

## **1891**

Prior to 1891, when an official death sentence was passed by the court, carrying out the execution became the Sheriff's responsibility. Sheriff Aguirre was forced to carry out court ordered executions by hanging. This always turned his stomach. He felt that the responsibility for executions should be transferred from local authorities to the state. He, along with several other Sheriffs, lobbied Sacramento to change the law, and was eventually successful. Ironically, in 1899, Martin Aguirre became warden of San Quentin Penitentiary and once more had to carry out the executions that he so detested. Now, however, it was not just for Los Angeles County, but for the entire state.

Mrs. W.A. Pallett was hired as a jail matron under Sheriff Gibson. She is possibly the first woman to officially serve in this capacity.

Sheriff Edward D. Gibson November 1891 – December 1892

After Edward Gibson became Sheriff, the County Board of Supervisors approved a payroll of \$825 to hire eleven employees. These positions included an Undersheriff, a traveling deputy, a civil process server, two court deputies, a jailer, three assistant jailers, a matron and a bookkeeper.

The Clock Tower Courthouse served the judicial needs of the county until the "Red Sandstone" Courthouse was built in 1891. It was the first building in Los Angeles County to be constructed solely for use as a courthouse.

During the last few years of operation, the Red Sandstone Courthouse was so overcrowded that temporary courtrooms were set up next door in the Hall of Records.

## **1893**

The jail matron's salary was set at \$50 per month by supervisors. The chief jailer was paid \$100. His assistant jailer and turnkeys each received \$75. Only the jailer assigned to work the hospital for \$40 a month was paid less. The matron's salary was reduced to \$45 a month by 1895.

Sheriff John C. Cline January 1893 – December 1894

On May 5, the "Panic of 1893" hit and the bottom dropped out of the stock market. 500 banks closed, 15,000 businesses went bankrupt and stock prices fell dramatically. Three of the big railroads were forced into receivership. Since trains were not moving, farm products such as California's citrus crop, could not be shipped. L.A. County employees took a 10% cut in pay as many others lost their jobs. Citizens living in Los Angeles County would continue to suffer through the depression into the turn of the century.

Sheriff Johnny Cline had a progressive outlook and despite the poor economy, was allowed to increase his workforce to twelve deputies. He hired his brothers, William and Caspar, to help him.

In May of 1893, Riverside County was formed from sections of San Diego and San Bernardino Counties. This land originally belonged to Los Angeles County.

Sheriff Cline headed up a parade committee which organized a three day cultural fiesta. In the parade were floats, a block long Chinese dragon and the Sheriff's Mounted Caballeros Posse. The Sheriff's posse consisted of highly-skilled equestrians and was the forerunner of the renowned Silver Mounted Posse of Sheriff Biscailuz.

On February 15, 1893, two daring train robberies were carried out by Alva Johnson and Kid Thompson in the San Fernando Valley. These crimes were investigated and solved by Sheriff Cline.

## **1895**

Sheriff John Burr January 1895 – December 1898

A technical error was committed by Burr when he failed to take the oath of office within 10 days of being elected. Johnny Cline filed a petition with the Board of Supervisors stating that since the position was vacant he, as the incumbent, should remain Sheriff. Since he had won the election, Burr's attorneys asked the Board to appoint their client to office. The Board of Supervisors agreed and Burr was appointed Sheriff on January 8.

A four year term for Sheriff was recently enacted by the legislature and John Burr was the first person to serve under the new statute.

When Burr became Sheriff the population of Los Angeles County was almost 200,000. The radio, automobile and cable cars were just making their debuts.

## **1896**

An inmate named Charles Matthews, also known as "Alabama Charley" informed Sheriff Burr that Deputy Mahone was being paid to assist in an escape. Matthews said that Deputy Charles Mahone was paid \$500 to break notorious bank burglar J.J. McCarty out of jail. Deputy Mahone had given Alabama Charley a key, a map of the jail and a rope. These items were to be given to McCarty to help the burglar scale down from the roof. Inmate worker Clifton Mayne overheard a conversation about the escape investigation and informed Deputy Mahone. Since the sheriff's investigation was compromised, Deputy Mahone was allowed him to resign in lieu of prosecution.

On December 27, 1896, Sheriff Burr dispatched Deputy George Lee Wilson and Constable Albert Smith to search for an attempted murder suspect. They located the suspect, Jose Morales,

at his brother's house near Monrovia. When they confronted him in the bedroom, he was able to take a gun from Deputy Wilson's pocket. As he fled, he shot Deputy Wilson in the thigh. Deputy Wilson lapsed into a coma and eventually died on January 8, 1897. Almost four years later, Jose Morales was located in Ensenada, Mexico. After an hour long battle, Jose was shot in the face and eventually arrested. He was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to ten years in prison.

## **1897**

On January 8, Deputy George Lee Wilson died from a gunshot wound that he suffered during a confrontation with murder suspect Jose Morales on December 27, 1896.

In April, while incarcerated in L.A. County jail during his trial, Kid Thompson tried to get a worker inmate to smuggle in a gun to him. A jailer saw the handoff and jumped the worker, stripping the gun from him. Not only was the gun fully loaded, but the worker had an additional nine rounds in his pocket. All of the conspirators were arrested and held in the Los Angeles County Jail.

## **1899**

Sheriff William A. Hammel January 1899 – December 1902

William Hammel was the Sheriff who led the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The 1800's were coming to an end and with them, the Western Frontier. Los Angeles County had been a part of that old west. Escaped criminals, robbers, card sharks, and horse thieves roamed streets lined with bordellos and saloons. Everyone carried a gun or knife for protection, but this time of lawlessness was swiftly changing. The rapidly growing population along with the introduction of cars, electricity and radios would transform crime fighting well into the future.

When William Hammel became Sheriff, he was well connected in the county. His brother-in-law was former Sheriff Gard, who was married to his sister. Also, his best friend was former Sheriff Martin Aguirre.

J.B. Loving made history in 1899 when Sheriff Hammel appointed him as the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's first black deputy.