

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**MITCHELL C. SKLAR**

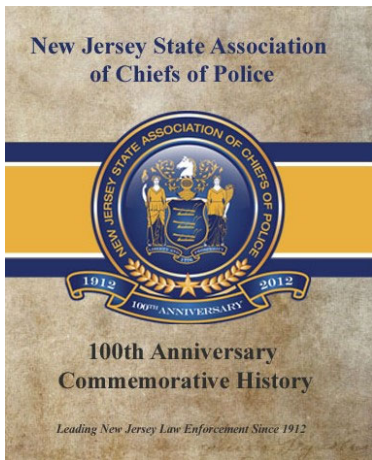


## Historic Times

Each May we honor our Life Members, the embodiment of our organization's heritage, and it was in May that we celebrated our Association's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary back in 2012. That same month we released the "NJSACOP 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative History" book.

So, I thought I would reprint here the introduction that I wrote to the Commemorative History, paying a brief homage to our organization's rich history even as we deal with the current issues that confront today.

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It has been my great honor to be the NJSACOP Executive Director since 1999, and throughout my entire tenure I have been well aware of the important, rich and varied history of this proud association. In preparing for this milestone year of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I have delved into a wide variety of archives to search out meaningful pieces of information, photos and other sources of information to help us fully document that proud tradition and history. I've visited various local historical societies and libraries, the archives at Rutgers University, researched through our own Association archives, and most interestingly of all, dug through archival materials of the newspapers that have covered and reported on New Jersey events.

Spending some time in this way, two things became strikingly clear. Over the past century the local police chief in our state has played a key role in the civic life of our communities, and has been a respected and important member of those communities. Likewise, the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police has been an engine of progress and advancement in the art and science of police leadership and administration both in the state of New Jersey and throughout the nation.

Back issues of the newspapers that have covered our state over the past century illuminate the picture painted by the archives and local histories. At one time there were many more papers covering New Jersey than publish today, and what they chose to cover, and where they placed the stories they published, speaks volumes about the values and interests of the public that they served. For decades, the coverage given to police chiefs gives a clear indication of their standing within their communities, and indeed throughout the state. Even the most routine of events became newsworthy – so long as the chief of police was involved.

What is really striking are the less-than-routine stories, the ones that show just how much respect was accorded to the New Jersey chief of police. Mostly this came in the form of stories about the fight to control crime and violence. Often these stories highlighted the chief's efforts to secure the peace and safety of his (and in those days, it was invariably a he) community, many times at the risk of his own wellbeing, and on occasion at the cost of his own life.

New Jersey police chiefs were even the "stars" of magazine ads and articles in publications such as "Modern Mechanics" and "The American City." The State Chiefs Association was also quite frequently given prominent by the newspapers, a reflection both of the prominence of the position of police chief in our state, as well as recognition of the important role played by the Association. Even the New York Times routinely reported on the installation of new Association presidents, the Annual Conference, and even on occasion on activities at the monthly State Police Chiefs Meetings.

It should be noted that the prominence of the Association was well-earned. Right from the very start, the Association sought out experts, practitioners and technological innovators to present at the membership meetings. Although taken for granted today, fingerprinting, radios, teletype, airplanes, forensics and even automobiles were once revolutionary innovations.

New Jersey's chiefs of police, through the agency of their State Association, have long been at the forefront of the effort to bring professional, effective, and efficient police and public safety services to the people of this state. The past always seems so much more tranquil than the present, but the fact is that post-World War I, New Jersey suffered from a significant crime and violence problem. And right from the start the NJSACOP was in the middle – if not at the front – of the fight to get that problem under control, as well as to modernize policing in New Jersey.

As the automobile became ever more popular, the hardy New Jersey perennial – traffic – became a cause of concern for the New Jersey Chiefs. In the 1920s the Association took the initiative to create a "Code of Hand Signals" to be used by police officers directing auto traffic. The Code was published by the Association to great effect. In fact, the idea of attempting to codify the signals that were adopted into New Jersey statute was rejected "on the grounds that it was not needed because of

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the very effective work in matters of such kind obtained through the State Police Chiefs Association." In fact, the handbook published by the NJSACOP with the uniform system of hand signals gained some international notoriety at the 1931 Paris convention of the Association of Chiefs of Police of Europe. Not content to stand still, a uniform system of traffic lights came about through the initiative and insistence of New Jersey chiefs of police.

Like their Association, New Jersey chiefs have often been innovators and leaders in advancing law enforcement. In 1928, Chief Peter Siccardi's Bergen County Police Department became the first police agency in the nation to have an "Aerial Police" unit. In 1933 the Bayonne PD became the first to use two-way radios in their vehicles.

It was not just technological advances that had the attention of the NJSACOP. So, too, did the establishment of compulsory statewide training for new police officers. Eventually that goal was realized. But the Chiefs did not just sit back and wait for it to happen. While pressing for the passage of such a law, for decades the Association took it upon itself to bring professional police education into New Jersey. The Chiefs' focus on excellence did not go unnoticed.

A newspaper editorial from 1965 got it just right:

"Professional police work" is more than a cliché or fancy slogan to back up higher salary demands. A look at the three-day program for the 53<sup>rd</sup> annual conference of the State Association of Chiefs of Police backs this up....Yes, the areas in which a modern policeman must be expert or knowledgeable are varied and many, dealing with factual information and elusive human relationships, law and ethics, as well as with criminals and other lawbreakers. We can no longer hand a rookie a gun, a badge and a night stick and expect him to cope effectively with modern social problems. We must encourage professional standards of police work, selecting the most capable men and women – and paying them accordingly.

This desire to professionalize policing in the state grew into today's NJSACOP training and professional development portfolio of programs for police executives that is second to none anywhere.

In 1990 the NJSACOP recognized the great benefits to law enforcement that would come from the adoption of best practices, or "standards." The Association's Executive Board passed a resolution that year supporting the adoption of voluntary standards for police agencies and sought out the appropriate state entities to help make this a reality. The process moved in fits and starts, eventually petering out. Not content to wait any longer, in 2002 the NJSACOP moved forward to create our own voluntary state accreditation program, which is now one of the largest and most successful law enforcement accreditation programs in the country.

As the calendar turned to a new millennium, NJSACOP introduced technological tools to help chiefs share information, policies, knowledge and communicate in a way unimaginable just a few years before.

Throughout the past 10 decades, the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, and the members who make it what it is (and always has been), have led the way for law enforcement in our state, through good times and bad. For a century, NJSACOP has helped make New Jersey a better place to live, work, and visit through the relentless pursuit of excellence in police leadership. If anything, that pursuit will become sharper and more focused as we confront today's exceptionally difficult economic and political realities.

This book is an effort to memorialize and honor the history of this great organization, and to recall the memory of all of those individuals who have made it what it is today. Not every story could be told; not every name and face could be recollected. But we think it will give the reader a vivid look into the colorful and sometimes stormy history of New Jersey's Chiefs of Police and their state association.

The NJSACOP's international reputation has been one hundred years in the making. We work every day to live up to it, and to see that it carries into our next century.

*H. T. Allen C. S.M.*