

History of the Altadena Station



The first 40 years of Altadena finds the fledgling community with no police force of its own. Policing was handled by the County Marshall in Pasadena. By 1927 Los Angeles County had planned to lease the building at 940 East Foothill Boulevard (now 924 East Altadena Drive) adjacent to what was then our Fire Station No. 11 of three years. Designated station no. 7, it was to become the headquarters for the northern division with substations at Temple, San Dimas and Newhall.

Altadena Sheriff's Station No. 7 was opened with a staff of eight deputies, two per each eight-hour shift and two in reserve. In 1930 the deputies moved to a more adequate facility at the northeast corner of Lake and Mariposa. By 1932 all Deputy Sheriffs were required to provide themselves with uniforms.

As early as 1928 the Altadena Sheriff's Department was wire-linked to every county and state agency by teletype. With this system a National Criminal Advisory Network was made possible.

In 1933 one-way radio patrol cars were provided for all stations within the county. Altadena patrols were broadcast from the Pasadena police department. In 1936 a proposal was made to spend \$14,275 on two-way patrol cars for the county. L. A. County sheriff Eugene Biscailuz's own experience suggested that only \$4,000 should be spent on a test system. Two portable transmitting units, one at Altadena and one at Montrose, and six cars were added to the county patrol. The test must have proven quite successful. In 1938, \$1.8 million was approved for equipping Altadena and five other stations with two-way radio cars.

In July of 1948 ground clearing was under way for the new Altadena Civic Center at Foothill Boulevard (Altadena drive) and El Molino. This very corner would be the location of the new Altadena Sheriff's Station. The new County Fire Station No. 11, built in 1955, would round out Civic Center at the corner south of the Sheriff Station. A spot was reserved between the two corners for a town hall, a proposed building for which was moved there in 1991. In 1957, the station received its first black-and-white patrol cars.

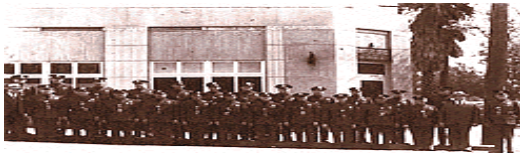
Through the 1970's the Altadena Sheriff's Station struggled along with a community that was undergoing a dramatic change in demographics. Altadena sheriff's were initiating a neighborhood improvement plan (nip), which was being widely accepted by neighborhood groups with the intent of fighting neighborhood crime, such as burglaries, thefts, and vandalism. From teletypes to radio cars, the sheriffs entered the computer age by early 1987 with some of its earliest onboard computer systems. This early model "lapcop" system helped patrol officers in writing reports by eliminating the excessive paper work.

By summer 1987, through a plan of consolidation, the Altadena and Crescenta Valley (CV)

stations merged, with the captain working from the CV "Substation" and Altadena becoming a local station under a Lieutenant. In October of 1999, the Altadena Station received its full-service status, and its commander Ronnie Williams was promoted to captain to see the new station into the new millennium. By July 2001, the Altadena Station had completely separated from the partnership of Crescenta Valley Station and became finally a station unto itself, the Altadena Sheriff's Station.

Captain Ronnie Williams, after six years at Altadena Station was succeeded by Captain Joe L. Gutierrez in April of 2002. In April 2010, our current Captain, Steven M. McLean took the helm and continues to serve as Commander of Altadena Station.

- by Mike Manning



The Second Altadena Sheriff's Station

No. 7 at the corner of Lake Ave. and Mariposa Street. This photo circa 1932 when officers were obliged to provide their own uniforms.

-photo courtesy Altadena Sheriff's Station.



The New Altadena sheriff's Station

After its completion in 1948.

-photo courtesy Altadena Sheriff's Station.