

Paterson was named after the former Lieutenant-Governor of N.S.W., William Paterson (1755-1810) who was sent by Governor King in June and July of 1804 to explore the Hunter River area. Not surprisingly, the upper part of the Hunter became known as the Paterson River. A substantial grant of grazing land was later made to the Australian Agricultural Company in the area, and by 1820 a settlement known as Paterson's Plains was well established there. That same year a military barracks was built in the town and the military commander at Newcastle, Brevet Major J. Morrisset reported on it as follows:-

"Military detachments are placed at the settlements at Paterson's Plains and Wallis Plains to assist the constables there in keeping order and to protect them against the blacks. There are four privates to each settlement, 1 acting as corporal. During the corn season they are annoyed by the blacks who steal large quantities. Occasionally, however, the blacks assist the settlers in bringing in the corn."

What with the depredations of convict bushrangers and frequent exchanges of violence between white settlers and local aborigines, the first police at Paterson were hard pressed maintaining law and order in the District. At least two constables were employed at Paterson's Plains by 1826, although police had been appointed there well before 1820. By 1828 the locality had a police strength of 1 District Constable, five ordinary constables, one scourger and one lockupkeeper.

During 1827 a building owned by a Mr. Evans was rented at the rate of £5 for six months as a lockup for the Paterson's Plains District. Its location is un-recorded and in any case its tenancy was short lived. In March 1827, the Colonial Government accepted a tender for the construction of a wooden government owned lockup at Paterson. Built by one Michael Hearne at a cost of £95, the lockup was completed later in 1827, but within five years was very delapidated. In 1832, contemporary accounts mention that the building was very small and that the constable's room within it was also used as the court room. When the Magistrates were conferring privately among themselves, the prisoners in the cells nearby could hear all that was said. Many loose slabs hung from the lockup walls and all in all the building was most unsatisfactory.

In 1835 the Police Magistrate of Maitland and Paterson, Mr. P. Laurentz Campbell, gave evidence regarding the Paterson district to a Government Select Committee on Police. He described it as "extensive and fertile" and peopled mainly with resident proprietors. The Police Magistrate held courts of Petty Sessions at Paterson once a fortnight, although, he was at times unavoidably absent. The two local unpaid magistrates could be expected to attend the Bench regularly "now that the courthouse is near their residences". Because the "district is occasionally shut out by floods", a police force was required within. However, Campbell stated that "great difficulty (was experienced) in finding proper persons to fill the situation of constable, in consequence of the expense and the harassing nature of the escort duty they have to do and the pay being below what they can receive in private services." Almost exclusively, convict 'ticket of leave' men had to be employed as constables. Campbell proposed that a detachment of Mounted Police should be stationed in the district to assist in its superintendence, but it was not until 1863 that mounted police were permanently stationed at Paterson.

The salary of the Paterson Police Magistrate at that time was £150 per annum and a house was also provided for him.

It is difficult to accurately determine the boundaries of the Paterson Police District in 1835 but the Committee on Police, mentioned earlier, proposed in their report that the "County of Durham, which now contains only the Police District of Patterson's Plains, be divided into 2 districts, Patterson and Ravensworth." Patterson was to be bounded on the east by the Williams River, on the south by the Hunter and on the west by Glendon Brook. Ravensworth, meanwhile, was to be bounded on the south by the Hunter River, on the west by the Upper Hunter and on the north by St. Helier's Brook.

Although the standard of police accommodation was not to change at Paterson until 1858 the problems confronting the local constabulary gradually became more manageable as the bushrangers and aborigines moved further inland. In June 1839 Edward Johnstone, one of Paterson's Justices of the Peace, was able to report to the Governor that crime had not increased in the District during that month, that the constabulary was efficient, that the Clerk to the Bench was competent, and that the court house and lockup was in good order. (Though one wonders whether this was the same building complained about four years earlier!). Johnstone was also satisfied that there were no bushrangers in the District at that time. However a reasonably large police strength was maintained at Paterson until the early 1850s. In 1852 a general police register shows that Michael Harte was the Chief Constable for the district on a salary of about £70 p.a., his District constable, Peter Conely, was paid 2/9d a day, while four ordinary constables James Magennis, Laurence Murray, John Peterie and John Smith were each daily in receipt of the sum of 2/3d for their services.

In 1857 tenders were at last called for the erection of a new court and watchhouse at Paterson. The tender of Stephen Stanbridge was accepted on the 30th September, 1857, and the building was completed in August 1858 at a cost of £1114. Made of bricks on a stone foundation it originally had a shingled roof and was located on a site at 33 King St., Paterson. It was not long, however, before even this new building was found to have some shortcomings. A Mr. E. Cory, J.P., writing for the Paterson Bench, informed the Colonial Secretary on the 18/10/1858 that the room in the courthouse intended as a residence for the lockupkeeper and his family is not sufficient for that purpose.

