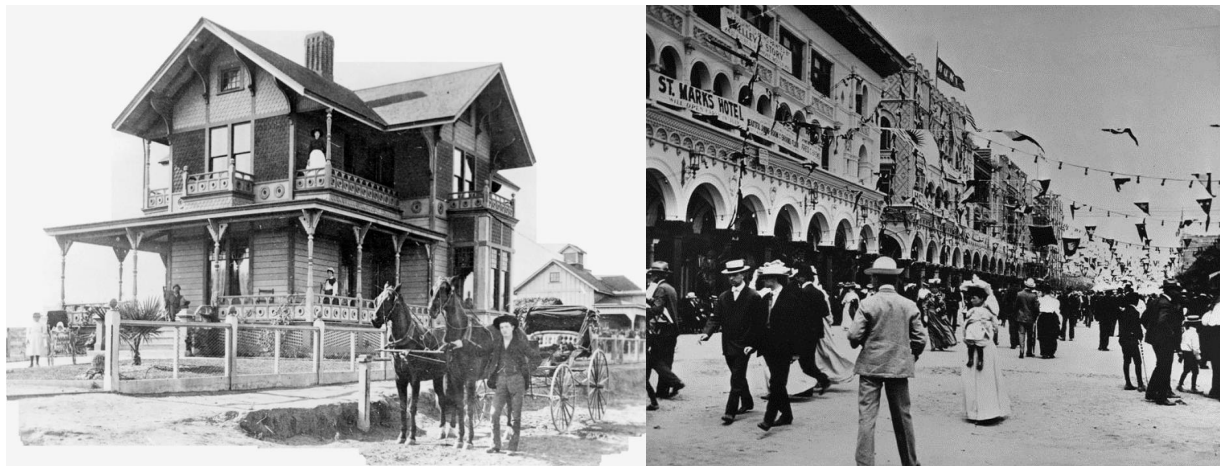


SurveyLA

Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles, 1862-1932



Prepared for:

City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
Office of Historic Resources



July 2016

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PREFACE

This historic context is a component of Los Angeles' citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors in identifying and evaluating potential historic resources relating to Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles. Refer to www.HistoricPlacesLA.org for information on designated resources associated with this context as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

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INTRODUCTION

The "Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles" context examines those communities that were at one time independent, self-governing cities. These include (presented here as themes): Wilmington, San Pedro, Hollywood, Sawtelle, Eagle Rock, Hyde Park, Venice, Watts, Barnes City, and Tujunga. This context traces the history of each of these cities (up to the point of consolidation with the City of Los Angeles), identifying important individuals and patterns of settlement and development, and then links the events and individuals to extant historic resources (individual resources and historic districts). Resources dating from pre-consolidation are significant reminders of the early history of these communities and are becoming increasingly rare.

A pre-consolidation community is a distinct type of Los Angeles neighborhood. As an incorporated city, it possessed a degree of identity that most other neighborhoods lacked. It also had, through the power of an independent municipal government, the ability to create institutions and construct facilities that reflected this identity.

There are officially ten pre-consolidation communities in Los Angeles. But, in fact, there are only nine. Barnes City was never a community. It was instead a legal device created to protect a circus from attempts to regulate its activities. It lasted less than a year and has disappeared as a physical entity. Barnes City is included in this context, but its discussion is brief.

The remaining nine communities can be considered in four groups. The first group consists of the harbor cities of Wilmington and San Pedro. They were the oldest and, in 1909, the earliest to consolidate. Consolidation for them was as much a matter of coercion as choice. Los Angeles wanted their ports as much as they wanted the services of the larger metropolis.

The second group is made up of agricultural settlements that developed into suburbs. It includes Hollywood, Hyde Park, and Eagle Rock. They were the most similar to traditional small towns of the era. Each found itself outgrowing its small-town resources as settlers moved in, and had to turn to Los

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Angeles for services. Hollywood did so as early as 1910. The more distant Hyde Park and Eagle Rock held out until 1923.

The third group consists of two cities which were shaped by adjacent institutions. One is Sawtelle, which began as a service center for the Soldiers' Home (now the Veterans Administration Center). It remained under the influence of retired veterans, who had a particular view of what kind of city they wanted. The other was Venice, with its beachfront entertainment zone, which gave rise to a unique variety of neighborhoods. Both cities eventually experienced the same need for Los Angeles services as did the agricultural settlements. Sawtelle consolidated in 1918 and Venice seven years later in 1925. But both, particularly Venice, maintained remnants of the earlier influence of the adjacent institutions.

The fourth group is made of the two social experiments – Watts and Tujunga. Watts began as an attempt to form a diverse community of low-income landowners. Lots were tiny and priced extremely low. There were no restrictions on who could buy or on what could be done on the plots. More distant Tujunga was similar. Its goal was a communitarian settlement of self-supporting agriculturalists on family plots. Both experiments did not work out as hoped, and the cities that remained eventually joined Los Angeles, Watts in 1926 and Tujunga in 1932. But the experiments gave each a flavor that survived consolidation.

In spite of these differences, there are two experiences that all the communities shared. The first is the impact of the transportation innovations of the early twentieth century. First to come was the electric railroad network – both narrow-gauge streetcar and standard-gauge interurban – and then the automobile. The population growth that allowed the pre-consolidation communities initially to flourish and, then, to exhaust their resources came from these innovations.

The second experience is the demand for services, particularly water, which the independent communities could not provide. The creation of the Los Angeles Aqueduct was perhaps the single most important factor in bringing about consolidation. Both San Pedro and Wilmington saw future access to it as an attractive feature. For the others, beginning with Hollywood in 1910 and ending with Tujunga in 1932, a connection to the aqueduct was vital for survival.

Architecturally, the pre-consolidation communities resembled other independent suburbs of the time. They all had one or more of the basic civic institutions of the early twentieth century – the City Hall, the Carnegie Library, the Public School. Churches and lodge halls provided social settings, and commercial districts with business blocks, often centered on the train station or trolley stop, served local needs. All were in the styles common to the times. Even seemingly unique buildings, such as the Hollywood Hotel, followed the architectural forms typical of the day.

Residential architecture also followed patterns found elsewhere. The Queen Anne cottage and the bungalow provided homes for the modest, while ample Craftsman houses filled the middle and upper-middle class neighborhoods. Even in places like Venice, which required denser forms, apartment buildings were similar to those found in nearby Los Angeles.

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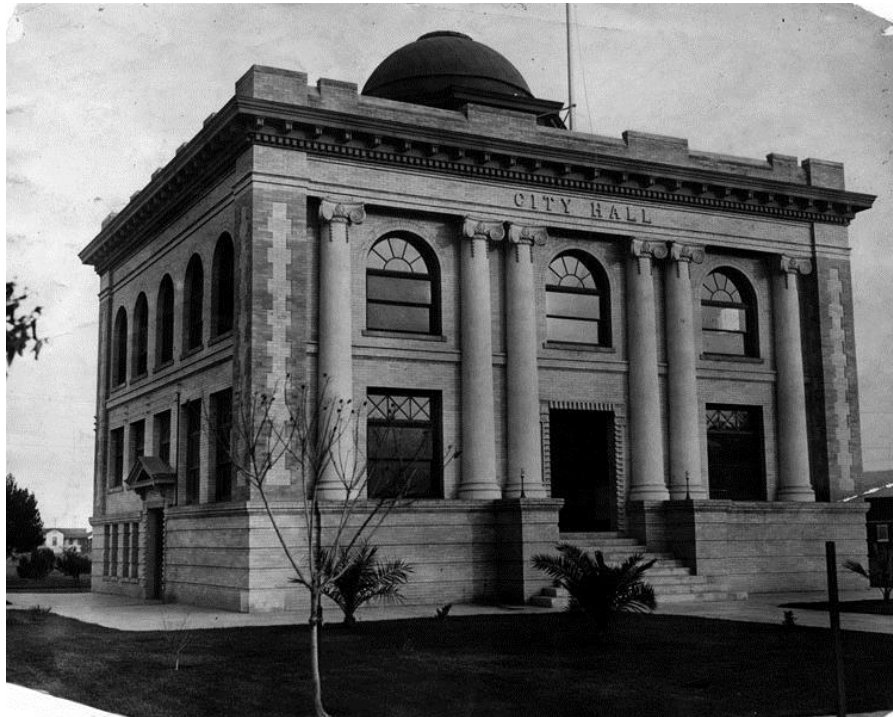
There are, however two architectural remnants that stand out as unique. One is Abbot Kinney's Venice-of-America. It is a combination of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 and Coney Island, and the pedestrian-oriented development, including the nearby so-called walk streets, are notable. The other is the stone construction of Tujunga. It is a truly unique vernacular architecture, using local materials and shaped by local craftsmen.

Evaluation Considerations

The "Pre-Consolidation Communities of Los Angeles" context may have some overlap with other SurveyLA context and themes as follows:

- Properties significant for their architectural quality may also be eligible under themes within the "Architectural & Engineering" context.
- Properties related to the development of the streetcar and interurban may also be eligible under the theme "Streetcar Suburbanization" within the "Residential Development and Suburbanization context" and under the theme "Streetcar Commercial Development" within the "Commercial Development" context.
- Properties related to harbor development may also be eligible under the theme "Los Angeles Harbor" within the "Industrial Development" context.
- Properties may also be eligible as excellent examples of a particular property type under various themes.

THEME: WILMINGTON, 1862-1909



*Wilmington City Hall
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Wilmington always seemed to live in the shadow of something bigger. First it was the Union Army during the Civil War. Then it was the more successful neighboring port of San Pedro. Hovering over it all was the dominant Banning family. The irony of Wilmington's fate was that it finally appeared to come into its own in the early 1900s, when it was absorbed into the infinitely larger Los Angeles.

Wilmington first developed as a military post and shipping point during the Civil War. From its official founding in 1862 through the end of the war in 1865, the town served the newly established Fort Drum. A wharf along Wilmington's waterfront collected supplies for the federal post situated about a mile inland. Once the war ended and the fort was decommissioned, the town faced extinction.

In 1869 Wilmington gained a second life with the coming of the railroad. Southern California's first rail line connected Los Angeles with the Wilmington wharf and gave it a clear competitive advantage over nearby San Pedro. During the next fifteen years the town grew in population, businesses, and social institutions. But in the early 1880s the rail line was extended to San Pedro. The competitive position of the two towns reversed. Wilmington by the end of the 1880s once again experienced serious decline.

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Wilmington entered its third life in the early 1900s with the coming of the interurban railroad. The arrival of the Pacific Electric in 1904 provided Wilmington with a quick and affordable connection to Los Angeles. It ended the isolation that the settlement experienced after being eclipsed as a port by San Pedro. Once again population grew, businesses created, and civic institutions founded. In 1906 Wilmington elevated itself from a town to an incorporated city.

But this success did not solve the basic problem that had always limited Wilmington's development. This was the shallow nature of its port at the top of the inner harbor. Development of its docks required a scale of dredging that was far beyond the financial means of a city as small as Wilmington. Only association with a larger entity would enable Wilmington to develop fully. City leaders considered joining with nearby San Pedro and, in particular, Long Beach. But, in the end, joining the much larger Los Angeles was the only practical path.

Thus the third life of an independent Wilmington came to an end. In 1909, Wilmington voted, along with San Pedro, to abandon its existence as a separate community and consolidate with Los Angeles. But, while this act may have ended Wilmington's independence, it began a period of economic growth that far surpassed what the town could have achieved on its own.

The Civil War Years, 1861-1866

Wilmington owes its existence to one man and one event. The man was Phineas Banning and the event was the Civil War. Banning owned both a wharf at the top of the inner harbor and the land surrounding it when, in 1861, the Union Army began looking for a site for a new military base.¹

The government's purpose was to establish a Union Army headquarters for all of California and the adjoining Arizona Territory. The headquarters was to serve two purposes. One was to make sure that California remained loyal to the Union. The other was to serve as a supply depot for other western forts.

Banning and his partner, Benjamin Wilson, deeded sixty acres to the government for the price of one dollar. At first, the headquarters consisted of a collection of tents called Camp Drum, after General Richard Coulter Drum, the acting adjutant general for the Department of the Pacific. By the following year, 1862, the post had grown to include more substantial structures of wood frame construction and was officially renamed Fort Drum.

¹ The material on Fort Drum and the early history of Wilmington town comes from Jeffrey Herr, *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Cultural Affairs Department of the City of Los Angeles, 2002), 261, 264, 272, 422, 441, 455; *San Pedro and Wilmington: A Calendar of Events in the Making of Two Cities and the Los Angeles Harbor* (Los Angeles: Title Guarantee and Trust Company, 1942), 19; Simie Seaman, Hank & Jane Osterhoudt, Susan Ogle, and Michael Sanborn, *Images of America: Wilmington* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 7-8, 29-50; Henry Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History* (San Pedro: San Pedro Bay Historical Society, 1984), 26-27.

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The military installation consisted of two building clusters. The first was a group of storage facilities for military supplies along the waterfront next to a wharf that Banning had built in 1858. A photo from 1863 shows a pair of structures at what was called the U.S. Depot or the Government Depot. It also contains a rare view of one of the camels that formed an experimental group of pack animals, brought from the Middle East during the 1850s to transport goods among the various forts in the southwest.



*Fort Drum Depot buildings, circa 1863
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The second cluster was the fort itself, which was located about one mile inland. By 1863 the fort covered sixty acres and had twenty-two structures, most of which were arranged around a parade ground. The parade ground and its surrounding buildings were bounded roughly by today's L Street on the north, Opp Street on the south, Eubank Avenue on the east, and Banning Boulevard on the west. Included at the fort were five barracks, each housing one hundred men, officer's quarters, and support buildings such as stables, a hospital, a laundry, a bake house, and a powder magazine.

Two historic structures and an historic site have survived from the fort. The first is the Drum Barracks and Officers' Quarters (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 21). Built in 1862, it served as junior officers' quarters. It is a two-story hipped-roofed duplex consisting of mirror-image two-story residences, configured like free-standing rowhouses and sharing a common wall at the stairhalls. Extending from the rear of each is a wing of offices opening onto a common courtyard, in the form of a

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U. The style is a restrained Italianate, with brackets at the eaves and a balustraded front porch. It appears to be a standard military design of the period and may have been prefabricated.



Drum Barracks and Officers' Quarters
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 21
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

The second surviving structure is the Drum Powder Magazine (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 249 and California Historical Landmark No. 169). It also dates from 1862. It is a small, rectangular stone and brick masonry structure set near the southern edge of the post, well away from the parade ground. The Powder Magazine features front and rear parapeted walls and, originally, a masonry vault springing from the side walls.

The surviving historic site is the Wilmington Cemetery (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 414). It actually dates from 1857 and served as a burial ground for Banning family members. But its primary historic significance is that it contains remains of thirty-one Civil War veterans. Some died while doing service at Fort Drum, while others were individuals who chose to stay in the area and were buried there after the war was over. (There was actually a separate Drum Barracks post cemetery. It was abandoned in 1887, and those interred there were reinterred in Woodlawn Cemetery in Compton.)

The activity of the Fort and its waterfront storage facilities led to the emergence of Wilmington as a settlement. The cluster of buildings and rough wagon paths surrounding Banning's wharf was officially platted as the town of New San Pedro in 1862. This is taken as the founding date for Wilmington. In

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1863 the town changed its name from New San Pedro to Wilmington in honor of Banning's home city in Delaware. By 1864 this new Wilmington had a Post Office and by 1865 a four-room school.

Unfortunately, growth lasted only until the end of the war. The fort was abandoned in 1866. The land and the buildings reverted to Banning and his partner Wilson, who sold them at auction. The infant town of Wilmington faced the challenge of finding a new reason to exist.

The Wilmington Community in its Early Years, 1869-1900

Wilmington soon recovered from the loss of economic activity that resulted from the closing of Fort Drum. This recovery came with the construction in 1869 of a railroad line connecting Wilmington to Los Angeles. Once more the force behind the move was Phineas Banning.



*View of Wilmington pier and rail line, circa 1870
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Banning, again together with Wilson, financed and built the line. It was the first railroad in Southern California, and named the Los Angeles and San Pedro (a good indication of what Banning hoped would be its future southern terminus). It ran for twenty-one miles alongside the route of present-day Alameda Boulevard. A spur extended onto the wharf and allowed cargo to be loaded directly from ships to railroad cars. The railroad provided a more cost-efficient and dependable means of transportation as compared to the existing horse-drawn cartage upon which neighboring San Pedro still depended.²

² Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 7, 11; Silka, *San Pedro*, 27; *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1885.

