



Historic Bakersfield & Kern County, California
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Women in Kern County Law Enforcement

The First Fifty Years 1911 - 1961

by Gilbert P. Gia

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Bakersfield Policewomen

In August 1911 a lone woman and 19 men competed for the job of patrolman. The Californian wrote, " *...No matter how much her male rivals may fret and fume, the woman on the police force is not a distant prospect, and in the event she is successful in passing the examination, there will be nothing for the board to do but give her the job.*"¹

A reporter later asked Mayor Matlack that if the woman proved to be thoroughly efficient would the board give her the job?

" *'Of course not,' said the mayor, in a tone which indicated that there was no doubt about it, and his sentiment was echoed by other members of the*

¹ Bakersfield Californian, Aug 31, 1911

board. Hence it is apparent that Bakersfield will have to wait some years before she will have a policewoman patrolling Nineteenth street.”²

She was the first woman who tried to get the patrolman job, but she was not the only one who had applied to the police department. “Their verbal applications have been made to City Clerk Murdock,” wrote the Californian. “None of them have wished to qualify for the job of patrolman, but they have asked whether or not there was any chance of securing a position as matron of the jail. Because of the fact that there are comparatively few women arrested in this city, the board of trustees has taken no action and has in fact never considered taking any action as to the appointment of a matron for the jail. It is said that Bakersfield will not need a jail matron for a good many years.”³

The next day the Californian wrote that the woman was “on the warpath.” She wanted answers from the city clerk, and when she found his door was locked she declared, “Women have had similar jobs in other parts of the county and have always done good work, and there is no reason why they should not have them here. I am going to appear before the board of trustees. If the city clerk cannot do anything about it and find out this discrimination against women when it comes to policing the city.”⁴ The woman was not hired, but a jail matron was. Four years would pass before a policewoman was on the force.

News about policewomen increased after 1906. In 1911 Mrs. Alice Stebbins Wells was hired by the Los Angeles Police Department and was

² Bakersfield Californian, Sep 1, 1911. Nineteenth street was the town’s main thoroughfare.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Sep 5, 1911, Sep 6, 1911. (Quoted verbatim)

called the "second policewoman in the world."⁵ That was probably not true, although Wells did become the most well known policewoman on the West Coast for her lectures before clubs and community groups on the importance of policewomen to communities.



MRS. ALICE STEBBINS
WELLS of Los Angeles' reg-
ular police force.

Alice Stebbins Wells, 1911⁶

⁵ Oakland Tribune, Feb 26, 1911. The Tribune identified a Miss Canny of Kansas City, Missouri as the nation's first policewoman and noted it was "...due to her record that California so quickly followed suit. At different places of amusement where the young men and women gather, the ready tact of a police woman, it has been found, often serves her better than her brother officer's more forceful manner." On Jun 21, 1909 the Tribune reported that a Mrs. Josephine Sullivan had been recently sworn as the first policewoman of Chicago.

⁶ Oakland Tribune, Feb 26, 1911.



Mrs. Alice S. Wells, California's first policewoman, who is one of several female bluecoats in Los Angeles, believes that suffrage for women will solve the servant girl problem.

Alice Stebbins Wells, 1914⁷

In North Yakima, Washington, in 1912, Mrs. Myrtle D. Roberts became the the town's first policewoman. She worked women's cases and had " ... special jurisdiction over dance halls and young boys and girls in the streets."⁸ Roberts' assignment continued the pattern of hiring set when Alice Stebbins Wells joined Los Angeles police force.

⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Feb 6, 1914

⁸ Mountain [Placerville, California] Democrat, May 11, 1912



Policewoman's uniform, 1913⁹

By 1916 the movement to hire woman in law enforcement touched most of the county. At the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in Indianapolis, Indiana, Alice Stebbins Wells' topic was "The Police Woman Movement." She said there was general agreement by *"nearly all reasonable people that there is a type of police work which cannot and should not be done by men... In the now-nearly six years since Los Angeles appointed the first regular police woman, twenty states have come into line -Maryland, Colorado, Texas, Pennsylvania, Washington,*

⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Aug 30, 1913. Under the right hand is a small pocket for a handgun. This picture from the Californian might have influenced the hiring of a policewoman two years later.

New York, Arizona, Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, Alabama, Indiana, North Dakota, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Louisiana, New Jersey, Missouri, Minnesota, Montana.¹⁰

Bakersfield's First Policewoman

She was a real estate broker, and she married a real estate broker. In 1911 Mrs. Della Fowler Miller married Mateo Smith¹¹ in a new house he built for them on G street.¹² Wrote a newspaper, *"Both Mr. and Mrs. Smith are well known in this city..."*¹³ At that time Mrs. Della Smith was active in church and social affairs and was a prominent member of the East Bakersfield Improvement Association.¹⁴

Mrs. Smith was not a policewoman in summer 1913 when guests at an east Bakersfield hotel became alarmed by the sound of crying children. A search lead to their penniless, despondent young mother who had spent her last ten cents on a bottle of milk. Mrs. Smith arranged for the Children's Shelter to care for the babies,¹⁵ and shortly later a well-known resident of Rio Bravo took in the mother and three little ones.¹⁶

¹⁰ Oakland Tribune, May 17, 1916

¹¹ 1869-1945 (Bakersfield Californian, May 5, 1945). Mateo Smith was the brother of Florence Smith Schamblin, wife of the founder of Pioneer Mercantile Co, Gustavus Schamblin. (Bakersfield Californian, Nov 3, 1953). Wallace Morgan (op cit) noted that the Smiths' mother's name was Carmen Pescaida.

