

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

WLBZ Radio Station Records

Manuscripts

10-22-1954

Ten Minutes at Bangor Police Headquarters

WLBZ Radio

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/wlbz_station_records



Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [Radio Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

WLBZ Radio, (October 22 1954) "Ten Minutes at Bangor Police Headquarters". *WLBZ Radio Station Records*. MS 608. T.1.8. Special Collections, Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine.
https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/wlbz_station_records/124

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in WLBZ Radio Station Records by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections Department

Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Ten Minutes at Bangor Police Headquarters

Date: Oct. 22, 1954

Recording number: T.1.8

Length of recording: 11:25

[transcript begins]

[Sound of phone ringing.]

Dispatcher: Police department, Dispatcher Whittemore. Well, he's on the way up there. He's got car one, car six is in the garage. Yes, he knows where you are and he'll pick you up right away. Alright, bye.

W.C. Mincher: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. That was police dispatcher Dick Whittemore of the Bangor Police Department to introduce this feature story tonight. We have set up our tape recorder in the communications room of Bangor police headquarters on what had seemed to be, up until now, a relatively quiet day, but you never can tell how business is going to be at the police department. We expect that in the next few minutes there will be some radio traffic that is the officers out in the squad cars reporting in, perhaps answering calls. Hope there will be no trouble, but in order to give you an idea of what goes on in the average day at Bangor police headquarters we are ready to take down just exactly what is going on here at Bangor Police Department's communications headquarters. One of the cars just reported that a traffic light is out. That's only one of the many routine reports which come in here in the course of a day. Nothing too exciting, as I understand, most of the time. Is that Dick? Most of your work here, radio traffic, phone calls, and so forth is routine traffic.

Whittemore: Yes, a great deal of it is routine Bill. We do get some unusual requests and questions come in during the day about all sorts of things, almost anything you could think of. People sometimes call in and seem to think the police have the answer to almost anything. Well we don't, we dream up one.

Mincher: Well can you think, a little bit later Dick I'll come back to you and we'll see if you can think of something unusual perhaps, not necessarily an accident or anything criminal, but something unusual and also not including Snapper. I'm sure everybody is familiar with Snapper by now. Anyway what's the progress report on Snapper? Any family?

Whittemore: Well we just disposed of two kittens, just a few weeks ago, that she had and did a nice job of raising. They were fat and strong and running around here. We had several requests for them and they were given away. What the situation is with Snapper right now hasn't been diagnosed recently.

Mincher: What's her total now?

Whittemore: Well let's see, since I've been here, which has been almost two years, she's had four or five litters since I have been in the last two years.

Mincher: No visit to the police department is complete without a report on Snapper. I see Chief John Toole has just walked in and I wonder perhaps if this might not be a good time to talk to him. Good evening, Chief. Can you tell me -- actually although it's evening when people are hearing this, it's morning now, it's quarter of eleven on Friday morning, October 21st -- how does our police department here in Bangor stack up in size with those of cities of about the same population as Bangor?

Toole: Well Bangor Police Department stacks up very favorably in size to police departments throughout New England and in fact I have seen a lot of police departments in New England and I'll take the Bangor Police Department any day.

Mincher: Well, it certainly does a good job, Chief, as anyone can see by watching our almost impossible tangles of traffic in the afternoon and how smoothly they are handled in spite of the tremendous volumes of cars. How's our safety records for the first half of this year?

Toole: Let's look at this book over here, Bill. Now we all know that traffic is a main problem of a police department and we are doing very well this year. We have had 620 accidents this year as compared with 751 in the same period of time last year.

Mincher: Is that up through what period?

Toole: That's through the month of September up until the first of October. Now our none fatal accident rate is 98 this year compared to 115 last year and our property damage rate is 520 this year compared to 631 last year.

Mincher: Well we have actually made a pretty fair start on 1954. Those figures are, most of them are unnecessary and certainly unwanted, but compared to last year this is a better year so far.

Toole: As far as accidents are concerned it's very much better than last year although we have one bad black mark. That is a death rate. We've had seven this year compared to five last year and that really is bad. Although I'll grant you that all of these deaths have occurred in the outlying districts of Bangor, it still makes a very bad record.

