# THE TURBULENT SIXTIES 1960-1969

The Cottonwood Creek Bridge where Adolph Coors III was murdered. Sheriff's Investigators search for evidence.

**February 9, 1960 Tuesday**

Dan Crocker was making his morning deliveries for United Dairies in South Jefferson County. He came to the narrow wooden bridge spanning the nearly dry Cottonwood Creek on Turkey Creek Road (now gone but located about ¼ mile down Turkey Creek Road from Soda Creek Road). Right in the middle of the bridge sat a large Travelall van, engine running, and no one in sight. Disgusted, Crocker turned his truck around and sought other ways to get to the homes south of the bridge. Later on in the morning he returned to the bridge and found the van still there, engine still running, and still no one around. He drove into Morrison and called the Colorado State Patrol.

State Patrolman George Hedricks called for a registration check on the van and soon received word that the unattended Travelall sitting before him on the Cottonwood Creek bridge was owned by 44 year old Adolph Coors III, chairman of the family owned brewery in Golden.

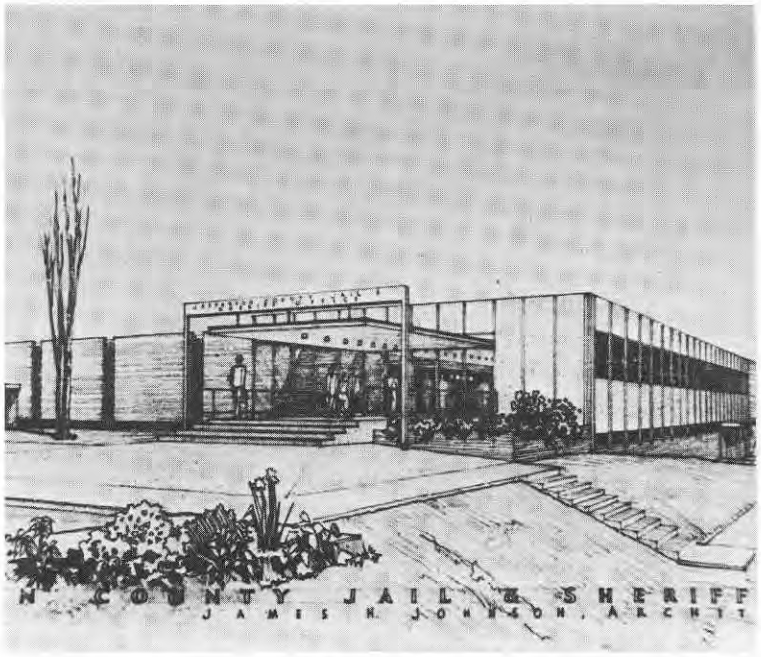
Sheriff's Department Investigation Captain, Harold E. Bray, and several other deputy sheriffs began a ten mile search of the area, combing each hill, cave, interviewing all neighbors, and calling out the Mounted Posse to check the back country. Several residents in the area reported seeing a grey and white car with a license plate number beginning with AT on Turkey Creek Road quite often in the last several months. Colorado State Patrol checked their records for speeding tickets and discovered that one had been issued in 1959 to Walter Osborne when he was stopped in a grey and white sedan just east of Morrison.

Later in the morning, Sheriff's Investigator William Flint pulled an envelope from a pile of letters at the Morrison Post Office that was addressed to Mrs. Adolph Coors III. It was carefully opened and examined.

" 'Your husband has been kidnapped. His car is by Turkey Creek. Call the police of FBI, he dies. Cooperate, he lives...' "

The typed message asked for $500,000.00 in unmarked currency in a suitcase and an ad for the pickup in the Denver Post Newspaper. With the assistance of the FBI, Sheriff's Investigators gathered up the money, placed the ad in the paper, and waited for a response. None came.

The hunt for Walter Osborne was on.




An architects drawing shows the entrance to the new Jail and Sheriff's Office built in 1957 for $435,000.00.

**September 12, 1960**

For seven months Sheriff's investigators and the F.B.I. tracked down Walter Osborne. On February 17th a charred and gutted automobile was recovered in New Jersey which listed to Walter Osborne. Samples of the vehicle were sent to F.B.I. laboratories and the paint was determine to be grey and white.

The ransom note stationary and typewriter used was traced a May D&F store and records there show a Royalite typewriter purchased by a man using the name of William Chiffins. This name was traced back and was discovered to an inmate at Chino prison who occupied a cell near one holding a Joseph Corbett, aka Walter Osborne. The clerk at the department store looked at a photo lineup and quickly selected the picture of Joseph Corbett as the man.

On August 31st photographs provided by the F.B.I. of Joseph Corbett hit the newspapers across the country. This was to become the largest manhunt in American history and one of the most notorious murder cases. J. Edgar Hoover ran an article in Reader's Digest giving a complete description of Joseph Corbett, entitled "The FBI Wants This Man". Fifty agents were put in the field.

