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# POLICE SCIENCE

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BRUCE SMITH\*

O. W. WILSON

Shortly after learning of the death of Bruce Smith the Editorial Board felt it appropriate to have a brief sketch prepared dealing with Dr. Smith's contributions to the field of police administration. Dean O. W. Wilson was considered the most logical choice to prepare such a paper, and he most graciously consented. Dean Wilson is well known to our readers through his various contributions to this Journal, his writings in the field of police administration, his long career as a police administrator, and through his work as Dean of the School of Criminology of the University of California.—EDITOR.

Bruce Smith died on September 18, 1955. He will long be remembered in police circles as the architect of Uniform Crime Reporting and as a tireless worker on behalf of sound police administration. His friends, however, will remember him, not so much for his impressive contributions to good government and the administration of criminal justice as for his qualities as a man. To many of his relatives and close friends he was known as Uncle Jack, a title indicative of the warm personal relationships that he established.

Bruce Smith presented an imposing appearance that radiated confidence and authority. An inch over six feet, his erect bearing, bold mien, and booming voice reminded the onlooker of a policeman—although he never served in this capacity. In the latter years of his life, his nearly white crew-cut hair and full, neatly trimmed but somewhat bristly moustache, combined with his regular features to produce an attention-demanding, distinguished appearance. He was a man of swiftly changing moods that were mirrored in facial expressions that varied unmistakably from the earnest and solicitous to the scowling and indignant; his moods were also evidenced by boisterous laughter or roaring disapproval frequently accompanied by loud and impetuous curses.

Smith combined the best qualities of policeman, executive, statesman, and scholar. He will be remembered by his colleagues in part for his tremendous energy and drive and ability to produce polished work under heavy pressure, his friendship and loyalty to those who labored for good government, his generous helping hand always ready for proffer to his fellow man, his courage to lead an unpopular cause as a minority of one and his ability to win the majority in its support, his genius for common sense which he applied rigorously in his work, his dedication to fair play for and by policemen, and his willingness to concede the unimportant in order to gain the important. But they will also remember him for the more congenial side of his personality evi-

\*Much of the material in this article relating to the early life of Bruce Smith was taken from his profile by Robert Shaplen appearing in the *New Yorker*, February 27, 1954. Miss Audrey M. Davies, of the Institute of Public Administration, and "Uncle Jack's" son, Bruce, also provided much useful information.

denced by his bon vivant manner, his warmth and feeling, his apt phrase in both the written and spoken word, his "quotable quotes" collected avidly by some of his friends, his ability as a raconteur, his love of sailing and the great outdoors, and his ability and willingness to relax with friends and disengage his mind from the most pressing problems.

Bruce Smith was born in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York, on May 23rd, 1892, the direct descendant of an early settler on Long Island who had received a large crown grant of land between Huntington and Port Jefferson and for whom Smithtown was named. His father was Clarence B. Smith, Republican, banker, and successful real estate operator; his mother Jessie Annin Smith.

As a youth Bruce attended Public School No. 3, and after graduation from Erasmus High School, his father sent him to Wesleyan University at Middletown, Connecticut, where Bruce distinguished himself by rolling cannon balls down the main street, firing a shotgun from his dormitory window, and finally (in his senior year, 1913, after purchasing a stop watch for the purpose) protesting in chapel that a prayer had lasted more than seven minutes. This is more than the school authorities would tolerate, and Smith was promptly expelled. His father's efforts to enroll him at Columbia University were blocked at first by the refusal of the Wesleyan authorities to transfer his credits elsewhere, but the threat of a family friend to change his mind about a donation he was thinking of making to Wesleyan won the credit transfer although the president of the school personally warned the Columbia University authorities that they would be accepting this student at their peril.

His studies at Columbia brought with them the maturity of young manhood. Smith received the baccalaureate in 1914, married Mary Belle Rowell in October 1915 while attending Columbia Law School, was awarded the M.A. and the LL.B. in 1916.

While at Columbia he spent his spare time at the New York Bureau of Municipal Research after meeting its director, Charles A. Beard, who exerted a strong influence on the development of Smith's interest in good government and his knowledge of sound practices in public administration. Smith did not then dream that he would one day become the director of this very organization, today called the Institute of Public Administration.

While studying for his doctorate under Beard and working for the Bureau of Municipal Research, Smith was assigned in 1916 to make a study of the police department in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This marked the beginning of a career which was to bring him recognition as the international authority on police administration.

But Smith's career was temporarily interrupted the following year by service as a pilot in the U. S. Air Service with the American Expeditionary Force in France, from which he was demobilized in 1919. Although he did not engage in combat, the roaring exhausts blasting the air near his head in the open cockpit damaged his ear drums; his hearing was permanently impaired, and he was compelled to restrict himself to surface travel thereafter, always a matter of inconvenience and disappointment to him during the later years of his life.

Although Bruce Smith is best known as a police consultant, his interests and activities covered a much broader field. He was the manager of the Institute of Public Administration from 1921 to 1928; its secretary since 1940; its acting director from

1941 to 1946 and again from 1950 to 1952. He served as its director from 1954 to the time of his death. From 1931 to 1945 he was continuously a member and sometimes the chairman of a variety of New York State commissions on the administration of justice and on law revision. From 1930 to 1942 he was a member of the executive board of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology. He served three terms on the executive board of the Governmental Research Association.

But it was in the police field where Smith was accepted by policemen as one of their own; his judgment they always accepted as being completely sound. Not only officials in higher echelons who were concerned with police inefficiency, but policemen themselves asked his advice.

Smith participated in the surveys of the police departments in about 50 leading American cities and in 18 states. His counsel was sought in the selection of the head of police forces in both cities and states. He was proud of his membership in the International Association of Chiefs of Police and served as the advisor of the State and Provincial Section and as the member of numerous committees. He was a member of the Committee on Police Training and Merit Systems of the American Bar Association since 1938 and its chairman in 1943-44. He was chairman of the advisory committee on law enforcement for both the U. S. Department of the Treasury and the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in 1954-55.

Smith was the author of a number of recognized texts in the police field: *The State Police* (1925); *Rural Crime Control* (1933); *Police Systems in the United States* (1940). He was the editor of *Uniform Crime Reports* (1930); *New Goals in Police Management* (*The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January, 1954). He was a contributor to innumerable publications such as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Encyclopedia Americana*, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, *Collier's Encyclopedia*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, and various U. S. and British police journals. He received the well-merited Centennial Award of Michigan State College in 1955 for his contributions to the improvement of government in the field of law enforcement.

Bruce Smith spent some time in 1953 and 1954 in England buying a yacht—the *Lucifer*—and gathering material on police administration in Great Britain by first hand observation. He and his friends enjoyed many a happy hour on the *Lucifer*. To the misfortune of all, his untimely death prevented the completion of a brief text that he had planned to interpret the British system to the American police in terms understandable over here, a task for which he was admirably suited by his knowledge of the British police which compared favorably with his knowledge of the American police. His understanding of the police in both countries was made possible by their ready acceptance of him as one of themselves and by their willingness to discuss with him the details of their operations and problems. A comment by Colonel Sir Frank Brook, recently retired as Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for England and Wales, sums it up: "He was an amazing man, and his knowledge of policing in all its aspects was, I think, not equalled anywhere. I am sure that over here we have never had anyone comparable to him."