

# *First Female Winnipeg Police Officer* **Mary Ellen Dunn**

On the 22nd of December 1916, the Winnipeg Police Commission met and “female police officers were discussed” and it was “resolved that two women would be appointed”.

Mary E. Dunn, (Widow) 43 yrs, was appointed on December 27th, 1916, at a salary of \$75.00 per month. She was listed on her equipment records as being 5’7”, 175 lbs. She was issued keys to the Fire Alarm Boxes, Call Boxes, office door, and whistle #26. She was also issued a copy of the Rules and Regulations, and a copy of the Juvenile Act and issued Badge # 368. Duties were to care for ‘Wayward Children and Women in Distress’

Mary was born in the Ottawa area, and had met and married her husband William Henry Dunn, who was a builder. Upon settling in Winnipeg, they resided at 759 Broadway at Maryland St, with their 12 children. Mr. Dunn developed pneumonia, and died in August of 1913. She raised her children, and 3 years later joined the Winnipeg Police Force at age 43.

Mary Dunn resigned from the Police April 15th, 1920, and married Joseph Guertin on April 19th, 1920. There is speculation that she may have been encouraged to leave the Force, as she would no longer be single.



**Mary Dunn  
(nee Halpin),  
of 759 Broadway.  
29 June 1873 to  
29 January 1928**

Joseph Guertin was a special agent for the Canadian National Railway, and was killed in an accident in the line of duty November 12th, 1921 near Fort William (Dona) Ontario. Mary died January 29th, 1928.

## *The early years*

Mary Ellen Halpin was born 29th June 1873 to M. Halpin & Margaret Mann. She was baptized in Ottawa Ontario. She met her husband William Henry Dunn, born in Ottawa on 18th October 1869.

They were married 1894 in Ottawa. He had two brothers, George A. Dunn and Frederick Dunn, both of whom worked for the Government Bureau, Ottawa.

William was a builder of houses, and the family went west, first to Oxbow, SK, before coming to Winnipeg. In Winnipeg, Mr. Dunn began building houses under the employ of Dunn & Wallace contractors, 254 Kingsway Av. They raised their children in a house at 759 Broadway, at Maryland St. This site is currently a paved school yard for Gordon Bell High School.

William was reportedly working on the Cornish Library, when he fell into the Assiniboine River. He developed pneumonia and died 19th August 1913. His eldest was Mary Kathleen (19yrs) and his youngest was 19 months. Mary continued to raise the children on her own.



**Back Row (left to right):  
Mary Kathleen, Ethel, Beatrice, Louise**

**Middle row:  
Wilfred, Gerald, Edward, Norman, Vera**

**Front Row:  
Mary Dunn, with Shirley and Bill on lap,  
William Dunn, with Rita on lap**

## The police years

Mary was a widow during her career with the Winnipeg Police Force. She wore plain clothes, and did not leave the station, unless accompanied by a male constable.

In reviewing arrest books and other files, there is little known about her work, other than leading up to the 1919 General Strike.

All members were asked to resign from the Union, and to sign an Oath of Loyalty. In all, 228 members were dismissed from the Force and only 23 remained. Records show that Mary Dunn was one of those that signed.

In the entry in the books of the Winnipeg Police Commission, it shows that a replacement was hired (Clare Donaldson), prior to Mary Dunn resigning. It is believed that if someone could support her, she did not require the job. With her declaration of impending nuptials, she may have been asked to resign.

## The later years

Joseph Guertin is listed in 1917 as residing at 314 Broadway.

Mary Dunn married Joseph Guertin on April 19th, 1920, at St. Mary's Cathedral. He was listed as a Special Agent for the Canadian National Railway, having served time in Canadian Pacific Railway, and Provincial Police. They continued to reside at 759 Broadway.

Mary's eldest daughter, Mary Kathleen, born 1893, had met a young man, William Leo Sullivan of 313 Burnell St (the site is currently a vacant lot). They were married at St. Mary's Cathedral on May 16th, 1917. The union produced two children:

Margaret Noreen Armstrong (nee Sullivan), born April 12th, 1918, died March 2nd, 2000.

Mary Louise MacElaney (nee Sullivan), died April 12th, 1992, in Washington DC.

Gentlemen,

I have the honor to inform you that in accordance with your instructions all members who had not signed the agreement referred to in General order 1177 have been discharged from duty, with the exception of the several mentioned hereafter who have not been interrogated up to the present for the reasons given.

I beg to enumerate as follows the standing of the total employees of the Department :-

Signed agreement in first instance.

C H Newton, Deputy Chief  
 E Stodgell, Chief of Detectives.  
 W Eddie, Patrol Officer.  
 G F Richards, Clerk of Court and Sec. of Board.  
 E A Andrews, Asst. to Clerk of Court.  
 P C Lyon, Clerk.  
 P Stark, H Green, John Street, Geo Smith, Inspectors.  
 H Mc Lauchlan, Jack Bishop, F F Batho, R E Mc Donald, Sergeants.  
 C Boxhall, D Mc Kenzie, Station Sergeants.  
 B Stewart, J Beal, Detectives.  
 A C Mills, Constable. J Tomlinson, Elevator Operator.  
 J I Andrews, Police woman. Mary Dunn, Policewoman.  
 J Kwiatkowski, Interorter.  
 23 in all.