¹² The Smiths lived in East Bakersfield, formerly Kern City. G st was renamed Grove St and about 1920 a section of Grove St was renamed East 19th St. Kern City merged with Bakersfield on Dec 21, 1909. Detailed biographies of Mr. and Mrs. Mateo Smith appear in Wallace Melvin Morgan, *History of Kern County, California*. Los Angeles, CA: Historic Record Company, 1914

¹³ Bakersfield Californian, Feb 13, 1911. Mateo Smith's first real estate ad appeared in the Aug 18, 1910 Bakersfield Californian. The Della Smith of this paper is not the Della Smith who was married to pioneer Kern County physician Dr. S.F. Smith.

¹⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Oct 18, 1915

¹⁵ Today the building is Sinaloa Restaurant at 910 20th St

¹⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Jun 12, 1913

In 1914 the Smiths adopted Vance Laverne Smith, a minor child,¹⁷ but the addition of a family member probably only complicated an already acrimonious husband-wife relationship. Adding to their conflicts, Mrs. Smith had recently taken up the "helmet and star" and had become a policewoman, certainly something that did not narrow the chasm between them.¹⁸



Della Smith appointed policewoman, 1915¹⁹

In May 1915 City Manager Wallace Melvin Morgan had hired Della Smith as Bakersfield's first policewoman.²⁰ Her duties included searching women and dealing with children,²¹ but the balance of her work was in managing the city's free employment agency.²² While Mrs. Smith occupied the spotlight as the city's first policewoman, in July 1915 her husband accused her of having illicit relations with a roomer at an East Bakersfield hotel. The Smith's separated.²³

¹⁷ Bakersfield Californian, May 27, 1914. In 1915 at her home at 905 Fremont St, Della Smith's daughter Mary Blookout married city fireman Leo Lund (Bakersfield Californian, Oct 18, 1915, Nov 4, 1915). Fremont was renamed E 18th St.

¹⁸ Bakersfield Californian, May 21, 1915. Della Smith worked under Chief of Police William J. Vizzard, who served from 1915 to 1917.

¹⁹ Bakersfield Californian, May 21, 1915

²⁰ Wallace Melvin Morgan, *History of Kern County, California*. Los Angeles, CA: Historic Record Company, 1914

²¹ Bakersfield Californian, May 27, 1915

²² Bakersfield Californian, Oct 18, 1915

²³ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 27, 1915

Mrs. Della Smith filed charges against her husband for extreme cruelty, and Judge Peairs granted an interlocutory decree of divorce,²⁴ but by that time the separation was minor news; newspaper accounts of the time suggest that Mrs. Smith had become much involved in her jobs with the city.

In summer 1915, out-of-work, down-and-out men regularly appeared on Bakersfield streets. Mrs. Smith was of help to one penniless family whose mother was seriously ill. The woman's young children had been seeking work, and their father was blind.²⁵ Then in December, Della Smith learned of an East Bakersfield family with six small children who were urgently in need of financial aid. Both parents were physically unable to care for their young ones. In a public appeal, the Californian wrote, *"Those caring to assist may communicate with Mrs. Mateo Smith, either by telephone or by calling at her home at 905 Fremont street. Mr. and Mrs. Smith contributed \$1 each separately."*²⁶

The city election of November 1914 incorporated Bakersfield as a city, and the election of April 1915 installed seven councilmen, a mayor, and a city manager named Wallace Melvin Morgan. They invented the new city government from scratch, and it caused missteps, one of which affected Mrs. Smith's job. In September, five months after Smith became a policewoman, she quit. Reason? The board of trustees also had added the job of City Charity Commissioner to her assignments but without a corresponding increase in her \$90 a month salary.²⁷

²⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 27, 1915

²⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 29, 1915

²⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Dec 3, 1915. One dollar in 1915 was about \$25 in 2010.

²⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Sep 30, 1915.

In November Mrs. Smith returned to the real estate business, started a private employment bureau,²⁸ and in spring 1916 opened the National Cafe at 719 Sumner Street.²⁹ But she continued her links with law enforcement.³⁰ In June, Della Smith and a Mrs. Sornborger, who was the new matron at the jail, convinced Judge Bunnell to not release a certain Gladys Jones from jail until something could be done to help the habitually intoxicated, penniless woman. The Californian remarked, "*Mrs. Smith hopes to find some place for her where she can start a new life.*"³¹

References to Mr. Mateo Smith would be lacking without mention of an act of charity on his part that occurred many years after the divorce. By 1912 he and his sister's husband, Gus Schamblin, had acquired property near Weedpatch in T30-R28, and decades after that, in 1934, those holdings offered promising signs of being valuable oil land.³²

In 1935 Mr. Mateo Smith, "*owner of local real estate and owner of rich oil properties in the Mountain View district,*" built a brick and stucco church on a large lot in East Bakersfield and gave it, entirely free of debt, to Pleasant View Negro Baptist Church.³³ Speaking at the dedication was Smith's personal friend the Rev. Charles H. Hulme of First Christian Church of Bakersfield, who was visiting pastor that day. The Californian wrote, "*The speaker enjoined upon his hearers the benefits of harmony*

²⁸ Ibid. The author found no newspaper accounts describing Mrs. Smith's law enforcement work as other duties probably occupied most of her time. In early 1916 Della Smith re-established a real estate business at her ex-husband's former store-front at 805 Baker St (Bakersfield Californian, Jan 25, 1916). When she left the city's payroll "...her work with the city employment bureau was widely extolled by the municipal administration." (Bakersfield Californian, Jan 25, 1916)

²⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Apr 22, 1916

³⁰ Della Smith was helping the first chief of police, William J. Vizzard.