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Because of the railroad, Wilmington pre-empted San Pedro as the primary port for Los Angeles and the surrounding area. The town grew steadily if not rapidly. From a population of 359 in 1870, Wilmington had by the mid-1880s around 1000. In addition to its own post office and a schoolhouse, with four teachers and perhaps 175 pupils, it had three churches and several general stores.³

The town had two distinct physical sections, separated by First Street (now Harry Bridges Boulevard). South of First was the densely built-up section dominated by the wharf, the railroad depot, and the associated businesses and warehouses. Most significant of these were the machine shops of the Banning-owned Wilmington Transportation Company. These shops functioned from the late 1860s through the 1880s, and produced parts for freight wagons, stage coaches, railroad cars, and tug boats.⁴

Some of these functions were in buildings left by the military at the wharf or moved from Fort Drum. These structures served as warehouses or contained industrial enterprises like the machine shops of the Wilmington Transportation Company. But also included was the Wilmington Town Hall, popularly known as Banning Hall and built by Phineas in 1870. It was the town's most important gathering place. Subsequent port expansion removed all of these structures.⁵

North of First Street was the more sparsely populated residential section. Here were located the homes and churches of Wilmington's inhabitants. Connecting these two areas was the north-south thoroughfare of Canal Street (now Avalon Boulevard.) It contained the businesses and social institutions serving the town. The more respectable were north of First Street, and the less respectable, such as the saloons, were generally to the south.

As with many small towns of the period, social life revolved around two types of institutions. One type was religious. Churches were founded early in Wilmington's life. The first, Saints Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church, dates from 1865. By the mid-1880s the town also contained Presbyterian, Episcopal, and German Evangelical congregations.⁶

Two of these early churches remain. The first is the Memory Chapel, built in 1870 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 155). It was the first home of the Calvary Presbyterian Church and was originally located on the corner of Fifth (today's F Street) and Main (now Marine), one block west of Canal and four blocks north of First. (It has since been moved.) It is a small wood frame structure with vaguely Italianate round-arched detailing, built from lumber said to have been shipped from around Cape Horn. Its steeple roof has been altered, but it still features, on the left and right sides of its front façade, its original separate doorways for men and women.⁷

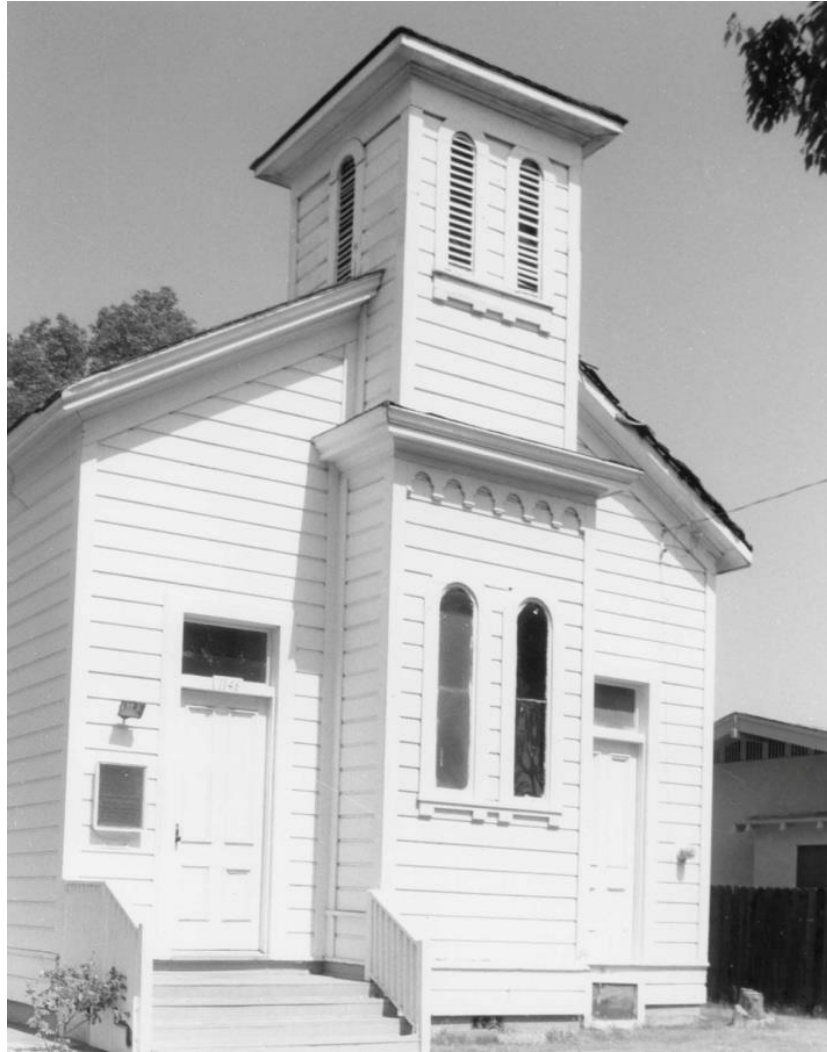
³ *U. S. Census for 1870; Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1882, September 13, 1883, January 1, 1885.

⁴ Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 17.

⁵ Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 17-18.

⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1886; Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 8.

⁷ Original site information from the Wilmington Historical Society; Herr, *Landmark L.A.*, 264, 265, 433; Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 110.



*Memory Chapel, Calvary Presbyterian Church
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 155
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

A second religious structure from Wilmington’s early years is Saint John’s Episcopal Church (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 47). It was built in 1883 and was originally located on Canal Street between Third and Fourth (today’s D and E Streets), two and one half blocks north of First. (It has since been moved.) Saint John’s was considered the Banning family’s church. The family was Episcopalian and paid the major portion of the construction cost. It is a small wood frame structure much like the earlier Presbyterian Church, but in a simplified Gothic style. The roof pitch is steeper and the windows feature pointed arches.⁸

⁸ Original site information from the Wilmington Historical Society; Herr, *Landmark L.A.*, 262, 424; Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 107.



Saint John's Episcopal Church
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 47
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

The other type of social institution around which Wilmington's respectable social life centered was the lodge hall. These institutions were significant in a number of ways in small town America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They provided a place for social gatherings, they pushed for town improvements, and they built lodge hall structures that often contained needed commercial space on their first floors.

For early Wilmington, the most important of these lodges was the Masonic Order. The Masons first established themselves in Wilmington in 1869, the year Banning built his railroad to Los Angeles. By 1882 they had formed a "Masonic Building Association" and were ready to construct a new lodge hall on

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Canal Street north of First. The result was the Wilmington Masonic Temple Lodge Number 198. The lodge was considered significant enough for the *Los Angeles Times* to cover the laying of the cornerstone in August of 1882.⁹

It still stands as an L. A. Historic-Cultural Monument, No. 342, at its original location on Canal Street (Avalon Boulevard). The Masonic Temple is a classic lodge hall/business block from the late nineteenth century. It is a two-story building of brick masonry construction, with commercial space on the first floor and a meeting room on the second. The facade features a heavy bracketed cornice and, at the second floor, round-arched windows in the Renaissance Revival commercial style typical of the period. (Comparison with an historic photo indicates that the cornice has been lowered.)¹⁰



Masonic Temple

*L. A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 342
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

The good years for Wilmington lasted as long as it had a monopoly on the rail connection to Los Angeles. This soon ended. In 1872 Banning and his partners sold the Los Angeles and San Pedro Railroad to the Southern Pacific Railroad, as part of the SPs arrangement by which it would route its transcontinental

⁹ Water Edwin Holstein, "A History of Wilmington from the Spanish Period to 1931," MA Thesis, University of Southern California, 1931 (in the collection of the Wilmington Historical Society), 35; *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1882; Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 15.

¹⁰ Herr, *Landmark L.A.*, 270, 449; Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 15

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line through Los Angeles. The Southern Pacific then began extending the line from Wilmington to San Pedro. This extension was completed in 1882.¹¹

At first, Wilmington thought that it could continue to prosper. In November of 1882 the *Los Angeles Times* echoed this optimism: “Wilmington, instead of decaying with the rise of San Pedro, seems to have a finer prospect than ever before. Lots are in demand at high prices there, and business is good.”¹² Less than a year later, in September of 1883, the *Times* quoted a local businessman who remained hopeful: “All the houses here are occupied,” he maintained; “notwithstanding quite a number from here who have moved to San Pedro, the town is very prosperous, and consistently on the increase.”¹³

But by the mid-1880s it was clear that Wilmington was declining as San Pedro grew. During that decade the Southern Pacific Railroad moved all its repair facilities to San Pedro, and many of the Banning shops followed. The Bannings carried workers back and forth from Wilmington to their new operations in San Pedro by railroad flat car.¹⁴

By 1890 Wilmington’s last hotel had closed, and the town saw its population decrease from around 1000 in the mid-1880s to 678.¹⁵ The *Los Angeles Times* noted that the inner-harbor approach to the wharf was “rapidly filled out with mud and is blocked by little mud bars and islands.”¹⁶ The result of all this, according to the *Times*, was that “Wilmington is one of the least progressive of the towns of Los Angeles County and has little in an esthetic point of view to commend it.”¹⁷

Wilmington Comes of Age, 1900-1909

In spite of its decline, Wilmington did not cease to exist. The railroad continued to serve it, and its port remained active, primarily as a point of shipment for agricultural products. Several large warehouses, used to store grain, were located south of First Street, often in the same buildings that had earlier housed manufacturing establishments.¹⁸

Wilmington was saved once again by the coming of a railroad. In this case it was the interurban line of the Pacific Electric. As early as the late 1890s the *Times* predicted a change in fortune for Wilmington. The paper thought that improvements to the harbor would combine with the proposed extension of

¹¹ Florence Twyman Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years* (San Pedro: New Pilot/The Daily Breeze, 1988), in the collection of the San Pedro Historical Society, 14; Robert M. Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, 1993), 56.

¹² *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1882.

¹³ *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 1883.

¹⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1892, February 9, 1906.

¹⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, February 4, 1887; *U. S. Census for 1890*.

¹⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 1906.

¹⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1887.

¹⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1898; 1888 and 1891 Sanborn Maps.

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interurban electric passenger service to revive economic activity. Because of these changes, “this ancient burg, once the rival of Los Angeles in commercial importance, feels the throb of life again.”¹⁹

The proposed interurban service arrived in 1904, when the Pacific Electric, or PE, extended a branch of its Dominguez line through Wilmington and on to San Pedro. The line cut diagonally through Wilmington from the northeast to the southwest, and the town obtained a stop on this line on Canal Street between Second and Third (today’s C and D Streets).²⁰ In announcing the start of service, the *Times* noted that “Wilmington for some time has been one of the deadest places in Southern California. Unless all signs are fallacious, it will within a year or two, be one of the liveliest places in the county.”²¹

By early 1905, the *Times* listed the progress made. “An electric line [the PE interurban] has been opened, a bank building is going up, and a lumber yard has commenced operations. Graded streets and shade trees are causing old timers to open their eyes and shake their heads doubtfully.”²² During the next few years, from the coming of the interurban in 1904 to consolidation with Los Angeles in 1909, Wilmington grew at a steady rate, even if it did not fulfill the optimistic predictions of the *Times*. From a population of 678 in 1890, Wilmington reached 885 by 1908.²³

The revival of activity led Wilmington to consider incorporating as a city. This was motivated in great part to prevent San Pedro or Long Beach from annexing it. The result was a complicated legal battle among the three, due to the questionable status of Wilmington’s original incorporation as a town in 1862. Wilmington finally won the legal battle and achieved city status in 1907. Its boundaries encompassed what had been Wilmington Township, stretching to the east and north as far as the current Los Angeles city limits, and to the west to what would become the so-called Shoestring annexation of Los Angeles.²⁴ The result was that the new city, according to the *Times*, included “large areas of almost uninhabited territory.”²⁵

The new Wilmington tried to diversify its economic base by attracting new businesses. Perhaps the most important were lumber yards. The largest of these was the Consolidated Lumber Company. It was located to the east of the settled part of town and had its own waterfront dock facility and railroad spur. Its economic well-being varied from year to year. In 1906 it was successful enough to raise the tallest flagpole in Southern California, at 151 feet. Yet, by the next year, 1907, it had closed temporarily for lack of demand.²⁶

¹⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1899.

²⁰ *Lines of the Pacific Electric: Southern & Western Districts; Interurban Special 60* (Glendale: Mac Seabee, 1975), 132; “Official Map of Wilmington, 1909,” in the collection of the Wilmington Historical Society; 1913 and 1921 Sanborn Maps.

²¹ *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1904.

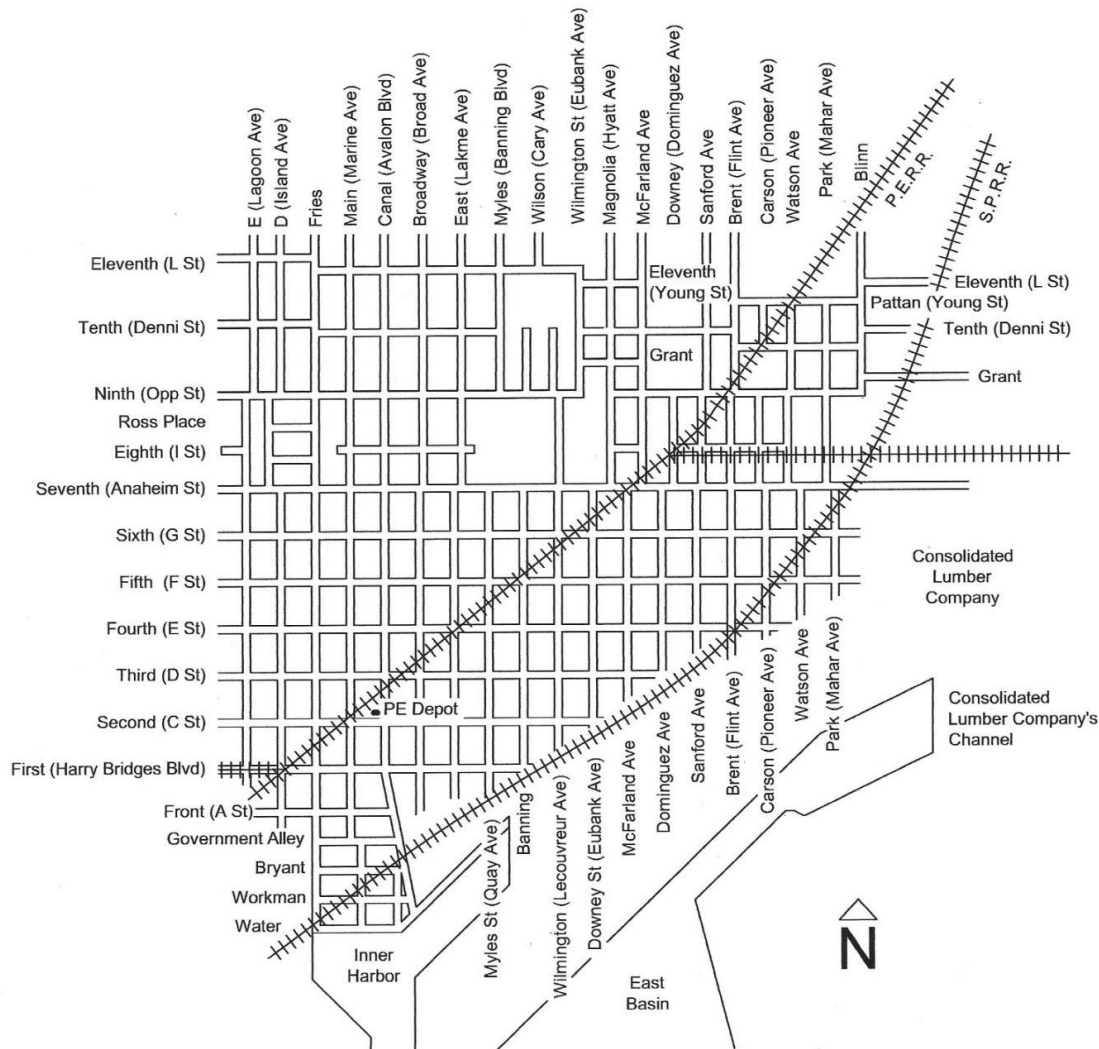
²² *Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 1905.

²³ *U. S. Census for 1890; Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 1908.

²⁴ Holstein, “A History of Wilmington,” 21-22; *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1907.

²⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 1908.

²⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1906, December 8, 1907.



**CITY OF WILMINGTON IN 1909
 POPULATED AREA**

Streets are identified with 1909 names. Current names, if different, are in parentheses

Data from the "Official Map of Wilmington, 1909"

Courtesy of the Wilmington Historical Society

Other efforts were more exotic. One was a leather factory. It was originally created in 1905 as "The Anti-Rubber Tire Factory" and had as its mission the manufacturing of leather tires for automobiles and bicycles. Along with the lumber yard, it was located in the eastern part of town. Apparently lack of a demand for leather tires led the company to switch to shoe manufacturing by 1907. It reportedly turned out 25 pairs a day, and had hopes of increasing this to 100 with new machinery.²⁷

²⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1905, June 26, 1905, May 5, 1907, October 29, 1907.