Today the remains of Adolph Coors III was discovered in an abandoned dump near Sedalia in Douglas County. Positive proof of the victim's identity was established through dental records. Evidence showed two bullet holes in the victim's clothes.

The investigators on the case did not know that as they collected the remains of Adolph Coors, the killer was in Toronto, Canada.

**October 29, 1960**

A man who had read the Reader's Digest article regarding the manhunt for Joseph Corbett, recognized the photograph supplied in the article as a man he knew in Toronto as Thomas Wainwright. He called the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Corbett left Toronto for Vancouver. The police there, under the desguise as deliverymen, captured Joseph Corbett without a struggle, and immediately notified the F.B.I. and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department. Captain Harold E. Bray immediately took the next available air flight out of Denver for Vancouver.

**March 29, 1961**

For the last sixteen days the jury has been sequestered in the Holland House in Golden and today they returned with verdict of guilty to the District Court. Joseph Corbett said nothing. No flicker of emotion crossed his face. Judge Christian Stoner sentenced Corbett to life at hard labor at the State Penitentiary. (In 1978 Corbett would win his freedom through parole).

The trial of Sheriff Arthur Wermuth in 1962.

Newly appointed Sheriff Harold E. Bray talks to reporters in the Jail for the first time.

**April 30, 1962**

Since 1960 Sheriff Arthur Wermuth had been quickly sliding into fields of unethical behavior, of probable criminal misconduct in office. It was discovered that he gave deputy sheriffs overtime pay to paint his wife's home in Edgewater. It was established that he allowed the prison escape of two known murderers from his jail in 1956 in order to get the headlines in the local paper, or receive notoriety in any detective magazine. He nearly destroyed the Coors Case investigation by his love of media attention, and even his desire to reach Vancouver before anyone else led the press and barroom patrons to refer to Vermuth's plane flight as the "Canadian Wild Goose Caper". A five month probe was begun and Sheriff Wermuth was indicted on embezzlement of public funds, and through a mutual agreement, Sheriff Wermuth agreed to resign from office instead of being prosecuted.

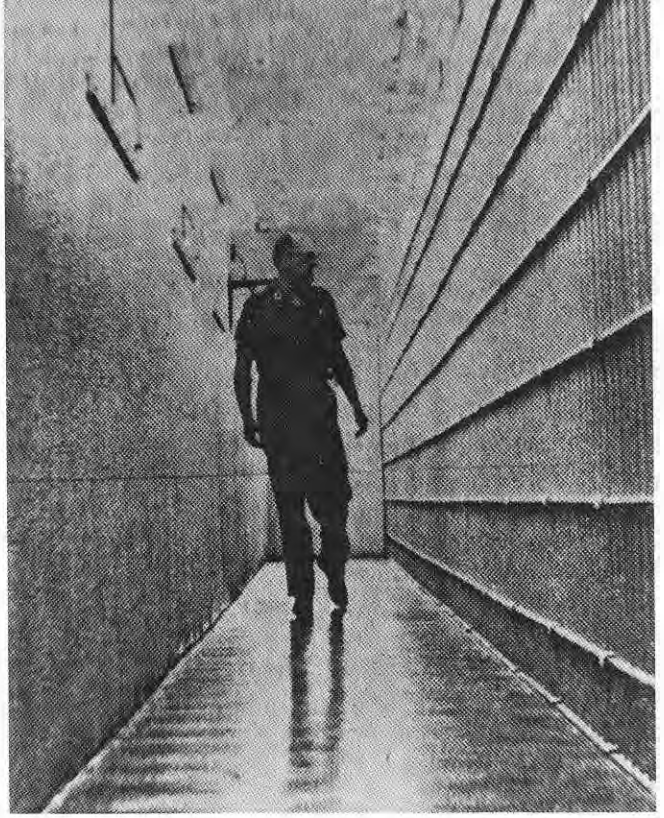
Tonight Sheriff Wermuth sat in his closed up office in the Sheriff's Department and learned that Captain Harold E. Bray had been selected by the Board of County Commissioners to take the office tomorrow morning at 9:30 am. When Arthur Wermuth left office today, he never returned.

**May 1, 1962**

At 9:30 am this morning Harold E. Bray is sworn in as Sheriff of Jefferson County. Arthur Wermuth's most recent Undersheriff, Charles Morris, will remain in that position.

