

The History of the  
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS)

**V.A. Leonard: The Focal Point in the Creation of  
ASC, APS, and ACJS**



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August Vollmer (L) visiting Dr. V.A. Leonard (R) in his office at Washington State University

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It is often the case that the role certain people play in the creation of things, organizations, and ideas are lost to the dustbins of history. Despite the fact they played a crucial part, if not *the* crucial part, others often receive the credit. Sometimes it is because they are more introverted, less dynamic, or less political. Other times it is because the person feels more comfortable or has more freedom working behind the scenes. And, in some cases it is because the popularity of another individual overshadows them and all others. A combination of these factors would appear to be the reasons Dr. V.A. Leonard's role in the creation of ASC (American Society of Criminology), APS (Alpha Phi Sigma), and ACJS (Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences) suffers from a lack of attribution. Leonard was assuredly more introverted, more comfortable behind the scenes, and nearly everyone was overshadowed by the presence of the Father of American Policing, August Vollmer.

The historical record, however, preserves the realities that Dr. V.A. Leonard of Washington State University was instrumental in the creation of The National Association of College Police Training Officials, which became the American Society of Criminology, for Vollmer himself wrote to V.A. Leonard on November 8, 1941, and said, "O.W. (Wilson) is sending out invitations to all of the Pacific coast police school directors to meet in Berkeley December 30<sup>th</sup>, so I guess your organizational birth will soon be a reality."<sup>1</sup> It was Leonard's idea, or at least the organization

that came into existence was his idea, but Leonard was politically astute enough to know that if fronted by Vollmer, his ideas would come to fruition as they did in December of 1941.

Following his return from Berkeley, in January of 1942, Leonard then set about creating a national honor society for policing students, and at Washington State University he created the inaugural chapter of Alpha Phi Sigma. And when Leonard retired from teaching in 1963, his retirement party became the impetus for the creation of a new, break-away organization, the International Association of Police Professionals, which became the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS).

Dr. V.A. Leonard was at the center of the creation of the three key organizations in criminal justice education that still exist today. His significant role, especially in regard to the creation of ACJS, should not be forgotten.

This is his story.

This is our history.

### **Vivian Anderson Leonard (1898-1984)**

V.A. Leonard was born Vivian Anderson Leonard, and he was always quick to tell anyone, "I was born and raised in Texas."<sup>2</sup> It was in Cleburne, Texas, to be precise, just south of Fort Worth, on January 13, 1898.<sup>3</sup> His parents were Anderson "Andy" Leonard (1871-1963) of Canada, who had traveled to Texas seeking a job and also found a wife, Mary C. Martin of Cherokee, Texas (1871-1951).<sup>4</sup> V.A., as he preferred to be called, was the first of four children; his brother, Claude, was born four years later in 1902, Edith was born in 1904, and Bruce was born in 1911.<sup>5</sup>

"When I was eighteen years old," V.A. later recounted, "I decided I wanted a university education, and I wrote to twenty or twenty-three different universities all over the United States."<sup>6</sup> He decided that he was going to major in poultry husbandry, and as he exclaimed, "I was going to raise Chickens!"<sup>7</sup> He received a letter of acceptance from the University of California at Davis in the Spring of 1916, and he moved that summer to California. After taking two 18-hour semesters, he came to the realization that, "One year was enough for me, and I decided that chickens were not for Leonard"<sup>8</sup> (It should be noted here that often V.A. Leonard had an odd, at times disturbing, penchant for referring to himself in the third person). He then transferred to the main campus in Berkeley, arriving in September of 1917, enrolling in the College of Commerce in order to major in accounting. "Among the courses I took the first year was an introductory elementary course in accounting," he recalled, "which I dropped like a hot iron after the first two weeks."<sup>9</sup> He explained he had, "no aptitude whatsoever for mathematics."<sup>10</sup> He then changed majors "three or four times" before finally dropping out of Cal to work two or three jobs.<sup>11</sup>

His life was not progressing quite like he had envisioned, so V.A. returned home to Texas. In the Fall of 1919, he was living as a boarder in Eagle Lake, Colorado, Texas, living the life of a single bachelor, at least that was until he met Mittie. Mittie Annie Sparks (1903-1995), who went by her middle name, was five years younger than V.A. and was only 16 at the time. After receiving permission and consent from her parents, they were married on December 29, 1919. They settled down in Cleburne, Texas, and V.A. continued to work multiple jobs, including one in a radio shop. The marriage apparently was a difficult one, for they soon separated and were officially divorced on February 27, 1924. V.A. and Annie had two children together.<sup>12</sup>

Divorced and with no real prospects in Cleburne, V.A. decided to return to California. He settled in an apartment located at 3226 Haste Street in Berkeley and was working at Secretary Store Equippers and Designers, and it was there he learned to take shorthand and type. While working at the clerical stores, he met Mary Robinson, who was living at 1617 University Avenue in Berkeley, with her parents. Although about to graduate from high school, she too was under the age of consent. V.A. claimed his age as 24, when in reality he was 26, at the time that he married Mary Ruth Robinson on May 19, 1924. As it was, in order for the marriage to proceed, they needed the consent of her parents, and Mary's mother, Mary Kavanagh, born in Ireland, gave her consent.<sup>13</sup>