There were further endeavors, none particularly successful. The *Los Angeles Times* reported over the years on the existence of a furniture factory, a boat-building factory, and various other lumber yards and mills. These enterprises were marginal and did not survive. In December of 1908, the *Times* noted the presence of only two, the Consolidation Lumber Company and the leather factory.²⁸

Civic leaders also tried to make Wilmington into a kind of commuter suburb through land development. This required the improvement of city services to attract new residents. Wilmington felt that it already had the needed schools. The grammar school that had existed during Wilmington's early years continued to function at its historic location on the northwest corner of Canal and Sixth (Avalon and G Street). More important for Wilmington's status was the existence of the Union High School. The Union district served Wilmington and the nearby settlements of Lincoln and Dominguez. Classes were held in the Drum Barracks until a new school was constructed after consolidation.²⁹

Utilities were another matter, and there improvements began immediately. Electricity was in place by 1906 and telephone by 1909. The Banning family had been supplying Wilmington through a limited water system since the late 1890s as part of its service to San Pedro. With the planned coming of the Pacific Electric, the Banning-owned Seaside Water Company began in 1904 to invest in an upgrade of the Wilmington system. By 1907 it had installed a new steel main down Canal Street.³⁰

Other city services also improved during the 1904-1909 period. A volunteer fire department was organized in 1906 and by the time of consolidation had forty members. A Board of Trade, which existed since 1903, was reorganized as the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce in 1906. The Wilmington Library Association was formed in 1908. Finally, the new city government began grading and improving existing residential streets. Beginning in July of 1907, all streets from First to Seventh west of Canal were to be graded and oiled. By December this effort was extended to streets east of Canal as well.³¹

Along with these residential street upgrades came an effort to improve the business district. Beginning in 1906, Canal Street was graded and oiled. A new wharf at the foot of Canal was completed the next year, 1907. That same year, the city began a project to install concrete sidewalks and curbs on Canal from Second Street south to the Southern Pacific right-of-way below First.³²

The route of the Pacific Electric line and the establishment of the station on Canal between Second and Third Streets shifted business away from the less reputable area south of First Street to the more

²⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1903, June 11, 1903, June 3, 1905, September 9, 1905, May 19, 1907, October 29, 1907, December 18, 1908.

²⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1907; Seaman, *Images of American: Wilmington*, 91.

³⁰ Information from the records of the Wilmington Historical Society; *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 1899, October 22, 1899, November 6, 1904, January 1, 1905, August 26, 1907.

³¹ Holstein, "A History of Wilmington," 36; *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 1906, June 26, 1906, July 25, 1907, December 1, 1907, July 8, 1909; Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 8.

³² *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1906, June 18, 1907.

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respectable section to the north. To maintain the higher tone of the northern section, the town in 1906 required that all saloons be located in the area south of First Street and none permitted above it. By the time of annexation in 1909, a renewed commercial district was emerging along Canal north of First, with masonry structures replacing the older wood buildings.³³

The most impressive of these was a trio of brick business blocks, beginning on the southeast corner of Canal and Second Streets and extending south for about half the block. Anchoring the corner was the two-story Bank of Wilmington Building. The Bank of Wilmington was founded in 1905 and its building completed shortly thereafter. Adjacent to it, to the south on Avalon, was a single story, two-bay storefront structure. Next to that was the two-story brick Petersen Block.³⁴



Petersen Block
236 Avalon Boulevard
(Photo by author)

Only the Petersen Block has survived, at 236 Avalon Boulevard. It was built around 1907 by Carl Petersen. Petersen lived in Wilmington since 1872 and worked for the Banning family before going into the real estate business. The Petersen Block is a restrained version of the commercial vernacular of the day. There is a storefront on the first floor façade and a narrow door and stairway leading to the second level. The second level façade has two large but simple trabeated windows, and at the top is a dentil band cornice. Historically, the second floor was Petersen Hall, a meeting space for public gatherings and, according to one source, for city offices before the new city hall was built. The architectural

³³ *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1906.

³⁴ Holstein, "A History of Wilmington," 24a; *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1905; *Wilmington Journal*, December 11, 1909, in the files of the Wilmington Historical Society.

integrity of the Petersen Block has been somewhat compromised, but its overall massing and brick detailing are still intact.³⁵

The most impressive building from these years was the new city hall. Planning for a combined city hall and library building began immediately after Wilmington's status as a sixth-class city was confirmed in 1907. Ground was broken in January of 1908 and the new building was completed in July of that year. The city hall, designed by C. H. Russell, was a small but impressive two-story Classical Revival cube topped by a dome. It was located on the southeast corner of Canal and Eight (now I) Streets, well to the north of the business district in what some saw as a future exclusive residential area. The city hall unfortunately no longer exists.³⁶

The timing of residential development from this period differs somewhat from that of commercial and institutional development, in that it seems to have begun before the start of interurban service. Increased residential construction appears to have commenced as early as 1901. It is possible that houses were built in anticipation of the interurban's coming. The peak years may have been 1904, when the *Los Angeles Times* noted that twenty-three houses were built in Wilmington and its surroundings.³⁷

Noteworthy is the fact that the houses surviving from the pre-consolidation period are scattered rather than concentrated. This indicates that there was not a building boom, with contractors erecting clusters of houses on speculation. Instead, it seems that individual owners bought land and then had contractors build individual houses. The standard building lot was fifty feet wide and varied from one hundred thirty to two hundred feet deep. This allowed for a fair-sized, if not expansive, building.³⁸

While the beginning of PE passenger service may not have led to a spike in home construction, it did encourage the development and marketing of residential lots. In 1906 the Wilmington Land Company, headquartered in Long Beach, developed what was then Rebecca Street and which was renamed Broadway (today's Broad Avenue) from Seventh Street (now Anaheim) south to the waterfront, and installed sidewalks and curbs. In 1907, the Bannings filed plat maps to develop 111 acres of their property holdings north of Tenth (today's Denni) Street as far as the city limits, and to dedicate a route for the extension of Canal Street through the property.³⁹

³⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, March 19, 1908, August 29, 1908, April 7, 1909; William A. Spalding, *History and Reminiscences, Los Angeles City and County* (Los Angeles, 1931), Vol. II, 122, in the collection of the Wilmington Historical Society; *Wilmington Journal*, December 11, 1909, in the files of the Wilmington Historical Society. The construction date of the Petersen Block is debated. Sources at the Wilmington Historical Society place it at 1905. The Block appears on the 1907 Sanborn Map and in a photo taken in late 1909. The *Los Angeles Times* makes reference to Petersen Hall in 1908. The Los Angeles County Assessor lists it as 1910. This last date may come from when the Block was raised as part of the Canal Street improvements. The 1913 Sanborn Map shows it at the same location. Because of the appearance in the Sanborn Map of 1907, that has been used as its approximate date.

³⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1907, October 6, 1907, November 17, 1907, January 10, 1908, July 13, 1908; Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 8, 54.

³⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1905.

³⁸ Construction dates and lot sizes from Los Angeles County Assessor's Map; 1921 Sanborn Map.

³⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1907, December 22, 1907, December 29, 1907.

Of note is the lack of surviving residential structures in the area south of Seventh Street (Anaheim), close to the commercial district of the time. In the early 1900s Wilmington was still a pre-automobile walking-city, and institutions like the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches were then close to the business district. One would expect residences to be close as well. However, most of the residences still standing are north of Seventh. This is likely due to demolition resulting from the shift to commercial and industrial use that took place in the older residential areas south of Seventh Street after consolidation.



Residence
1040 Watson Avenue
(Photo by author)

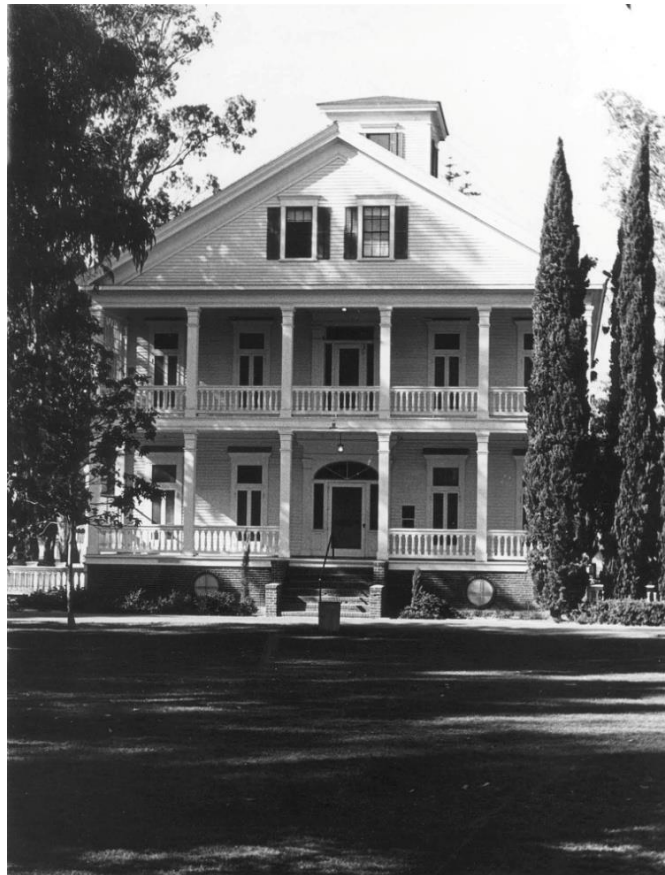
This also means that most of the surviving residences were apparently intended for the middle and skilled working classes. All are single-family homes in the quasi-suburban forms typical of outlying streetcar suburbs of the time. A good example of a middle or solid working class home is the hip-roofed bungalow at 1040 Watson Avenue, from 1904. Housing for the less-well-off was probably located in older, denser structures closer to the places of work and entertainment south of First. Unfortunately, no examples of this type of housing are known to have survived.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Construction dates from Los Angeles County Assessor.

Wilmington's Elite

Throughout the life of pre-consolidation Wilmington the Banning family looms. Many called Wilmington a Banning company town. This was true up to the coming of the interurban. But in the years just before consolidation, the little city was developing a business elite that challenged, at times openly, the Banning family dominance.

The Bannings continued to exercised economic power long after the death of Phineas in 1885, when he was succeeded by his sons William, Joseph, and Hancock. The family controlled two enterprises of significance. One was the Wilmington Transportation Company. This was the entity that managed shipping, including passenger service to Catalina Island, which was also owned by the Banning family. The other was the Banning Company, directed toward real estate and land development.⁴¹



*General Phineas Banning Residence
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 25
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

⁴¹ Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 21; *Wilmington Journal*, December 11, 1909, in the files of the Wilmington Historical Society. The Wilmington Transportation Company, including Catalina Island, was sold in 1919 to William Wrigley of Chicago.

Architecturally the position of the Bannings was symbolized by their home. The General Phineas Banning Residence is both an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, No. 25, and a California Historical Landmark. Built in 1864, it is a large, two-story Greek Revival style mansion with galleries on the first and second floors of the front façade and a cupola in the center of its gabled roof.⁴²

It was the activities of the Banning Company that proved most controversial in Wilmington during the years leading up to consolidation. Most of the waterfront was either owned or claimed by the company, as was much of the land that surrounded the town. Its resulting power became a political issue during the early 1900s, with candidates for local office running as pro-Banning or anti-Banning. The result was the emergence of groups of businessmen supporting one side or the other.⁴³

Representative of this emerging elite was Frederick S. Cary. He was a banker, businessman, real estate developer, and civic leader. Cary's influence came from his position as head of the Bank of Wilmington. He served as Cashier (essentially owner) from the bank's founding in 1905 until his retirement in July of 1909, just before the vote on consolidation on August. He then continued to serve as First Vice President. The bank quickly emerged as a power in the community. The *Los Angeles Times* in 1906 noted that the largest property owners in Wilmington were the Banning Company, the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Wilmington Bank.⁴⁴

Cary's other activities were numerous. As a real estate developer he was involved in the Harbor Park Tract, a subdivision of 116 lots that sold out by April of 1905. By 1906 he was reported to be planning to erect several houses for rent and for speculation. That same year he became treasurer of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, and served on the Harbor Committee, the Public Improvements Committee, and the Factory Sites Committee. The Chamber was reorganized in 1908 and Cary became its president. He also served as City Treasurer in 1907 until he had to resign over a conflict of interest when one of his companies obtained a lease for city-owned property.⁴⁵

Most important, Cary, as a director of the Wilmington Dock and Land Company, was active in efforts to promote local development of the waterfront. The goal of the company was to dredge the approach to the city-owned Wilmington dock and to construct additional docks on land leased from the city. At that time, the tidelands around the docks were privately owned, primarily by the Banning Company and the Southern Pacific Railway. Because of this private ownership, the Federal government was barred from funding any dredging. Thus dredging had to be a private endeavor, undertaken by an enterprise such as the Wilmington Dock and Land Company.⁴⁶

⁴² Herr, *Landmark L.A.*, 262, 263, 423.

⁴³ *Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 1905, March 18, 1906, April 9, 1906, November 21, 1908.

⁴⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1906, September 11, 1906, July 26, 1909.

⁴⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, April 9, 1905, February 16, 1906, June 29, 1907, July 25, 1907, July 9, 1908.

⁴⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 1906, October 11, 1906, June 29, 1907.

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Cary's home still exists at 903 Marine. Built in 1905, it is a compact and rather elegant story-and-a-half Queen Anne cottage with Colonial Revival detailing. It sits on a corner lot, which gives it a bit more frontage than adjacent structures, but it is still relatively modest and typical of residences in the area. The windows and some of the details have been altered, but it is surprisingly intact.



*Cary Residence
903 Marine Street
(Photo by author)*

Consolidation

In 1905, with the pending arrival of the interurban, the *Los Angeles Times* offered this optimistic view of Wilmington's future: "After a sleep of almost half a century at the head of the quiet lagoon that stretches back from San Pedro a mile and half inland, Wilmington has awakened to find herself an important commercial port that is bound to be a big manufacturing center when the lagoon shall have been transformed into a great inner harbor with immense wharves at which will be discharged the cargoes of the nations."⁴⁷

The flaw in this prediction was Wilmington's inability, on its own, to transform its waterfront into a part of this great inner harbor. The federal government made clear that it could not fund any improvements to that waterfront so long as most of it remained in private ownership. Wilmington on its own could not raise the capital needed to undertake the improvements without the help of some larger entity. The

⁴⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1905.

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result was the inevitable consolidation with Los Angeles and the creation of a port under public ownership.⁴⁸

Frederick Cary was a key mover in favor of consolidation. As early as May of 1906 he was openly supporting it.⁴⁹ In September of 1908 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Cary, “a well-known banker of Wilmington,” and “an ardent supporter of annexation,” had served as chairman of a mass meeting in Wilmington held to explain the advantages of consolidation.⁵⁰

As the effort to consolidate became more intense in 1909, Cary, as its President, worked through the Chamber of Commerce. In February of that year the Chamber expressed support for the bill then before the State Senate that would allow for consolidation of existing cities (then not legally possible). In early March, the Chamber sent a petition in favor of consolidation to Sacramento that had been signed by 93 of Wilmington’s registered voters. Finally, Cary served on a combined committee that consisted of members of the Wilmington, San Pedro and Los Angeles Chambers of Commerce to work for consolidation of the three cities.⁵¹



Wilmington city limits at consolidation
(From “Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, City Boundaries & Annexations”)

⁴⁸ Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, 114-115; *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 1906, December 29, 1906.

⁴⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1906.

⁵⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 1908.

⁵¹ *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1909, March 1, 1909, March 19, 1909.

In addition to development of the port, Los Angeles offered other advantages. These included connection to the soon-to-be-completed Los Angeles Aqueduct, macadamization of Canal and other streets, and Los Angeles City fire, police, library, and school services. Los Angeles also promised that, if consolidation were approved by at least two-thirds of the Los Angeles voters, it would assume Wilmington's bonded indebtedness.⁵² The *Los Angeles Times* referred to these offered benefits as "Wilmington's Golden Spoon."⁵³

Los Angeles added a threat to the promised advantages of consolidation. In 1906 it had annexed the Shoestring, a sliver of land that extended approximately the route of today's Harbor Freeway from the city's existing southern boundary to the western edge of Wilmington Township and the northern limits of San Pedro. This annexation included the Harbor City area, where Los Angeles threatened to build its own harbor if Wilmington and nearby San Pedro did not agree to consolidate.⁵⁴

During the campaign for consolidation, it turned out that one of Wilmington's main concerns had little to do with the development of the port or the promise of urban amenities. Rather, it was the fear that Wilmington would lose its saloons. The worry was that licenses granted by an independent Wilmington would be voided after consolidation. The *Times* in July of 1909 went so far as to maintain that Wilmington's only opposition to joining Los Angeles came from the Consolidated Lumber Company, no doubt fearing higher taxes, and the saloon owners. To reassure the Wets that things would not change, the City of Los Angeles, a month prior to the vote, stated that existing licenses would not be interfered with and that Wilmington's saloons could continue as before.⁵⁵

The result of all this was that, in August of 1909, just one year after completing its new city hall, Wilmington voted to consolidate with Los Angeles by a vote of 107 to 61. Wilmington officially became part of the Fifth Ward of Los Angeles City. San Pedro followed within the month and the political unification of the Los Angeles Harbor area was complete.⁵⁶

Wilmington quickly began to take advantage of the benefits offered by Los Angeles. One of the most important was the raising of the grade of Canal and the surrounding streets. As early as 1903, with the anticipated coming of the Pacific Electric, the town had been discussing improvements to Canal. In the months leading up to annexation, it had commissioned a survey of property lines and elevations, with the goal of both widening Canal and of raising the grade to prevent flooding. The survey was completed just as the consolidation campaign concluded and the vote taken. A new city map was adopted and a "datum point" established for the new height of Canal Street on the day of the consolidation election.⁵⁷

⁵² *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1909, June 9, 1909.

