

**The Standard Democrat**  
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## **Chief Beller Retires From Active Service**

### **Has Been Faithful Public Servant in Burlington For Thirty-Eight Years**

After thirty-eight years as a police official of the city of Burlington, during thirty years of which he was chief of the city police department, Frank Beller retires from active work on a pension today and turns over his office to younger hands.

Chief Beller presented his resignation to the fire and police commission a month ago, when he decided to give up his active work with the department. His long career, first as a marshal and street commissioner of the village of Burlington, and then faithful years of service as head of the police department, was identical with Burlington's growth from a small country town to a city of modern proportion and advantages.

Frank Beller was appointed fire marshal and street commissioner thirty-eight years ago, succeeding Henry Storey who served as marshal before him. In this capacity for about eight years he was practically the city force, for beside having charge of the fire and police department in his office as marshal, he repaired the streets, laid cross walks and sewer pipe and was general handy man.

In those earliest days of his city duties there was no pavement with board sidewalks and planks arranged as crosswalks for pedestrians. The automobile had not come into its own and Chief Beller has graphic pictures to paint about the mud on village streets during his years as street commissioner.

One of the most disastrous fires in the history of the village was that which destroyed the C. G. Foltz store building. The fire broke out on the night of February 15, 1895. Frank Beller was one of the volunteer firemen who fought the fire and he says he well remembers the exact date. That date, together with an inscription of appreciation from the citizens of Burlington is inscribed on a gold headed cane which is still a cherished possession of Chief Beller. The walking cane was presented to him shortly after the fire by grateful people of Burlington for his bravery in entering the burning building and carrying out in his arms heavy kegs of gun powder stored in the cellar.

"Of course it was a crazy thing to do" the chief admits now after thirty-nine years, "but I don't think I thought about it then."

It was most likely on account of such indifference to danger that Frank Beller was selected by the village council to police the town. A year or so after the fire Beller was given his appointment to keep the peace in Burlington.

For eight years he ran the department alone on day duty, with a merchant police for night watch. But he was always ready for call, and he said that rarely he took more than ten or fifteen minutes for meals. Two o'clock became his usual hour to retire. His salary was \$50 a month.

"I never carried a gun, and I never carried a club during all the time I was police," Chief Beller remarked. "I know I have a quick temper at times, and I don't want to get myself into trouble. These are what always helped me out, when I needed help," the chief continued, as he presented two

sturdy fists that still look far from useless.

Burlington citizens know Chief Beller has always had another weapon that stood him in good stead. A stentorian voice that could make any culprit cringe and long to be on his way as fast as possible.

"Our most trouble in the old days was with hoboes," Chief Beller recalled. That is, they would have been troublesome if the chief had not used his characteristic ways in handling them. At the end of the week the crews filling ice houses in the lakes about Burlington used to make a bee-line for Burlington and one of its twenty-two saloons, as soon as pay day came, he explained. Of course they would get noisy and sometimes troublesome, the chief continued. Chief Beller would simply conduct them down to the railroad track, point the way out of town, and tell them to go. It was then his voice helped him out. The same ones seldom came back, he said.

Several robberies in the early days came to chief Beller's memory. One was the Wagner Hardware store robbery, when a quantity of valuable goods, knives and razors were taken. The St. Paul depot was a constant source of worry to the chief. Regularly about twice a year the depot was robbed. That went on about twenty years he said, but only small amounts were ever taken.

But as for trouble, all these incidents fade into insignificance compared to the trouble the fire and police commission caused Chief Beller several years ago when it ruled "uniforms for the force."

Chief Beller was appointed chief of Police thirty years ago when the police department became a separate branch of city government. He was relieved of his work as street commissioner, and worked only in the department. Theodore Micklish was his first assistant, and later Edward Mealy was appointed to the department and served until his death several years ago.

The department grew in size as the need for more intensive policing developed and at the time of his retirement consisted of four policemen besides himself, Lawrence Grossman, who has been appointed chief of the department in Mr. Beller's place, H. W. Schenning, Charles McCourt and Mark Ward.