³¹ Bakersfield Californian, Jun 15, 1916. Mrs. N. Sornborger worked for Bakersfield's Associated Charities (Bakersfield Californian, Jan 11, 1915).

³² Los Angeles Times, Jul 3, 1933. Bakersfield California, Mar 16, 1912

³³ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 22, 1935. The community of Mountain View was approximately four miles west of Hwy 58 on Weedpatch Hwy.

and co-operation in parish affairs and extended congratulations to the congregation, and the pastor, the Rev. E.R. Felix."³⁴ Until that time the congregation held services in an abandoned box car.³⁵

In January 1931 a petition by nearly 3000 voters called for Civil Service in Bakersfield Police Department hiring.³⁶ The measure's later success in the March election barred the Bakersfield City Council from hiring or firing chiefs of police.³⁷ Some months later two council members called for repeal, but Civil Service survived.

The growing number of minors hanging around sleazy amusement places alarmed the Bakersfield Council of Parents and Teachers, and in 1934 it petitioned the city council to establish a "police-woman" position.³⁸ Bakersfield's economic state, however, made that impossible, and when the PTA called for that job it surely knew that the city already had started mandatory furloughs for existing employees.

The jail matrons and female secretaries and clerks hired after Della Smith were called upon from time to time to do policewoman work, although they were never identified as such. In 1928 the city attorney's office hired

³⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Jun 25, 1936. The church, now known as Pleasant View Baptist Church, still stands at 700 South Haley St at the corner of De Wolf and Haley in East Bakersfield.

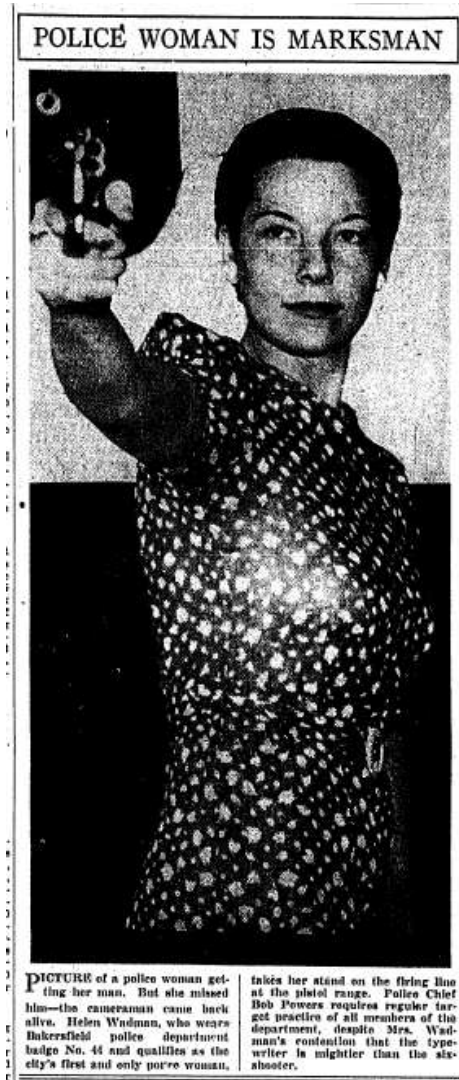
³⁵ The former location of the church is unclear. In 1934 it was on South Williams St (Bakersfield Californian, Nov 3, 1934). A newspaper account in 1935 said it was on Cottonwood Rd and that the congregation was building a church there (Bakersfield Californian, Jun 29, 1935).

³⁶ The office of Sheriff was an elected position. Until 1931 hiring and firing in the Bakersfield Police Department was at the discretion of the city council. Civil Service is a governmental power that oversees public employment based on competitive examination.

³⁷ Robert B. Powers, *Bakersfield Police Department, 1898 – 1946*. p 50, typed manuscript, McGuire Local History Room, Beale Library, Bakersfield, California. (Powers was Bakersfield Chief of Police, 1933 – 1947.)

³⁸ Bakersfield Californian, Sep 12, 1934

Mrs. Helen Wadman as a secretary, but in 1936 (probably even earlier) Chief Powers used her to transport female prisoners. Although there was no official position of policewoman, Powers swore her in as a peace officer.³⁹



Helen Wadman, 1937⁴⁰

Wadman recalled, *"I was kind of a stopgap measure, because the law required a matron to transport and to be present with female prisons.*

³⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 6, 1935. Wadman later became secretary for the police Civil Service commission.

⁴⁰ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 23, 1937

...Lost children are deposited in your lap, you mend ripped coats. You go on the spot with a Dictaphone. You handle the switchboard and radio during a manhunt. You take trips with officers to return female prisoners. In short, you do anything you're asked to do, even if you know you can't."