During 1860 and 1861 the old wooden lockup/courthouse was accordingly stripped of its shingles and resingled with ironbark. Its floors and weatherboards were also repaired and it was taken into use again as a lockupkeeper's quarters. Meanwhile a verandah and fence were erected at the new courthouse at this time by Joseph Stanbridge. During 1862 further extensive alterations were carried out on it. The "Singleton Times" reported on the 10/12/1862 that

3

"the front and side walls of the Court room (which measured only 16' x 12') have been taken down and a new Court Room, 30' x 23', with a magistrate's room on one side and a clerk's office on the other, and an arcade in front of the Court Room, are now being added to the building. The old roof has been removed and the walls are carried to the height of the new roof, so as to form another storey at the back of the Court Room, for the accommodation of the police. The new front and sides of the building, of brick, will be very ornamental. The works are being executed by Chas. Mack, contractor, from a design by Mortimer Lewis Jnr."

The entire cost of these alterations which were completed sometime between March and June, 1863, was £1142.

An old Duty Book from Paterson Police Station has survived to this day and is currently kept in the N.S.W. State Archives. It covers

the 1862-65 period and, as one would expect, gives an interesting insight into the type of police work that the Paterson constabulary was engaged in at the time. Their duties included serving summonses at Maitland, Hinton, Vacy and Toryborn, executing warrants, collecting statistical returns for the area and sometimes attending Maitland Circuit Court. Of course regular foot patrols of the Paterson township were carried out and after Mounted Constable James Short was stationed there from the 17/7/1863, he did much mounted patrol work to the Maitland, Vacy, upper Paterson, Gostwick, Gresford, and Stradbrook townships. A Sergeant McGrath is frequently mentioned in the Duty Book and it is apparent that he was then the Officer in Charge of Police in the patrol. His horse must have been very temperamental. Between April 1863 and February 1864 he was thrown from the saddle on three occasions as a result of which he sustained serious bruising and bone breakages.

During 1864 it was thought the bushranger Fred Ward, alias Captain Thunderbolt, may have been hiding in the area. Paterson was visited by mounted Sergeant Conway and Constables Johnston and Connolly who were all in pursuit of the bushranger. However they all later returned to Paterson on their way elsewhere, without receiving any information of the haunt of Thunderbolt.

In July 1864 Paterson's Sgt. McGrath was replaced by a Sergeant P. Conway who was himself replaced in November, 1864, by mounted senior Constable James Johnston as the Officer in Charge of Police.

The Duty Book concludes on the 24/6/1865 when the Paterson Police establishment consisted of Senior Constable Johnston, Constable Treacy and foot constable McKenzie.

In 1882-3 a new watchhouse was built in the town on a site at No. 9 Church Street. Replacing the old wooden lockup it was made of bricks on a stone foundation with a galvanised iron roof. This building is still in use today and contains quarters for the resident constable and his family, and two cells.

By 1891 the strength of Paterson police station had been reduced to one unit, a situation that still applies today. From the 4/10/19 the police barrack accommodation within Paterson Court House was vacated and the Officer in Charge of Police henceforth occupied the lockup-keeper's quarters in Church Street. An office in the Court House is now used as the Police Station at Paterson. Little else has changed there in so far as the Police and court buildings are concerned except that a 4-stall wooden stable and forage room near the Courthouse has been converted into a garage. Paterson Court of Petty Sessions was abolished on the 22/9/1967 and the former court house has since been used as a museum of local history.

Between 1865 and 1934 we know few if any of the names of the Police who served at Paterson. Senior Constable Edward Cunningham was stationed there from February, 1896 until November, 1908, and was succeeded by S/C Samuel Danks who was the town's constable from November, 1908 until October, 1915. The names of the Officers in Charge of Paterson Police patrol since February, 1934 however have been as follows:-

Const. 1/c (later Sgt. 3/c)	Frank Carroll	8	from 19. 2.1934
" "	Oscar H. Stapleton	7	" 4.11.1939
" " " Sen.Const.	Vincent W. Clarke	9	" 21.11.1946
" " " Sgt. 3/c	L.H. Paten	5	" 18. 1.1956
" " " Sen.Const.	M.A. Hickson	5	" 25. 2.1961
Sen. Const.	" Sgt. 3/c M.J. Stalker	3	" 1.10.1965
Const. 1/c	" Sen. Const. J.A. Tilburg	6	" 20. 4.1968
Const. 1/c	" Sen. Const. M.J. Roberts	5	" 6. 5.1974
" "	R.A. Cox		13. 8.1979