

Remember when ...

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*Intelligence*



Charlie Thorn Sr.



Jenny Thorn outside her father's animal control truck about 1965.

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Housing the animals was part of Charlie's duties although he received no money to cover the costs.

Marjorie Thorn recalls her husband used to take milk from their house to give to stray cats he caught. Marjorie went to the Cash and Carry Dairy on Pinnacle Street every second day and bought 12 quarts of milk to feed the animals. Asked how they afforded it, she says they "just had to cut back on stuff."

The same year Charlie Sr. took over the job from his father, additional work was added to his responsibilities. At a council meeting in 1950 it was decided to add the duties of cleaning the courtroom on the second floor of the former police building (then on market square) and stoking the furnace in the basement, to those of animal controller.

Charlie Jr. sometimes made the trip to the basement with his father. "It was a dull looking place," he recalls. "Just about as bad as the cells."

Perhaps the least pleasant of Charlie Sr.'s tasks was putting down animals. In Thomas' days a bullet was seen as doing the job quickly and painlessly but the Humane Society objected to this in later years and Charlie Sr. had to use carbon monoxide fumes from his car. On one occasion Thorn found it nearly impossible to perform his duty when he had to put down a large German Shepherd. "I can remember him just about crying when he had to do the animal in," says Charlie Jr.

The younger Thorn believes this part of the job — frequent exposure to carbon monoxide — took an even greater toll on

his father, who died in 1968 in his early 50s.

Today Charlie Jr. still has the handcuffs, whistle and club his grandfather carried while patrolling the city's streets as special constable.



Charlie Thorn Jr.