Not yet interrogated, as to re-joining, but have not signed.  
 Detention C Mc Kenzie - wife - Mrs Gear (matron) - quarantined -  
 Constable A Mc Lyst, - quarantined - Constable T Gregory - wife -  
 Constable S A Findlay - wife - Mrs Wright and Mrs Mc Keown,  
 Constable W Homer and C Thompson  
 9 in all.

Appointment.

Clara M C Donaldson, Police woman. 12 April 1920  
 -to be paid at rate of prob'ly constable-

Resignations.

Const. P M Matheson ; resigned own accord ; 15 April 1920  
 (app. May 8 1914)

Police woman Mary E Dunn ; resigned own accord ; 15 Apl "  
 (app. 27 Dec 1916)

Fine.



Joseph Guertin was killed in a rail accident in the line of duty near Dona, Ontario, about 27 miles east of what is now Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Mary's eldest, Mary Kathleen died March 4th, 1922.

Mary Ellen Dunn was again a widow, and now also caring for her two surviving grandchildren.

Mary Ellen Guertin continued with her family, leaning heavily on the church and preparing hers and other children for the church. She died January 29th, 1928 at the Misericordia Hospital, at age 54, leaving 11 children.

She was laid to rest on Wednesday, February 1st, 1929, at St. Mary's Cemetery 520 Osborne.

**JOSEPH GUERTIN KILLED**  
**C.N.R. Special Agent Run Down**  
**Near Fort William**

Joseph Guertin, 759 Broadway, special agent of the Canadian National railways, was fatally injured late Saturday afternoon, at Dona, Ont., about 27 miles from Fort William, Ont. Mr. Guertin went to Port Arthur to investigate a wreck near Dona, and had occasion to use a hand speeder, when he was struck head on by a train at a curve while travelling west of Fort William. Mr. Guertin was removed to McKellar hospital at Fort William after the accident, but succumbed to his injuries about an hour after admission. His skull was fractured. He was about 56 years of age.

The late Mr. Guertin has been with the Canadian National railways, in the special service department under J. M. Bannerman, for the past six years. Prior to this he was with the provincial police, while in the early days he was head of the Canadian Pacific railway police. He married Mrs. Mary E. Dunn, formerly a policewoman with the Winnipeg city police, about two years ago.

The body will arrive in Winnipeg today, and funeral arrangements in charge of Barker's undertakers, will be made later.

**MRS. M. GUERTIN,**  
**PROMINENT CITY**  
**CATHOLIC, DIES**

*Took Leading Part in Woman's Work of St. Mary's Cathedral*

Mrs. Mary E. Guertin, widow of Joseph Guertin, and prominent in the women's work of St. Mary's cathedral, died Sunday evening in Misericordia hospital, following a short illness.

Mrs. Guertin, who was 54 years of age, was born in Ottawa, Ont., and had lived in Winnipeg for 20 years. She was active in the work of the Christian Mothers' Confraternity, Catholic Women's league, Foster Home committee, and was a representative of the Providence Shelter for Children's Aid.

She leaves six daughters—Mrs. E. Gander, Detroit, Mich.; Beatrice Dunn, Winnipeg; Mrs. James H. McGuire, Rochester, N.Y.; Sister Mary Joan, Montreal, Que.; Sister Shirley Dunn, Kingston, Ont.; and Margaret Helen Dunn, at home—and five sons—Gerald, Wilfred James, William Edmund, Norman and William, at home.

The funeral will be held Wednesday morning at 8:30 o'clock from the family residence, 759 Broadway, to St. Mary's cathedral, where a requiem mass will be sung. Burial will take place in St. Mary's cemetery. The funeral arrangements are in charge of Barker's funeral home.



It is interesting to note that Mary Dunn is buried with her second husband, Joseph Guertin. Her first husband is directly to the north of her, and shares the plot with their oldest daughter, Mary Kathleen Sullivan.

Jane (Jenny) Isabel Andrews was appointed January 4th, 1917, at the age of 44 years. She was issued Badge # 367, although she was later issued Badge # 286. Jane was listed as 5'6½", 164 lbs, and resided at 8-752 McDermot Av. Born in Hantz County, NS, she would remain on the Force until pensioned on April 30th, 1938. She lived in apartments until 1924, when she is listed at 495 Rosedale Ave. The Henderson Directory does not list her in Winnipeg after retirement. Born November 8th, 1872, she died in 1952.

Clara M. C. Donaldson was hired April 12th, 1920, to replace Mary Dunn. Records indicate that she was a widow, having been married to William M., and residing at 30 Cathedral Av. Her occupation was listed as nurse. In 1924 she was residing at 1 - 577 Sherbrook, until 1931 when she moved to 25 - 828 Preston Av, and then in 1935 she moved to 10 - 45 Carlton. She retired on July 1st, 1941, and remained on Carlton until 1945.