

DAWN DAYS  
*of the*  
STATE POLICE

BY  
DR. GEORGE F. CHANDLER



*Compliments of Oneida Daily Dispatch*

PUBLISHED BY THE RECORD NEWSPAPERS

1938

**DAWN DAYS**  
*of the*  
**STATE POLICE**

**By Dr. George F. Chandler**

Noted Surgeon and Soldier, and Founder of the  
New York State Troopers

**Published by The Record Newspapers**

**TROY, N. Y.**

**1938**

## PREFACE

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A year ago Dr. George F. Chandler, founder of the New York State Police and then, as now, a surgeon of national prominence, wrote out the intimate story of his connection with the Troopers. It was a human document, filled with the facts of organization and development. He read the manuscript at a dinner in New York City.

The reception of the paper was enthusiastic and it became evident to many who were present that the document ought to be preserved. It was history, written by the man who had made the history.

Realizing that Troy, as the seat of one of the State Police Barracks and the home of the Police School, had been from the start close to the activities of the Troopers and their organization, Dr. Chandler finally agreed to permit The Record Newspapers to offer to their readers this sketch of police beginnings. The Record Newspapers are deeply indebted to Dr. Chandler for permitting them to be the agency through which the story can be preserved for future members of the body and their friends as well as for those even closer to the facts he offers.

For those who are not familiar with the career of Dr. Chandler it might be added that he attended Syracuse University and was graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University in 1895. He practiced for many years in Kingston and there joined the National Guard, serving in the United States Army on the Mexican border and in the World War. For more than six years he headed the Department of State Police which he had founded, retiring in 1923 to return to the practice of surgery.

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In order that every member of the New York State Police may become familiar with the beginnings of the organization The Record Newspapers are herewith publishing Dr. Chandler's history in pamphlet form and presenting a copy to each trooper.

THE RECORD NEWSPAPERS

Oct. 1, 1938.

# DAWN DAYS OF THE STATE POLICE

## CHAPTER I.

### "I Have the Man!"

Upon my return home from border service in April, 1917, I had just started my practice when we entered the war, and I was expecting to go with my regiment—when I received a telephone call from Governor Whitman, who was Governor of New York State. I had not seen him for some years, except for a few brief moments when he came to the "Border" to inspect the New York troops stationed there. I thought that he wanted to consult me professionally, as I had often looked after him in the early years of my practice, because he only asked me to come and see him.

When I saw him at Albany the next morning, he told me that he wanted to talk to me about the Constabulary—or State Police—bill that he had just signed and had become law. I was surprised, as I had heard nothing about the bill—having been away on border service. He told me to take the bill, read it over, and then think out what kind of an organization it should be.

After deliberating over it all morning I gave him my ideas. He seemed pleased and we then talked over who was to create, or organize, the Department. After considering several names pro and con, he got up out of his chair, and went to the window in the Executive Chamber. After looking out for a few minutes he suddenly turned and said:

"I have the man. It is you!"

I could not see it, as I wanted to

go into war service very soon with my regiment. The appointment hung fire for some days, when Governor Whitman again sent for me. It seems that Col. Theodore Roosevelt, the ex-President, wanted to organize a Division for service in the Great War, but had been turned down by Washington; therefore he then asked Governor Whitman to let him organize a Division under the Militia Act of the State of New York. Governor Whitman was going to do this, and wanted me to be present at the luncheon at the Executive Mansion that day.

At the luncheon were Colonel Roosevelt, Sen. Douglas Robinson, nephew of Colonel Roosevelt, Maj. Gen. Wotherspoon, Maj. Frank Hoppin (military secretary to Governor Whitman), Governor and Mrs. Whitman, and myself. After luncheon Governor Whitman announced that he would grant the authority of Colonel Roosevelt to raise a Division in New York State, for war purposes, under the Militia Act. Colonel Roosevelt was delighted, and he immediately turned to General Wotherspoon:

"General, I will make you my Chief of Staff.

A little later he turned to me and said: "Chandler, if you organize the Constabulary, I will ask Governor Whitman to let me have the unit, and you shall be my Chief of Cavalry!" I saw visions of the Rough Riders, and immediately told Governor Whitman that I would undertake the job. He ap-

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pointed me at once, and next day, May 2, 1917, I was confirmed by the Senate of New York State.

After luncheon we all went into the sitting room of the Mansion for cigars. At this point the butler came to Governor Whitman, told him that there were a number of reporters in the hall who wanted to interview Colonel Roosevelt. The Governor spoke to Colonel Roosevelt, who—after a few moments thought—said:

"Have them all assemble in the Green Room, opposite the stairs in the main hall."

