

The Los Angeles Police Relief Association, Inc. (LAPRA) was originally organized October 17, 1919, to provide benefits and support for members of the Los Angeles Police Department.

In 1919, Georgia Ann Robinson was appointed to the position of police officer, making her the first African-American policewoman at the LAPD and one of the first in the United States. She joined the force as a volunteer in 1916, when the Department was faced a staff shortage due to men enlisting to fight in World War I.



Georgia Ann Robinson



Breaking up of a Distillery

The passage of the 18th Amendment in 1920 prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors. The blissful, bone-dry utopia which prohibitionists envisioned failed to materialize. Instead, a horde of bootleggers, moonshiners, racketeers, and dishonest officials took over, taking in millions of dollars through the sale of this contraband.

West Los Angeles Station was acquired through the annexation of Sawtelle on August 31, 1917. Later, on October 15, 1921, this annexation was cancelled by order of the Supreme Court and the station was moved to Westgate. However, on July 13, 1922, Sawtelle was re-annexed and the station established at its present location.



Sawtelle Station

Eagle Rock was annexed with the City on May 17, 1923. Eagle Rock Division was located at 2336 Colorado Blvd. The Division's name and location would change in 1925.

1923

The United States remained neutral from the outbreak of World War I in 1914 until 1917, when it joined the war as an "associated power", alongside the formal Allies of World War I, helping to turn the tide against the Central Powers. In 1918, LAPD was doing its bit to win the war. No less than 81 men, or 11% of the Department's total membership, had been granted leaves of absence without pay to join the colors for the duration of the war.



Charles P. Williams

Valley Division was created in 1923.

Charles P. Williams was the first African American LAPD Officer killed in the line of duty on January 13, 1923.

The Los Angeles Fire and Police Protective League was organized in February 1923 to represent the interest of LAPD officers. In 1972, the League separated into a fire Chapter and a Police Chapter.

In 1920, the City was 363 square miles, the estimated population was 700,000, the Department had 544 patrolmen and a total of 768 employees.



Chief August Vollmer



In 1923, August Vollmer, former Police Chief of Berkeley, California, accepted the appointment as LAPD Chief of Police. Chief Vollmer, known for being an innovative reformer, initiated much restructuring and reform during his one year with the LAPD. He completely reorganized the Department, improving working conditions, establishing new standards of professionalism, and this laid the groundwork for what eventually became the Scientific Investigation Division (now Technical Investigation Division and Forensic Science Division). Vollmer believed that scientific analysis of evidence had a place in police work; so he ordered formation of the first crime lab in the United States. On July 1, 1923, Police Officer Rex Welsh received the assignment as LAPD's first criminalist because he had some scientific training. To perform his duties, Officer Welsh was given an antiquated microscope, a handful of chemicals, a smattering of glassware and a cubbyhole lab in a corner of Central Division.