⁵³ *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1909.

⁵⁴ Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, 115; Joe McKinzie, *Postcard History Series: San Pedro* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 8.

⁵⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1909, July 14, 1909.

⁵⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1909, August 11, 1909.

⁵⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 1903, June 10, 1909, June 17, 1909; August 5, 1909.

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The result was that buildings constructed just after this date along Canal placed their ground floors ten to twelve feet above the ground floor of their neighbors. The first built this way was a new masonry structure on the northeast corner of Canal and Second Streets. The *Los Angeles Times* wrote of its groundbreaking in its August 7, 1909, edition, just three days after the consolidation election, and noted that it was the first structure to use the new “datum point” for the future level of Canal Street.⁵⁸



*Canal Street (Avalon Boulevard) north from the interurban tracks, circa 1911
Photo taken just before the street elevation was raised
Saint John's Episcopal Church is in its original location
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

By 1911 the raising of Canal and the surrounding streets was underway using material removed from the harbor by dredging. At the same time Canal was widened. The process was completed two years later. The result was that buildings not constructed to the new elevations and property lines had either to be moved or demolished. Some of the major masonry structures, such as the Masonic Temple and the Petersen Block, were raised and, if need be, moved back. But most others, primarily wooden structures of less imposing appearance, disappeared. In the process, Wilmington lost a good deal of its pre-consolidation history.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1909; Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 52.

⁵⁹ Seaman, *Images of America: Wilmington*, 52.

Resources from Pre-Consolidation Wilmington

Resources from pre-consolidation Wilmington south of Anaheim Street are rare, and, from south of Harry Bridges Boulevard, non-existent. Harbor improvements have cleared the area of any remnants of Banning's warehouses and workshops and of the south Canal Street commercial district. Between Harry Bridges and Anaheim, transformation of previously residential areas into commercial-industrial districts, and later urban renewal, has left little. Resources north of Anaheim, particularly residential, are more plentiful if scattered, and often altered to the point of having lost integrity.

Pre-Consolidation Wilmington can best be divided into two Sub-Themes. The first, The Civil War, clearly stands separate. It has a clearly defined time period that ends well before consolidation. Its structures were built by the military and intended for military purposes. The extant resources are significant under Criterion A, military history, and all appear to be designated. As such, no eligibility standards have been developed.

The second Sub-Theme consists of Life in Independent Wilmington. Extant resources are significant under Criterion A/1/1 for their association with early settlement. Some are also significant under Criterion B/2/2, related to significant individuals. Individuals include member of the Banning family and Frederick Cary.

There are three broad building categories: institutional (religious and fraternal), commercial, and residential. In some cases, as with business blocks that include a lodge hall above and retail space below, the fraternal and commercial uses are mixed. The category used is dependent upon who or what constructed and/or financed the building. A building constructed by a lodge for its use, which includes retail space, is considered fraternal. A business block built by an entrepreneur, in which the second floor is rented for fraternal and/or institutional purposes, is considered commercial. All institutional properties identified under this theme appear to be designated.

SUB-THEME: THE CIVIL WAR

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the area of military history as a resource relating to the Civil War. These resources are a product of the Union Army's effort to construct and operate Fort Drum in Wilmington between 1862 and 1865. Identified examples have documented links to the fort and to the Union Army, and retain essential character-defining elements of style, layout, location, and/or method of construction. All resources significant under this theme appear to be designated. Because all known resource under this theme are designated, no eligibility standards have been developed.

Period of Significance: 1862-1865

Period of Significance Justification: The first structure was built at Fort Drum in 1862. The Civil War ended in 1865.

Geographic Location: Within the 1909 city boundaries of Wilmington when it consolidated with Los Angeles

Area(s) of Significance: Military History

Criteria: NR: A CR: 1 Local: 1

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Institutional-Military/Military Post
Property Type: Institutional-Military/Military Cemetery

Property Type Description: Institutional-Military/Military Post: Structures related to military uses and constructed by the military in a military-controlled site

Institutional-Military/Military Cemetery: Local cemeteries containing graves of military personnel

Property Type Significance: Extant structures from this period are significant within the area of military history. They provide evidence of the kinds of structures the military built, and of how military personnel lived, during the Civil War period.

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT WILMINGTON

Summary Statement of Significance: Resource: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement and social history for its association with the early development history of Wilmington as an independent city prior to consolidation with Los Angeles. Resources dating from this time include residences, places of work, and sites for social life and are now rare.

Period of Significance: 1862-1909

Period of Significance Justification: Wilmington was formally platted in 1862. Wilmington consolidated with Los Angeles in 1909.

Geographic Location: Within the 1909 city boundaries of Wilmington when it consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History

Criteria: NR: A/B CR: 1/2 Local: 1/2

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Residential-Single Family, House
Property Type: Commercial-Retail, Retail Store
Property Type: Institutional-Religious/Spiritual, Church
Property Type: Institutional-Social Clubs/Meeting Halls, Lodge

Property Type Description: House: Domestic dwelling on a private lot
Retail Store: Facility for transacting commerce with the general public
Church: Place of worship denoted by a denomination
Lodge: Meeting place for a social organization

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are significant under Criterion A/1/1. Buildings under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation Wilmington lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life. Some property types are also significant under Criterion B/2/2. Buildings under this criterion are directly associated with significant individuals in pre-consolidation Wilmington, in addition to illustrating how residents lived. All institutional properties significant under this theme (churches and lodges) appear to be designated.

Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from the pre-consolidation period of Wilmington
- Is associated with the formation, settlement, and/or development of Wilmington
- Under Criterion B/2/2, is directly associated with the productive life of a person who played an important role in the formation, settlement, and/or development of Wilmington

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- Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to the early settlement and development of Wilmington

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Related to the life of pre-consolidation Wilmington by showing how residents lived, worked, and socialized
- For residential properties (Criterion B/2/2) individual must have resided in the property during the period in which he or she achieved significance
- May be associated with groups or individuals important in Wilmington's early ethnic/cultural history

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within Wilmington for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed
- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria

THEME: SAN PEDRO, 1882-1909



*Early San Pedro looking north from Vinegar Hill
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

San Pedro has always seemed a place apart. Because of its remoteness, its topography, its port, and its sometimes rowdy reputation, the community has a sense of identity perhaps unique among Los Angeles neighborhoods. With the possible exception of Venice, it was the most developed at the time of consolidation, with its own strong central business district and set of residential communities.

Yet San Pedro's existence as a separate settlement was a short twenty-eight years. It began with the arrival of the railroad in the early 1880s. This allowed San Pedro to form itself as a town in 1882, recapture the shipping business lost earlier to Wilmington, and emerge as the dominant port for Los Angeles. A compact business district grew up around the harbor. Adjacent to this business district were distinct neighborhoods, all within walking distance. This small-town physical pattern existed for a little over two decades.

Beginning in late 1903, San Pedro began to grow in population and spread out in area. This was due to two transportation innovations. The first was the coming of the electric interurban railroad, which connected San Pedro with Los Angeles and made it easier for potential new residents to reach the port city. The second was a separate system of streetcars that traveled within San Pedro itself. This allowed

the new residents to find homes and create institutions beyond the confines of the old walking city. This physical expansion was just getting underway when San Pedro consolidated with Los Angeles in 1909.

The Coming of the Railroad

San Pedro as a port actually predates the coming of the railroad by many decades. The first non-Spanish ship to anchor in the harbor was the American *Lelia Byrd* in 1805. The first warehouse facility was a storage building for hides built in 1823, the site of which is commemorated as the Casa de San Pedro (California Historical Landmark No. 920). By the 1850s a wharf existed at Timm's Point, the location of which is L.A. Cultural Historical Monument, No. 171, and a horse-drawn freight and stage service connected it to Los Angeles. This was all made official with the declaration of San Pedro as a Port of Entry with its own custom's house in 1853. But there was no town as such to support the port.⁶⁰

This changed in the early 1880s, when the railroad came. The line to San Pedro was an extension of the original route that Phineas Banning built between Los Angeles and Wilmington in 1869. The Southern Pacific Railroad, popularly known as the SP, gained control of Banning's line in 1872, and decided to continue it to the peninsula. The line reached San Pedro in 1881 and, by 1882, was extended as far as the old wharf at Timm's Point. The next year, 1883, saw construction of a new 1600 foot-long wharf along the waterfront, and this was followed by railroad yards and other improvements. By 1900 the entire waterfront was a maze of rail lines, wharves, and warehouses.⁶¹

A settlement quickly formed around the new passenger terminal. San Pedro was officially organized as a town in 1882. The southern limit was the northern boundary of Fort MacArthur, at that time called the Government Reserve. The town reached as far west as present-day Pacific Avenue, then called West Street, and extended north to Santa Cruz Street. San Pedro gained a post office one year later, in 1883. By 1888 the town was ready to promote itself to a city of the sixth class. It voted to do so 145 in favor to 57 against.⁶²

From the beginning, the relationship between the new settlement and the railroad was difficult. On the one hand, San Pedro's economic life depended upon the Southern Pacific's patronage. On the other, citizens continually felt that the railroad, together with the powerful Banning family of nearby Wilmington, acted in its corporate interest, rather than in the interest of the city. The *Los Angeles Times* went so far in 1885 as to assert that San Pedro was "practically in the pantaloons of a little and a big monopoly – General Banning and the Southern Pacific Railroad."⁶³

⁶⁰ Henry Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History* (San Pedro: San Pedro Bay Historical Society, 1984), 21-22.

⁶¹ Flora Twyman Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years* (San Pedro: New-Pilot / The Daily Breeze, 1988), in the collection of the *San Pedro Historical Society*, 14; Joe McKinzie, *Postcard History Series: San Pedro* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 8, 14.

⁶² Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 14, 16; *San Pedro and Wilmington: A Calendar of Events in the Making of Two Cities and the Los Angeles Harbor* (Los Angeles: Title Guarantee and Trust Company, 1942), 21.

⁶³ *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 1885.

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Generally, conflict focused on control over land along the waterfront. All terrain east of Front and Beacon Streets remained in the hands of the railroad, and the residents found themselves increasingly powerless to shape it. The result was that San Pedro turned its back on the waterfront and allowed the Southern Pacific to extend its docks and construct facilities as it saw fit.⁶⁴

Regardless of popular attitudes toward the railroad, its development of the port allowed a settlement to grow from literally nothing into an economically successful city within two decades. While population estimates from the years between the censuses are rough, sources from the period generally agree. By 1883, a year after its creation, San Pedro had about 200 people. By 1890 this had increased to 1240. It reached about 1600 in 1894 and 1787 by 1900. Growth was steady, but not spectacular. This fit with the compact nature of the walking city before the coming of the interurban and the streetcar.⁶⁵

Topography did much to determine the layout of early San Pedro. The narrow shore along the city's eastern edge was the location of the railroad that served the city and its wharfs. A business district that centered on the rail depot lay just to the west of the waterfront. This is where a valley, which extended further to the west, provided land relatively level with the waterfront. This business district was bounded by Fourth Street on the north, Front Street (present-day Harbor Boulevard) on the east, Sixth Street on the south and Palos Verdes Street on the west. Beacon served as the business main street, while Front housed shipping related enterprises, including many of the better-class saloons.



*Beacon and Sixth Streets, early 1900s
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

⁶⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1890, December 20, 1891.

⁶⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1883, February 6, 1955; *U.S. Census for 1890 and 1900*.

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The city that extended beyond divided itself into three distinct sections, all within walking distance of the business district. There were two middle-class neighborhoods. To the north and northwest were Nob and Barton Hills. To the south was Vinegar Hill. By 1900 both Nob and Vinegar Hills had developed into respectable residential areas.

Separating these two middle-class neighborhoods was the low land stretching as a valley directly west of the business district. Originally known as Stingaree Gulch, this section gained the name of Happy, or Paradise, Valley. This is where the less well-off lived, particularly those providing labor for the wharves and ships. Here too were centered the saloons and houses of pleasure that were inevitable in any port town.⁶⁶ Some, such as the “Happy Valley Saloon,” may have been major enterprises, but the *Los Angeles Times* referred to the typical “resort” in the Valley as a “poor, squalid little shack.”⁶⁷

Of the various areas, Vinegar Hill became known as the city’s best (a designated City Historic Preservation Overlay Zone or HPOZ). It owed this reputation to its relationship to the waterfront. South of Sixth Street the land rose steeply, and along the east side of Beacon Street, south of Sixth, was a park known as the Plaza. It sat on a bluff that separated the waterfront below from the city above. Vinegar Hill extended to the west of the Plaza. Thus it was able to enjoy both an ocean view and a sense of separation from the harbor. Vinegar Hill’s sense of itself as a place apart was such that its voters apparently defeated a school bond issue from passing in 1896, because it would have removed local students from temporary quarters on the hill and sent them to school with the rest of the city. Vinegar Hill got its own school, at Sixteenth and Mesa, in 1903.⁶⁸

Vinegar Hill and the bluffs to the south remained the site for both elite and middle-class homes throughout pre-consolidation San Pedro’s life. The elite occupied the choice lots along the bluffs, while the middle class built to the west of Beacon Street. Premier among the residents of the bluffs were the Peck and Dodson families.⁶⁹

George H. Peck, Jr., was, in San Pedro, perhaps second in power only to the Southern Pacific Railroad. He arrived in 1886 and soon created the city’s first bank, the Bank of San Pedro. He then entered into real estate development. Peck’s primary area of subdivision activity was to the south of the central business district. This included much of Vinegar Hill. In 1905 Peck was described by the *Los Angeles Times* as the largest property holder in San Pedro and in 1906 as the city’s single millionaire. He had a large Stick-style home along the heights opposite Timm’s Point. It was during the 1890s considered the

⁶⁶ Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 20.

⁶⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1901.

⁶⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1896; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 44.

⁶⁹ In addition to the Peck and Dodson houses discussed below, there is a residence possibly associated with the Banning Family. William Banning owned a house at 1003 Beacon, from perhaps as early as 1890 until 1903. Assessor’s records show that it underwent an extensive reconstruction under a different owner during 1917-1919. The house as it currently exists is stylistically a product this reconstruction. It is difficult to see any remnant of an earlier structure in the massing or the detailing. Because of this, it was not considered appropriate for inclusion in the theme of pre-consolidation San Pedro.

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city's most imposing residence. (It has long since been moved to 380 Fifteenth Street, raised and greatly altered. Only its third story retains any of its original features.).⁷⁰

Also inhabiting the bluff was the Dodson family. The Dodson house, built in 1885, was originally located across from the Plaza on the corner of Seventh and Beacon Streets. It was later moved to 859 Thirteenth Street, where it still exists in good condition. The house is fine example of a Stick style two-story frame structure, and is L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, No. 147.⁷¹



Dodson House

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 147
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

James Dodson was involved in development of the port as the president of the San Pedro Home Dock and Warehouse Company. Of at least equal importance was his wife Rudecinda Florencia Sepulveda de Dodson. A member of the Sepulveda family, which once controlled the Rancho de los Palos Verdes, Rudecinda and her brother Roman were among the town's original subdividers. Rudecinda was also involved in philanthropic and civic activities, having given land and funds to the city for park construction and improvements.⁷²

⁷⁰ Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 14, 20; *Los Angeles Times*, December 21, 1905, September 13, 1906; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 36. Peck also owned a bungalow located at 928 Centre Street. Built in 1903, Peck owned it from 1907, or possibly earlier, through 1910. It is unclear if he actually lived in it or bought it for rental purposes. It originally had an overscaled octagonal bell-shaped cupola over its bay window, long since removed. (Information on 928 Centre was obtained from photos in the collection of the San Pedro Historical Society and "Historic Preservation Zone Overlay – Property Notes." Confirmation of Peck's ownership is from Los Angeles Assessor Archives, Book 209 (1902-1910), 19-20. Construction date is from the Los Angeles County Assessor.)

⁷¹ Jeffrey Herr, editor, *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Cultural Affairs Department of the City of Los Angeles, 2002), 274, 433.

⁷² Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 36-37.

The Peck and Dodson houses were exceptional. Most of the Vinegar Hill homes to the west of Beacon Street were more modest one-, one-and -one-half, and occasionally two-story dwellings set close together on narrow lots. They are interesting for what they say about the city's population.

Many were owned by members of the middle-class native-born business elite that could be found in any small town of the era. A good example was Frank Karr. Karr was a graduate of Stanford University and an attorney by profession. He was one of those individuals, typical of the turn of the twentieth century, who was involved in a variety of legal activities in the private and public sectors. Karr was city attorney for four years. He was also an attorney for the Southern Pacific railroad, and he concluded his career by serving as a judge. Karr's residence at 245 Ninth Street was built in 1901. It is a tasteful restrained Queen Anne design, with traces of the Colonial Revival style just becoming fashionable at the time of its construction.⁷³



*Karr Residence
245 Ninth Street
(Photo by author)*

Another example of the white collar middle class was banker Henry Baly. He began his career as a bookkeeper at the Bank of San Pedro in 1893. He was promoted to assistant cashier in 1897 and was made cashier, an important executive position at that time, in 1902. Baly was also involved in real

⁷³ J. M. Guinn, *A History of California and the Extended History of its Southern Coast Counties* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1907) in the collection of the San Pedro Historical Society, Vol. II, 1828; "Historic Preservation Zone Overlay – Property Notes," December 11, 1982, in the HPOZ File of the San Pedro Historical Society.