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Can't might have included firing a gun, because Powers insisted that all staff take part in target practice. Wadman need not have worried. In 1936 the Californian noted that she "shoots better than some of her instructors."⁴² Months later it added, "Mrs. Helen Wadman, policewoman, participated regularly in the shoots, using the heavy .38 caliber revolver and maintained creditable scores."⁴³

In fall 1937 the city ended a standing agreement between the attorney's office and the police department that allowed Wadman to split her time between the two.⁴⁴ She chose to leave the police department and work full time for the city's legal division.⁴⁵

Wadman never took a Civil Service test to become a policewoman because there was no Civil Service test for such a position, and today the police department has no record showing that Helen Wadman ever was a policewoman.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Bakersfield Californian, Aug 8, 1977, "Former policewoman says she 'had a ball' "

⁴² Bakersfield Californian, Feb 13, 1936

⁴³ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 23, 1937

⁴⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Sep 1, 1937. Bakersfield Californian, Aug 8, 1977, "Former policewoman says she 'had a ball' " Helen Wadman and Gordon C. Roesch were married in Feb 1941. By then she was working full time for the attorney's office (Bakersfield Californian, Feb 28, 1941, p 6).

⁴⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Aug 28, 1937; Aug 8, 1977, "Former policewoman says she 'had a ball'" Helen Wadman and Gordon C. Roesch were married in Feb 1941. (Bakersfield Californian, Feb 28, 1941, p 6). By then she was working for Walter Osborn at the attorney's office.

⁴⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Aug 8, 1977, "Former policewoman says she 'had a ball'"

In August 1937 a few days after Wadman moved to city legal, Alice Jane Mandaville passed the police department's Civil Service test for secretary. ⁴⁷ She brought to the position four years experience in the Army Quartermasters Corps, ⁴⁸ a brief period of service as secretary to Chief Powers, and two years as a fingerprint technician in the City of Bakersfield and County of Kern Bureau of Identification. ⁴⁹



Alice Mandaville, 1938⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Sep 1, 1937. Mandaville was then the only full-time female employee on the department [Charles H. Dodge, "History of the Bakersfield Police Department." Typed manuscript]. William Dolan, undersheriff for Sheriff Tom Kelly (1951-1955) gave the Dodge manuscript to this author. Dolan bought it and Power's Bakersfield Police Department, 1898 – 1946 (op cit) for \$2 when both were originally circulated.

⁴⁸ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 4, 1938

⁴⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Sep 1, 1937

⁵⁰ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 4, 1938

A year later the Bakersfield Californian attached the title "policewoman-secretary" to her name. Mandaville wore badge number 57, shot regularly with the department, managed police records, and was a member of the Women's Peace Officer' Association.⁵¹ She, like Wadman was not hired under Civil Service as a policewoman.

The need for a sworn policewoman became pressing, and between 1938 and 1940 the Kern County League of Women Voters repeatedly asked the city council to establish the job.⁵² In 1939 Mrs. Lillian Holson of county probation spoke on behalf of the League of Women Voters and pointed out that 88 juvenile cases had come before her office in February alone.⁵³ In 1940 Chief Powers addressed the League of Women Voters and told them what they already knew. He cited "... examples of 'crimes' in children that might lead to criminal careers later if not corrected by an understanding person whose sole duty it was to nip such activities in the bud." Powers advised the assemblage that current police staffing could not meet the need, and he pointed out that he had but two men per shift to patrol 150 miles of city streets.⁵⁴ In 1941, Mrs. Claude R. Blodget spoke before the League of Women Voters and repeated what had been said for the last three years, that there was a need for a policewoman who would do preventive work in steering children away from the courts.⁵⁵ Some weeks later the city council established the position and funded it.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 4, 1938

⁵² Bakersfield Californian, Jun 3, 1941, City Sec, p 9

⁵³ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 11, 1939

⁵⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Dec 21, 1940, p 6

⁵⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 1, 1941

⁵⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Jun 3, 1941, City Sec, p 9



Mary Holman, 1941⁵⁷

In 1933 Miss Mary J. Holman⁵⁸ graduated in mathematics from the University of California, Berkeley, but she soon discovered there were no math jobs for women. Holman returned to college for a teaching credential, and she subsequently taught high school for several years at Tulare and Pleasanton. In summer 1941 Holman was visiting her parents in Bakersfield when she read that the city council had voted to hire a policewoman for the Bakersfield Police Department. Holman was one of 19 who applied. She scored 100% on the Civil Service entrance test, and on July 3, 1941 she was hired and swore-in as a policewoman to work

⁵⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 8, 1941

⁵⁸ Mary Holman was born at Bakersfield and raised near 27th and L Streets. She attended Hawthorne School, Kern County Union High School, and Bakersfield Junior College (Author's interview with Charles H. Dodge, May 6, 2002).

with juveniles and women.⁵⁹ In 1943 Policewoman Doris Jordon was added to assist Holman in the growing number of juvenile cases.⁶⁰

A biographer wrote, "*In 1953, Mary Holman was promoted to lieutenant and took badge number 13 for good luck. She was the first policewoman to achieve the rank of lieutenant in California.*"⁶¹ Mary Holman married Charles H. Dodge in 1963, and in 1965 she retired with 24 years in police work.⁶²



COPS AND KIDS—Shine Boys Club, with the aid of Police Chief Robert Powers, and Policewomen Mary Holman and Fay Sanders, has transformed a trash dump at 1316 Twentieth street, into a center for games, sports, and good times generally. The boys are

Fay Sanders, 1944⁶³

⁵⁹ [http://www.firstwomenofkern.org/stories/storyReader\\$32](http://www.firstwomenofkern.org/stories/storyReader$32). In 1966 Charles H. Dodge was elected Kern County Sheriff and served from 1967 to 1975.