Harold E. Bray was born in Guadalupe County, New Mexico on a large cattle ranch where he lived for the next twenty years. In 1940 Bray came to Denver to go to school but enlisted in the Navy instead. He served in the South Pacific during World War Two and remained in the Navy for an additional six years working in Navy Intelligence. In 1951 he returned to Denver where he and his family lived in an apartment in Lakewood. With his GI Bill money running out he sought out a part time job with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Carl Enlow hired him, paid him by the hour, in June of 1952. In August of 1952 he received a Commission Card from the Sheriff's Department and continued to serve in a part time capacity throughout the remainder of the year. On January 1, 1953 Carl Enlow hired Bray on the department as a full time deputy sheriff.

Just two months ago Harold E. Bray was totally aware that Harold David Wooley, the conviced murderer of William Scott Wright in 1959, was put to death in the gas chamber. He had received on stay of execution in early 1960 but failed the stay of execution last March 9th.



Deputy Clyde Prichett patrols the cell block in 1963.

The Jefferson County Courthouse, built in 1878, is being torn down in 1963.

**May 25, 1963**

Today the old courthouse and Sheriff's Department and Jail were torn down. By the end of the day only a pile of brick and mortar remained of the two Jefferson County landmarks on Washington Avenue. Some of the fixtures and courtroom furniture was salvaged and removed to a local museum, but the remainder of Jefferson County's history was carted out to the Rooney Road dump site and buried forever. A fast food restaurant and an oil company now rest upon the ground which once was occupied by a magnificent building.

**August 26, 1964**

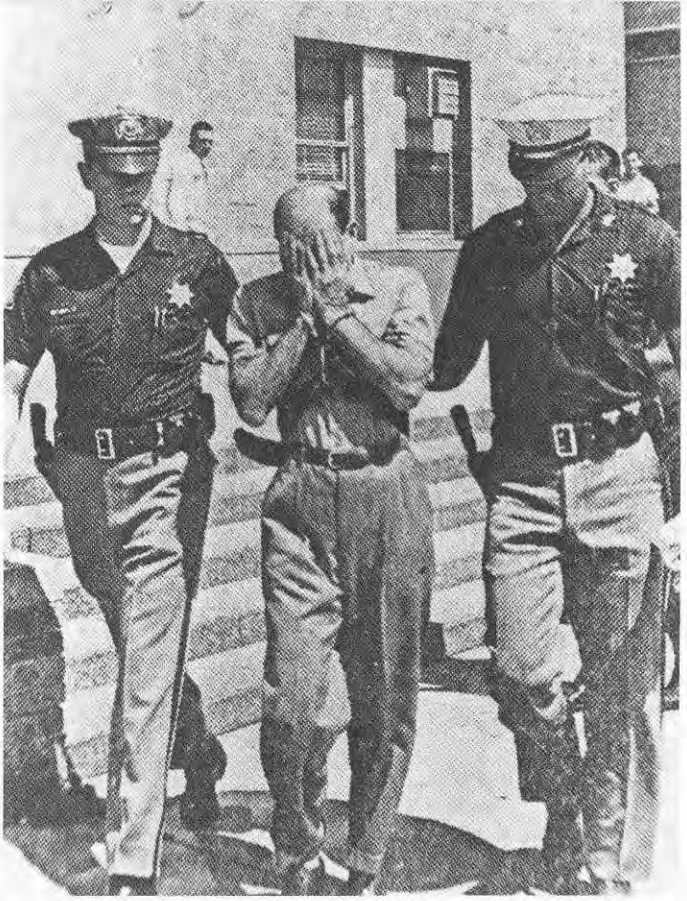
Tonight the English rock and roll band The Beatles played a concert at Red Rocks. Sheriff's Department personnel was on hand to control the hysteria and help the Denver Police Department with traffic.

Investigator Lyle Wright displays evidence taken from juvenile offenders in 1965.

Deputy Butch Lurita and the bobcat he had to shoot in Wheatridge in 1965.

The Avaition Unit in 1964. Sheriff Bray is kneeling on the left, then Deputy Garnett Bennetts, two unidentified pilots, and Deputy Al Urich. This helicopter was flown on a rescue mission near Mount Evans in 1965.

Deputies unload a murder suspect in front of the Jail in 1964.



Deputy Robert Lyons, left, and Sergeant Frank Page escort a murder suspect in 1964 to Jail.

