

The 1873 City Charter states “The Marshal is Chief of Police, and shall have the entire management and control of the police, both regular and special.” In the following year the office of Chief of Police is strengthened by the addition of an ordinance giving the Chief of Police more power to deal with dereliction of duty on the part of the officers. This would be the final step to the establishment of the police department. The last thing to do was to repeal the word “Marshal” which was continued to be used interchangeably until 1878, where on the City Charter states, “the Mayor and Council of the City of Los Angeles do ordain as follows: Section 1. Sec. 103 of chapter VII of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Los Angeles, as revised by William McPherson, is hereby amended by striking out the word “Marshal,” and inserting in place thereof the words “Chief of Police.”

One of six officers of the LAPD, who was hired in 1970, Emil Harris was not a typical policeman. He was a German-born Jew, pioneer in youth work in Los Angeles as a gymnastics instructor, a champion marksman, and a devoted Odd Fellow. Jewish merchants loved Harris because he watched over their stores, and conversed with them in Yiddish. During the Chinese Massacre riots of 1871, Harris did his best to protect the Chinese from the anti-Chinese mob, and was trusted thereafter by the Chinese community. He is also credited with helping create the City's first volunteer fire department and was elected first assistant foreman of the Fireman's Company in October 1871. In 1874, Harris aiding in the capture of the notorious outlaw, Tiburcio Vasquez, and retained the bandit's rifle in his personal collection. He later became a detective before becoming the second Chief of Police for Los Angeles. Emil Harris was appointed to serve as chief for one year, from 1877 to 1878.

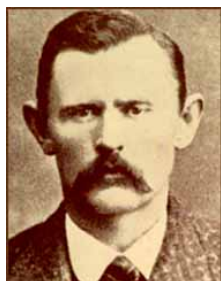


Emil Harris

By 1881 LAPD had its first traffic squad. Officers directed horse, wagon and carriage traffic for the safety of pedestrians.

1883

Chief Jacob F. Gerkins (1876-1877) was appointed the first Police Chief of Los Angeles after the abolition of the office of the Los Angeles City Marshal. He had previously twice been elected to the Los Angeles City Council.



Jacob F. Gerkins



Spring Street near First looking north, c. 1880s.

The Police Department had 15 full time paid police officers, which included one detective, two officers on horse detail and the Marshal. The mounted horse detail was later expanded to four officers. In addition, there were 6 reserve officers that were referred to as “special police officers.” The Marshal/Chief received \$1,200.00 per year, police officers received \$75.00 a month, officers on the horse detail received \$960.00 a year and the newly appointed detective received \$1,140.00 a year. Special Police Officers received \$5.00 a month for their part time services. In addition to the base salary, police officers were paid an additional \$2.00 for each arrest made, which was discontinued on March 16, 1876. The mounted unit received an extra \$1.00 for each animal that they “impounded.”