Governor Whitman gave this order to the butler. In a moment or two Colonel Roosevelt went over to the Governor and asked if he might go upstairs for a few minutes, and said that he wanted to use the back stairs—remarking, with a laugh, "I am pretty familiar with this house!"

Of course his request was granted, and Colonel Roosevelt left the room by the door opening into the dining room, away from the hall. I thought that this use of the back stairs was curious, so I went out into the hall and saw that the reporters (ten or a dozen) were all in the Green Room—waiting. I stood there for a few minutes; then I heard Colonel Roosevelt coming down the stairs, and when he came to the main landing he

stopped a moment, and then ran down the rest of the stairs, two steps at a time, and dashed in among the reporters, waving his hands high. He grasped some of the ones he knew by the hands, calling: "Hello, and how are you?"

Then he announced, in an enthusiastic and excited manner, that Governor Whitman had granted his request to raise a division in the state for war purposes. After a few minutes of animated conversation he bade them good-bye, and with a wave of his hand, turned and went back to the little sitting room. Sinking at once into a chair, he put his head in his hand—as if he were completely exhausted. He remained sitting without saying a word, for a long time. His entrance before the reporters and his announcement was dramatic. He had deliberately made it so, tired as he was. No wonder a man of such great ability, and with his theatrical sense, arrived at the position he attained.

Colonel Roosevelt did not raise the division, as he was soon told by Washington that even if he did it would not be accepted. I therefore found myself with a commission as superintendent of State Police, and an appropriation of \$50,000 on my hands. There was nothing for me to do but go ahead and organize the department.



## CHAPTER II.

### Two Women.

I was sure that I could organize four troops as a military unit, because of my training, but I knew nothing about police at that time—except in a general way. I realized that nobody knew any more about rural police in New York State than I did, as it was a brand new thing for the state. While thinking the problem over, taking an estimate of the situation as it were, it came to me in a flash that a doctor and a policeman were very much alike in their work. For when a law of health is broken a doctor is needed, and if a law of civilization is broken a policeman is needed. They are both subject to call at all times of the day or night, and they alike have to meet the young and the old, the drunk and the sober, the rich and the poor, the sane and the insane.

For the doctor: is the patient sick, or is he a faker? Does he need advice, or medicine, or an operation? Does he need attention where he is, or should he be removed to his home (if not there), or to a hospital?

For the policeman: is there a crime committed, what kind of a crime? Would a warning suffice, or must an arrest be made—followed by removal to jail, witnesses obtained, and the evidence of the crime safeguarded?

These two jobs seemed so much alike that I carried out the analogy further in my mind, until I could see that there are needed specialists in police work: Finger-print men, handwriting experts, microscopists . . . just as X-ray men, anesthetists, and microscopists are

necessary in medicine. All at once I felt that I knew the principles of police work, and had confidence in organizing the department, with the idea in mind that the members of the department were to be more or less doctors of civilization.

It was not as simple as that, I soon found. It seems that years ago Senator Platt once threatened to have a constabulary raised that would come down to New York City, and police the city. The powers in New York City had not forgotten this, therefore nearly everybody in the City of New York was against a constabulary. Labor was against it, and so were the police throughout the state. In fact it seemed that nearly everybody was against it.

I learned that the reason the bill was passed was due to the work of two women, Miss Moycea Newell and Kathryn Mayo (the writer). Two or three years before the bill was passed, a workman on Miss Newell's estate near Mt. Kisco was murdered by some Italians—money in a payroll was the cause—and the cooperation of the sheriff's office was so poor that these women vowed then and there that there should be a state police in New York State. They went to Pennsylvania and studied the state police there under the late Colonel (then Major) John C. Groome, a wonderful organizer and policeman extraordinary. This was the only state police, at that time, in existence in the United States. Miss Mayo then wrote her book, "Justice To All," and Colonel Roosevelt wrote the forward. It made a fine impression, and these wo-

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men soon organized a committee for state police, made up of many well known men and women who had homes in the country, in different parts of the state. This committee hired a woman speaker who had a fiery and persuasive manner, and the state was campaigned. Governor Whitman at last said he would sign the bill, if it were passed by the Legislature.

It was passed in the Assembly, but was fought to a finish in the Senate, until finally the Senate (which was Republican) went into caucus. One senator, (Charles Newton), who later became attorney general under Governor Miller, held out. Unless the bill read that the superintendent should be appointed for five years, and should only be removed by charges preferred by the governor, after a hearing before the Senate, he would not vote for it. Finally this was put into the bill, and it was passed and signed by Governor Whitman.