⁶⁰ Jordon served in juvenile between fall 1943 and winter 1945.

⁶¹ [http://www.firstwomenofkern.org/stories/storyReader\\$32](http://www.firstwomenofkern.org/stories/storyReader$32). Mary Holman wrote *The Police Officer and the Child*, C.C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1962.

⁶² [http://www.firstwomenofkern.org/stories/storyReader\\$32](http://www.firstwomenofkern.org/stories/storyReader$32). Charles H. Dodge had been assistant chief of police. In 1966 he was elected Kern County Sheriff and served in that capacity from 1967 to 1975.

⁶³ Bakersfield Californian, Aug 10, 1944

Fay Sanders, daughter of Mrs. Clifton Cumby, attended Bakersfield High School and Bakersfield Junior College and in 1944 graduated from the University of California with a Master Degree in Social Welfare.⁶⁴ Robert Powers recalled, "*Desiring to make a break in the pattern of racial segregation which had always resulted in only Caucasians on the Police Department, I appointed Fay Sanders temporary policewoman. She was a graduate of the University of California and went on to do work with juveniles in Alameda County after leaving us.*"⁶⁵ Sanders probably left the police department about 1946, perhaps for better pay. In 1948 the monthly salary for a senior policewoman was equivalent to about \$2500 today.⁶⁶

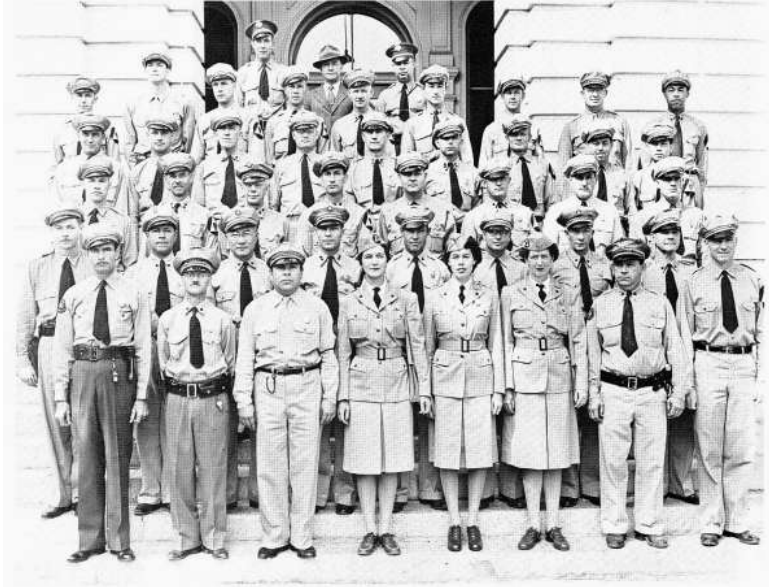
During wartime many municipal employees were called to military service, or they left for higher-paying jobs in defense work. As the police department struggled to maintain staffing, in 1942 a social group called the Bakersfield Motorcycle Patrol was restructured as the Bakersfield Auxiliary Police to recruit volunteers to perform the duties of regular police officers.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Aug 10, 1944, p 11; Jan 22, 1947. In Jan 1947 Fay Sanders and Clinton W. White were married in Bakersfield. At that time she was working for the office of state welfare in Oakland, California, and C.W. White was a law student at the University of California, Berkeley (Bakersfield Californian, Jan 22, 1947).

⁶⁵ Robert B. Powers, *Bakersfield Police Department, 1898 – 1946*. p 50. Typed manuscript, McGuire Local History Room, Beale Library, Bakersfield, California. p 78

⁶⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Oct 21, 1948, Loc Sec, p 9. The monthly salary was \$274. For police desk sergeants it was \$262 and for the Chief of Police \$500.

⁶⁷ Ibid.



Bakersfield Auxiliary Police, 1943⁶⁸

By January 1943 the shortages became so serious that Lieutenant Claude Morelock announced that three slots had been set aside for woman.⁶⁹

