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## Police Science Book Reviews

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## POLICE SCIENCE BOOK REVIEWS

*Edited by*

**Paul V. Trovillo**

**POLICE SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES.** By *Bruce Smith*. Harper & Brothers, Publishers (New York and London, 1940). Pp. xx, 372, index. \$4.00.

First, let us say a few words about the author. After graduation from Columbia Law School in 1916, Mr. Smith became a staff member of the Institute of Public Administration and he has had 24 years in which to study government in all its phases. He has been in intimate contact with Federal, state, and local administrators and has been employed as counsel in a wide variety of practical political problems. Thus, he has a unique background for his study of police systems:—not only does he know the police but he knows the environment of police activities. To illustrate: he was counsel for the Joint Legislative Commission on Taxation and Retrenchment for the State of New York, 1922-23; Mayor's Advisory Committee, Chicago, 1931-33; Westchester County Committee on Government, 1934; the International Association of Chiefs of Police 1928-31. He assisted in the Missouri and Illinois Crime Surveys and he wrote the Chicago Police Survey. Altogether, he has studied intensively and separately the police systems of more than 60 cities, in this Country and abroad. And all of this police study was done from an objective, legal and governmental viewpoint. He has been an active member of the New York State Commission on Administration of Justice, the State's Law Revision Commission, the Governor's Crime Commission and other organizations too numerous to mention here.

From this combination of training, opportunity, and activity came valuable books, written by himself or under his direction, the most notable being, "The State Police," "Rural Crime Control," "Uniform Crime Reporting," "Chicago Police Problems," and "Police Administration in New York State."

In the instant book we have the culmination of a quarter of a century of experience and labor. Suffice it to say that Bruce Smith is *THE* authority in this field and the one man in the country who could write this book—an outsider (i.e. not a policeman), but an experienced, practical man; a scholar, but one who knows the shadier side of government and realizes that it must be considered; a specialist, but a man who can balance his specialty in the background.

Now consider the book. We can get the flavor of the whole from a few morsels in the opening chapter, "The Police Problem":

"Our police problem also is due in part to inactivity and neglect."

"There can be no doubt that the greatest handicap of modern police administration is derived from partisan politics."

"In city after city and in state after state it is literally true that the general public does not want law enforcement in the strict sense of the term."

"As often as not, law enforcement reformers have succeeded only in replacing one set of corrupt or incompetent officials with another set of the same or similar stripe."

"If there were fewer police in politics, there would be less politics in police."

"On the whole, it is not men, money, and materials that American police chiefly lack, but a favorable climate in which to grow and develop."

"The imposition of fines and other penalties for traffic law infractions often leaves the violator unconvinced of the justice of such action."

"Popular opinion is convinced, however, that third degree abuses are both universal and of common occurrence."

"Against this background of high lights and shadows two features stand out in

bold relief. One is the pervading influence of corruption. The second feature is in striking contrast. It represents the mighty and apparently irresistible surge of certain forces toward a new standard of administration and performance."

"Yet as the patrolman walks his beat his mind does not persistently dwell upon the code of criminal procedure or the latest report on juvenile delinquency."

"The task of raising the level of police performance does not hinge upon the use of mechanical aids as so many suppose. It depends upon sound organization and efficient procedures which are applied to—and by—alert and intelligent servants of the police organism."

"Our so-called systems are mere collections of police units having some similarity of authority, organization, or jurisdiction; but they lack any systematic relationship to each other."

"It is clear that there are about 40,000 separate and distinct police agencies in the United States."

"Let a crime be committed which promises to make headline news and all pretense at cooperative relationships may be thrown to the winds."

All of these quotations are from the first chapter! Of course, most of these remarks are well known, but they illustrate the pungency of the text and the wisdom of the author. All through the book as I first read it there was sentence after sentence which I marked or underlined. Since there is no place in this review to use them, the reviewer must be content to state: "This is one book which I shall keep. Bruce Smith has written a sound, enduring, basic text on policing. None of us should try to get along without it."

