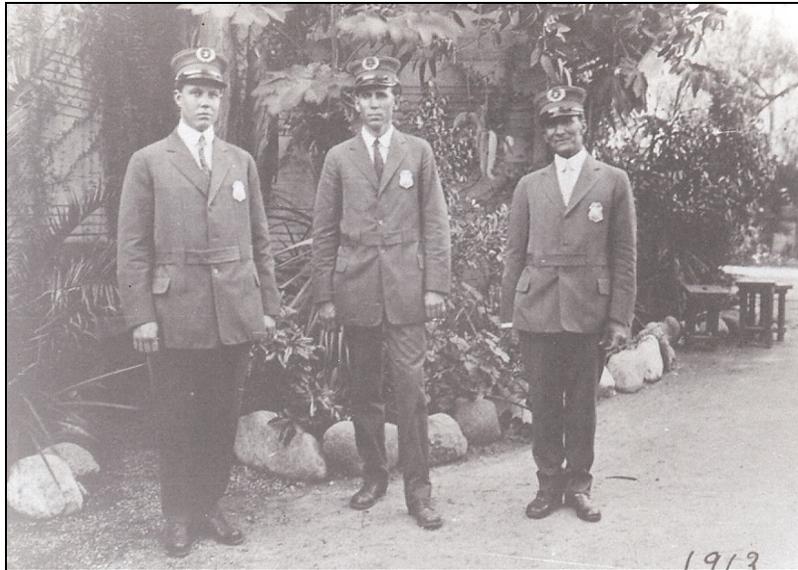


CENTENNIAL CORNER



*Early San Gabriel marshals pose for the camera in 1913, the year of the city's incorporation.
– Courtesy Ret. Capt. Richard Arnold, SGPD*

Long arm of the law: San Gabriel Police Department history

Law enforcement in San Gabriel had its official beginnings shortly after the city incorporated on April 24, 1913, although the city's law enforcement was not officially referred to as a "police department" until years later as staffing increased.

First City Marshal Appointed on Incorporation

The Board of Trustees selected Arthur E. Manzer as their first City Marshal on May 13, 1913 with a starting salary of \$75 a month. Manzer was required to furnish and maintain his own automobile which at that time was a Ford Model "T" Touring car and was required to pay his own operating expenses. At the July 15, 1913 meeting of the Board of Trustees, Marshal Manzer resigned after being denied a pay increase. He was rehired at their next official meeting on July 29, 1913 at a salary of \$125.

Early Police Station Located in Mission District

The location of the first police station was an ivory colored two-story frame building at the northwest corner of Mission Drive and Carmelita Street which also served as the first City Hall.



Early image of motorcycle unit parked in front of City Hall. Note the design of the original bell tower, which had a different shape from the modern bell tower.

The building was actually a grocery store belonging to the City's first mayor, Alex J. Cuneo and was initially used as a meeting place for the future trustees as they gathered to discuss incorporation.

The Board of Trustees met downstairs every night for the first year, eventually moving their meetings to every other Tuesday evening.

Trustees Pass Early Laws

Ordinance No. 39, "Peace and Order" which made certain offences against the peace and good order of the City a crime and punishable by law was adopted by the Trustees on June 3, 1913. At the same time, Mayor Cueno made arrangements with Sheriff Hammel of Los Angeles County to hold and care for prisoners arrested by Marshal Manzer in the County Jail.

Eventually a small brick building was constructed to the north of City Hall and used as a City Jail. In later years the structure was used as a registration office for WWI inductees, a truant office and later bail bonds office when the Slack & Salcido Groceries and Hardware Store (present day Parks and Recreation building) became the Justice Court. In February 1955 during construction of Panchito's, the former jail became one of the interior rooms of the restaurant.

In an effort to regulate traffic upon the City streets, Ordinance No. 39 was enacted on September 30, 1913. It would not be until 1918 with the purchase of its first motorcycle that the department was effective in enforcing speed within the City. Manufactured by Thor, the motorcycle was said to be the first such machine on the west coast.

The "wild west" was still being tamed when San Gabriel incorporated in 1913 as the many grog-shops (saloons) that once lined the streets around the San Gabriel Mission slowly began to disappear. Ordinance No. 103 was adopted on July 18, 1916 in order to control gambling, drunkenness, fighting and indecent language.

Early 1920s Bring Changes

In 1923 a new City Hall was built at 532 West Mission Drive which included a modern police station with the entrance off Ramona Street. The station included offices, lobby, booking room and jail facility. In 1926 when Art Manzer was appointed the joint duties of City Marshal/ Fire Chief the police station was moved into the fire station, located at 605 South Del Mar. It remained a combined facility until 1929 when the police station moved back to City Hall.