Now married, and with a child on the way, Leonard needed a better paying job. At the time, he was working at a shop that was involved in selling radios on Market Street in San Francisco.<sup>14</sup> V.A. had a personal interest in radio and had developed some knowledge of its inner-workings which is why he was hired at the radio shop. The problem was, the position did not pay well and it was in San Francisco, across the Bay from Berkeley where he was trying to work on his bachelor's degree. A former roommate of his, Herold Schulz, recommended he join the Berkeley Police Department.<sup>15</sup>

## **Berkeley Police Department (1925 – 1933)**

V.A. decided to listen to the advice of his former roommate, and as he described it:

So I dressed up one morning in my finest and went down to the police department in Berkeley and had a chance to meet the Chief and I'm sure I deliberately said just the right thing. I told the Chief that I was familiar with his scientific achievements in the American police services. I told him that because I had read about him, you see, and I'm sure that pleased him. He didn't comment one way or the other. Anyway, I filled out the application form and I took the entrance examination. There were forty-five men who took the examination, and I thought it was going to be a typical forty-five minute civil service test. That examination lasted three days and parts of three nights. The Chief threw every psychological, psychiatric test in the book at us. The Thorndike Will and Temperament Test, the Army Alpha, the Otis Group Intelligence Test, a half a dozen other tests.<sup>16</sup>

He later recalled "that the entrance examination for the department was harder than any he took on campus."<sup>17</sup> Leonard then had a final interview with Police Chief August Vollmer. Out of the forty-five men, Leonard learned that only three had passed and he was one of them. He was offered a position on the police department and after readily accepting, he went to work right away.

Vollmer recognized potential in V.A. Leonard, but not necessarily for working on the street. He had some clerical and organizational skills, he could type and take shorthand, so Vollmer assigned him to serve in the records division from 4 p.m. to midnight. "One of my chief responsibilities," Leonard later recalled, "was to take care of the Chief's correspondence, and my first duty every afternoon when I came on duty at four o'clock was to take my notebook and pencil into the Chief's office and take his dictation for forty-five minutes or an hour."<sup>18</sup> The reason Leonard felt he received this job right after being hired was because "I could do about ninety words a minute at a typewriter and I could take dictation at around 135 to 140 words a minute; so I was tailor-made for the job."<sup>19</sup>

Where Leonard began to distinguish himself was when he approached Chief Vollmer with an idea. As he explained, "One day I walked into Chief Vollmer's office and I said, 'Chief, what do you think about the possibilities of radio communication in patrol service?'"<sup>20</sup> Vollmer didn't say anything, but reached for a pencil and began tapping it on his desk. Vollmer's silence and the tapping of the pencil must have had an impact on Leonard, perhaps unnerved him, for every time he ever recounted this story, he always told the part about the tapping of the pencil.<sup>21</sup> When Vollmer finally ceased thinking (and tapping), he said, "If we could just get that over from police headquarters into a patrol car, it would be a monumental contribution."<sup>22</sup> So, Vollmer encouraged him to work on the creation of a police radio system.

V.A. worked on the police radio system proposal in the mornings on his own time and then worked his shift from 4 p.m. to midnight. V.A.'s original idea was to create the overall plans for how it would work and then take it to the experts with the hopes that they would sign on to the project. "I drew up the blueprints for a police radio system," he explained, "and made appointments with the chief executives of RCA, General Electric and Western Electric, in San Francisco." "I made appointments with them," he continued, "and I went over there and I laid the blueprints on their desks, and each one of them told me: 'There is no future for radio in police service.'"<sup>23</sup> That decision would seem to rank up there with Western Union telling Alexander Graham Bell that the telephone was

nothing more than a “novelty.” The adoption of the police radio, like the telephone, was so rapid that not even the Great Depression slowed its advance throughout American police departments in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Rebuffed by the major companies, Leonard went back to Berkeley dejected. He met with Vollmer and then Vollmer did what he was so good at; he encouraged Leonard to continue by telling him, “Leonard, go ahead with your homework.”<sup>24</sup> If the companies wouldn’t build it, he would build it himself. While Leonard understood radio, he was not an engineer, so “I came back and got acquainted with a student in the College of Engineering at the University of California by the name of Reginald Tibbetts. And we worked together and built this seventy-five watt Hartley transmitter.”<sup>25</sup> There was only one problem—in order to build a radio transmitter, the federal government was already regulating radio operators and they needed a license:

So, I prepared myself to take the qualifying examination for an operator’s license... in San Francisco. I stayed up more than once all night long studying, preparing for this examination, which was an eight-hour examination. No lunch and you couldn’t leave the room.<sup>26</sup>

Leonard presented himself well, however, for he scored a 95, a record score at the time.

Leonard and Tibbetts were then able to not only build the 75 watt Harlley transmitter and install a receiver in a patrol car, they were legally authorized to operate the system. After pre-testing the prototype in the summer of 1925, they invited Chief Vollmer, fellow officers, and the press for the official unveiling. The prototype of the system worked and within months, it saved the life of a child who nearly drowned in a bathtub behind a locked door. Because the radio call went out to the officer with the radio receiver, he was able to respond and save the child. Moving forward with establishing the complete system was to everyone involved, the logical thing to do.<sup>27</sup>

Vollmer then encouraged Leonard to share and disseminate his knowledge of the police radio system by putting it all down in a book. Vollmer had this endearing charm about him, for he was always encouraging others to write books. In some cases he encouraged thieves, robbers, and those accused of homicide; in other cases it was police officers and students. So, like so often before, Vollmer encouraged Leonard to write a book, and Leonard began the project in 1927. Then, from time to time, if Vollmer saw something in the newspaper regarding radios and especially police radios, he would clip them out and send them to Leonard.<sup>28</sup>

Leonard now had to balance his time between family, his job, advancing the police communication system and fielding it to more cars, and laboring on a book. For the most part, creating the police radio system with receivers in each car occupied the lion’s share of his time, and unfortunately, family, the least. In his personal life, his marriage to Mary Ruth was beginning to come unraveled and before the decade’s end, V.A. was divorced for a second time.