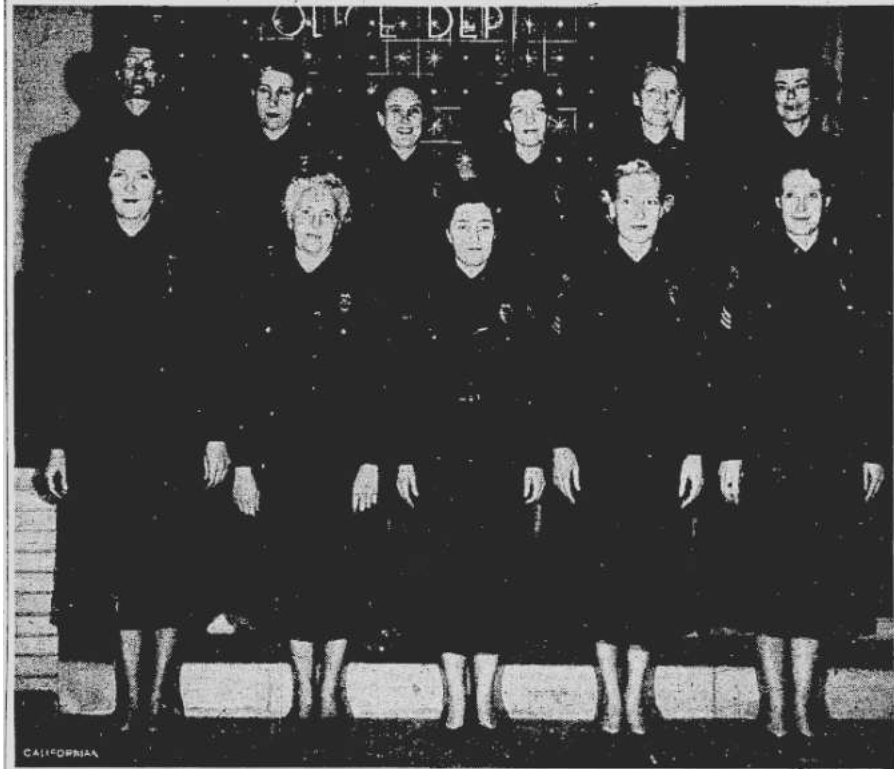
Nearly ten years later, the Police Women's Reserve was organized following the earthquake of 1952. It set up at the BPD's temporary headquarters at 17th and L streets,⁷⁰ and accepted 12 volunteers. They received regulation badges, policewomen uniforms, and basic police training and assisted in records, juvenile patrol and investigations, matron duty, shoplifting detection, parade and clerical duty, and in detective work.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Bakersfield Police Department: A Commemorative Book, 1898-1990. 1990 (1601 Truxtun Ave, Bakersfield, California, 93301), p 42

⁶⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 1, 1943. Other local volunteer organizations were Air Raid Wardens Service, Auxiliary Fire, Rescue Squad, and Ambulance Corps, the last of which was made up almost entirely of women. For that group see Bakersfield Californian, Apr 3, 1942.

⁷⁰ Bakersfield Californian Jan 25, 1957

⁷¹ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 25, 1957



POLICE WOMEN'S RESERVE—Members of the Bakersfield Police Women's Reserve line up on the steps of the police station in their brand new uniforms. The volunteer group was organized to assist police regulars in radio dispatching, administrative and clerical duties during emergencies. In

front row (left to right) are Lt. Dorothy Stanley, Sgt. Marguerite Johnson, Kay Wall, Sgt. Margaret Cline and Sgt. Mary McKanna. Rear row includes Cecelia McCracken, Elnore Chaffin, Metta Mattly, Nelle Beauchamp, Myrtle Goodrich and Betty Thompson.

Police Women's Reserve, 1954⁷²

Said Police Chief Grayson,⁷³ *"They deserve a commendation from all city residents for the faithful service which they have performed, and all should be grateful that there are women of high integrity and character who will so unselfishly give of their time and talent to aid in enforcement of the law in our city."*⁷⁴

The next person hired as a full-time policewoman had been a founding member of the Police Women's Reserve. In 1954 Dorothy Stanley resigned from seven years of teaching school in Lamont, passed the Civil

⁷² Bakersfield Californian, Jan 15, 1954

⁷³ Horace V. Grayson was Chief of Police from 1945 to 1966.

⁷⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 25, 1957

Service test⁷⁵ and was assigned to Lt. Mary Holman in juvenile division. Dorothy Stanley retired in early 1974 with 22 years of service in police work.



Dorothy Stanley, 1954⁷⁶



Lt. Dorothy Stanley⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 3, 1974. Juvenile delinquency grew during the war years, and by 1947 additional juvenile officer was needed (Bakersfield Californian, Jan 14, 1947, Loc p 9)

⁷⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Nov 5, 1954

Women in County Law Enforcement

Just a few deputies staffed the sheriff's department before WWII, and most of them were assigned to the jail or to courts in Bakersfield. In the outlying districts, constables were the principal law enforcement officers. After Kern County was established in 1866, judicial townships were drawn up based on population and geography,⁷⁸ and the constables were bailiffs, but their duties also included summoning jurors, serving civil papers, and enforcing court orders.⁷⁹

To each judicial township the county appointed a judge called the justice of the peace.⁸⁰ One of them in 1920 was Mrs. Kristianne Skjerve Evans of Oil Center.⁸¹ Although this author was unable to identify the constable assigned to Judge Evans' court, history does provide the name of the first full-time female Constable under Kern county employment. That was Cora Bowen of the 4th Township (Maricopa area) who served from 1936 to 1951.⁸²

⁷⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 3, 1974

⁷⁸ In 1947 there were 17.

⁷⁹ Commemorative Book, 1866-1991. Kern County Sheriff's Department, Bakersfield, California, Taylor Publishing Co, Dallas, Texas, 1993, pp 38-40

⁸⁰ Commemorative Book, 1866-1991. Kern County Sheriff's Department, Bakersfield, California, Taylor Publishing Co, Dallas, Texas, 1993, pp 38-40

⁸¹ 1920 U.S. Census. Oil Center was north of Bakersfield and about four miles east of North Chester Ave on China Grade Loop Rd. In 1910 Oil Center's population was around 5,000. Mrs. Kristianne Skjerve Evans was a graduate of the U of California, Berkeley, where, in 1917, she received an MA in Education with the thesis "An Educational Survey of Kern County, California." According to historian Jerry Kirkland, Mrs. Kristianne Skjerve Evans was clerk of the Aztec School District's board of trustees from 1917 to 1921.