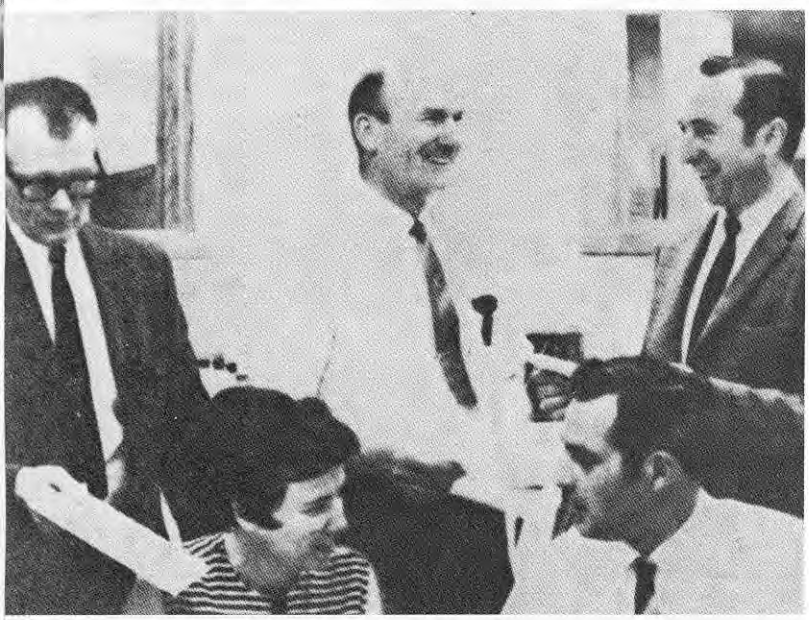
Judge Christian Stoner, center, inspects items recovered from the burglary of his own home in January of 1967. Sheriff's Investigators Mike Wiggins, left, and Don Edwards, right, look on.

**November 8, 1966 Tuesday**

Today Sheriff Harold E. Bray soundly defeated Democrat candidate, Ray E. Keech, for the office of Sheriff. Bray received 43,198 votes to Keech's 19,869 votes. In the November 1962 election, Bray ran unopposed for the election to serve his first four year term. Due to the change in the law of 1954, Bray would not have to run again until 1970.

**June 3, 1969 Tuesday**

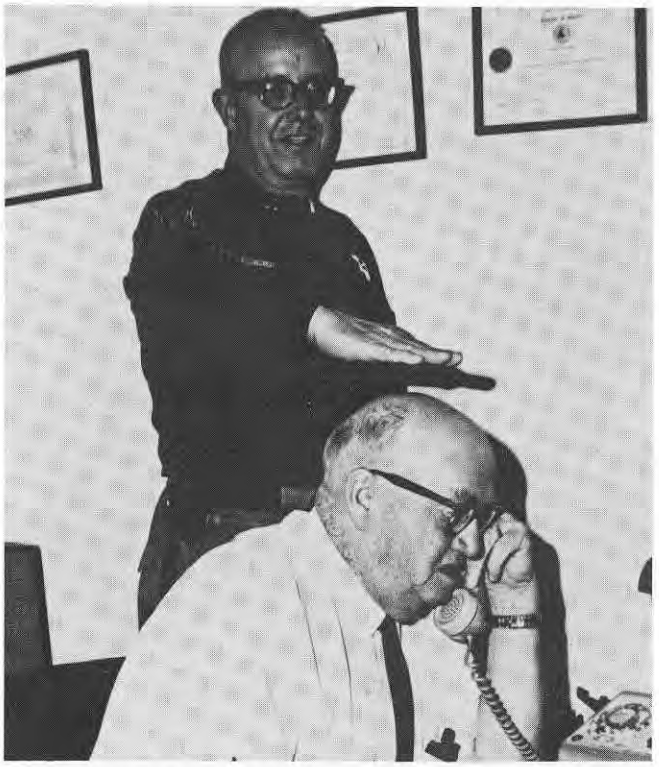
Jefferson County voters gave overwhelming approval for a new law enforcement district for unincorporated areas of Jefferson County. This election provided for additional Sheriff's Department personnel, necessary equipment and salaries, to control crime in areas not controlled by the cities. Sheriff Bray announced today that eighty new deputy sheriffs will be added to the overall force, and training academies will commence in August of this year to train them. Now the Patrol Division of the Department will be totally funded by this tax money. This new district was to be known as Law Enforcement Authority (LEA).



Deputy Ken Baker, Corinne Guietterez, Sheriff Bray, Deputy Jan Burton, and Deputy Dick Piper celebrate the passing of the LEA Bill in 1969.

Sergeant Roger Bruchett conducts shift briefing in 1970.

The 1969 Sheriff's Department Pistol Team. From left to right are: Roger Willard, Jon Vandersys, Lou Warren, Sheriff Bray, J.T. Warren, Ray Taylor, and Robert White.



The Captain of the Jail in 1969 was John Phillips, while the Undersheriff was Charles Morris who is seen here on the telephone.

**November 4, 1969 Tuesday**

Today 13,600 voters from Alameda, Green Mountain, Applewood, and Lakewood cast their votes for the approval of incorporating a new city in eastern Jefferson County. Earlier in the year, the citizens of Wheatridge approved the measure to incorporate their community. The election today was a success. The people opted for a new city, at one time this year known as Jefferson City, to be incorporated. The Sheriff's Department would now phase their patrol protection out of this area that today officially became the City of Lakewood.