

*San Luis Obispo Police Department*

*A Brief History*

*By Paulette Staley*

*No one is compelled to choose the profession of a police officer, but having chosen it, everyone is obliged to perform its duties and live up to the high standards of its requirements." Calvin Coolidge*

*The above quote was taken from the dedication program of the new facility when it was officially opened on Walnut Street in 1970.*

*This is a brief history of the San Luis Obispo Police Department. It provides a summary of the work accomplished over many years. In this year of 2006, San Luis Obispo looks back on 150 years as a city. It was changed from a township to a proper city in 1856. The City Police Department was established on May 26, 1911, and has served the community for 95 years. We wanted to take you on a historical trip, back to the development of the department and those who served this city to make it a safer and more desirable place to live.*

*It has been compiled to honor the men and women who have served and protected our city, giving their all, and for two men in particular, their lives. Any errors are solely my own. I have tried to truthfully and accurately portray the dedicated officers to the best of my ability.*

*In our 95 year history, so many events have occurred and I've only scratched the surface. To truly do the department history justice it would take years to gather all the information available. We wanted this information to be ready in time for the city's 150 year celebration, the sesquicentennial.*

*This is also dedicated to the support personnel who make the police officer's job safer and more effective:-*

- The Dispatchers, who put out the calls for service and supply life saving instructions to those who need emergency medical aid;*

- The field service officers, who assist with so many things (accident calls, abandoned vehicles, instructions on child safety seats, to name only a few);
- The records clerks, who keep all the records and reports organized and make it possible for the officers to have what they need in court, plus a myriad of other mandatory reporting responsibilities;
- The secretarial staff, who make it possible for the department to have an organized system;
- The crime scene personnel and property management officers;
- And volunteers who dedicate many hours of their time to the department.

In doing this project, I've found the old saying so true, "There are no new things under the sun." Human nature is consistent and those who enforce the law of the land are what come between the average person and chaos.

This work would not have been possible without the help of many others:

- My husband Rick has spent countless hours with me at the local library scanning old records and reading old newspapers. His support and assistance has been invaluable.
- Retired officers who have assisted with their recollections and pictures include Ron Brown, Gary Wilde, Bruce LaHargoue, Dale Strobridge, and Rocky Miller.
- The San Luis Obispo City/County Library personnel, who have patiently explained where things are and how to use them,
- The staff of the San Luis Obispo Historical Society, who offered pictures and old newspaper articles, to assist us in our work,
- Sharon Olson, who has been supportive throughout and helped with providing the historical records that are kept at the police department,
- John and Marilyn, who graciously shared their work space so I could scrutinize the historical books,
- And of course my son Chris, who has patiently listened and encouraged me in this effort.

*I leave you with the acknowledgement that you are a part of a noble profession, one that brings many blessings, and some heartache. Each of you will pursue it in your own fashion, but with the knowledge that you are part of a group of wonderful people who are dedicated to justice and protecting those who cannot protect themselves. To all of you currently serving, those who have served, and those to come, God bless and protect each and every one of you.*

*~ Paulette Staley ~*