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estate and owned several properties around the city. His residence at 252 Ninth Street was built in 1892. It is a modest hipped-roofed bungalow with an almost tropical appearance.⁷⁴

Other Vinegar Hill homes indicate the role of the port in giving San Pedro a distinct flavor of cultural diversity. This diversity can be seen in both the origins of these individuals and in their occupations. Particularly striking are the role of Scandinavians. One of these houses, the “Danish Castle” (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 814) is on its original Vinegar Hill site at 324 West Tenth Street and dates from the 1880s. Its name comes from one of its early owners, who was a Danish sea captain. It is an elaborate two-story residence in an early Queen Anne style with some Eastlake features. It has spindled porches at both levels and an open corner tower.⁷⁵



“Danish Castle” House

L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 814

(Photo by author)

A second is the home of Martin Lindschow. Lindschow was born in Denmark and first served as a “lighterman,” working on the small boats or “lighters” that transferred cargo from ships anchored in the bay to the wharves. Eventually he moved on to working on the breakwater constructed in 1871, where he rose to the position of superintendent. He then built a wharf known as “Lindschow Landing” and ran a ferry between San Pedro and Rattlesnake (now Terminal) Island. Lindschow’s residence at 1103 Centre Street was built in 1890. It is a simple if ample two-story wood frame house with a low-pitched hipped

⁷⁴ Guinn, *A History of California*, Vol. II, 1906; “Historic Preservation Zone Overlay – Property Notes.”

⁷⁵ David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, Revised Edition (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2003), 93.

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roof and galleries on the first and second floors on the front façade. Like the Henry Baly house, it has a distinctly tropical appearance.⁷⁶

The third and perhaps most colorful Scandinavian was Gustav Falk. Falk was born in Sweden and served as the captain on ships involved primarily in the lumber trade. Around 1885 he purchased the block bordered by Front (now Harbor), Sixth, Beacon, and Wall (now Wall Street Walk along the northern edge of the Municipal Building). Here he built several storefronts and, historically most significant, the Pepper Tree Saloon. The significance of this saloon was such that the city has created a plaza on its site to commemorate the longshoremen who died in a general strike in 1934. Falk's residence at 330 Tenth Street was built in 1902. It is a single-story hipped-roofed cottage with a large bay window and Stick-Style detailing on the front façade dormer.⁷⁷



*Falk Residence
330 Tenth Street
(Photo by author)*

As compared to Vinegar Hill, there is little left from Nob Hill. One residence of note from this northern neighborhood is the Muller House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 253). The residence was originally built in 1899 by Edward Mahar, a local community leader and one-time mayor, and stood at Front and First. In 1901 Mahar sold it to William Muller, a well-off shipbuilder who worked for the Bannings. In 1912, with the leveling of Nob Hill, Muller moved the residence to Nineteenth and Grand,

⁷⁶ "Historic Preservation Zone Overlay – Property Notes;" *Shorelines*, a publication of the San Pedro Historical Society, Volume 6, Number 1, January 1979, 5; Volume 19, Number 1, June 1991, 8; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 33.

⁷⁷ Guinn, *A History of California*, Vol. II, 1893; Historic Plaque on Pepper Tree Plaza; "Historic Preservation Zone Overlay – Property Notes," *Shorelines*, Volume 8, Number 1, February 1981, 11; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 123-124.

far to the southwest. The house moved again in 1986 to its present site at 1542 Beacon Street, where it serves as a museum. The house is an ample story-and-a-half Queen Anne residence with a bay window and a recessed porch on its front elevation. The symmetry of the front dormer indicates Colonial Revival influence.⁷⁸

Life in the Early City

Between its founding and the early years of the 1900s, San Pedro functioned relatively well as a small city. This success was due to the economic well-being provided by the port, and to a political leadership that made the city work in the face of a diversity that could have paralyzed it. The basis of this success was tolerance, perhaps encouraged by physical separation. There was a willingness of the well-off ensconced on Vinegar and Nob Hills, both native born and immigrant, to allow the less blessed to pursue their livelihoods and pleasures along Front Street and in Happy Valley. Middle-class bankers and saloon-patronizing sailors tolerated each other, so long as they left each other alone. The occasional disorder in some districts may have bothered outside observers, but was a price locals seemed willing to pay.

Business life reflected the diverse nature of the population. On one hand there were the traditional activities one would expect in any small city, included banking, real estate development, and retail services, along with local government. Not so typical were activities related to construction and maintenance of the port itself. There was a demand for skilled labor which could build, operate, and maintain the breakwaters, wharves, ferries, and other port-related activities. These individuals were often former ship captains or sailors of immigrant background, many of them Scandinavians like Linskow, who decided to settle in San Pedro as they grew too old for the more strenuous life at sea.

Finally, there was another, somewhat less respectable but generally tolerated, form of business associated with San Pedro as a port. This was the saloon. The *Los Angeles Times* counted twelve of them within the city limits in 1897. There seems to have been two types. The more disreputable ones were located in Happy Valley and often linked to facilities for other pleasures. Those of better reputation were located in the central business district, particularly along Front Street. These latter establishments often served the function of employment centers, where captains looking for sailors and wharf bosses seeking stevedores would recruit.⁷⁹

Given the wealth provided by the harbor, San Pedro was quick to establish basic services. It organized a volunteer fire company in the late 1880s, and by 1891 it had its own hose cart. Its first public school building, the Fifth Street School, opened in 1885, at Centre between Fifth and Sixth Streets. By 1890 the school had four teachers and 160 students. By the late 1890s, two water companies, a Banning-owned company based in nearby Wilmington and a locally based company controlled by the Sepulveda family,

⁷⁸ Herr, *Landmark L.A.*, 270, 441; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 144-145.

⁷⁹ Historic Plaque on Pepper Tree Plaza, site of Pepper Tree Saloon, southeast corner of Beacon and Sixth Streets, San Pedro; *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1897.

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competed for customers. Also, by the late 1890s, San Pedro had electricity, complete with street lights in the business district, and telephone service.⁸⁰

Social life also flourished. For the middle and skilled working classes, San Pedro by 1900 had all the institutions one would expect in a typical small city. Lodge life included chapters of the International Order of Odd Fellows by 1889 and the Masons by 1897. The Elks did so well that by the early 1900s they were planning an imposing new lodge hall. These were primarily male organizations, although most had women's auxiliaries.⁸¹

The more genteel had the San Pedro Literary Society. It was founded in 1888 for the purpose of providing San Pedro with a lending library. It constructed a building just south of the central business toward Vinegar Hill at Seventh and Palos Verdes Streets. In 1902, the Literary Society gave the building and the collection it housed to the city to serve as the first public library.⁸²



Saint Peter's Episcopal Church
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 53
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

⁸⁰ Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 14, 20, 23, 25; *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1891, February 18, 1896, February 29, 1896, May 5, 1896, May 30, 1896, November 11, 1896, May 14, 1897, October 23, 1898, February 15, 1899.

⁸¹ Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 20, 25; *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 1908.

⁸² Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 20, 29.

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Most significant for all were the churches. The oldest was built for the Episcopal congregation, established in 1884. In 1888 the Presbyterians had a church, followed by the Roman Catholics in 1889. In that same year of 1889 the Baptists began meeting, although they did not organize to build a church until 1897. In 1891 the Methodists opened their new church. The Scandinavian Lutherans managed to construct a small building in 1902. At the same time, indicative of San Pedro's social life as a port, the Salvation Army established a headquarters there in 1890.⁸³

Two of these early churches remain. One is Saint Peter's Episcopal Church (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 53). It was originally located just north of the business district toward Nob Hill on Beacon between Second and Third. (It has since been moved to the Harbor View Memorial Park, San Pedro's oldest cemetery, at 2411 South Grand Avenue.) It was built in 1884 and was San Pedro's oldest church.⁸⁴ It has been described as "a simple, unpretentious Carpenter's Gothic in wood."⁸⁵ The second is the Scandinavian Lutheran Church of 1902, still standing at 238 North Mesa.

The Arrival of the Streetcar

Beginning in 1903, San Pedro started to spread out from its compact walking-city core. The cause was rapid and significant population growth, and the creation of an intra-city streetcar network to disperse this growth. The impact of the streetcar network was just beginning to be felt on San Pedro when it consolidated with Los Angeles in 1909.

The growth in population came with the arrival of two electric interurban railroad lines. They improved San Pedro's links other Southern California communities. In the process they changed the city from an isolated harbor community, with the social life that come with being a port, into a potential suburb that desired to draw new inhabitants, some of whom might not be comfortable with the existing character of the town.

The first electric interurban began service in January of 1903. The California Pacific Interurban (later acquired by the Pacific Electric Company) ran on narrow streetcar-gauge tracks from Los Angeles, through Gardena, and then to San Pedro. In San Pedro, it functioned as a streetcar traveling down the center of the unpaved streets on a single track. It entered the city via Ancon Street (no longer existing), then traveled on Ancon south to First, east on First to Front (Harbor Boulevard), south on Front to Fifth, west on Fifth to Beacon, north on Beacon to Second, and east on Second to Front, completing the loop.⁸⁶

⁸³ Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 20, 23, 25; *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1899; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 35-36.

⁸⁴ Herr, *Landmark L.A.*, 260-261, 425; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 35-36

⁸⁵ Gebhard and Winter, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, 94.

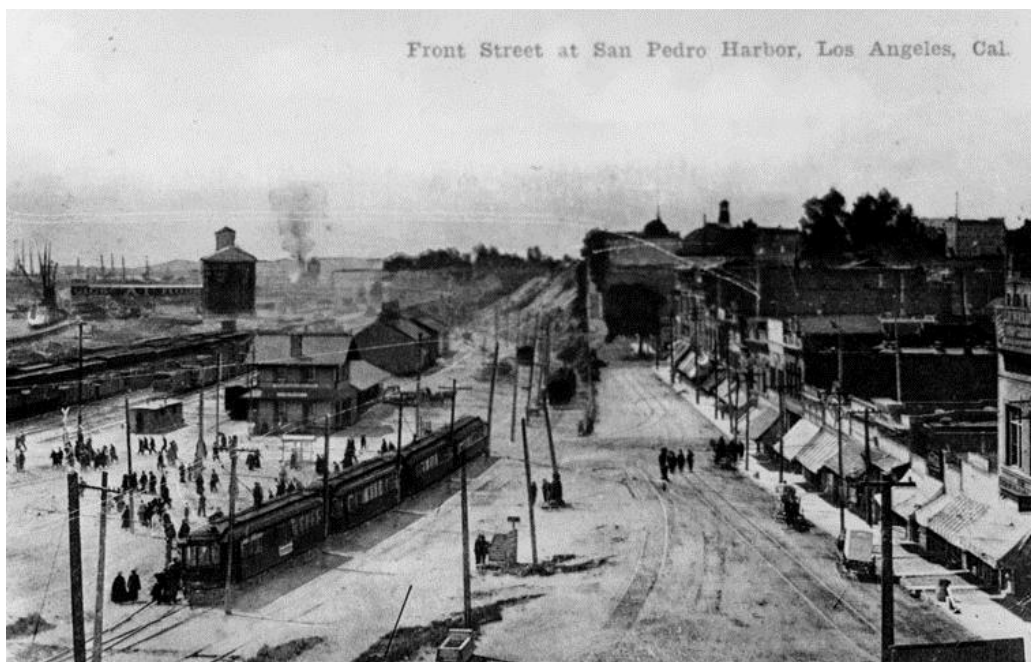
⁸⁶ *Lines of the Pacific Electric: Southern & Western Districts, Interurban Special 60* (Glendale: Mac Seabee, 1975), 199, 202.

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This first interurban was joined by the Pacific Electric's own route via its Dominguez Line a year later in 1904. It consisted of a faster and more direct route on standard railroad-gauge tracks, which traveled south from Los Angeles through Wilmington and then on to San Pedro. It had its own right of way along the waterfront and was served by a terminus on Front Street adjacent to the Southern Pacific's passenger station. It quickly became the dominant carrier.⁸⁷

The impact of these improved inter-city transportation connections can be seen in San Pedro's population growth. It took San Pedro eighteen years, from the creation of the town in 1882 to the turn of the century in 1900, to achieve a population of 1787. Six years later, in 1906, the city's population had more than tripled to an estimated 5600. Over the next two years, the city added another 3500 plus inhabitants to reach an estimated population of 9150 by 1908.⁸⁸



*Front Street looking south, with a Pacific Electric interurban train
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

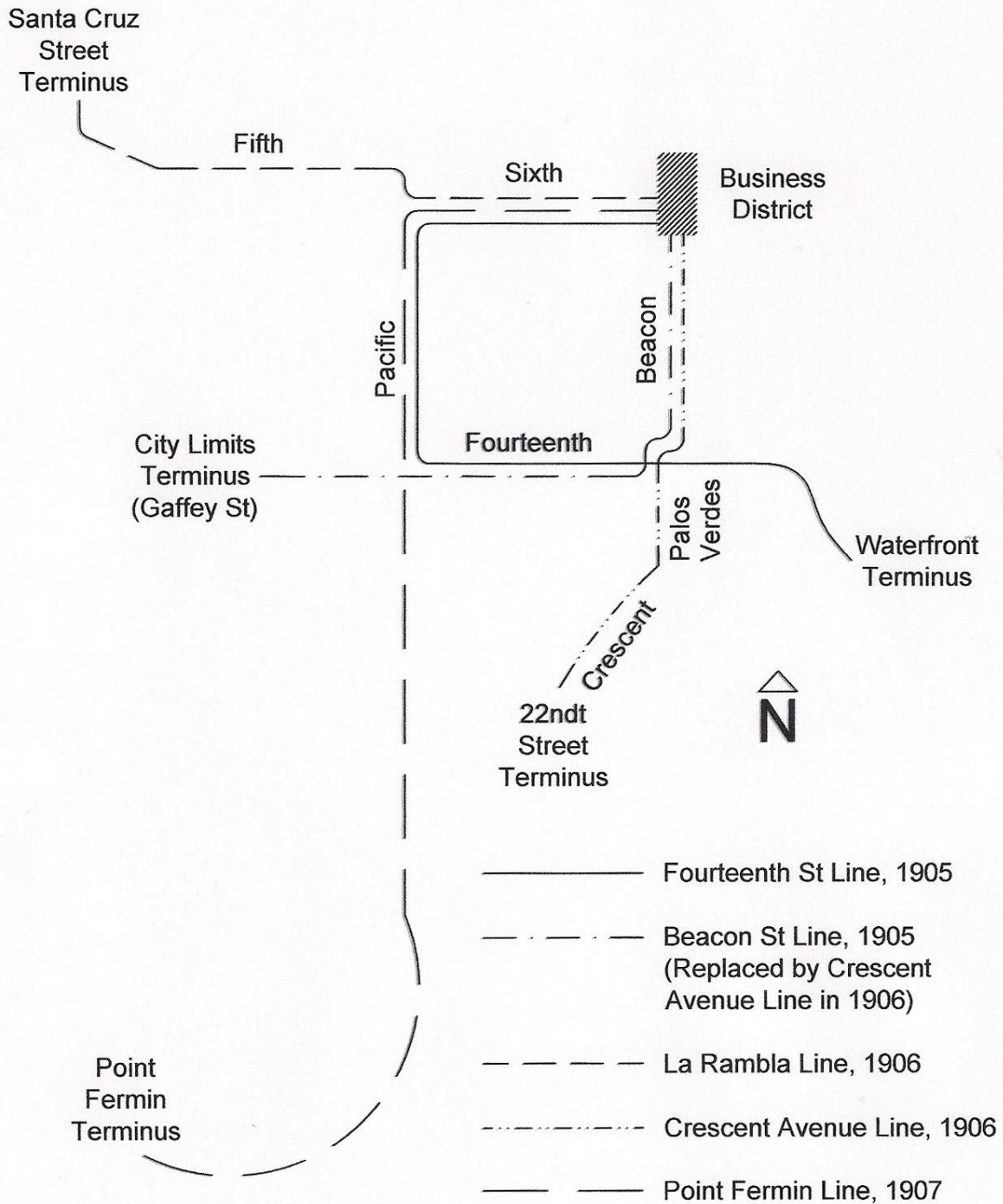
The physical spread of San Pedro was inevitable given this population increase. Permitting settlement in outlying areas was the creation of a separate network of streetcars that served the city itself. Between late 1903 and 1907, five routes were opened that extended to the south, west, and northwest of the old central business district. This city network was a totally independent system, with neither a common terminus nor a reduced-fare transfer between the streetcar and the interurban.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ *Lines of the Pacific Electric*, 132-135, 202

⁸⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 1908; *U.S. Census for 1900*.

⁸⁹ The map and the following paragraphs describing the streetcar routes are from *Lines of the Pacific Electric*, 199; and from the *Los Angeles Times*, November 17, 1905.