His passion and obsession was clearly the police radio, and he struggled with many issues, problems, and setbacks, most of which are now things that are taken for granted today. For instance, one thing that had to be worked out was the placement of the antennas in the car. When they placed the antenna inside the car, they discovered that “Closed cars, especially those with metal tops offered a lot of difficulties” but that “an antenna outside the metal top improved reception a thousand percent.”<sup>29</sup> Leonard kept testing, experimenting and modifying, and he continued to keep the Chief up to date, even when Vollmer was away on leave teaching at the University of Chicago. In December of 1929, the official trial of a complete system, where every patrol car fielded a receiver, was put into place, and declared 100% successful by an external reviewer (with the only problem being police officers forgetting to change the batteries). The reviewer also noted he was “pleased with the department’s policy of beginning with a code signal system rather than voice transmission direct,”<sup>30</sup> thus allowing for more secrecy and then breaking that only if necessary with voice transmissions.

Leonard was hailed a genius by his fellow officers and by the press. Police departments from all over the country started coming to Berkeley to investigate the police radio system in order to emulate it.<sup>31</sup> In order to more widely disseminate information on the police radio he authored an article for the publication *The Policeman*, and finally by 1931, he had put together an outline for a book. He sent it off to Vollmer in Chicago for his input

and review. In addition to continuing to advance the police radio, Leonard also still had his work in the record's division and when the head of that division left to serve as the police chief in Honolulu, Hawaii, Leonard took on more responsibilities.

As the commitments on his time mounted, Leonard was having less opportunity to write his book. In addition, his many divorces were beginning to drain his finances, and he needed to escape. So, Leonard requested a leave of absence from the Berkeley Police Department under the auspices of finishing his book, but in part to get out from under California law regarding alimony and to perhaps find a position back in his home state. Vollmer wrote him a letter of recommendation that noted, "Mr. Leonard is interested in the possibility of transferring to southern police service and I take pleasure in recommending him as an experienced and capable police executive."<sup>32</sup> Of course when the leave ran out he also had to chide him with a handwritten note in January of 1934, "Your leave expired on the seventh and you are now A.W.O.L. Either send in your application for extension of leave or resign. You cannot afford to be dropped."<sup>33</sup>

### Fort Worth Police Department (1934-1939)

As Leonard explained, in 1933, "I took a leave of absence from the Berkeley Police Department to come back to my home state to finish up the manuscript of a book, *Police Communication Systems*."<sup>34</sup> Prior to arriving in Texas, Leonard surveyed the police departments in Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City in order to explore what they were doing with both police communications and records. He then arrived in Cleburne, Texas, at the home of his parents. After taking some time off for vacation, he began finishing the manuscript in earnest, writing from September of 1933 until early Spring of 1934. As he wrote, he sent chapters to Vollmer for his review, and they continued back and forth until it was completed. The book was no slim monograph, for by Leonard's estimation it was over 2,000 typed pages, and the final manuscript, after laboriously being edited by multiple people over multiple years, was finally published at 589 pages.

For publication of the book, Leonard turned to his mentor, August Vollmer, for assistance. Vollmer spoke with the publishers at the University of California Press and while they were interested, they realized the book would not make money. They requested that perhaps a grant could be obtained to help pay for the production of the book, and Vollmer came through by obtaining a grant from the Laura Spellman Foundation.<sup>35</sup> The book was finally published in 1938, *Police Communications Systems*,<sup>36</sup> and it detailed everything from the development of the first mobile radio system established in the United States, to modern systems, to international systems of police communication.<sup>37</sup>

While writing the book, Leonard met another woman, Imogene McFall (1910-1992). She was born on February 4, 1910, and was 12 years Leonard's junior. She was 23 and he was 35. After dating her while finishing the manuscript, he decided to ask her to marry him in late 1933.<sup>38</sup> Having now married a Texan, he began to rethink his future. As Leonard recalled, "I decided to cast my lot with police service here in my home state."<sup>39</sup> He resigned from the Berkeley Police Department on February 1 (backdating it to January 1), 1934.<sup>40</sup> Then, as Leonard explained, "after I finished the manuscript I began looking around. And the opportunity came in the police department at Fort Worth."<sup>41</sup> Leonard explained:

I had learned that the position of executive secretary to the chief of police in Fort Worth would soon be vacant; the incumbent was a part-time gambler and was resigning in order to devote full time to his gambling interests. So, I made an appointment and went in to see Chief Lewis. We had a conference lasting about an hour and a half. I told him something about my background, and he turned around to me and said, 'Leonard, I'd like to put you to work. But you know too much.' So we talked a little further. Finally, he said, 'You come back to see me again Thursday.' So, I came back and we had another conference and I went to work the next day.<sup>42</sup>

Leonard, it would turn out, had managed to land the right position at the right time. He began working on May 19, 1934 for the record's department of the Fort Worth PD, "making out payrolls, answering phones, that sort of stuff."<sup>43</sup> Then, as he relished recalling, "On August the 1<sup>st</sup> I held the rank of captain in that department, commanding the records and identification division. The man who held that position was secretary for the Police Benevolent Association...he had been embezzling money from the association."<sup>44</sup>

