

A Brief History of ASC and the Society Publications

Perhaps as early as 1932, former Berkeley police officer and then San Jose State College Professor [William A. Wiltberger](#) began to bring together a group of individuals on a sporadic basis to informally discuss contemporary law enforcement issues. It appears that the bulk of those involved in these discussions had either taken classes from [August Vollmer](#) at the University of California, Berkeley and/or had been police officers in Berkeley when Vollmer served as Chief. The group called themselves the “V-men,” recognizing Vollmer as their intellectual leader. It remains unclear, however, as to what direct role Vollmer may have had with respect to these early discussion groups.

In 1939, Professor Wiltberger formally organized the discussion group as the National Association of College Police School Administrators with himself as the President and his former student, Willard E. Schmidt, as Vice President and Secretary. In late December of 1941, anticipating his eminent departure into the military subsequent to the raid on Pearl Harbor, Wiltberger looked for someone else to take charge. August Vollmer agreed to step in. On December 30, 1941, August Vollmer invited seven men to his home in Berkeley. William Wiltberger and Willard Schmidt were both present. The meeting began at 10:15 am, and did not conclude until after midnight. At this meeting, Wiltberger’s organization was re-named the National Association of College Police Training Officials. August Vollmer (then 65 years old) was named President-Emeritus and [Orlando W. Wilson](#) (one of Vollmer’s former students) was named President. Willard Schmidt was named First Vice President, and William Wiltberger was named Third Vice President.

William Wiltberger was indeed called to active military duty shortly after this meeting was held. He served in the Air Force and survived the war, eventually rising to the rank of Lt. Colonel. Although appointed as Third Vice-President in the newly named association, there is no evidence of active involvement on his part after the organizational meeting of December 30-31, 1941. He did, however, maintain sporadic membership up until at least 1959. His lack of involvement is likely due to the fact that the new organization, reflecting Vollmer’s perspective, took on more of an academic orientation, which was contrary to Wiltberger’s vision. August Vollmer remained active in the organization at least until 1949 when he served as the Annual Meeting Program Chair (at age 73). Orlando W. Wilson served as President until 1950. Schmidt remained active in the organization at least up until 1952 when he again served as Vice President and as Annual Meeting Program Chair.

With the advent of World War II, growth and development of this new organization was quite slow. As post-War events settled, a meeting was held at the Durant Hotel in Berkeley, California in 1946. There were roughly 40 members of the Society at the time. At this meeting, the name of the organization was changed to the Society for the Advancement of Criminology, and a Society Constitution was adopted. The next meeting of the Society took place in December of 1949 at the University of California, Berkeley. Among other matters, the need for a newsletter was discussed, and as best

as we can tell, three newsletters were produced and distributed by [John Kenney](#) over the next three years (1950 – 1952).

In 1952, the *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Sciences* was designated as the official vehicle for Society news and articles. After a year, it was determined that the *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Sciences* was not a suitable medium for distributing Society news. Consequently, the Board decided in April of 1953 to publish a newsletter, in-house. The Secretary/Treasurer, Lowell W. Bradford, took on this task. With some surprising speed, Volume 1:1 appeared in print the very next month, May 1953. The Bulletins were likely published out of his home in San Jose, California. Seven Bulletins were published by Mr. Bradford in 1953 and 1954. The Publications Committee then took on the task of preparing the Bulletins, and a number were published over the course of the next four years. They were produced on a sporadic basis, however, and the number of Bulletins published during this time has been lost to history.

This was a time of growth and development for the Society. There were a number of stops and starts as the organization and its early leaders sought to carve out policies and practices and purposes. The Executive Board of the Society for the Advancement of Criminology met on March 30, 1957 at the President's Conference Room in the Administration Building of the University of Southern California with several far-reaching items on the agenda. Among other items, the Board decided to change the name of the Society at this meeting. Three options were proposed:

American Society of Criminology
American Criminological Association
American Criminological Society

In the following months, the membership as a whole (64 persons at the time; half of which resided in California) voted on the name change, and on a new Constitution. In November of 1957 it was announced that the new Constitution passed, and that by a vote of 7 (American Criminological Society), to 10 (American Criminological Association), to 18 (American Society of Criminology), the name of the organization had been changed. This newly named organization was officially incorporated in the State of California on August 7, 1958.

There was also much discussion at the March 1957 Board Meeting regarding the need for a journal and a newsletter. The Society was small in numbers, and not financially grounded. Nonetheless, the Society tried to move forward with a newsletter and sought to standardized a publication schedule. The Publication Committee, chaired at the time by C. Robert Guthrie, was tasked to produce ten newsletters per year, and to contribute material for the SAC News section of the *Journal of Criminal Law, Police Science and Administration*, and *Police*. Unfortunately, the Publication Committee only managed to produce three newsletters in 1957 and two in 1958. In 1959, Howard R. Leary was named the Newsletter Editor, and he produced three issues that year. There are no surviving records as to who was responsible for newsletter production from

December 1959 until early 1963.

In early 1963, backed with a \$500 Certificate of Deposit (the beginnings of the organization's financial solvency; up to this point much of the financial short-falls were personally covered by [Donal E. J. MacNamara](#)), the Society resolved to publish a newsletter on a regular basis. In May of 1963, Vol 1:1 of *Criminologica: Newsletter of the American Society of Criminology* was published, with [Charles Newman](#) serving as the Editor.

With the publication of the May 1966 issue, the newsletter *Criminologica*, became the journal *Criminologica: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Criminology*, with [Simon Dinitz](#) serving as Editor. *Criminologica* was self-published by the Society from May 1966 issue through the February 1970 issue. With the May 1970 issue, the name of the journal was changed to *Criminology: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, and was jointly published by Sage Publications through the November 1984 issue. The Society ended the relationship with Sage Publications and self-published *Criminology* from the February 1985 issue through the November 2004 issue, printing the journal at Christensen's (in Lincoln, Nebraska). The Society entered into an agreement with what is now John Wiley and Sons, Inc. to publish *Criminology* as of the February 2005 issue. That relationship continues to this time.

By the year 2000, it was becoming quite clear that another professional publication was needed, one that focused more on policy issues. The cost of developing a new journal was outside of the Society's fiscal capabilities. Consequently a grant was sought from and subsequently awarded to the Society by the National Institute of Justice to develop such a journal. Volume 1:1 of *Criminology & Public Policy (CPP)* was published in February 2001, with [Todd Clear](#) serving as Editor. The Society self-published *CPP* through the November 2004 issue (as with *Criminology*, also printing *CPP* at Christensen's), and then entered into an agreement with what is now John Wiley and Sons, Inc. to publish *CPP* (in conjunction with *Criminology*) as of the February 2005 issue. That relationship continues to this time.

As best as we can tell, no separate Society newsletter was published for the ten-year period from February 1966 until June 1976. During this time, Society news and notes from the field were often included in the journals, *Criminologica* or *Criminology*. By the Spring of 1976, it was clear that a separate publication for news and notes was needed. Consequently, the Society established *The Criminologist: Official Newsletter of the American Society of Criminology*, and designated [Alvin Cohn](#) and [Joseph Scott](#) as the Co-Editors. Volume 1:1 of *The Criminologist* was published in June 1976. The Society has published *The Criminologist* regularly since that time, initially printing the newsletter at Ohio State University, and then at Robin Enterprises (in Columbus, Ohio). With the November/December 2020 issue, and in the midst of the COVID pandemic, the newsletter became an on-line only publication.