SAN PEDRO CITY STREETCAR ROUTES



Source: Beacon Street Line route from *Los Angeles Times*, November 17, 1905; All other routes from *Lines of the Pacific Electric: Southern and Western Districts* (Interurban Special 60), 1975, pages 199-200.

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The first of these streetcar routes was the Fourteenth Street line, begun in 1903 and completed in 1905. It started in the business district and ran west on Sixth Street to Pacific Avenue. It then turned south on Pacific to Fourteenth Street, and then east on Fourteenth to the waterfront. It encircled Vinegar Hill on three sides.

The second was the Beacon Street line, which began service in November of 1905. It ran from the business district south on Beacon Street to Thirteenth Street, then one block west on Thirteenth to Palos Verdes, and then south on Palos Verdes to Fourteenth Street, and then west on Fourteenth to the city limits. This completed the encirclement of Vinegar Hill with trolley service.

The third was the La Rambla line, begun in 1905 and completed in 1906. It too started in the business district and ran west on Sixth Street to Pacific Avenue. It then turned north on Pacific for one block and then again west on Fifth Street and on a private right-of-way to La Alameda, then north on Bandini to Santa Cruz Street. The La Rambla line served the west and northwest sides of town.

The fourth line was the Crescent Avenue line, opened in 1906. It replaced the Beacon Street line and eliminated that line's Fourteenth Street portion. It ran from the business district south on Beacon Street to Thirteenth Street, then one block west on Thirteenth to Palos Verdes, and then south on Palos Verdes to Crescent Avenue, where it terminated at Crescent and Twenty-Second Street. This line maintained the existing service to the eastern edge of Vinegar Hill, and opened service to areas further to the south.

The fifth line was the Point Fermin line, completed in 1907. It followed the route of the Fourteenth Street line until it reached the corner of Pacific and Fourteenth. It then continued south on Pacific Avenue and what was then a private right-of-way to Point Fermin. It provided service to subdivisions newly opened south of the Military Reservation (now Fort MacArthur) as well as to Point Fermin Park and a now-vanished dance hall built there in 1908.

Impact of the Streetcar

The streetcar expanded San Pedro well beyond its earlier walking-city boundaries. All building types – commercial, institutional, and residential – were now able to spread across nearby vacant land. What is interesting, however, is that the architectural forms of these new structures were essentially the same as those found in the walking city. The downtown business block and the urban church simply replicated themselves. Most striking was the continuity in residential construction. Houses may have been further from the city, but they were essentially the same in scale and design.

At first the streetcar network reinforced the dominance of the existing central business district. It allowed individuals from the more distant parts of San Pedro to reach the stores and offices along Front, Beacon and Palos Verdes Streets. The year 1907 saw the construction of six new business blocks in the

business district, including one for George Peck at Fifth and Beacon and one for Roman Sepulveda at Sixth and Palos Verdes.⁹⁰

At the same time, developers saw that the land along the streetcar routes outside of the business district was equally accessible for commercial uses. The *Los Angeles Times* noted this as early as November of 1903, less than a year after the first interurban started service. “The feasibility of transferring the retail business section of San Pedro to some desirable site along Pacific Avenue and intersecting streets is being freely discussed. While there is no congestion now, in a few years all available space along the water front and the present business section will probably be required for warehouses and freight depots.”⁹¹

One year later, the *Times* was able to see progress on Pacific Avenue. It called the street San Pedro’s probable “business thoroughfare,” and noted that it was being graded and was to receive concrete sidewalks and curbs. All of this was due to the coming of the streetcar service, which it was to receive “at an early date.”⁹² This was written in April of 1904. Pacific, from Sixth to Fourteenth, received its streetcar in 1905.

The prospect of the spread of business activity accounts for the construction of a business block that for a time served as City Hall. Built in 1905, it is located on the corner of Eleventh and Palos Verdes Streets, in what is still primarily a residential neighborhood. The *Los Angeles Times* described the location this way: “The site will be about six blocks away from the present business center of San Pedro, on what is known as ‘Vinegar Hill’.”⁹³ But it was one block from the Beacon Street and Crescent Avenue streetcar lines.

This business building was a two-story brick structure, originally in the classically-based commercial style of the day. The contractor was Richard Quinn and the developer was Edwin Mahar, the prominent business and political figure who was mayor at the time of construction. The structure was intended as a temporary home for city offices, and thus was designed as a typical business block of the time, with storefronts on its first floor and offices on its second. The intent was that it would revert to retail and office use once a new city hall was completed. Its architectural integrity is badly damaged, but it remains as a commercial outpost from the pre-consolidation period in a residential neighborhood.⁹⁴

This venture was apparently not the first such structure to be considered for this out-of-the-way spot. When another developer had considered such a structure two years earlier at the same location, the *Los Angeles Times* saw it as a logical move. “This seems to be the advance movement which may start an exodus to the mesa [as Vinegar Hill was called]. As the business section now is bounded by hills, and has

⁹⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, 1907.

⁹¹ *Los Angeles Times*, November 11, 1903.

⁹² *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1904.

⁹³ *Los Angeles Times*, January 5, 1905.

⁹⁴ Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 34; *Shorelines*, Volume 9, Number 2, September 1982, 32; Volume 24, Number 1, July 1996, 10; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 50.

an area not to exceed 300 x 600 feet, the next move of any magnitude will have to be made on the elevation.”⁹⁵

In spite of these endeavors, however, commercial construction in outlying areas did not become common until after consolidation in 1909. The same is not true of residential. The new inhabitants of San Pedro needed somewhere to live and developers acted quickly to meet that demand. Subdivisions to the north, west, and particularly south of the old business district followed, and sometimes preceded, the coming of the streetcar

The city began making infrastructure improvements in anticipation of the interurban’s arrival and continued until consolidation. The larger of the two water companies serving San Pedro started work on a new main line from its wells and a new storage reservoir in 1903. Also in 1903, plans were announced to extend electric and gas service to all parts of the city. In 1904 the city stated its intention to install a system of sewer lines, and later extended the reach of the proposed system to the newly settled southern and northern parts of the city. Also in 1904, a second telephone company announced plans to begin servicing the city. Grading of the streets to the north and south of the older settled areas began in 1905 and continued through the next four years.⁹⁶

The areas opened up by the streetcar were far beyond the original southern city limit of the military reservation and the western limit of Pacific Avenue. In 1906 San Pedro annexed to the south beyond the military reservation all the way to Point Fermin, in anticipation of the opening of the Point Fermin car line on Pacific Avenue. It also annexed areas to the west to extend well beyond Pacific Avenue, and to the north to what was then Wilmington Road and is now approximately the approach to the Vincent Thomas Bridge.⁹⁷

The city also extended its school system into the new areas opened by these developers. The original Fifth Street School had proved to be inadequate by the early 1900s, and a second school had been built on Vinegar Hill. But this was not enough. As the *Los Angeles Times* indicated, “The rapid increase in the number of children of school age here makes an additional school imperative.”⁹⁸ A third school, the Barton Hill School on Pacific Avenue north of O’Farrell Street, soon opened to serve students from the northern part of town.⁹⁹

A major result of streetcar-related dispersal was the location of a new high school. Rather than be placed near the old central business district, the new structure was located on Gaffey Street, between Twelfth and Thirteenth. This put it two blocks west of the streetcar lines that ran on Pacific Avenue, and

⁹⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, November 11, 1903.

⁹⁶ Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 29; *Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1903, March 2, 1903, May 20, 1903, October 8, 1903, June 16, 1904, April 18, 1905, April 20, 1905, June 29, 1905, May 25, 1906, January 24, 1907, June 12, 1907, October 14, 1908.

⁹⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 1906.

⁹⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1905.

⁹⁹ Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 78.

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centered it among the residential areas that were growing up on the north, west and south sides. Bonds for the new high school were approved in 1904, the site was selected in 1905, and the building completed in 1906.¹⁰⁰

Important institutions serving the dispersed population included churches as well. One of these was Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church. Earlier churches, such as Saint Peter's Episcopal Church, originally on Beacon between Second and Third Streets, were located adjacent to the business district. Saint Andrews is an example of a church moving to what was a relatively sparsely populated residential district where future development depended upon streetcar service.



*Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church, with the Manse to the left
Manse is an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 514
(Photo by author)*

Saint Andrews, located on the corner of Tenth and Mesa Streets, was completed in 1907. Associated with it is the adjoining residence to the east at 383 Tenth Street (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 514), which served as its manse. Saint Andrews was significant enough as an institution that the laying of its cornerstone in 1906 was covered by the *Los Angeles Times*.¹⁰¹ At its dedication a year later it was described by *Times* as being a prime example of "Gothic Architecture."¹⁰² The church members themselves described it as "one of the handsomest church edifices in the southern part of the state."¹⁰³ The church remains, albeit in altered form, with its tower removed and its original stone exterior stuccoed over.

¹⁰⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1905, March 25, 1905; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 50.

¹⁰¹ Herr, *Landmarks LA*, 270, 271, 463; *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1906.

¹⁰² *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1907.

¹⁰³ "First Presbyterian Church of San Pedro," In the collection of the San Pedro Historical Society, 5.

Most of the construction during the streetcar years was residential. The important factor in determining its character was the decision to maintain the traditional size of individual lots. The pre-streetcar lot in Vinegar Hill was approximately forty feet wide by one hundred twenty five feet deep. Developers used these same dimensions in the newer streetcar-dependent districts south and west of Vinegar Hill. Only on the corners and on some of the more heavily trafficked streets did the dimensions vary.¹⁰⁴

This maintenance of small lot size was accompanied with a continuity of social status. The new subdivisions were intended for the same category of the middle class and skilled working class as the earlier neighborhoods. As a result, the housing forms of the newer areas were generally similar to those of the older. Bungalows and cottages predominated, with an occasional Colonial Revival style of slightly grander scale on one of the larger corner lots.

The Role of Peck

Instrumental in opening this new land to residents were the city's own developers, long active in local real estate. There were several, but three stand out. They are George Peck, James Gaffey, and the Sepulveda family.

In general, Peck developed the southern section of San Pedro, Gaffey the northern section, and the Sepulveda family the areas in between. Gaffey operated through the Gaffey Investment Company and Peck through the Pacific Improvement Company. Both Peck and Gaffey were also instrumental in getting streetcar routes created to service their developments. In Peck's case it was the Point Fermin line and in Gaffey's case it was the La Rambla line.¹⁰⁵

James Gaffey owed his role as a developer in large part to his wife, Arcadia Bandini, a descent of the Sepulveda family. His early business activity was focused on the harbor, and he seems not to have had as large a political role in pre-consolidation San Pedro as did George Peck. The placement of his home is indicative. He did not live on the bluffs of Vinegar Hill. Instead, the Gaffney family had a mansion, no longer standing, on the far west side at Third and Bandini, which was built in 1905.¹⁰⁶

Roman Sepulveda, along with his siblings Aurelio and Rudecinda, were among San Pedro's original subdividers. He was involved in creating the city's first water system and was responsible for laying out the Carolina, Grand View, and Sepulveda tracts. He was also an organizer of the First National Bank. He had a house built in 1883 on Fifth near West Street (today's Pacifica Avenue), which no longer stands.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Lot sizes from Los Angeles County Assessor's maps.

¹⁰⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 1905, March 10, 1907, May 21, 1908, August 8, 1909.

¹⁰⁶ Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 23, 61-62.

¹⁰⁷ Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 36, 71.

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Peck was the most significant of the developers. He was best able to exploit the possibilities of development that came with the streetcar. The Point Fermin line was the most important in opening land that previously been out of reach. Peck built himself in 1907. He paid for the laying of the track and, in 1908, took over its operation. The line's primary purpose was to provide service to residents of his Ocean View subdivision south of the Military Reservation. But he also sought to increase traffic through the creation of a resort at the end of the line, where he built Peck's Pavilion, a dance hall at western end of Point Fermin Park.¹⁰⁸

Peck's struggle with the War Department over the right-of-way for the Point Fermin line through the Military Reservation illustrates both his power and his attitude. The proposed route down Pacific Avenue cut through the northwest corner of the Reservation. The city had not been able to obtain permission to cross the boundary, and Pacific Avenue stopped at the Reservation's edge. Peck also failed to get permission to cross, but he laid his rails regardless in September of 1906. The military promptly tore up the newly-laid track.¹⁰⁹

Peck threatened to retaliate unless the military changed its mind: "I own several hundred acres immediately surrounding the [federally owned] Point Fermin light station and it is my present intention, if the War Department is unreasonable, to fence up all this land and prevent ingress or egress to or from the lighthouse. Should I do this the only way to approach the station would be by sea, which I do not believe would prove the most convenient."¹¹⁰

It is not clear if Peck carried out his threat, but in December of 1906 the War Department officially refused Peck's request to reinstall the torn-up track. Yet two months later, in February of 1907, Peck was able to have the War Department's decision reversed by an Act of Congress. He then proceeded to re-install his track. At the same time the military continued to refuse the city permission to extend Pacific Avenue. So, for the time being, Peck's trolley cars could cross the reservation, but a fence still blocked off the road.¹¹¹

Peck's activities also illustrated the ramifications of streetcar development on the tradition of live-and-let-live that had, up to that point, characterized San Pedro. Peck envisioned the new San Pedro as a suburban attachment to greater Los Angeles. The market for his subdivisions was the same middle-class and solid working class to whom he had earlier sold Vinegar Hill lots, but this market consisted of customers from outside San Pedro. As such they might not be as tolerant of San Pedro's ways as were existing residents.

This became apparent over the issue of behavior around the saloons on Front Street. Peck was firmly anti-saloon. His concern was apparently less with the well-being of those imbibing, however, and more

¹⁰⁸ Baker, *San Pedro: The First 100 Years*, 40; *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 1906, September 13, 1906, October 28, 1908.

¹⁰⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1906.

¹¹⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1906.

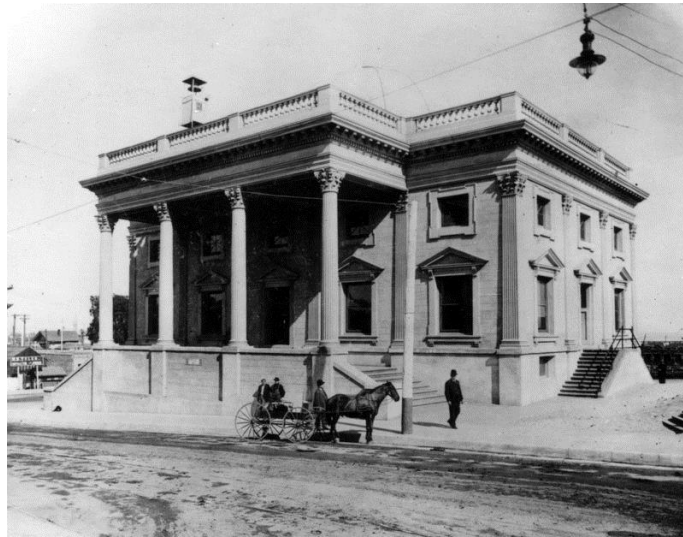
¹¹¹ *Los Angeles Times*, December 14, 1906, February 20, 1907, March 14, 1907.

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with the impression that they gave visitors coming to inspect his properties for sale. The *Times* made note of Peck's views. "He stated that since the electric [interurban] cars had been using Front Street as a terminus Sunday visitors gained a bad impression of San Pedro. The disorder could not help but be noticed, he said, and many homeseekers and much capital was drive away from San Pedro on this account."¹¹²

This placed Peck in opposition to a powerful group of San Pedro businessmen. The most he could hope for was Sunday closing. In March of 1906 Peck proposed to his fellow city trustees that the saloons be required to close on Sundays after 1:00 p.m., unless "conditions relative to drunkenness and disorder on the street were changed."¹¹³ There is no record of the proposal passing. The tolerant if sometimes disorderly social life of San Pedro apparently continued, in spite of the opposition of the city's most powerful man and his attempt to transform San Pedro into a respectable suburb.



*San Pedro City Hall
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Consolidation

In the six years between the coming of the interurban in 1903 and consolidation with Los Angeles in 1909, San Pedro acted as if it would remain an independent city far into the future. It built two notable public structures in those years, of a size and nature symbolizing this independence. In 1905 the city won a grant for a Carnegie Library and built a domed Greek Revival style structure designed by architects Edelsward and Saffellas. It was located on the east side of Beacon Street between Eighth and Ninth Streets in Plaza Park. It was completed in 1906 and stood until it was demolished in the mid-1960s.¹¹⁴

¹¹² *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1906.

¹¹³ *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1906.

¹¹⁴ McKinzie, *Postcard History Series: San Pedro*, 43-45; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 79.