There was no place for me to have headquarters, nothing in the bill (a sketchy affair) fortunately for me as an organizer. Finally the Adjutant General gave me the use of a small room in his headquarters in the Telephone Building in Albany. Later we were assigned a small room, No. 100, on the ground floor of the capitol. Fortunately through General Dyer I got hold of Stanley Beagle, as secretary. I soon found that he was unusual in understanding finances . . . and as I knew very little about finances I turned this matter over to him. Later I made him a sergeant-major, and he has been the watch-dog for the treasury of the department ever since.

When it came to getting men, the Civil Service Commission immediately told me that they would examine the candidates and furnish me a list. This I was absolutely opposed to, for I would not take the responsibility of sending out men, to do police work, who were assigned to me. I wanted to examine my own men. We had a bitter fight, but I went before the Attorney General, accompanied by several of the Civil Service Commissioners, and stated my case. Luckily for me the Attorney General saw the point, and rendered an opinion favorable to me—after studying the bill. Had he not done so I would have quit the job and gone into the Army at once.

Civil Service is a curse to police all over the country, to my way of thinking. It is the illegitimate child of politics, and allows the politicians to really control the various police forces in the United States. Whatever success the New York State Police has had is, in the main, due to the fact that it has been kept out of Civil Service, and so out of politics.

We held the first examination in the Assembly Chamber in the Capitol. About two thousand applicants appeared and nearly swamped us. We gave those that were examined a practical examination: Stripped them, looked them over well for physical defects; had them write a 200 word letter about their trip to Albany—or about some important happening in their lives, so that I could ascertain whether they could write legibly, were able to express themselves, and had some imagination; following this, a three minute psychological test—on a printed sheet of paper; then a

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memory test, where thirty different objects were placed upon a table . . . and after a three minute study, if any of the candidates could not write down twenty of these objects, he was out. A few practical questions about a horse and his care concluded the examination.

In connection with these examinations I used to stand before the candidates and say something like this: "Gentlemen, you are here to take an examination to become a State Trooper. There are six hundred of you in this room. Out of this number I can say that there are sixty men here who are potential crooks: What I mean is that there are sixty men here who, if they have the opportunity, would try to beat their way on a train or street car by not paying their fare; or if they happened to be in somebody's home, waiting to see someone, and a box of cigars was lying open on the table they would slip one or two of these cigars into their pockets—after carefully removing the bands so that they could not be identified. This examination will tell whether you are physically and mentally fit, and we are trying to find those who are the best, but we cannot find out in this examination those of you who are potential crooks. Therefore, should you pass, you will have to sign a statement that you will without question, resign at the request of your Captain within the first six months." This of course was not in the bill, but I made it my own rule and it worked out satisfactorily.

Any social tendencies will crop out during the first six months, as a rule. Of course this does not always work out either. Once I had an excellent Sergeant who suddenly, on account of a woman, stole five thousand dollars and an automobile, and skipped the state. I was interviewed by a group of reporters at once, and they asked

for an explanation. I thought for a moment, and said:

"Christ had twelve apostles, and one of them went wrong. I have between three and four hundred men, and one of them has gone wrong. Up to date my batting average has been pretty good!"

They saw the point, and were mighty kind about this matter in the papers.

The day the examinations began put me in a rather embarrassing position, because Governor Whitman did not want to antagonize the powerful Civil Service Commission, and had told me not to and did not know about my fight with them before the Attorney General. I had to think fast, but hit upon this scheme—which worked to perfection. I suggested to the governor that as he had signed the bill creating the police, it would be a fine thing if he appeared in the Assembly Chamber and addressed the candidates. He agreed, and at once asked about the Civil Service. I told him that they would be there. "All right!" said the Governor. I was delighted, and went up to the Civil Service rooms in the Capitol and told the commissioners that it was the wish of the Governor that they be in the Assembly Chamber when he addressed the candidates that afternoon. Reluctantly they came, because the wish of the Governor is virtually a command, and they did not dare refuse! Everything worked out well. The Governor was pleased at seeing the Civil Service Commissioners present and apparently sanctioning the examination, and he made a fine address. The Civil Service Commissioners came and went, but that was all—because from that time on we examined all of our candidates without question. The same examination has been used up to the present time.



