Prohibition, Hamilton voted alcohol to be legal, illegal, and then legal again, often by squeaky close margins, including one decision that turned on a single vote. In pre-Prohibition dry years, Hamilton constables were assisted by 'liquor committee specials', 'liquor spotters,' and the Law and Order League. Wet years simply meant one less law to enforce. Dry years simply sent drinking underground.

Alcohol's legality -- and by extension a police officer's duty -- was hotly debated in Hamilton and nationwide, before, during, and after the Prohibition years of 1919 to 1933. In 1919 a man was charged with operating under the influence of liquor in Hamilton and served 12 days in Salem jail. In 1923 an operating under the influence charge brought a \$100 fine. In 1925 two Hamilton men were charged with keeping liquor with intent to sell and were fined \$100 each.

In 1936, three years after the repeal of Prohibition, a statewide election showed that Hamilton wanted to legalize alcohol, but with restrictions. It approved private consumption only; public drinking places were prohibited. Furthermore, it legalized wine and malt beverages only. The vote broke down as: 550 to 398 against legalizing the sale of *all* alcoholic beverages, with 225 blanks; 480 to 449 in favor of legalizing the sale of wine and malt beverages only, with 244 blanks; and 484 to 455 in favor of package stores (in favor of selling but not serving), with 234 blanks.

RULES OF THE ROAD

The *long acre*, the Irish called it -- that grassy swath in the middle of and alongside the public way where everyone's stock was free to feed and breed. New Englanders called use of that public property letting stock run *at-large*, and Hamilton's farm animals enjoyed public roaming for many, many generations. The wandering swine, sheep, and cows kept growth down and, in their random couplings, kept gene pools heterogeneous.

Whether livestock could roam at-large or not was put to vote each year in Hamilton until just after the Civil War. The at-large votes mirrored whatever the current consensus was on desired stock regeneration rates. If, for example, pork was expected to sell at a premium in the near future but, at the same time, there was a glut of mutton, swine would be allowed at-large, but not sheep. Constables would then have to round up and impound any stray sheep and, later, see that their owners kept them fenced in. A Hamilton law of 1838 provided up to one year's imprisonment in the county jail -- or a fine of up to \$100 -- for willful and malicious vandalism, including damage to trees, glass, and fences, and "opening gates." Livestock branding was used until 1870, when a Hamilton bylaw provided for fines of from two to five dollars for any "unsupervised" stock found in a public way.

Eventually the focus for enforcement of public way laws shifted from *use* limits to *speed* limits. Speed was first addressed in 1903, when Hamilton prohibited any horse, whether pulling a carriage or not, from speed exceeding 10 miles an hour. The speed limit also applied to bicycles, tricycles, and "carriages propelled by hand." The law also banished livestock from the sidewalks, which improved traffic and protected trees and shrubs from being eaten. Horse care was a police budget item as late as 1913.

Early motor vehicles traveled only as weather permitted, and only the most intrepid drivers would chance wet or snowy roads. It was 1924 when Hamilton selectmen first recommended in their annual report that "some type of flashing beacon be located at dangerous street corners," which included the corner of Railroad Avenue and Lois Street, and three corners on Highland Street. Two years later, Chief Arthur Southwick ushered in six traffic regulations: no driving to the left of a white line or a traffic signal; no back-ups to the curb or sidewalk except when loading or unloading; no street parking unless 'near' to a curb or sidewalk; no standing with the left side of a vehicle to a curb or sidewalk; no stopping or standing within 20 feet of a public corner; and no stopping and obstructing the road unless forced to by an accident.

The need to share the road reached the top of the traffic safety agenda in 1963, when town meeting aired an article that, as originally worded, would have required a horse and rider to keep to the *right* side of the road. The article was amended at the suggestion of equestrian Mary Curtis, who pointed out that, horseback-riding being what it is, it was better to require horse and rider to keep to *the* side, not necessarily to the right or left. Town meeting saw the horse sense in that and the article's wording -- not to mention compliance -- was changed and made less confusing than it would be otherwise.

Riders and horses always set out together but, even to this day, don't always *return* together, as the occasional sighting of a saddled but riderless horse will show. The annual tally of 'horses returned' (which includes unsaddled horses that simply get loose) has not been regularly recorded over time, but the record shows that the number has ranged from only a few in some years to dozens in others.

COMMUNICATIONS

Before the telephone, anyone looking for an officer went to the stationhouse or to where the officer worked. In the telephone's infancy, phone numbers were only four digits long, phones themselves displayed no numbers, and there was no dial tone. To make a call you simply lifted the handset, which connected you to the switchboard in the telephone company office. From there, the switchboard operator asked what number you wanted dialed, and made the connection to that number from the switchboard.