What Leonard had decided to do, upon hearing of the captain being fired, was to write a three page letter to Chief Lewis explaining his qualifications for the job. He then scheduled an appointment with the chief and gave the letter to him. As Leonard recalled:

I really laid it on the line. I could hear him turning the pages while he was reading it. And after he finished he came out and he said, 'Damn it to hell, Leonard, why didn't you tell me about all this before?' I said, 'Well, once I tried to.' So he took the letter into the city manager, and the city manager sent an airmail letter to the police department in Berkeley, to verify what I'd put in this letter, and Greening was then chief of police, Jack Greening. And he came back beautifully. Chief Greening said, in effect, 'Not only is what Leonard said true, but he neglected to mention ---' and went on to enumerate a lot of other things! So, on August 1<sup>st</sup> – May the 19<sup>th</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup> – I became captain, commanding the records and identification division, a position I held until I resigned to go work on the master's at Texas Christian.

Leonard continued his work in the Fort Worth Police Department under the official title of Superintendent of Records with the rank of Captain, helping to reform their record keeping system using the Vollmer methods.<sup>45</sup> In addition, he continued to take classes at Texas Wesleyan for he found combining all of his college credits from Texas Wesleyan and from both the University of California at Davis and Berkeley, he was close to having a bachelor's degree.<sup>46</sup> Once on campus, because of the interest by a number of faculty members, as well as the president of the university, Leonard was asked to teach a class each semester.<sup>47</sup> When he told Vollmer of this news, the Chief wrote back, "Congratulations!! This first lecture course will have a profound influence upon your future. It marks a distinct step forward in your professional career, which will be followed by other important openings."<sup>48</sup> He could not have been more right.

Other good news also followed, for Imogene was pregnant with their first child, a girl they would name Sherry Sue. Leonard also received a request from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to guest lecture at the newly established federal police school, the FBI Academy, sharing his knowledge on records and identification systems.<sup>49</sup> Everything appeared to be coming along nicely, that was, at least, until the local city politics that Vollmer had always railed against reared its ugly head.

In 1937, a new city council was elected, and it created a sea change in Fort Worth politics. Heads of departments were abruptly fired, and one of those was the Chief of Police. Leonard had just lost his key supporter in the department. Then the state of Texas passed an odd law which stated that every police officer and fire fighter had to make at least \$150 a month, which necessitated departments laying-off of dozens of police officers in order to raise the salaries of those they could keep. Fort Worth decided to use the formula of last hired first fired, dating back to 1931. Leonard had been hired in 1934. Still, V.A. was hoping his position might be excluded, but Fort Worth was in turmoil and the politics were causing instability, so nothing was for sure.

Leonard was also told by the outgoing chief that it would be best if he discontinued teaching at Texas Christian University because it might leave him open to ridicule or false claims that he was holding two jobs and only needed one. Leonard was clearly shaken by all of the changes in his letters to Vollmer. Concerned over the rapidly changing situation, Leonard canceled a 90 day European vacation that his now fired chief had approved, and he and Imogene decided to use the money to purchase a four unit apartment house at 2815 Primrose so they could live in one apartment and rent the other three to cover the mortgage and their expenses. They were preparing for the worst.<sup>50</sup>

In the summer of 1939, V.A. had one more class to take to complete his bachelor's degree from Texas Wesleyan College.<sup>51</sup> Upon finishing the course and after deciding it was safe enough, he and the family went on a two week vacation to the Gulf.<sup>52</sup> Upon their return, Leonard was completing the process of enrolling for a Master's Degree in Sociology when he discovered that Texas Christian University was offering a course titled Beginner's Identification in the Fall and Advance Identification in the Spring. The University was hoping he would teach both. He was still hesitant to do so, at least that was until he was called into the new Police Chief's office in mid-August. In light of the political reorganization and cut backs, Leonard was asked to step down to Assistant Superintendent, agree to follow a new Superintendent, and to accept a reduced salary, from \$210 a month to \$175, all "for the good of the Department."<sup>53</sup>

V.A. talked it over with Imogene and she encouraged him to resign, finish his master's degree, and find a job in academia. She reasoned they could survive the two years with the money they had saved by renting the efficiency apartments in their home, and with V.A.'s teaching salary from the TCU courses. Plus, if he was full-time, he could expedite the degree program by taking more courses and be done in twelve months. After they both agreed with the plan, on September 15, 1939, V.A. Leonard resigned from the Fort Worth Police Department.<sup>54</sup>

Leonard then enrolled as a full-time student at Texas Christian University and took an overload of master's courses, 18 hours a semester. Despite the heavy load, Leonard managed to maintain an A average, and he completed his Master's Thesis, *Criteria for the Evaluation of a Social Institution, The Police System*, by April of 1940 and defended it in May. He was awarded his Master's Degree on June 1, 1940.<sup>55</sup> Now all he needed was an academic appointment.

Unable to find an academic posting for the Fall of 1940, V.A. Leonard took a position as the Office Manager and Chief Clerk for the Tarrant County local board at what, for him, was the low salary of \$150 a month. Meanwhile, he applied to numerous universities, as well as several police departments for the chief's position, and he sent his résumé to August Vollmer in the hope he might be able to offer some assistance.<sup>56</sup> Then, over the summer, he waited for an opportunity to come along. One finally did, very late in the summer, on August 23, 1941.