⁸² Commemorative Book, 125 Years of Service, 1866-1991. Kern County Sheriff's Department, Bakersfield, California, Taylor Publishing Co, Dallas, Texas, 1993, p 41. On Jan 2, 1977 the positions of Justice of the Peace and Constable were eliminated (Ibid, p 43).



Judges, Marshals and Constables Assn., 1951
L to R: Judge Bill Woods, Tehachapi — Secretary/Treasurer, Judge J.G. Sherrill, Mojave — Vice President, Constable Ed Coffee, Taft — President, Constable Cora Bowen, Maricopa — Sgt. at Arms.

Constable Cora Bowen, 1951⁸³

In late 1938 Miss Mary Lenora Routzong quit her job with the high school attendance office to take work as a clerk in the sheriff's department.⁸⁴ As was true for those women who preceded Mary Holman in the police department, Routzong became a de facto law enforcement officer. For two years she handled juvenile cases and spoke before community groups about the sheriff's juvenile division.⁸⁵ By 1941 the Bakersfield Californian regularly referred to Routzong as deputy juvenile officer.⁸⁶

⁸³ *Commemorative Book, 125 Years of Service, 1866-1991*. Kern County Sheriff's Department, Bakersfield, California, Taylor Publishing Co, Dallas, Texas, 1993, p 65, p. 41

⁸⁴ Bakersfield Californian, Dec 16, 1938.

⁸⁵ Bakersfield Californian, Apr 17, 1939. May 27, 1940

⁸⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 14, 1941. The sheriff then was John E. Loustalot who deputized more employees than had any former Kern County sheriff. There is little doubt that Routzong was deputized, but it is unlikely she tested for the job under Civil Service. By 1941 Kern County was moving in the direction of Civil Service merit hiring after the Federal government threatened to withhold funds from the county (Bakersfield Californian, Mar 17, 1941).



Mary Routzong (Mrs. Olefson), 1946⁸⁷

In 1946 Routzong married sheriff's sergeant Otto Maurice Olefson. Mrs. Mary Routzong Olefson left the sheriff's department,⁸⁸ but "Ole" Olefson continued in the juvenile for many years.

The next female officer hired was Deputy Sheriff Pat Dibble, who was on duty by spring 1949.⁸⁹ In 1953 the Californian noted that she was in charge of juvenile work.⁹⁰ In early 1954, Miss Patricia Dibble left the department and went to work for California Probation.⁹¹

Mrs. Mary A. Pritchard served as a WAVE in WWII, returned to military duty during the Korean Conflict, and in 1951 interviewed with Kern County Undersheriff William Dolan for a clerk job at the sheriff's department.

⁸⁷ Bakersfield Californian, Oct 17, 1946

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Apr 13, 1949. In 1951 her title, as well as those of other deputies involved in investigations, was changed to investigator, although all salaries were unchanged (Bakersfield Californian, Sep 14, 1951, p 26).

⁹⁰ Bakersfield Californian, Jan 8, 1953

⁹¹ Bakersfield Californian, Mar 3, 1954



Mary Pritchard, about 1945

She recalled, "I worked the switchboard and in the warrant division, but I also helped transport females to court or to Kern General Hospital. When I was hired the department didn't have a commissioned female deputy, but about a year later they needed one for the juvenile division, and Undersheriff Bill Dolan asked me if I wanted to take the test. Sheriff Tom Kelly deputized me, and I was assigned badge number 127. The sheriff's department was at the old jail site at Truxtun and Q, but it was so crowded they'd moved the juvenile division north across the street to a little house the deputies had used for coffee breaks. In 1952 I took the test, was deputized, and went across the street to work with Ole and Ray Reynolds."⁹²

"I had Car 28. Part of my job was to cruise around the high schools looking for truants or trouble, but I also worked sex crimes, and sometimes the office called me in the middle of the night to work on a

⁹² Ibid.

case. I remember Katie Williams. She came from Taft to work with us in juvenile, but she had a heart condition and did not drive herself.”⁹³

“You asked me how I was treated at the Sheriff’s Department. Well, I remember I was out in Lamont one day and got a call from Ole to return to the office. When I finally got back he said, ‘Oh, I just wanted to know where you were.’ I wasn’t married when I was hired. The sexual harassment was bad. That kind of stuff today would get deputies fired.”⁹⁴

She left the Sheriff’s Department in 1958, took a job as bookkeeper for an auto agency, and enrolled in part-time classes to earn a California teaching credential. Mary Pritchard retired from Bakersfield City Schools in 1988 with 24 years of teaching.⁹⁵

Kathryn “Katie” Williams came to the Sheriff’s Office in a roundabout way. She grew up in Taft, was president of the Taft Business and Professional Women’s Club,⁹⁶ and during WWII volunteered with the Kern County Fire Department. Later in the war Sheriff John E. Loustalot hired Mrs. Williams for the sheriff’s Taft substation, but Mrs. Williams actually held two law enforcement jobs. By joint city-county agreement, she served as sheriff’s deputy and Taft policewoman.⁹⁷ In 1958 Sheriff Leroy F. Galyen transferred her to the sheriff’s headquarters at Bakersfield.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Author’s interview with Mary Pritchard, 2002. A more complete story of Mary Pritchard’s life appeared in the Bakersfield Californian, July 4, 2005, “This Woman’s Work Not So Ordinary.”