That was fine for non-emergency communications. Otherwise, people in trouble or with news of trouble called -- or drove to -- the telephone office, which quickly became not only the first place to get news of an emergency but the *de facto* station house. If an officer was elsewhere, the operator made a call to either the officer's home or workplace. World War II-era

Hamilton Police Chief Edward Frederick was often contacted via his employer Constance Williams, on whose estate he worked.

Hamilton police got mobile radios in 1953 with the help of Charles E. Gagnon, who owned and operated a Hamilton radio station, WILQQ, at 10 North Street. Gagnon, an experienced Navy radio operator, accepted an appointment as Communications Officer in the Hamilton Civil Defense in 1952. He installed the first two-way radio in a Hamilton cruiser the following year. That radio was tuned to the Beverly Police Department frequency for the next seven years. During that period, emergency communication and response in Hamilton was comprised of many and variable links...and a bit of luck. Assuming the officer on duty was *not* at the Hamilton telephone switchboard, the operator there would call Beverly with whatever information there was. Then the Beverly radio dispatcher would radio "car 45", the number designated for the Hamilton cruiser. If the Hamilton officer on duty was *in* the cruiser he got the message (portable radios were years away). At the same time, a buzzer in Depot Square would sound off and a light there would flash, broadcasting general knowledge of an emergency.

VOLUNTEERS

Forming safety committees to respond to foreign threats dates back to the American Revolution, when defense plans were first formulated. Colonel Dodge (one of Hamilton's first constables) attended a pre-revolution safety committee meeting in Gloucester. Other safety committee meetings of that time were held in Newbury, Ipswich, and elsewhere. America's entry into World War I was preceded by a Hamilton-Wenham Committee on Public Safety that addressed food, medicine, transportation, and more.

By the end of 1942 the United States had been on a wartime footing for a year. Federal troops were living in Hamilton Town Hall and operating a 24-hour-a-day report center. Three iron guns and carriages from the Hamilton Soldiers' Green, and four brass mortars from the Soldiers' Plot, had been donated to the war effort in October as meltdown stock. General George S. Patton, Jr., an Asbury Street resident, had landed in North Africa in November in command of the first American forces sent across the Atlantic.

"In keeping with the times," wrote Hamilton Police Chief Frederick in 1942, "I have trained an auxiliary police force of 25 men who have assisted the Civilian Defense (CD) Committee during blackouts, etc." The creation of the auxiliary police force was one of the main responses in Hamilton and across Massachusetts, to Governor Saltonstall's instruction to all public safety committees "to organize, to remain calm, not to create any hysteria, and to await further orders."

"These men," Frederick continued, "have been equipped with arm bands, whistles, flashlights, and night sticks. Replacements have been necessary from time to time as several of the men are now serving with our armed forces."

The Hamilton Police Auxiliary got the lion's share of the \$1,800 allocated to civil defense in 1941. That bought uniforms and training in medical care, mass casualty response, air raid warnings, blackouts, weapons handling, and a variety of other things, included training in everyday civilian police work. The auxiliary updated a Works Progress Administration map to pinpoint the location of every water supply, hydrant, building, and residence in Hamilton. Auxiliaries and other residents stockpiled aluminum and sent it to factories, and went to Air Raid Warden training in Boston. American Legion members, auxiliary members, and Hamilton high school students kept watch at aircraft observation stations on Sagamore Hill and on top of the school on Union Street. A new siren was set atop town hall so it could sound off simultaneously with the fire station siren in South Hamilton. After that, the general alarm could be heard throughout town during any and all weather conditions. Nine out of ten Hamilton residents -- including all auxiliaries -- took instruction in first aid. Participation in blackout and dim-out exercises -- scheduled and unscheduled -- was required of all residents.

The Cold War brought threats of communist world hegemony and nuclear war. In 1950 "with the Red Army marching on Korea," as the selectmen observed, the man who had guided Hamilton's civil defense throughout the World War II, former selectman John Perkins, agreed to resume the CD directorship. "Our responsibility for preparedness," Perkins emphasized, "is not reduced by the fact that we are less likely to (suffer) direct attack than other more industrialized centers."

The auxiliary took first place for marksmanship in its division in the North Shore Pistol Target League more than once. Auxiliaries practiced rifle marksmanship at the private range of Donald Cutler, Jr., and gave weekly firearms instruction to Boy Scouts -- and boys of scout age - in the Community House basement into the 1960s.