## CHAPTER III.

### Right and Evil.

Politics was rampant in Albany, and a new department looked like good picking for those in power. But I soon found that Democrats and Republicans alike, when it was actually demonstrated to them that fitness and ability and nothing else counted with us, were all right and left us alone. I well remember when a venerable senator from Dutchess County, who had served many terms, came to me with a man to be placed on the force. I looked at the man, who was a pot-bellied, flat-footed, horrible physical specimen. Taking the senator aside, I told him that the man would not do. He argued with me and said that he was a trusted constituent of his, and had been for years, and that he had promised to place him in the new department. I was adamant. However he kept at it, and brought me others, but I kept turning them down—until the sixth or seventh man, who was excellent. We appointed him at once. The next day the old senator called again and asked about his man. I told him that he had passed and was already enlisted, whereupon he slammed his fist down on the desk and said:

"By George, I knew that I would get a man in here some day!"

I told him that I would enlist all of the men like the last that he would bring before me. He was so well pleased that he passed the word around that we were organizing on the level, and I never had any trouble afterwards—except with George Glynn. He was Chairman of the Republican State

Committee, but he soon learned how matters stood, became a good friend, and never bothered us. In fact I never had Governor Whitman, Governor Miller, or Governor Smith ask a favor that was in any way political, and the Legislature became more than kind. For as soon as they knew that we were actually out of politics, they were all relieved—and our department could not have had more consideration in every way. It was a pleasure to work with them, and I have found out that legislators are men who try their best to represent the people who elected them, and are as a rule a fine lot of hard-working men.

I decided on a camp for organization near the center of the state, Manlius — near Syracuse, and we trained there from June 20 to Sept. 7, 1917. I called the camp "Camp Newayo"—a combination of the names of the two women who had really brought about the organization, Newell and Mayo.

I went out west and bought horses. During the summer one of the mares gave birth to a mule colt. Governor Whitman, who had heard nothing from me in some time. . . but had heard that we were near Syracuse, motored up one day—as he was near by. He was pleased with what he saw, and (as I was away at the time in Albany) the officers who were taking him around, showed him this colt. He said that it was the "first time in history that the state had gotten something for nothing!"

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The idea of a uniform had been bothering me. What should be the color was a question, and what should be the design. One day, as I was riding on a train, upon looking out of the window I saw that Nature used green for the foliage and grass. So I fell to wondering what was the reason. Since the sun was yellow and the sky blue, and the combination of blue and yellow made green, it seemed to me that there could have been no other color used by Nature . . . and that there was a definite reason why everything in general was green. Surely there must be some good reason for the color of our uniform. After a while I came to the conclusion that white is usually employed to depict right, while black is the symbol of evil. Therefore right and evil clashing would make a mixture of black and white—so I had fabricated a cloth that contained equal parts of black and white thread, resulting in a neutral gray. It is the only cloth that I know of which is made in this way, as all other gray cloth has some slight shade in it. Therefore we had it patented. Then I added royal purple as a touch, because purple had never been used before in the police or military in this country. Three years later I added black stripes to the breeches and put black slices on the sleeves; this finished it, and the uniform has never been changed.

I also carried out this idea in the stationery for the department, using gray paper and purple ink. This colored paper idea soon caught on in the comptroller's office, because it was easy to find our files by the gray paper. Now the other departments have their own colors.

I drew my own design for the uniform, and had 19 different firms bid and make samples. But the uniform was so radical in design at this time, that it was impossible for them to get the idea—and the uniforms they made all looked like chauffeurs' livery.

I was discouraged, but finally James Russell, owner of the Russell Uniform Co., said that he could reproduce any design. After spending a whole day with me he produced just what I wanted: So then the men were measured for uniforms.

In and around Syracuse were stationed several thousand troops, as it was war time, and this police uniform was such a radical change from that of the Army that most of my men objected to it. Finally a few went to Syracuse in uniform, and they were all elated upon their return. It seems that the Army officers, when they saw the men (the uniform being new to them) thought that the Troopers were probably foreign officers. So majors, colonels, and even generals, saluted them first as they passed by, and even arose and stood at attention when they entered a hotel lobby! The rest of the men wanted to try it, and they all did with startling results. Before long they all liked the uniform and became accustomed to it.

I put the revolver on the outside of the uniform, in an emergency holder, on the left side—so that it could be quickly drawn by the right hand in case of sudden necessity. I felt that this would place the policeman on an equal footing with the crook. It is surprising that the police chiefs at this time, throughout New York State, objected to carrying the revolver exposed—but they did so loudly, and I had a very unpleasant time. At the meeting of the International Police Chiefs in Detroit, I read a paper on the subject which was booed at one point—as the idea was so radical. As far as I can find out this was the first police force in the United States ever ordered to carry the revolver on the outside of the uniform regularly, and on the left side. Now, most policemen carry their guns on the outside of their uniforms, where they can get them in a hurry.