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One year after beginning construction on the new library, San Pedro began planning for a new city hall. In September of 1906 the voters approved a \$40,000 bond issue. The building was completed in 1907 and stood on the east side of Beacon Street between Sixth and Seventh Streets, at the northern edge of Plaza Park. Architect F. S. Allen produced a Classical Revival structure similar in scale and form to the nearby library, if somewhat more ornate. It stood until it was replaced by the Municipal Building in 1928.¹¹⁵

In spite of these symbols of independence, it was evident in the years before consolidation that San Pedro could not, on its own, develop the port on the scale needed to serve the growing Southern California market. The question became one of finding a way to unite with Los Angeles and still maintain a degree of independence. Many civic leaders, including George Peck, looked to the unification of greater New York City as a pattern. The idea of reorganizing Los Angeles into a number of semi-autonomous boroughs was seen as the answer. San Pedro, as well as nearby Wilmington, could become a borough on the model of Brooklyn and Queens.¹¹⁶

This view held that greater Los Angeles would deal with port issues, and leave administering city affairs to the local boroughs. Peck told the *Times* as early as April of 1906 that Los Angeles should have “something to say about government of harbor affairs.” The *Times* went on to describe his position as the following: “The port, says Mr. Peck, really belongs to all Southern California, not to one small city, and the water front should not be disposed of by the Trustees of San Pedro.”¹¹⁷ The trade-off was that non-harbor affairs were not the business of Los Angeles.

The thought of giving Los Angeles control of the port was made acceptable by the Free Harbor movement. This was the concept of combining San Pedro, Wilmington, the Harbor City area of Los Angeles, and perhaps even Long Beach into a single publicly-owned authority. It would eliminate the control of the waterfront by private entities. Specifically, in the case of San Pedro, this meant the elimination of the Southern Pacific Railroad. It would also leave San Pedro as a self-governing entity.¹¹⁸

In spite of these ideas, Los Angeles pursued a path that would give it total control. To the carrot of harbor improvements, Los Angeles added the threat of developing a competing port in the Harbor City district to the north of San Pedro. This threat was increased when Los Angeles annexed the so-called Shoestring in 1906. This was a ribbon of land stretching roughly along the route of today’s Harbor Freeway from the existing southern boundaries of Los Angeles to the northern boundary of San Pedro and the western edge of Wilmington.¹¹⁹

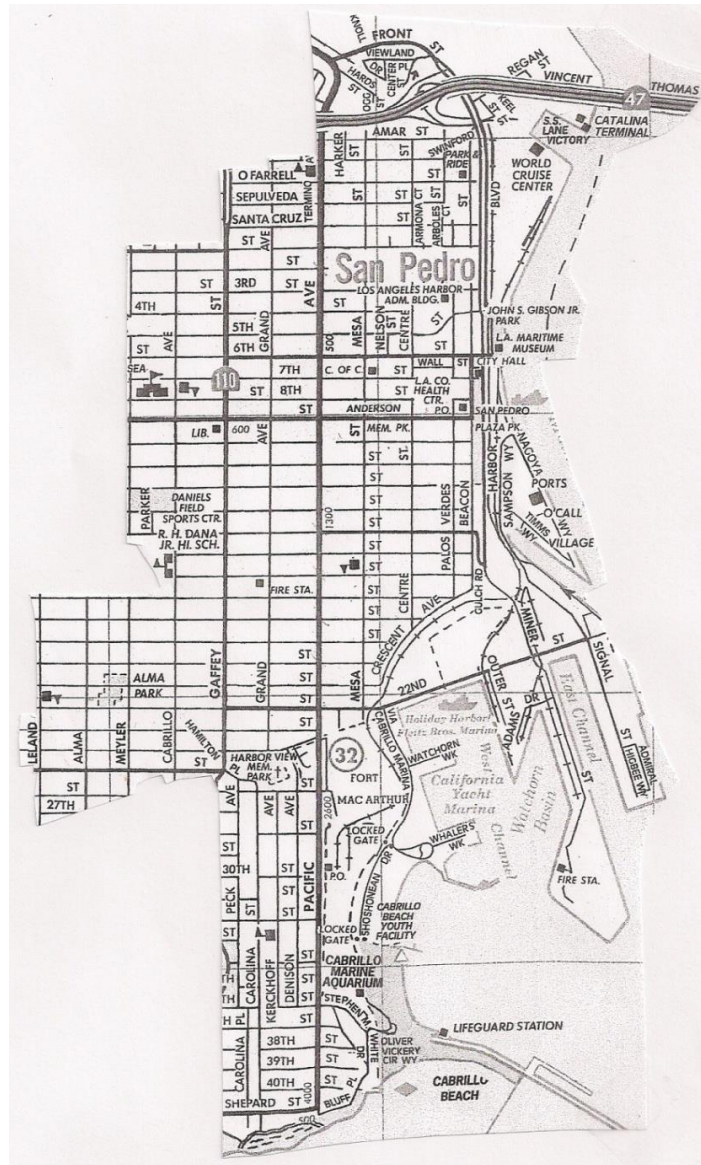
¹¹⁵ McKinzie, *Postcard History Series: San Pedro*, 41-43; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 79.

¹¹⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1907.

¹¹⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1907.

¹¹⁸ Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1903* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 113-118

¹¹⁹ McKinzie, *Postcard History Series: San Pedro*, 8; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 55-57.



*San Pedro city limits at consolidation
(From "Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, City Boundaries and Annexations")*

By early 1909 the idea of a borough arrangement had been replaced with simple consolidation. Opinion in San Pedro was split. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, consolidation had historically been opposed by "the hired agents and attorneys of corporations seeking monopoly of harbor privileges, all well-known if not notorious, petty office holders afraid of losing their jobs and their opportunities to profit by traffic in franchises, and the publishers of local newspapers enjoying the profits of public printing."¹²⁰

¹²⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 1907.

While hardly an objective view, it did indicate that there were a number of businesses that saw continued independence as preferable.

Among these were the saloon owners. They were fearful that a more stringent Los Angeles would reduce the number and limit the freedom of their enterprises. The supporters of consolidation were aware of this. In July of 1909, a month before the vote, Los Angeles assured San Pedro that it would be able to keep its saloons. The town had in place twelve saloon licenses, one license for wholesale liquor sales, and two licenses for restaurants to serve liquor. They would all remain valid if consolidation were to pass.¹²¹

The shifting position of the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce reflected the ambivalence of the business community. In December of 1908 the Chamber went on record in support of changes to state law that would ease the path to consolidation. But in January of 1909 it decided to stay neutral on the issue. It was simply too divisive. Yet, by April of 1909, sentiment had shifted, and the Chamber came out in favor of consolidation.¹²²

Partly out of fear that Wilmington would unite with Los Angeles against a still independent San Pedro, and partly out of the desire for improved city services, San Pedro voted in favor of consolidation. The vote took place on August 12, 1909, and the results were 726 in favor to 227 against. San Pedro eventually gained its improved harbor and the removal of control by the Southern Pacific Railroad. But the hoped-for continuation of some level of local governance did not materialize. This loss of autonomy was best symbolized in 1928 when city hall, just twenty-one years old, was demolished and replaced by a municipal office building with the name of the Mayor of Los Angeles engraved on the cornerstone.¹²³

Resources from Pre-Consolidation San Pedro

Unfortunately, many of the older sections of San Pedro have undergone major physical changes. First came work to level the topography. Most notable was the elimination of Nob Hill to the north of the original business district, an endeavor that began in 1907 and took several decades. This was followed in the 1970s by the Beacon Street Redevelopment Project. This urban renewal program covered a 12-block area along the old waterfront and eliminated the original business district.¹²⁴

During these urban renewal projects, buildings from the pre-consolidation period were sometimes moved or, more often, demolished. The result is that buildings from pre-consolidation San Pedro are rare. Only Vinegar Hill, a residential Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ), is well populated with them. As a result, there is little left that is associated with independent San Pedro's lively and diverse social life focused on Front Street or Happy Valley. The primary indications of diversity are the several

¹²¹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 14, 1909.

¹²² *Los Angeles Times*, December 27, 1908, January 24, 1909, April 21, 1909.

¹²³ Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, 117; *Los Angeles Times*, August 6, 1909, August 7, 1909, August 13, 1909, August 17, 1909; McKinzie, *Postcard History Series: San Pedro*, 43, 48-49.

¹²⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 1909, August 17, 1909; Silka, *San Pedro: A Pictorial History*, 79, 109-110.

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residences built and/or occupied by immigrants with maritime backgrounds and later occupations such as saloon-keeping.

Extant resources are significant under Criterion A/1/1. Some are also significant under Criterion B/2/2 for their association with important Individuals noted above. They include George Peck, James Dodson, Rudecinda Florencia Sepulveda de Dodson, Roman Sepulveda, and James Gaffey. Only Peck and the Dodsons are known to have extant resources from the pre-consolidation period.

There are three broad building categories associated with the community life of pre-consolidation San Pedro. They are institutional, commercial, and residential. The residential are most numerous. In addition to individual resources, there is the Vinegar Hill HPOZ, much of which was settled before 1909. Most of the resources mentioned individually are on Vinegar Hill (in a designated HPOZ), or were before relocation.

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT SAN PEDRO

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement and social history for its association with the early development history of San Pedro as an independent city prior to consolidation with Los Angeles. Resources from this time include residences, places of work, and sites for social life and are now rare.

Period of Significance: 1882-1909

Period of Significance Justification: San Pedro was platted as a town in 1882. San Pedro consolidated with Los Angeles in 1909.

Geographic Location: Within the 1909 city boundaries of San Pedro when it consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History

Criteria: NR: A/B CR: 1/2 Local: 1/2

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Residential-Single Family, House
Property Type: Commercial-Retail, Retail Store
Property Type: Institutional-Religious/Spiritual, Church
Property Type: Institutional-Government, City Hall/Administration

Note: Vinegar Hill HPOZ is the only known historic district associated with Pre-consolidation San Pedro. Vinegar Hill is already designated and, thus, eligibility standards have not been developed for this type.

Property Type Description: House: Domestic dwelling on a private lot
Retail Store: Facility for transacting commerce with general public
Church: Place of worship denoted by denomination
City Hall: Location for functions of city government

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are all significant under Criterion A/1/1. Buildings under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation San Pedro lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life. Some property types are also significant under Criterion B/2/2. Buildings under this criterion are directly related to significant individuals in pre-consolidation San Pedro in addition to illustrating how residents lived.

Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from the pre-consolidation period of San Pedro
- Is associated with the formation, settlement, and/or development of San Pedro

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- Under Criterion B/2/2, is directly associated with the productive life of an person who played an important role in the formation, settlement, and/or development of San Pedro
 - Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to the early settlement and development of San Pedro

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Related to the life of pre-consolidation San Pedro by showing how residents lived, worked, and socialized
- For residential properties (Criterion B/2/2) individual must have resided in the property during the period in which he or she achieved significance
- May be associated with groups or individual important in San Pedro's early ethnic/cultural history
 - Indicative of the diversity of San Pedro as a port city

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within San Pedro for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed
- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria

THEME: HOLLYWOOD, 1887-1910



*Hollywood Hotel, circa 1903
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Of all the pre-consolidation cities, Hollywood seems the most improbable. It had no apparent reason for a separate existence. It was not geographically isolated like Tujunga or Eagle Rock. It had no unique natural feature like the harbors of San Pedro or Wilmington. It had no anchoring institution like the amusement district of Venice, the Soldiers Home of Sawtelle, or even the circus of Barnes City.

Instead, from its beginning, independent Hollywood functioned like a somewhat distant neighborhood of Los Angeles. It portrayed itself as another Pasadena, but it lacked that suburb's strong economic base. In reality, Hollywood resembled more an affluent section like the West Adams district. Only its lack of a common boundary with Los Angeles, and its resort-like Hollywood Hotel, differentiated it from other well-off neighborhoods within the Los Angeles City limits.

Ambivalence toward independence was evident at the incorporation of Hollywood as a city in 1903. A sizable minority opposed incorporation, and a segment of the local leadership instead supported annexation to Los Angeles. Only the lack of a common border prevented this from occurring. In

October of 1909, a common border was finally achieved and just four months later, in January of 1910, Hollywood voted 409 to 18 in favor of consolidation. It seems as if Hollywood could not wait to give up its independence.

There is little left of institutional and commercial pre-consolidation Hollywood. The few business blocks remaining have been altered beyond recognition. There are, however, a good number of significant houses that have retained their integrity. They are scattered around the city, but are particularly concentrated on the short blocks abutting the hills north of Franklin between Western and Vine. These ample Craftsman-style homes provide a hint as to what pre-consolidation Hollywood must have been like.

Harvey Wilcox and the Creation of Hollywood

The first Hollywood was a failure. It was one of the many land speculation schemes to be found in Southern California during the late 1880s. Like most of them, Hollywood began with a great vision of itself and ended up as a vacant expanse of unsold lots. The only result was that the site gained a name and a potentially valuable railroad right-of-way along its proposed main thoroughfare.

This scheme was located in the so-called Frostless Belt of the Cahuenga Valley, considered ideal for citrus. But scarcity of water kept the Belt a district of traditional dry farming, with early landowners including John Gower, Colonel Griffith J. Griffith, for whom Griffith Park was named, and the Hancock family. The idea of placing a town here was that of Harvey Wilcox, generally considered the founder of Hollywood.¹²⁵ An experienced land promoter from Kansas, his goal, in the words of one historian, was the creation of “a god-fearing suburb with a country-club feel, with homeowners and a small commercial area to support them.”¹²⁶

By 1886 Wilcox was in possession of a large L-shaped tract of land. The base of the L ran from Whitley east to Gower and from Sunset north to Hollywood Boulevard. The upper arm of the L extended along Whitley as far east as Vine and from Hollywood Boulevard north to Franklin. On February 1, 1887, Wilcox filed a subdivision map for this property with the Los Angeles County Recorder. At the suggestion of his wife, he called the new subdivision Hollywood.¹²⁷

As part of his subdivision Wilcox created a broad east-west thoroughfare which he called Prospect Avenue. It is today’s Hollywood Boulevard. He also constructed the Cahuenga Valley Railroad, a narrow-gauge line that ran along Prospect and then continued on to Los Angeles. The line ran from First and Hoover at the western edge of Los Angeles, then along Beverly to Western, north on Western to

¹²⁵ Marc Wanamaker and Robert W. Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood* (Charleston SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 9.

¹²⁶ Paul Williams, *The Story of Hollywood: An Illustrated History* (n.p.: BL Press, 2005), 15.

¹²⁷ Bruce Torrence, *Hollywood: The First Hundred Years* (New York: Zoetrope, 1982), 25; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 19; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 14-15.

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Prospect, and west through the development, first terminating at Wilcox and later extending to Highland. For a while five trains daily made the commute.¹²⁸

In spite of the rail line, Hollywood failed. Between early 1887, when he filed his plat, until the middle of 1889, Wilcox went from optimism to desperation. Between July and October of 1887 he ran ads that boasted of Hollywood as the “future home of the wealthy,” with “cement sidewalks” and “an elegant hotel now being built.”¹²⁹ By the winter of 1888-1889 he was pleading for business. “I want money and will sell the most desirable property at a big sacrifice for a short time only.”¹³⁰ In March and April of 1889 he was offering a free pass for one year on the Cahuenga Valley railroad for anyone buying land and putting up improvements.¹³¹

By August of 1889 Wilcox gave up on making a success of Hollywood and sold a large block of his land to an investor named E. C. Hurd. One source, writing in the 1920s, maintains that in the end Wilcox managed to sell only two or three ten-acre plots and, once the boom ended, had to buy them back. Wilcox died soon after the end of the boom in March of 1891. However, ownership of a large portion of Hollywood land remained in the hands of the Wilcox family, specifically Harvey’s widow, Daeida Hartell Wilcox.¹³²

Emergence of the Citrus Culture

The Wilcox dream of Hollywood as a second Pasadena may have stalled. But another ideal took hold. That was the image of Hollywood as a second Redlands, a gentleman farmer community located about 60 miles east of Los Angeles. The district could develop as a citrus center for the wealthy, complete with palatial homes surrounded by lemon groves. Behind this was the work of E. C. Hurd. Earlier settlers had experimented with truck gardening and avocados. But Hurd was the most prominent of the entrepreneurs who established citrus as the signature crop of early Hollywood.¹³³

In March of 1890 he planted an orchard of Eureka lemons on his newly acquired land and also experimented with navel oranges. He then constructed in 1891 what the *Los Angeles Times* called with uncharacteristic restraint “a large house.”¹³⁴ It was a rambling two-story Queen Anne pile which stood on the northwest corner of Prospect and Wilcox. By 1892 he had established ten acres of orange and lemon groves.¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 16, 19; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 18.

¹²⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1887 to October 5, 1887.

¹³⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 1888 to March 22, 1889.

¹³¹ *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1889 to April 13, 1889.

¹³² Patricia Adler, *History of Hollywood* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles City Planning Department, 1968), 14; *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1891, August 4, 1889; Security Trust and Savings Bank, *In the Valley of the Cahuenga: The Story of Hollywood*, Sixth Edition (Los Angeles: Security Trust and Savings Bank, n.d. [c. 1925]), 15.

¹³³ Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 13.

¹³⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1891.

¹³⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1892; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 22.