Fallout from the 1961 Cuban missile crisis, instead of firestorms and radiation, was psychological stress. Hamilton responded by continuing to merge civil defense and the auxiliary, which had always been CD's mainstay. Failing to convince the town to fund the construction of brand new fallout shelters, the CD/auxiliary converting existing shelters instead. By 1967 shelters at the Christ Church on Asbury Street and the old junior high on Union Street were reinforced, stocked, and deemed up to par by federal officials. Another shelter was under construction at the seminary. Shelters remained the number one civil defense priority through 1971, with food and supplies regularly collected from federal surplus depots, and radiation-measuring equipment was continually maintained and certified to be in working order. Domestic political upheaval brought gas masks to Hamilton in 1971, also courtesy of the federal government, for use in "civil disturbances or other emergencies," according to Hamilton CD reports.

The auxiliary was most visible during natural disasters, which have given it many opportunities to prove its worth -- Hurricane Carol in 1954, the northeast blackout in 1965, and the blizzard of 1978, to name a few. It also bolstered the police presence at Christmas tree burns, dances, plays, exhibits, fairs, horse shows, parades, and holiday celebrations. And, as CD Director Harvey Barnes once put it, given the time and money invested to train up a regular officer, "freeing regular police for regular duties" was significant.

MISCELLANAE

Bounties on foxes were in effect in Hamilton, off and on, until well into the nineteenth century. An 1804 Hamilton vote established a bounty of 12 ½ cents for crows killed in the town. A year later a bounty of six cents per dozen was put on the heads of blackbirds. In 1827 the crow bounty dropped to 10 cents a head, with 'the heads being produced to either of the selectmen.' In 1831, the bounty was 10 cents a head for old crows and 5 cents for young ones, to be paid by the town treasurer on delivery to his office. Bounty fraud became a large enough problem that in 1837 Hamilton law was revised to provide "that if any person presents a crow not killed within the limits of this town to the selectmen of this town for a bounty shall pay a fine of fifty cents to the use of the town."

A Hamilton law of 1838 made it illegal to possess, sell, or give away "any of the fireworks called rockets, crackers, squibs, or serpents without having first obtained license" from the selectmen. The fireworks fine was \$10.

1914 there were five "insane" people taken from Hamilton to the state hospital in Danvers. 1933, three persons were charged with insanity.

Hamilton first female officers were Mrs. E. A. Frear and Fay Mathewson. Frear was elected constable in 1921. Mathewson was appointed a police officer that same year -- one year after women won the right to vote. The 1913 Naumkeag Directory lists Eddy A. Frear as a farmer living on Railroad Avenue with Mary Frear, also of Railroad Avenue and also listed in the town's 1921 registry of female voters.

Bastardy (begetting an illegitimate child) and 'Gaming on the Lord's Day' were charges brought by Hamilton police well into the 20th century; so was the charge of 'stubborn child.' Fornication (sex outside marriage) was a charge brought in Hamilton as recently as the 1950s.

Items in the *Salem Gazette*, a local newspaper of the day, that might have caught the eye of Hamilton constables in 1793 include:

- Offers of bounty for the capture and return of runaways, sometimes identified as slaves, sometimes as indentured servants, and sometimes only by name.
- Notices of horse theft, some straightforward, others as a result of a lessee's failure to return the animal.
- Notices of missing household items and promises that "whoever will detect the thief or thieves, so that the goods may be recovered, shall be handsomely rewarded for their trouble."
- A reward for the capture of a Marblehead seaman who had signed onto the schooner *Polly*, received his pay in advance, and deserted.

- Notice that the militia law required the attendance at drill of every able-bodied male between the ages of 18 and 45.
- A request that "gentlemen who delight in excursions on Sundays drive more moderately as they pass houses of public worship in the time of services."
- Notice of the execution in Worcester of a murderer.
- Notice of the murder in New Haven of a five-year-old girl.
- Notice by Rufus Wheeler of Rowley, dated and timed September 30, 1793, at 9:15 am, that "whereas Abigail, the wife of the subscriber, has eloped from my bed and board, this is to warn all persons against trusting her on my account, as I will not pay any debts of her contracting, after this date."

END NOTES

¹ *Peaceable Kingdoms*, Michael Zuckerman, published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY, 1970.

² *Changing Town: Hamilton, MA 1850 to 1910*, Janice C. Pulsifer, published by Fox Run Press, Topsfield, MA, 1976.
