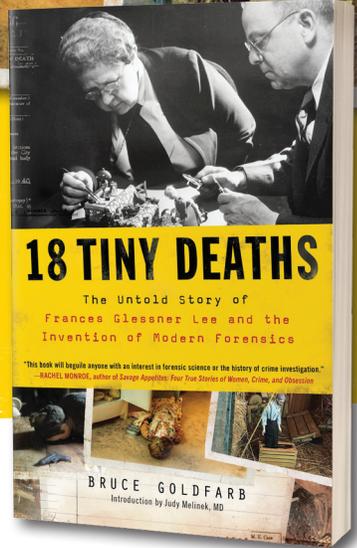




# 18 TINY DEATHS

Subject Guide: **WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT**



Commissioned as a captain in the New Hampshire State Police in 1943, Frances Glessner Lee was a rarity; a woman in a field dominated almost exclusively by men.

We've come a long way since then, but not as far as some might think. Today about 13 percent of law enforcement officers are women, according to the National Institute of Justice. Fewer are in leadership positions.

Women began working in law enforcement in the mid-1800s in traditional maternal capacities as matrons in juvenile detention homes and women's prisons, without power of arrest or full police authority. Eventually, women assumed roles as sworn officers and detectives.

## Some of the trailblazing women in law enforcement include:

**MARIE OWENS**, an Irish immigrant burdened with supporting her family after her husband died of typhoid fever in 1888. Owens was hired as an inspector for the Chicago Health Department to enforce sanitation and child labor laws. Children as young as seven or eight years old often worked long hours under harsh and dangerous conditions in factories and sweatshops. Owens was so dogged in pursuing child labor law violators that the Chicago Police Department hired her in 1891. She was given a badge, the power to arrest, and the title of detective sergeant.

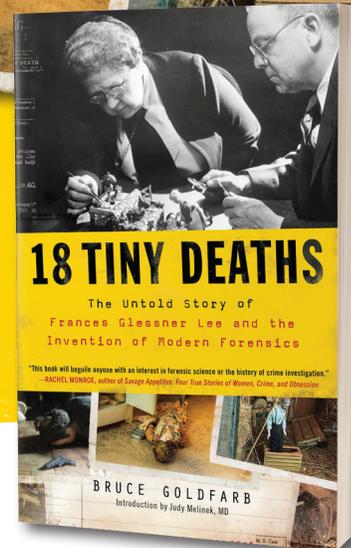
**LOLA BALDWIN**, of Portland, Oregon, began her career in public safety at the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition. Baldwin worked for the Traveler's Aid Society, heading up a team of social workers to protect children and young women attending the fair. The program was so effective that the Portland Police Department decided to make it permanent. Baldwin was hired as Superintendent of the Women's Auxiliary for the Protection of Girls. A sworn officer with a badge and power of arrest, Baldwin did not have a gun or wear a uniform.

**ALICE STEBBINS WELLS**, a social worker, petitioned Los Angeles city leaders in 1909 to appoint her as a police officer to better assist women and children victims of crime. Wells had the backing of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and civic leaders. Sworn as a police officer in September of 1910, she didn't wear a uniform or carry a weapon -- later publicity photos show her in a police uniform wielding a baton -- but Wells had a badge and arrest powers, and walked a patrol beat. Her duties included patrolling dance halls, arcades, picture shows and other public places to enforce morals statutes. Within two years, the Los Angeles Police Department had three women patrol officers and three police matrons.



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Subject Guide: **WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT**



In 1912, **ISABELLA GOODWIN** of New York City was commissioned as America's first woman police detective. In 1917, New York police had the nation's first woman homicide detective, **MARY SULLIVAN**. The Chicago Police Department hired ten police women in August of 1913. One of these women, **ALICE CLEMENTS**, became the first woman detective in Chicago.

## Further Information

National Center for Women and Policing -- <http://womenandpolicing.com>

International Association of Women Police -- <http://iawp.org>

*Women in Policing: Breaking Barriers and Blazing a Path*, National Institute of Justice 2019, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/252963.pdf>

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*A Different Shade of Blue: How Women Changed the Face of Police Work* by Adam Eisenberg, 2009

*Breaking the Brass Ceiling: Women Police Chiefs and their Paths to the Top* by Dorothy M. Schulz, 2004

*Police Women: Life with the Badge* by Sandra K. Wells, 2005

*Women in Blue: 16 Brave Officers, Forensics Experts, Police Chiefs, and More* by Cheryl Mullenbach, 2016

*What it's Really Like to be a Female Cop* by Kaitlin Menza, *Women's Health* Oct 28, 2016, <https://www.womenshealthmag.com/life/a19917052/female-cops/>

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