

## Police put their past on display

**More items are sought for exhibit that will show the history of law enforcement in Charlotte and Mecklenburg.**

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There are handcuffs from the 1890s, a bayonet-tipped shotgun from an era when police apparently needed extra protection, and tickets to a May 1955 baseball game pitting the “Charlotte Policemen vs. Charlotte Firemen.”

Those items are a small part of a collection compiled by Charlotte-Mecklenburg police in their effort to create a museum exhibit.

The bigger part of the collection, they say, is in the closets, drawers and attics of many Charlotte-area residents.

On Thursday, police displayed what they have gathered so far for an exhibit that will be titled “Beneath the Badge: Policing in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1865-2009.”

“This tells the story of our department over 140 years,” Deputy Chief Harold Medlock said. “But we know that people in the community – retired officers and the general public – probably have many other items that would help tell the story.”

CMPD's Melissa Manware Treadaway has teamed in recent months with curator Ryan Sumner, who is working with the Charlotte Museum of History, to label and document what they found. “Most of these items were already here,” Medlock said, referring to the police department's headquarters on East Trade Street.

Initially, probably early next year, the exhibit will open at either police headquarters or the Police Training Academy on Shopton Road. Eventually, police hope to have an exhibit at the Charlotte Museum of History.

“That will take money,” Medlock said. “In the meantime, we'll do what we can to make this available to the public.”

Treadaway said CMPD and the museum have not determined how much a museum-based exhibit would cost.

The items so far date back to near the 1865 beginnings of the Charlotte Police Department and the 1925 start of the Mecklenburg Police Department. The units merged in 1993. There are photos from the 19th century, a nightstick, badges, firearms, a book of traffic citations from 1959, and tickets to the ninth annual ballgame between police and firefighters.

“Folks from the museum have been a huge help for us, and we hope one day to have this exhibit there,” Treadaway said.