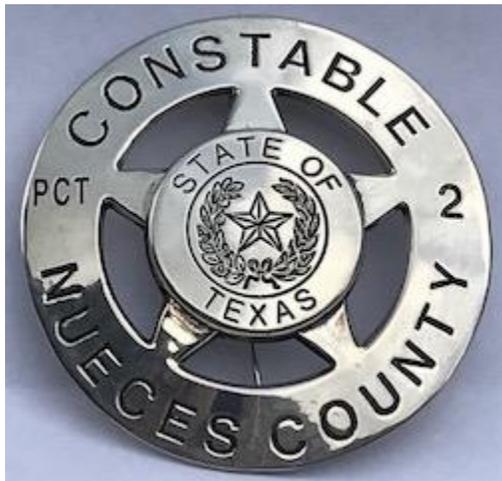


The Constable's Corner: What does COP mean?

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Several popular COP etymologies all exist for this word meaning policeman. One says that it is an acronym standing for Constable On Patrol. Another says that the first policemen in London (or another city--it varies in the telling) had copper buttons on their uniforms. Yet another says that it was not buttons, but a copper badge that gave them the name. Some of the first New York City police officers are said to have worn badges made from copper.

The most commonly heard theories trace "cop" or "copper" meaning "police" to copper buttons worn on early police uniforms, or to copper police badges issued in some cities. Still other theories explain "cop" as an acronym, standing for "Constable On Patrol," "Chief of Police" or other such phrases.

The police sense of "copper" and "cop" probably comes originally from the Latin word "capere," meaning "to seize," which also gave us "capture." "Cop" as a slang term meaning "to catch, snatch or grab" appeared in English in the 18th century, ironically originally used among thieves -- a "copper" was a street thief. But by the middle of the 19th century, criminals apprehended by the police were said to have themselves been "copped" - caught - by the "coppers" or "cops." And there you have the etymology of "cop." Case, as the cops say, closed. Well, not so fast. Read On!

The ultimate origin of the verb copper is disputed. It either derives from the Dutch kapen, meaning to take. This in turn comes from the Old Frisian capia, meaning to buy. The other choice is that it derives from the French caper, to take, and ultimately from the Latin capere.

Here are some COP acronyms you might not have thought of:

COP Copper ; COP Chief Of Police ; COP College of Pharmacy (Xavier University of Louisiana) ; COP Coefficient Of Performance ; COP Code of Practice ; COP Coil on Plug (automotive ignition) ; COP Court of Protection (UK) ; COP Cost of Production (agriculture) ; COP Citizens On Patrol ; COP ConocoPhillips (stock symbol) ; COP Chief of Party (various locations) ; COP Canada Olympic Park ; COP Congressional Oversight Panel (US Senate)

For me, I'm kinda partial (wonder why) to Constable on Patrol. Back in jolly old England, the Constable used to go to the livery stable and check out his horse, lantern and night stick. In a book, they would have to write "constable on patrol" and the time they went on patrol. I'm told that eventually someone got tired of writing all of this and shortened the entry to COP and then entered the time.

Semper Fi,

Constable Clark (your constable on patrol)



[Mitchell Clark](#)

Constable Clark is the duly elected official for the Pct. 2 Constable's Office. He has been involved in the Nueces County Constable operations since 1981 and holds a Masters Peace Officers license from the State of Texas. He is a licensed attorney in Texas and Tennessee and in the U.S. Supreme Court. He is a former Marine with assignments as a military policeman with a specialty in corrections and as highly prestigious Marine Corps Drill Instructor @ MCRD San Diego. Constable Clark knows the law.

Learn all about your constable by going to his new web site: ConstableMitchellClark.net



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NOTE: Nueces County Pct. 2 Constable Mitchell Clark can be contacted at the Nueces County Building in Flour Bluff, located at 10110 Compton Road, Corpus Christi, TX 78418. 361.937.6306 Constable Clark's door is always open. He is there to serve you!