

Burlington's First Police Chief

Research & Writing by Detective Jeffrey Beerworth – February 2015

Early in 1865, Mayor Albert L. Catlin appointed Luman A. Drew to be the city's "First Constable."¹ Luman Augustus Drew was born in Burlington on October 27, 1832, into a family with a prominent history of being involved in the affairs of the village. Drew was educated in the public schools of Burlington and at the Bakersfield Academy. After graduation, he became an associate with his father in the wholesale and retail meat business, which he would return to after his long tenure as County Sheriff and Chief of Police. Drew was also involved in breeding blooded stock, chiefly the "Ethan Allen" breed of horses. He was a promoter and stockholder in the Vermont Horse company and later took an active interest in the Vermont Breeders association.² In terms of politics, Drew was a republican and a life long member of the Scottish Rite Masonry and the Knights Templar.³

Drew rendered a more relevant service to the State Vermont, and to his country, which made him the obvious choice to be Burlington's First Constable. This service came on October 19th, 1864, when a band of Confederate cavalymen raided the town of St. Albans, Vermont. The St. Albans Raid was the northernmost action of the Civil war, in which the rebels robbed local banks of \$208,000 and attempted to burn down the town. Drew was serving as a constable in Burlington at the time of the raid and aided in the pursuit of the Confederates by carrying dispatch communications between the soldiers of St. Albans, and the the army reinforcements in

¹ Resnick, Robert J. *Legendary Locals of Burlington, Vermont*. Arcadia Publishing. Charlestown, South Carolina. 2013

² The Burlington Free Press. Burlington Vt. February 23rd, 1905. print.

³ Carleton, Hiram *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Vermont: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of a Commonwealth and Founding of a Nation. Volume I*. The Lewis Publishing Co. New York. Chicago. 1903.

Burlington. Drew's correspondence to Colonel Conger from Governor John A. Dix, was reported to have contained the following orders: "To pursue the raiders if necessary into the Queen's dominions, and capture them at all hazards."⁴

The broad nature of the orders given to Drew were, under normal circumstances, were in violation of law, and called for Drew and the group of soldiers in his company, to invade the territory of a peaceful nation. If the pursuit was not handled with prudence, it could have led to war between the United States and the British territories. Drew's mission was handled discreetly and the mission was accomplished without bloodshed and without national incident.⁵ Many of the Confederate raiders were pursued into Canada and later arrested. Drew's service was deemed meritorious by Col. Conger and in February, 1865, Drew was appointed by Governor J. Gregory Smith, to be quartermaster in the second regiment.⁶



UVM Special Collections. William D. Munson Papers.

⁴ Carleton, Hiram *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Vermont: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of a Commonwealth and Founding of a Nation. Volume I.* The Lewis Publishing Co. New York. Chicago. 1903.

⁵ Carleton, Hiram *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Vermont: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of a Commonwealth and Founding of a Nation. Volume I.* The Lewis Publishing Co. New York. Chicago. 1903.

⁶ *The Burlington Free Press. Burlington Vt. February 23rd, 1905. print.*