Mincher: Is speed a problem in these outlying areas? Is it still Chief? I know it always has been.

Toole: That is a cause of all of these accidents, these deaths rather, speed. Too fast for conditions.

Mincher: A police department is only as strong as its number and we couldn't possibly have enough men to cover all of these roads all of the time. So roving patrols is about the best we can do in these outlying areas, is that right?

Toole: That's right. These squad cars with the patrol and the motorcycles and so forth. It is bad there were seven deaths and we hope that someday that we will be able to get through the year without a single death. I don't know if that's possible, but we hope so.

Mincher: I've read somewhere in a safety manual, chief, that November and December are about the two worst months a year, is that so?

Toole: Yes, we have our two worst months of the year coming up right now, November and December. Next month the time will return back to standard time which makes it bad. Darkness approaches earlier and those really are the bad months, but we are hoping to get by those two months and keep that death rate down.

Mincher: Without any actual figures this may be a question that will put you on the spot. Are November and December considered worse than say January and February chief?

Toole: Oh yes, we have a lot of rain, there's leaves in the ground which makes it slippery going. Kids are playing in the leaves. I think in January and February that people know the condition then and cars are equipped with chains and they drive more safely, they don't take as many chances as they do this time of year.

Mincher: I was going to ask that. As soon as people get acclimated to slippery weather all over again every single year is there always a rash of minor accidents after the first snow for example?

Toole: Yes, there is. Right after the first snow storm we have a lot of accidents and then they keep diminishing as people realize that winter is upon them and they equip their cars with the equipment that they need.

Mincher: Thank you very much chief. Now let's go back to dispatcher Dick Whittemore and everything does seem to be very quiet. If we had wished for excitement, we would have been disappointed Dick. Can you tell me what is going on now with the officers who are out?

Whittemore: Alright, now it's quiet because many of the cars are out covering the school crossings. About four times a day we have to cover the school crossings. Children going to school and then coming back in the afternoon. That's car five calling in, he was in a run up on Davis Street. That was just a complaint, nothing important.

Mincher: The officers who are out now on school crossings are in addition to our women traffic guides?

Whittemore: Yes, that's right. That's one racket we are very proud of here, the crossings. And we have, let's see chief, how many traffic guides do we have right now?

Toole: We have eleven traffic guides. We also have five patrol guides.

Whittemore: Okay, just a minute, I'll answer this call. [Call audio not very clear.] That was about a hit and run we have been looking for and evidently, they have been having trouble locating him and his car has recently been moved, so he seems to think he's around now so we are going to try to reach him. But on those crossings you were talking about, we send five patrol men out, four times a day, to cover these crossings and that's one record that we are very proud of. It's been many years now I guess since a child

has been hit going or coming from school. Which is outstanding I believe across the nation as far as the number of crossings we have, schools we have, and children going and coming.

Mincher: Working with the news is my business and I can't recall one at all, Dick.

Whittemore: We have been very lucky in that way. In fact, four times a day we have our fingers crossed just hoping because kids are wild you know and they'll just dash across the street even with a policeman there so we have to keep a pretty close eye on them. So at this time there are the crossing and things are pretty quiet. We have four cars out now. For the last three days, business across the desk has been rather slow and routine.

Mincher: Well, actually that's what we like to hear. Thank you very much, Dick. Dispatcher Dick Whittemore of Bangor Police Department and Chief John B. Toole who gave us a few words of advice on safety. This trip to Bangor Police Headquarters has been unproductive as far as excitement is concerned, but it has been very productive as far as showing you how to routine work goes here at Police Headquarters. From time to time on feature story, we will be dropping back here at Bangor Police Department and you will be able to see many different phases of the work because at every ten-minute period of the day there is always something different going on.

[transcript ends]

For more information about this transcript, audio recording, or other materials in Special Collections at the University of Maine, contact:

Fogler Special Collections
5729 Raymond H. Fogler Library
Orono, ME 04469-5729
207.581.1686
um.library.spc@maine.edu