## Washington State University (1941-1963)

On August 31, 1941, as Leonard recounts, "My wife and I and our daughter were vacationing at Lake Worth."<sup>57</sup> He continued:

This cabin had a telephone, and we were down on the dock fishing. Somebody went up and answered it, and it was Western Union, and it was a telegram from Chief Vollmer. And at the time he sent the telegram the president of Washington State University, Ernest O. Holland, was in his study. Holland made frequent train trips back to the East, and on a train coming back – he was an outgoing personality, he liked to sit down and talk to people – and on this trip back he sat down by a young man who turned out to be an ex-convict. And there was something – I never did quite learn – there was something that was said during this conversation that germinated the idea in President Holland's mind of a degree program in police administration. And so he cultivated an acquaintance with Chief Vollmer, had him come up and speak at the university three or four times. They became real close personal friends.<sup>58</sup>

After getting side-tracked, V.A. then returned to the telegram that he had received:

I got this telegram saying that President Holland is in Vollmer's study...on Euclid Avenue, 923 Euclid Avenue...I remember the exact wording to the telegram. 'Would you accept directorship of academic police training program at Washington State University? And what salary---?' I especially liked those words – 'What salary would you demand?' I liked those words real good. What had happened was that President Holland had become fired up over this idea and had sold the board of regents on it and had gotten a salary



figured okayed. He told me later that he was a little provoked with me because of the salary figure I wired back because he had to talk long distance to each one of the board of regents to get a new figure cleared. But Holland became fired up over this idea and was down in Berkeley in Chief Vollmer's study to get a recommendation for somebody to head up this program. And I was the lucky boy.<sup>59</sup>

Leonard's highest salary at that point in his career had been \$210 a month, but he had asked for \$350 a month. That is the equivalent in today's dollars (2014) of having made \$3500 a month and asking for \$5600 a month. No wonder the president was "provoked" and Leonard liked those words "real good." Needless to say, Leonard fired back a Western Union Telegram to Vollmer that evening, "Will accept Washington appointment at forty two hundred subject satisfactory contract regards."<sup>60</sup>

His appointment began in September of 1941, and his official title was Department Chairman of the Department of Police Science and Administration; he had been personally asked to create his title.<sup>61</sup> He was also hired as a full professor with tenure; Leonard never knew what it was like to move through the academic ranks.<sup>62</sup> The Leonards packed their bags, put the house up for sale, and took off, first for Berkeley to visit the Vollmers, and then on to Pullman, Washington. When he arrived at work on September 12, he discovered that he had been given \$600 to purchase office equipment, \$2000 for laboratory equipment, and that the department would be treated on an equal footing with all the other departments on campus. Leonard decided to spend a little less on the lab equipment in order to set aside some money to begin developing a world class police science book collection. In addition to adjusting to his new job, he and Imogene were also able to find a house just west of the college campus, located at 207 Spaulding Street in which to settle the family.

The biggest task Leonard had was in creating the new program. The one he arrived to find was based on the short course concept—the courses were offered to police officers who could take a week or two off from work to take an intensive course. Leonard immediately began to craft a four-year degree program. As he later recalled:

I was confronted with the challenging task of developing a four-year academic program in this new professional major. A police training program was then under way at San Jose State College, under the direction of Professor William A. Wiltberger, a former member of the Berkeley Police Department, but it offered little help in forging the blueprints for the caliber of program I had in mind. The basic concept was a liberal arts education combined with professional courses in the various areas of the police operation.<sup>63</sup>

For instance, while Leonard offered a course on crime prevention, he also allowed for one on police communications, a topic he would return to time and again. The course on crime prevention proved to garner much interest, but it was his Police 1 (later 101) course, which he cleared with the President to offer as an elective to the whole campus, that generated the most interest in the program. As Leonard observed to Vollmer, "it is the type of course that takes hold in the student body."<sup>64</sup>

Leonard continued to keep the Chief up-to-date on the developments at Washington State through extensive correspondence. In this conversation, the possibility of meeting over the holiday break was discussed, sometime after Christmas but before the New Year's and the continuation of classes.<sup>65</sup> This also developed into a potential meeting with other heads of police education programs, including O.W. Wilson from the University of California at Berkeley and William Wiltberger who was at San Jose State. Vollmer was willing to host the meeting in his living room at 923 Euclid Avenue and eventually the date was set for December 30, 1941. When December 7<sup>th</sup> came around and everyone learned that Pearl Harbor had been bombed, there was some hesitation over whether to still hold the meeting, but it was decided it would be best to do so before everyone was off in the military.