Police Facility Opens in 1962, Serves City More than 50 Years

On February 1, 1962 the City dedicated a new police facility at 625 South Del Mar Avenue before a crowd estimated at 2500 including retired Los Angeles County Sheriff Eugene W. Biscailuz. The police facility which was located on the site of the former fire station was built at a cost of \$420,432.73, including land, construction and furnishings.



SNAPPING ON THE CUFFS—San Gabriel Policewoman Bessie Evans snaps handcuffs on drunk suspect in the photo of an actual arrest being made. She rides regular duty in patrol car three nights a week and is proving herself capable in law enforcement.

USED TO HANDLE BRAHMA BULLS 12-13-56

San Gabriel Policewoman Rides Regular Night Patrol

By JACK JOHNSON
Post-Advocate Staff Writer
SAN GABRIEL. — The San Gabriel Police Department boasts two very capable policewomen. Mrs. Gabrielle Temple, No. 1 policewoman, handles administrative reports and juvenile cases. She is the right hand of the Chief.

Frank L. Carpenter. In preparing cases for court, also. The other policewoman, Bessie Evans, handles the desk on swing shift for two nights a week. Bessie likes the desk work fine, but much prefers the other three nights of duty.

That's when she takes over the job of a regular patrol officer. She straps on her gun, and rides in the patrol car on one night and in the juvenile car the other two. Sgt. L. T. Knight, who rides with her two nights a week, says "She can handle any situation adequately too." Bessie averages two to three arrests per week.

This includes handcuffing belligerent offenders as well as detaining juveniles for pick-up by the call.

The pert blonde shrugs off the oddity of her duties with a smile. "I'd a lot rather face those young boys and men than a charging

Bessie left the rodeo and enters police work with the Monterey Police Department two years ago. She liked the department and was well liked herself but craved something more than desk work.

In August of this year, she transferred to the San Gabriel Department. At first she did desk work and filing much the same as she had done at Monterey Park.

She became discouraged and applied for a transfer to the County Sheriff's Department in October. After carefully checking into the sheriff's department, however, she decided that San Gabriel had more opportunities for her.

On Swing Shift
Chief Carpenter recently said he was on swing shift. The law requires that a police officer be on duty whenever there is a female prisoner.

With a regular desk man on

CENTENNIAL FACT

In December, 1956, the *Alhambra Post-Advocate* featured two of San Gabriel's first policewomen in a story. Gabrielle Temple and Bessie Evans were profiled in the article.

In the 98 years since Arthur Manzer was first appointed as the first City Marshal, the department has grown from the initial marshal and two deputy positions to the current staffing of 57-sworn officers and 13 civilian employees. Eleven persons have had the honor of serving as the department's police chief from Arthur Manzer, who changed his title from City Marshal to Police Chief in 1935 to David A. Lawton who was appointed as the department's Police Chief in 1990.

Officers Honored for Ultimate Sacrifice

Unfortunately the department experienced the tragic loss of two of its officers since being formed. Officer Elmer H. Griffin was killed on February 7, 1926 while apprehending bootleggers who were smuggling whiskey during prohibition and on September 6, 1933 Officer Alvin W. Haynes was struck and killed as a result of a traffic collision involving a drunk driver while conducting a traffic stop.

Many advancements have taken place over the years including the introduction of sawed-off 12-gauge repeating shotguns which were mounted on the departments motorcycles in 1931, the installation of the first two-way radios in the departments patrol units in December of 1934, and the first use of radar for traffic enforcement in the early 1960's. Once the department entered the "computer age" technological advancements have become endless.

Man from Mars Puts San Gabriel in the News

Over the years crime in San Gabriel has also had a drastic impact on the community. One of the most unusual crime sprees to occur in San Gabriel was perpetrated by none other than the "Man from Mars."

The bandit was dubbed the "Man from Mars" because of the bizarre attire he wore while terrorizing supermarkets in the western San Gabriel Valley. The notorious bandit, later identified as 27-year old Forest Ray Colson, was described as a commuter bandit because he made it a habit to return to his parents' home in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma between robberies. Colson disguised his identity during the holdups by wearing a leather football helmet, goggles, gas mask, hood, and tight fitting black clothes with boots resembling a motorcycle officer's uniform.

The "Mars" bandit staged five successful holdups of supermarkets in a period of six months netting more than \$55,000.00 before his luck ran out on Thursday evening, October 12, 1951 when he was shot by Officer Harry Stone while in the commission of a robbery.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to Ret. Capt. Richard Arnold and the San Gabriel Police Department for the information in this story. Look for his upcoming publication on San Gabriel, to be published by Arcadia Press.