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 17, 1962

⁹⁷ Williams worked juvenile division for Taft Police Department (Bakersfield Californian, Jan 24, 1958, p 7). Taft chief of police was H.R. Higgins.

FAMED THROUGHOUT STATE

Mrs. Williams Feted on Retirement as Veteran County Juvenile Officer

Nearly 200 friends and co-workers will honor Mrs. Kathryn Williams this evening at a retirement dinner in the Earl Roberts Field Veterans Memorial Building signaling the close of long career in law enforcement work in Kern County.

The second juvenile department investigator hired by the county, Mrs. Williams went to work under Sheriff John Lunsford's administration in 1943 after three years with the Kern County Fire Department.

She served in the juvenile division throughout her 17-year career for Lunsford and his two successors, the late Tom Kelly and Sheriff Leroy Galvin, the incumbent and sheriff-elect for another two-year term.

Assigned by the sheriff's substitution in Taft where she had made her home since 1956, Mrs. Williams' first years of law enforcement were in a dual capacity. By a joint city-county agreement, she was a sheriff's deputy and a Taft schoolteacher for three

One O'Brien, in charge of the juvenile division.

A Kings County native born near Lemoore, Mrs. Williams expects to visit relatives in northern California but will continue to make her home in Bakersfield.



KATHRYN WILLIAMS

and spent more time with her family and five grandchildren.

Other son, Jack, a heavy equipment operator for the county, has three children, Carolyn, Helen and Lisa.

Mrs. Williams was promoted to senior deputy in March, 1956, seven months after her transfer to Bakersfield headquarters.

As for her work, she states it is this way:

"Juvenile delinquency will exist as long as parental responsibility for character building and instilling proper moral concepts in children is neglected.

"The first burden is upon the parent, and when the burden is cast by the parent, society must assume it."

"The first burden is upon the parent, and when the burden is cast by the parent, society must assume it."

"A bowl of beans and a lot of love to go a long way in keeping children out of juvenile courts," she thinks.

Advise Young Mothers

"Her advice to young mothers: 'Please be too busy to listen to your children.'"

Society's answer to juvenile problems is not in juvenile trial

Katie Williams, 1962⁹⁸

At an interview in 1962 Williams said she had little patience for neglectful parents. She added, "A bowl of beans and a lot of love go a long way in keeping children out of juvenile courts."⁹⁹ Mrs. Kathryn Williams served in law enforcement for 17 years. She and Mary Pritchard mentored the next commissioned female sheriff's deputy, Millie Munding.

In 1943 Mildred Giddings Gia was a file clerk for the police department, but by 1947 she and her sister Bernie were employed at the sheriff's records office. Millie recalled, "The sheriff's office was very much a man's organization in the early 1950s. At that time they had just one deputized woman."¹⁰⁰ The other females working there were matrons or clerk-typists. Chauvinism was rampant, and a girl had to look out for herself."¹⁰¹ In 1949 Mille married Sheriff's Deputy Phillip J. Munding. She added, "After that they left me alone."¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 17, 1962

⁹⁹ Bakersfield Californian, Jul 17, 1962

¹⁰⁰ That was commissioned deputy Mary Pritchard.

¹⁰¹ Author's interview in 1998 with his mother, Millie Munding.

¹⁰² Author's interview in 1998 with his mother, Millie Munding.



Millie Giddings Gia, 1948



Clerical Staff in 1957. Millie Munding, second from left ¹⁰³

About the same time Kathryn Williams' retired, Millie Munding took the deputy test and became the next commissioned female deputy in juvenile division. ¹⁰⁴ In interview in 2001 she suggested that the barriers facing women in police work had not fundamentally changed since 1911. *"When I was deputized in the early 1960s it was commonly believed that men were better drivers than women, so it was a blow to the males when I*

¹⁰³ *Commemorative Book, 125 Years of Service, 1866-1991*. Kern County Sheriff's Department, Bakersfield, California, Taylor Publishing Co, Dallas, Texas, 1993, p 65. This picture from February 1957 shows the first dress code for female employees.

¹⁰⁴ *Bakersfield Californian*, Jan 14, 1963

passed the academy's driving course. It was much worse on some of them later when I scored higher on the firing range than some of them. I hadn't set out to prove anything, but I would soon learn what it meant to face injured male pride." ¹⁰⁵

Historically those woman hired for clerical work were called upon to help male officers in cases involving juveniles and women. Most policemen agreed that females were better at it than male officers, which was generally true as shown by the number of women who came to police work from teaching or left police work to enter teaching. The obvious, however, was not mentioned, that men who went into law enforcement seemed to lack the interpersonal skills needed for successful juvenile work. Not until women attained more equality was it possible for them to compete for the traditionally male jobs in law enforcement.

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¹⁰⁵ "Three Cases From the Juvenile Division,"

http://www.gilbertgia.com/hist_articles/crime/juvenile_division_cases_cri.pdf