Specifically whose idea for the meeting was, has long been a source of contention. Wiltberger said he suggested such an organization in the early 1930s, but Wiltberger was long known for both self-aggrandizement and antagonism, making him a poor source.<sup>66</sup> Vollmer wrote in one letter to Leonard that Wiltberger had approached him about it, and a short time later, Wilson dropped by to discuss the same thing.<sup>67</sup> Others have claimed it developed out of the V-men meetings. After Vollmer's retirement as Chief of Police of the Berkeley Police Department in

1932, his wife Pat realized he missed the comradery of his old police friends, so she created the V-men in honor of her husband and named it tongue-in-cheek after Hoover's G-men.<sup>68</sup> They met often in the early 1930s, and many of them were police educators including both Wilson and Wiltberger. In another exchange between Vollmer and Leonard, Leonard had talked about getting the various police programs together for research purposes, and Vollmer had replied that if Leonard could get that done, "it would be more than I was able to accomplish."<sup>69</sup> This is probably what led Vollmer to attribute the idea to Leonard when he wrote to V.A. saying, "O.W. (Wilson) is sending out invitations to all of the Pacific coast police school directors to meet in Berkeley December 30<sup>th</sup>, so I guess your organizational birth will soon be a reality."<sup>70</sup> Yet, in an earlier letter, Vollmer appears to mention Wiltberger's idea to Leonard who then replied, "such an organization will open the way for a formal approach to any number of problems and will afford the means for directing national attention to the fact that professional training for police service at the University level is sound public policy."<sup>71</sup>

It appears there are really two questions here: who called the meeting, and what was the meeting supposed to be about? The answer to the first appears to be Vollmer, for he was orchestrating the meeting through his correspondence. The second question appears to be what historian Frank Morn elucidates as the underlying dynamic.<sup>72</sup> What Wiltberger envisioned was an association of police trainers, college programs that focused on the practical aspects of policing, such as self-defense, application of the law, first aid, and firearms training—those things we would associate today with police academies. What Leonard envisioned (what was in actuality the Vollmer vision), was an organization that could share research and work on police problems in concert, and that these would be liberal arts education programs for those in policing or interested in policing. Thus, the divide was really between police training and police education.

On December 30, 1941, seven guests arrived at 923 Euclid Avenue in Berkeley, California, in what had become the most renowned address for police education in the world. Present were August Vollmer, V.A. Leonard, O.W. Wilson, William Wiltberger, Willard E. Schmidt, Robert L. Drexel, Frank Yee and Benjamin Pavone.<sup>73</sup> They called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and began their work on creating their new association. They selected the name of National Association of College Police Training Officials; Vollmer was elected President Emeritus, while O.W. Wilson was elected the first president. Considered to be one of the most important functions of the group at this juncture in the process was the selection of who would be tasked with writing the Constitution and By-laws. That task went to V.A. Leonard.

Although Wiltberger had coveted the task of writing the Constitution, for he knew that the one who made the rules controlled the organization. The reality was, he never had enough votes to override Leonard. The only members present on his side were Schmidt and Drexel, whereas, Wilson, Leonard, Pavone, and Yee all went with the guiding hand of Vollmer. Vollmer had also decided not to be a voting member in order to stay above the politics and to ensure there would be no ties. As Morn explained, Wiltberger did not play politics very well and was so frustrated that he was not getting his way, that he left the meeting early.<sup>74</sup>

Leonard worked on the draft of the Constitution and By-laws over the next several months, exchanging numerous letters with Vollmer and many with the other members. Eventually finalized, it was distributed by mail for final approval. The issue of membership highlighted the divisions between the two factions. While Wiltberger wanted membership open to those involved in in-service police training, Vollmer, Wilson, and Leonard did not. The issue arose again several years later, in 1948, when Leonard maintained his stance by writing, "If we expect to maintain the standards of such an organization, it seems to me that membership must of necessity be limited to college and university faculty participating in degree programs in police science and administration. I can see no other alternative...If we let the bars down to include in-service training, we will have neutralized the main objective of the Association."<sup>75</sup>

At the first annual meeting in Vollmer's living room, Leonard had volunteered to host the second annual meeting in Pullman, Washington. Over the next year, he set about preparing for the conference. The plan was to hold it at the same time frame, after Christmas, but before the New Year, so December 28, 1942, was the chosen date. Leonard invited all manner of guests who confirmed their attendance, including Edwin H. Sutherland,

August Vollmer, O.W. Wilson, and Robert Gault, the editor of *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*.<sup>76</sup> Although the conference was still a go, many contacted Leonard and had to cancel, including Vollmer, Wilson, and Sutherland.<sup>77</sup> Despite this, Leonard put on a positive spin, for in a letter to Vollmer he wrote, “The conference was a marked success.”<sup>78</sup>

By the time of the second annual meeting, the reality was that the war was beginning to have a major impact on American life. Wilson and Wiltberger were preparing to go off and fight in World War II and Yee was back home in China, for they were facing their own challenges with an impending war against Japan. In fact, when Wiltberger left for the war, the San Jose State Police School was discontinued, and when Wilson left, the Berkeley program was suspended.<sup>79</sup> It was not until after World War II that the association would be able to hold their next meeting, and at that meeting, the organization changed its name to the Society for the Advancement of Criminology. Still further, it was not until after Vollmer’s death in 1955, at the 1957 meeting, that the association was able to change its name to its current form, the American Society of Criminology.

