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NATIONAL WOMEN’S HISTORY

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Josephine Serrano Collier [lost her fiancé and her family’s support](#) when she applied to become a policewoman for the LAPD in 1946 during a time of rampant mistrust between the Latino community and law enforcement. As the first Latina officer in the agency, Collier wasn’t given a gun or allowed to attend a graduation ceremony. Despite these hardships, Collier proudly served until 1960, first assigned to a jail before eventually working undercover (and finally being equipped with a service weapon!).



At the time of her death in 2014, Chief Charlie Beck said Collier broke the “lines that divided women from many assignments in the early history of the LAPD” and “opened the door for many women and Latinas in the department.”

Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin

Native American Rights Activist

Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin (Metis/Turtle Mountain Chippewa) was born in Pembina, North Dakota. Her father, J.B. Bottineau, was a lawyer who worked as an advocate for the Ojibwa/Chippewa Nation in Minnesota and North Dakota. While a teenager, her family lived in Minneapolis, and Marie attended school there as well as in nearby St. Paul. She spent some time across the border at St. John's Ladies College in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Canada), and returned to Minneapolis to work as a clerk in her father's law office. She and her father moved to Washington, DC in the early 1890s to defend the treaty rights of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Nation. There, they became part of an established community of professional Native Americans who lived and worked in the capital.



In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Marie as a clerk in the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), an agency within the Department of the Interior.[1, 2] She was hired at \$900 per year, and received a raise to \$1,000 before she had served a full year in the position. While this pay was low compared to what other clerks were making (\$1,000 to \$1,800 per year), she was the agency's highest paid Indigenous woman.

Early in her career, Marie believed that Native Americans needed to assimilate into European-American society to survive. Over time, as she became involved with the suffrage movement and the Society for American Indians (SAI), her views began to change. Instead of assimilation, Marie emphasized the value of traditional Native cultures while asserting her own (and therefore others') place in the modern world as an Indian woman.

This shift is evident in a ca. 1911 photo of Marie. Taken for her government personnel file, she chose to wear Native dress and to braid her hair. This was a radical act as a federal employee working for the OIA. At the time, was pushing for Native Americans to assimilate into white American culture-- and using Indian employees as examples of assimilation. And yet, her choice went unremarked at the time -- except by journalists, who often paired her federal service photo with one of her dressed in "[modern American dress](#)."

In 1911, Marie's father died. His death proved a turning point in her life. That year, she gave a speech at the first meeting of the Society of American Indians, and became increasingly involved in their work to celebrate and advocate for Native identity. She became nationally known as a spokesperson for modern Indian women, testifying in front of Congress, meeting with women from across the country, and was a member of the contingent who met with President Woodrow Wilson in the [Oval Office](#) in 1914. While at the SAI, she was colleagues with [Zitkala-Sa](#), another Native American woman who worked towards Indian suffrage.

In 1912, at the age of 49, she enrolled at the Washington College of Law. Two years later, after taking night classes while still working, she graduated as an attorney. Marie was the first woman of color to graduate from the school.[3] She became active with the suffrage movement in Washington DC and marched with a group of other female lawyers in the [1913 Suffrage Parade](#) organized by [Alice Paul](#). Interviewed in newspapers who were covering the suffrage movement, Marie educated people about the traditional political roles of women in Native society.

Changing politics and priorities within the OAI led to Marie disengaging from the group in 1918 or 1919. She continued to work for the Indian Office in Washington, DC until 1932, when she retired for health reasons. In 1949, she moved from DC to Los Angeles, where she died from a cerebral hemorrhage in 1952. She is buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale, Los Angeles, California.