Now, what of the body of the book itself? Here, again, I must use the words of the author. He says, on page 29:

"Accordingly, the pages which follow are concerned first of all with crime and criminals, and with the gross returns secured from operating the criminal justice machine. This is succeeded by a descriptive treatment of the various police systems of the United States, undertaken not from the point of view of the malfunction-

ing which may characterize this or that particular unit, but rather in an effort to show what each type of police unit is, what each is intended to accomplish, and what are the major administrative problems which cluster about each type, as well as about the police field as a whole. If, after each problem is identified, some light can be thrown upon why it is a problem, the formulation of future policies with respect to our police structures may be accelerated. For if substantial gains are to be made, they must be effected through discovering new avenues of approach, not to one police problem alone, but to many."

The above paragraph sums up Mr. Smith's book. It is no description of particular systems (and in this respect the title is misleading), nor is it a collection of examples of police "malfunctioning." Rather, it is a summary of the problems of the whole police field.

There is no denying the fact that the author has produced a standard work of great and enduring value. In some respects, however, it is disappointing. It is dull in spots and all of it is difficult to read. The writer's style is that of the slow, careful scholar; almost every statement is qualified and ponderous. Undoubtedly this is caused by the excessive use of generalities throughout, unrelieved by illustrations (except in Chapter VIII—"Central Services"). The tables and graphs are good, but some of them are produced in type so small that they are almost illegible (e.g. p. 141. One map was printed up-side-down, by the way). And all-in-all there is too much summarization. The writer seems to be straining himself to cut down the space and to confine his ideas to as few words as possible. The result is that it becomes too impersonal. He has little to recommend and he seldom mentions people, plans or proposals, bar association and crime commission reports, police-school curricula, or leaders in the field. He seems over-cautious. For example, we recall a statement: "*With certain notable exceptions*, our American police have not, in the past, been recruited with an eye to the future leadership of the force" (p. 229). What were those *notable exceptions*? Scores of

such sentences appear and they leave the reader unsatisfied, desirous of more factual, concrete illustrations.

Throughout my reading of the book I wondered, "Now what does Bruce Smith really think about this—and that—problem?" *He never pinned himself down.* This is a matter of some regret, but perhaps it is all to the good. He produced a strong, sane, fair, unbiased and even brilliant picture of the problems of policing. Obviously, he limited his work to that; he was not bent upon entertaining, nor collecting a mass of "materials." In what he set out to do he did an excellent job.

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GUN COLLECTING. By *Charles Edward Chapel*. Coward-McCann, Inc., (New York, 1939), 228 pp., 12 plates and Frontispiece, \$2.50.

This is an invaluable book for one who desires to take up the fascinating hobby of gun collecting, and it is intriguing to anyone who has any interest in guns. The development of guns is traced from the hand cannon to the modern automatic, particular stress being laid on methods of ignition. These methods are studied in a chronological survey of the hand cannon, matchlock, wheel lock, flintlock, percussion, and cartridge periods. Classification of collections according to ignition periods is suggested. The chapters on classification, identification, condition, and economics of gun collection are of particular value to the collector. The chapter on gun photography is excellent, as precise details are given. The first principle in photography is proper illumination and the procedure recommended accomplishes the desired result. The appendix contains a list of the principal Museum Gun Collections, Dealers in Firearms and a list of Gun Collector Clubs.

The reviewer has only words of praise for this interesting and unique volume. He feels, however, that the descriptions of the many variations in ignition mechanism would have been made much clearer if they had been accompanied by photographs or drawings. To a collector these details are important.

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THE GUN COLLECTOR'S HANDBOOK OF VALUES. By *Charles Edward Chapel*. Published by the author (San Leandro, California, 1940), 220 pp., 32 plates and Frontispiece, \$2.50.

About two thousand American and foreign arms, mostly pistols and revolvers, are described in this book, some very briefly. The book is intended for those who wish seriously to take up gun collecting as a hobby, rather than for the expert, and it contains much sound advice as to the way to proceed in starting a collection. His method of evaluation is explained and his discussion of the factors which determine values is lucid. The chapter on "Condition" should be read and re-read by every amateur collector. The Croft system of condition rating, first described in detail in the author's previous work, "Gun Collecting," is discussed briefly and then the author's own modifications are explained. The amateur must have a clear understanding of the terms used.

In the chapter on "Personalities in the Antique Arms Trade" the beginner is given the names and addresses of a large number of dealers and collectors who are considered both reliable and experienced. Seventeen of them are given special mention. This should be a real help to the beginner.

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