On his return to Pullman, Washington, just after the New Year, having traveled over snow and ice to return home, Leonard developed another idea. He reasoned that if there could be an association of college police science instructors, why not an association of police science majors?<sup>80</sup> Once the quarter resumed, “Leonard met with seventeen Police Science majors at Washington State and Alpha Phi Sigma was established,” a student organization that still exists today.<sup>81</sup> The students elected Glenn Hill to serve as their first president, and they appointed a committee to draft the Constitution and By-laws with Leonard’s assistance. He was, after all, busily drafting his own. Two years later, in the Spring of 1943, Miss Nelson, the first female president, was elected to lead Alpha Phi Sigma.<sup>82</sup>

Leonard continued to build the police science program over the next several years, and in 1942, the four-year degree program came into existence. In 1944, the Department of Police Science and Administration was also accepted into the University’s Graduate School, thus allowing them to begin offering the Master’s degree in Police Science and Administration.<sup>83</sup> Realizing he could no longer do it alone and wanting someone who could more adequately run the crime lab, Leonard hired Donald F. McCall who was, at the time, in charge of the Portland Police Crime Laboratory.<sup>84</sup> As the program continued to expand after the war years, Leonard also hired Felix Fabian, a fellow Texan, and Harry More, Jr.<sup>85</sup>

While Leonard was a member of the organization that became ASC, he was also fascinated by the polygraph and almost right away at Washington State University he used funds to purchase an original Keeler polygraph. As he developed his interest in the polygraph, he became a member of an appropriate association. As he later recalled:

One organization I was really active in was originally the Academy for Scientific Interrogation...it is now the American Polygraph Association...as a matter of fact, at the Chicago convention of the association in the late 1950s – I didn’t attend the convention – but even though I was not there, I was elected president without my knowledge. I had no idea any such move was in the picture. They elected me president and in the following year I staged the annual convention at Washington State University. And it was a memorable occasion. One of the speakers I had on the program was a retired detective from the Berkeley Police Department, Al Riedel. He was their polygraph man.<sup>86</sup>

What had made the difference was the fact that V.A. Leonard had finally obtained the Ph.D., thus elevating not only the legitimacy of the Washington State program, but also Leonard himself.<sup>87</sup> He had, however, fished around, trying to find a Ph.D. program that would both accept him and conform to his needs to avoid a leave of absence from Washington State. Leonard did not want to leave the university for an extended time period out of fear that the program might collapse. He began a correspondence with Dr. Walter C. Reckless at Ohio State in April of 1946, inquiring about the possibility of earning the Ph.D. by taking classes over the summer breaks. Reckless referred him to others and eventually a plan was developed that would allow him to obtain enough credits from his master’s degree and professional experience so that he only had to take three quarters of classes, which he could do in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of 1946 and 1947. While there, he would basically do a police survey of the

Columbus Police Department and then return to Washington State in the Spring of 1947 with nothing more than the dissertation left to write. That was, at least, the plan.

Although V.A. began the program at Ohio State and did well in his classes, including Penology with Reckless, Leonard decided to return to Washington in January and continue shopping around for a program. After nothing panned out, he returned to Columbus, Ohio in January of 1947 to take more classes in both the Winter and Spring quarters. Upon completion of his course work, he took a trip with his family to England, then to visit extended family in Texas, and a trip to visit Berkeley and the Vollmers, before finally returning home to Pullman in September of 1947. As he reached closer to finishing the degree, he wrote to Vollmer, "The Ph.D., while not indispensable is worth its weight in gold in this business."<sup>88</sup>

Throughout the Fall of 1947 and the Spring of 1948, Leonard worked on his dissertation which he had titled *Police Organization and Management*. In addition, while working on the dissertation he received a contract for two books with the Foundation Press, and he was working on both of those books simultaneously. Upon completion of his dissertation, he traveled to Columbus in July of 1948, to present it then returned in March of 1949 for the oral examination. Upon passing, he was granted the Ph.D. from Ohio State—he was now Dr. V.A. Leonard.<sup>89</sup> Walter Reckless was so impressed with Leonard's dissertation he quoted from it a number of times and referred to Leonard by name in his seminal book, *The Crime Problem*.<sup>90</sup> Vollmer wrote him to congratulate him saying, that "your achievement has made me very happy. First, because I count you among my top bracket friends; second, it will add dignity to the police profession; and, third, you have justified the faith that I have always had in you."<sup>91</sup>

Ph.D. now in hand, Leonard found that it opened up new doors for him, including selection as the president of the Academy for Scientific Interrogation. In addition, several publishers were seeking to publish not only his Dissertation, but also other books related to police science. Charles C. Thomas had specifically asked him to serve as the editor on a series of books to be named the "Police Science Series."<sup>92</sup> By the end of his career, V.A. Leonard himself authored or co-authored a total of 32 textbooks.<sup>93</sup>

The books published with Charles C. Thomas included essentially what was a slimmed down version of his first publication, the similarly titled, *The Police Communication System*.<sup>94</sup> In addition, he published with Charles C. Thomas: *Survey and Reorganization of the Seattle Police Department*; *The Police Enterprise, Its Organization and Management*; *The Police, the Judiciary and the Criminal*; *Police Patrol Organization*; *The Police Detective Function*; *Criminal Investigation and Identification*; *Police Traffic Control*; *Police Crime Prevention*; *Police Pre-Disaster Preparation*; *Police Science for the Young American*; *Police Personnel Administration*, and *The Police Records System*.

V.A. Leonard also authored a number of books with the Foundation Press. Among those were *The Police of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* and *Police Organization and Management*.<sup>95</sup> The latter text was first published in 1951 by Charles C. Thomas and was released a year after O.W. Wilson's similarly titled book, *Police Administration* (1950). This text continued in subsequent editions with the third edition being published by Foundation Press, and then for the fourth edition, Harry More, Jr. (a past President of ACJS), became Leonard's co-author. Harry More had worked with Leonard at Washington State and was present at his retirement party in 1963. After Leonard's death, More continued to update the book with its last release occurring in 1993, the ninth edition.<sup>96</sup>

Over the following years, Leonard entertained leaving Washington State University, but the right circumstances never seemed to pan out.<sup>97</sup> As V.A. approached retirement, in 1959, he stepped down from the chairmanship of the Department of Police Science and Administration, the position he had held since 1941 and turned it over to Dr. Donald F. McCall. He then decided in 1963 to retire. McCall, Fabian, and More put together a retirement party for Leonard to be held in Pullman, Washington. Members of the old guard arrived, including John Kenney, Douglas Gorley, Robert Borkenstein, and Ed Farris. While the party was underway, many of these police professors lamented how much things had changed in the American Society of Criminology, the association that Leonard had helped to create. It had lost its police focus and had developed into a more theoretical, East Coast endeavor. And that was when they decided that they would create a new organization, one that would honor the legacy of Vollmer, as well as Leonard's contributions to police education.<sup>98</sup> They decided to name it based off of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, by calling themselves the International Association of Police Professors (IAPP).<sup>99</sup> The

organization began meeting regularly, and in 1970, the IAPP officially changed its name to the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS).

In his retirement years, which spanned some 21 years, Leonard returned home to Texas, and settled in Denton, just outside of Fort Worth. There, he continued to write books and the occasional article. From 1971 to 1972, he served as a visiting professor in the Central Police College in Taipei, Taiwan.<sup>100</sup> And in 1976, when the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences held its annual conference in Dallas, Texas, Leonard was invited to give a special address, which he titled, “Memories of August Vollmer,”<sup>101</sup> which was later published in *Police Chief* magazine.<sup>102</sup> At that conference, ACJS had inaugurated two awards, the Founders Award and the Bruce Smith, Sr. Award. Leonard, along with William Wiltberger, were jointly awarded the Founders Award that year.<sup>103</sup>

It was also at the 1976 conference that ACJS honored V.A. Leonard in another way as well. Since 1942, when Leonard had created Alpha Phi Sigma, the organization had expanded slowly to other campuses and by 1976, consisted of only 14 chapters. At the annual meeting, the Executive Board voted unanimously to designate Alpha Phi Sigma as the National Criminal Justice Honor Society and that all future meetings of ACJS and APS would be held jointly.<sup>104</sup> Then, in 1982, at the annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, Alpha Phi Sigma officially recognized V.A. Leonard for his contributions to that organization by naming the V.A. Leonard Scholarship in his honor, a scholarship that continues to be given on an annual basis to both an undergraduate and graduate student.<sup>105</sup>

V.A. Leonard died in his home in Denton, Texas, on October 28, 1984, after suffering a short illness.<sup>106</sup> He was 86 years old.

## Conclusion

V.A. Leonard’s ACJS obituary, written for *ACJS Today*, summed up his contributions to police science and criminal justice quite succinctly when it stated, “His death ended a career in police operations, communications, administration, and education that spanned six decades.”<sup>107</sup> Prout, when writing about associate degree programs in law enforcement for the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, asserted that, “As August Vollmer is acclaimed to be the ‘father of modern law enforcement,’ it could be stated that Dr. V.A. Leonard is the ‘father of law enforcement education.’ Dr. Leonard was responsible for the growth and development of the police science program at...Washington [State].”<sup>108</sup> While his impact at Washington State University is clear, his impact beyond WSU is perhaps not as widely known, which is perhaps why a professor there once wrote, “The impact upon the police field and police education of Doctor Leonard and the Police Science Program may never be fully measured. But when the police science history of this century is finally written, both Doctor Leonard and his police science program will be cast in focal positions.”<sup>109</sup> It would seem then, that by recognizing Leonard’s strong relationship with August Vollmer, and his instrumental involvement in the creation of the American Society of Criminology, Alpha Phi Sigma, and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, by all evidence, he *was* the focal point. While attribution is given to Vollmer for the creation of modern police education, and others have surely contributed greatly along the way, it is perhaps time to more readily recognize the significant contributions made by Dr. V.A. Leonard from Washington State University.

## Endnotes

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- 77 Currently (2014) the website of the American Society of Criminology for past conferences lists 1942 as follows: "A meeting was held and there are definite references in existing correspondence to that fact, but the dates are completely unknown, and the location is unclear. There are indirect references to the meetings possibly being held at what is today Washington State University in Pullman, but no firm documentation exists and has now likely been lost to history." In light of the current documentation, this could now be changed, for there is direct evidence from V.A. Leonard to August Vollmer that the conference did occur in Pullman, Washington as planned. In addition, Leonard also noted, "Best wishes to you and Mrs. Vollmer; we wish both of you could have been here. The wives of several members of the faculty were prepared for a reception in honor of both Mrs. Vollmer and Mrs. Gault; at the last minute



- Mrs. Gault couldn't come." See August Vollmer Papers. The Bancroft Library. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley. See BANC MSS C-B 403, Box 19, Letter from V.A. Leonard to August Vollmer, January 1, 1942.
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- 80 There is also the possibility the creation was a result of Wiltberger's actions at San Jose State. In 1935, Wiltberger had created Chi Pi Sigma, a law enforcement fraternity at the college. On November 8, 1941, Vollmer wrote Leonard and mentioned that fact. This may have been the spark that led Leonard to form his fraternity at Washington State. See August Vollmer Papers. The Bancroft Library. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley. See BANC MSS C-B 403, Box 46, Letter from August Vollmer to V.A. Leonard, November 8, 1941; Chi Pi Sigma. (2014). History. Retrieved from <http://www.chipisigma.org/history.html>
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