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Necessary for a citrus culture to flourish, however, was water. Would-be growers drilled shallow wells driven by windmills and then deeper wells using gasoline-driven pumps. Several small dams went up in the nearby canyons. Yet local sources such as wells and canyon dams were not enough. Water had to be brought in from outside.¹³⁶



*View up Beachwood Canyon, circa 1900
The Henry Claussen house, with hipped roof, is upper-center left,
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

This was the goal of the West Los Angeles Water Company, incorporated in 1895. It obtained contracts for water purchases from landowners, and then began work on a system that would gather water from artesian wells west of Burbank and transport it via pipeline to Hollywood and surrounding areas. By June of 1897 the company had completed a line of pipe that ran through Burbank, crossed the Los

¹³⁶ Adler, *History of Hollywood*, 15; *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1892, March 19, 1892; William A. Myers and Ira L. Sweet, *Trolleys to the Surf: The Story of the Los Angeles Pacific Railway*, Interurban Special 63 (Glendale CA: Interurban Publications Inc., 1976), 34; Security Trust and Savings Bank, *In the Valley of the Cahuenga*, 18; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 17.

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Angeles River, and extended down present-day Los Feliz Boulevard to Hollywood and then on to the Soldiers' Home in Sawtelle.¹³⁷

This imported water, when combined with local sources, supported a flourishing citrus economy. Marketing the product was the Cahuenga Valley Lemon Growers Exchange, later renamed the Cahuenga Valley Lemon Association. It was a co-operative effort patterned after a similar organization in Ontario. The center of the exchange was a packing house on the corner of Cahuenga and Santa Monica Boulevard, completed in May of 1896 and located on the newly opened interurban rail line along Santa Monica Boulevard.¹³⁸

This citrus-centered Hollywood created for itself a number of community institutions. A school district dated from 1881 and a church from 1894. But they had to compete with two saloons. Martin Labaig operated the Six-Mile House on the northeast corner of Sunset and Gower. Across the street on the northwest corner was the Cahuenga House, also known as the Blondeau Tavern.¹³⁹

What passed for a commercial district was strung out along Cahuenga. The Hollywood Cash Grocery, at the northeast corner of Sunset and Cahuenga, and Sackett's Hotel and General Store, at the southwest corner of Prospect and Cahuenga, provided basic supplies. Sackett's Hotel served as a community gathering place and was selected as the location for Hollywood's first post office. It also was the location of a public telephone once service reached the area.¹⁴⁰

Buildings remaining from the citrus years are rare. One notable survivor is the house of Henry Claussen. Claussen was a German immigrant who owned land along lower Beachwood Canyon. In 1890 Claussen was successfully raising oranges. By the early 1890s the *Los Angeles Times* considered him to be one of the leading citizens of Cahuenga Township. He soon increased his holding to the point that by the early 1900s the land at the head of Gower Street, then the entrance to Beachwood Canyon, was known as Claussen Valley.¹⁴¹

The Claussen House still stands at 6112-16 Winans Drive. The date of construction is uncertain. One survey of the area's resources places it at 1880. The *Los Angeles Times* noted that Henry Claussen completed an eight-room residence on his property in November of 1895. Either date could be correct, based on the style of the structure.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Adler, *History of Hollywood*, 15, 16; *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 1896, September 15, 1896, June 10, 1897; Edwin O. Palmer, *History of Hollywood: Revised and Extended* (Hollywood: Edward O. Palmer Publisher, 1938), 89.

¹³⁸ Adler, *History of Hollywood*, 17; *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1895, April 20, 1896, October 20, 1899; Palmer, *History of Hollywood*, 98, 103-105.; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 37, 47.

¹³⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 1894; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 38-39; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 21, 24.

¹⁴⁰ Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 20, 22.

¹⁴¹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1893, July 4, 1907; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 14-15; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 17.

¹⁴² Hollywood Appendix, Office of Historic Resources, Los Angeles Department of Planning; *Los Angeles Times*, November 18, 1895. The County Assessor lists the construction date as 1922 and classifies the structure as a multi-



Claussen House (east elevation)
6112-16 Winans Drive
(Photo by author)

Currently the house faces north on Winans Drive. However, based on an historic photo, the front façade originally faced south. The house is a relatively simple four-square form, two stories in height with an exposed basement on the southeast corner. The walls are clapboard and the roof steeply hipped. The house itself is surrounded by a first-floor veranda that covered all four sides. Small gabled balconies on the second level sit on top of this veranda. Even though it has been converted into apartments, its exterior integrity appears generally intact.

A second structure related to the citrus culture is the Lasky-DeMille Barn. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a designated California Historical Landmark (No. 554), but for its later role in the motion picture business rather than for its original link to agricultural Hollywood. It was built around 1895 for citrus grower Robert Northham, and sold in 1904 to Jacob Stern. It stood on the southeast corner of Selma and Vine. The 1907 Sanborn Map shows it as a carriage and automobile service facility. In 1913, three years after consolidation, it was leased to Cecil B. DeMille and Jesse Lasky

family dwelling. The structure is clearly older than that, based on its design. Most likely the Assessor's date is the time of its remodeling from a single-family home into an apartment building.

for use as a studio. It has since been moved to a location near the Hollywood Bowl where it is part of the Hollywood Heritage Museum.¹⁴³

The Interurban Comes to Hollywood

By 1900 the settlement of Hollywood had a population of about 500. By then it contained three stores and two churches. Its school had 126 students. Hollywood appeared to be a stable agricultural settlement with a future in citrus.¹⁴⁴

The flaw in this self-image was the cost of imported water. The *Times* noted this in 1896. "It is evident that such rates can only be afforded by those who have small suburban places, and do not depend altogether upon horticulture for support." Because of this, "for increased growth the Cahuenga will have to depend upon suburban residents, rather than upon those who till the soil for a living."¹⁴⁵

The requirement for suburban development was an improved rail link to Los Angeles. The old Cahuenga Valley Railroad continued to function, albeit under various owners and with varying degrees of service. E. C. Hurd bought it in 1893, and extended it south on Highland to Sunset and then west to Laurel Canyon the next year. But it remained a narrow gauge single track line running sporadically.¹⁴⁶

All this changed when Moses Sherman and E. P. Clark bought the Cahuenga Valley in May of 1896. Sherman and Clark controlled the Los Angeles Pacific Railroad Company, a collection of electric interurban lines that served the west side, and saw the Cahuenga Valley as valuable for its right-of-way along Prospect Avenue. Regrading of the roadbed, laying of new track and electrification, began later that same year.¹⁴⁷

This improvement did not come without cost to Hollywood residents. Sherman and Clark would not complete the work until the locals contributed both land and cash. Three individuals, important in the history of independent Hollywood, led a drive to meet the demand. The first was Griffith J. Griffith. The second was H. J. Whitley, who became Hollywood's best known subdivider and marketer of building lots. The third was the widow of Harvey Wilcox, who had remarried and went by the name of Mrs. Philo J. Beveridge. Philo was placed in charge of obtaining the additional rights-of-way demanded by the railroad from sometimes recalcitrant property owners.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 33; Wikipedia entry for the Lasky-DeMille Barn, updated April 12, 2013; 1907 Sanborn Map.

¹⁴⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1900; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 9.

¹⁴⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 1896.

¹⁴⁶ *Los Angeles Pacific: Electric Railways of Hollywood and Santa Monica Bay Cities*, Interurban Special 18 (Los Angeles: Interurbans, 1955), 15; *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1893; Myers and Sweet, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 17.

¹⁴⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1892, May 30, 1896; Myers and Sweet, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 18; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 33.

¹⁴⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 1899, August 13, 1899, August 18, 1899, September 30, 1899, October 8, 1899, November 21, 1899, January 3, 1900, January 19, 1900, January 26, 1900.



*Prospect Avenue (Hollywood Boulevard) looking east from Gower Avenue, circa 1900
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The case for the interurban was put most bluntly by Griffith. He noted that, as agricultural land, Hollywood was worth around \$300 to \$500 per acre. But, if the interurban were built, “the next crop to be harvested will be home-seekers, the intellectual people of the Eastern states, who, by their improvements, will make its land worth, not \$500, but \$5000 per acre.”¹⁴⁹

By January of 1900 the locals had accomplished their task and the electric line was complete. It was at first a single track, narrow-gauge line, with hourly service to downtown Los Angeles. By June of 1900 service was increased to a car every half-hour. The line was soon made double-track. By October of 1902 cars were running every fifteen minutes. By the end of 1904 there was car service every ten minutes between 6:30 a.m. and 9:20 p.m. In 1905 the Hollywood Board of Trade maintained that the trip, under the right circumstances, could be made in thirty minutes.¹⁵⁰

The interurban line ran west, as well, and linked Hollywood to the beach. By 1905 cars from downtown reached Hollywood and then continued on to Santa Monica every half hour. This ride from Hollywood to the coast took around forty minutes. Hollywood was also a stop on the Balloon Route, an all-day

¹⁴⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 1899.

¹⁵⁰ Mary E. Crosswell, *The Story of Hollywood* (Hollywood: Hollywood Board of Trade, 1905), n.p. (29); *Lines of the Pacific Electric: Southern & Western Division*, Interurban Special 60, 1975, 74; *Los Angeles Pacific*, 36; *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1900, October 19, 1902, November 2, 1904.

tourist excursion that went from downtown Los Angeles to Hollywood, Santa Monica, Venice, Playa del Rey, and then back to Los Angeles. At each of these points, passengers could disembark and look at the local sites, which included, in Hollywood, real estate for sale.¹⁵¹

Together with the building of the interurban line came improvements to Prospect Avenue. As the single track was replaced with a double track, Prospect came to resemble a modern boulevard, with the rails down the center and lanes for wagons, carriages and, increasingly, automobiles on either side. The coming of the interurban and the improvements to Prospect Avenue led the *Los Angeles Times* to predict that Hollywood would become a “rival to the San Gabriel Valley as a location for affluent suburbs.”¹⁵²

H. J. Whitley and the Development of Suburban Hollywood

Harvey Wilcox is commonly considered the founder of Hollywood. E. C. Hurd can rightfully take credit for developing the citrus culture. But the individual most responsible for creating Hollywood as a successful suburb was Hobart Johnstone Whitley. He succeeded where Wilcox failed in selling both real estate and an ideal. According to the *Times* in 1902, “Mr. Whitley’s tireless efforts in this direction have led some to suggest that it would be appropriate to change the name of Hollywood to ‘Whitleyville.’”¹⁵³

H. J. Whitley, like Wilcox, had experience in real estate before coming to California. He had been a professional town-site promoter for the Rock Island and Northern Pacific Railroads prior to establishing a jewelry business in downtown Los Angeles. His first investment in Hollywood was a home for himself. In April of 1899 he purchased the Hurd house, on the northwest corner of Prospect and Wilcox, and the surrounding property for \$22,500. He added to it land purchased from the Hancock family further to the west. This gave Whitley 480 acres of land with frontage along the north side of Prospect from Wilcox to west of Sycamore.¹⁵⁴

There were three major subdivisions into which Whitley divided this property. The first was the land around his house, which he called the Whitley Home Tract.¹⁵⁵ In 1901 he and partner George W. Hoover announced that they would build three houses “of a character in keeping with the surroundings.”¹⁵⁶ Contracts were let a year later, in August of 1902.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Croswell, *The Story of Hollywood*, n.p. (29); *Los Angeles Times*, February 21, 1904.

¹⁵² *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1901.

¹⁵³ *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1902.

¹⁵⁴ Gaelyn Whitley Keith, *The Father of Hollywood* (Mustang OK: Taft Publishing, 2010), 127; *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1902; Cary McWilliams, *Southern California Country: An Island on the Land* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946), 133; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 28.

¹⁵⁵ Adler, *History of Hollywood*, 18.

¹⁵⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1901.

¹⁵⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1902.



Janes House
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 227
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

One of these houses is the Janes House, at 6541 Hollywood Boulevard (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 227). It was completed in 1903 and sold to H. N. Janes for \$10,000, gaining mention and a photo in the *Los Angeles Times*. The house is a somewhat monumental Queen Anne design, with touches of the Colonial Revival, by the architectural firm of Dennis and Farwell. Lyman Farwell had worked with McKim, Mead and White in New York before migrating to California. This firm was to do a lot of work in early Hollywood.¹⁵⁸

There is a second house that is also associated with Whitley's first endeavor. It actually may be another of the three noted in the *Times* announcement of 1901. This is the house at the rear of Whitley Court at 1720-1728 Whitley Avenue. It too was completed in 1903 and also designed by Dennis and Farwell for the Whitley family. Its style is similar to that of the Janes House. Its original position is shown on the east side of Whitley Avenue in the 1907 Sanborn Map of Hollywood. In 1919 it was moved to the rear of the lot and the four Dutch Colonial Revival buildings of Whitley Court constructed in front. The entire ensemble is an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, No. 448.¹⁵⁹

Whitley's second subdivision, the Ocean View Tract, was much larger in scope. It stretched north of Prospect from Whitley to west of Sycamore and consisted of about 300 acres. Whitley subdivided this

¹⁵⁸ David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, Revised Edition (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2003), 181; *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1903; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 68; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 14.

¹⁵⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1982; 1907 Sanborn Map.

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tract through the Los Angeles Pacific Boulevard and Development Company, created in the fall of 1901. Other investors in the company included Sherman and Clark of the Los Angeles Pacific Railway, Harrison Gray Otis of the *Los Angeles Times*, and George Hoover, Whitley's partner from the Janes House construction. But Whitley remained the financial head and principal stockholder.¹⁶⁰



*View from Whitley Heights toward the southwest, circa 1905
Intersection of Highland and Franklin in foreground the and the Ocean View Tract beyond
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

In December of 1901 subdividing began. Lots were placed on the market in March of 1902. They ranged from one-half to eight and one-half acres in size, and the entire tract was serviced with electricity and water. It featured graded and graveled streets with gutters, concrete curbs and sidewalks. Housing was restricted to single family only, and no dwelling could cost less than \$3000. Less than a year later, in January of 1903, 185 lots had been sold, about 50 houses completed, and around 200 residents lived in the tract. Sometime between the end of 1904 and the beginning of 1905, according to the *Times*, the tract was said to have been sold out.¹⁶¹

Lots were marketed in the traditional ways of Los Angeles real estate. Cary McWilliams, in *Southern California Country*, provides a description. A special excursion of interurban cars travelled to Hollywood on May 3, 1903, where passengers were greeted by flags, a brass band, and speeches by Sherman, Clark, and Harry Chandler, Otis's son-in-law. McWilliams maintains that, in preparing for this visit, Whitley

¹⁶⁰ Keith, *The Father of Hollywood*, 136-137, 215; *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1902, April 3, 1904.

¹⁶¹ Keith, *The Father of Hollywood*, 139; *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1901; March 30, 1902; January 11, 1903; April 3, 1904; February 4, 1905.; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 43; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 44.

placed SOLD signs on unsold lots and dumped loads of building materials to make it appear that construction was underway.¹⁶²

The third of Whitley's major real estate tracts was Whitley Heights, registered with the county in June of 1903. It was situated in the hill district to the north of the Whitley Home Tract (north of Franklin) and to the east of the Ocean View Tract (east of Highland). The northeastern edge was Cahuenga. (Whitley Heights is now bisected by the Hollywood Freeway.) Within this area Whitley laid out the serpentine path of what are now Whitley Terrace and the upper part of Whitley Avenue. A visit to the tract soon became a stop on the interurban's Balloon Route. However, it remained generally undeveloped until after the First World War.¹⁶³

Beginning in 1906 Whitley began to take a less visible role in Hollywood affairs. He sold his house on Prospect Avenue and shifted his attention to the San Fernando Valley, where he worked with Otis and Chandler.¹⁶⁴ But Whitley's endeavors north of Prospect remained his primary legacy, with the *Times* stating in 1908 that "it is largely due to his investments and efforts that Hollywood is today one of the most beautiful and best built suburbs of Los Angeles."¹⁶⁵

Hollywood Becomes a City

By 1903 Hollywood felt itself ready to incorporate as a city. It had about 1100 inhabitants within its proposed boundaries. These were established, with a few salients, along Fountain to the south, Normandie to the east, and Fairfax to the west. The northern boundary extended far into the undeveloped hills. (These were to be the same boundaries at the time of consolidation seven years later.)¹⁶⁶ The city limits were drawn, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, so as to include only the "choice district" in which most of the streets had already been graded.¹⁶⁷ "The territory to be included consists of the best portions of Hollywood" and excluded the supposedly less desirable portions to the south and east.¹⁶⁸

Proponents of incorporation campaigned on a platform of three planks. The first was better roads. The second was more schools. The third was the imposition of prohibition. But support for incorporation was far from unanimous, with fear of higher taxes feeding objections. Whitley, his partner Hoover, and the Hollywood Board of Trade were in favor. Philo Beveridge, the husband of Wilcox's widow, was against it, as was the *Los Angeles Times*. Beveridge noted that small cities of the sixth class elsewhere in California were generally worse off than they would have been had they joined with larger cities.

¹⁶² McWilliams, *Southern California Country*, 133.

¹⁶³ Keith, *The Father of Hollywood*, 215; *Los Angeles Times*, February 21, 1904; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 43.

¹⁶⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1906; October 18, 1908; Andrew Rolle, *Los Angeles: From Pueblo to City of the Future*, Revised and Expanded Second Edition (Sacramento: MTL, 1995), 55.

¹⁶⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1908.

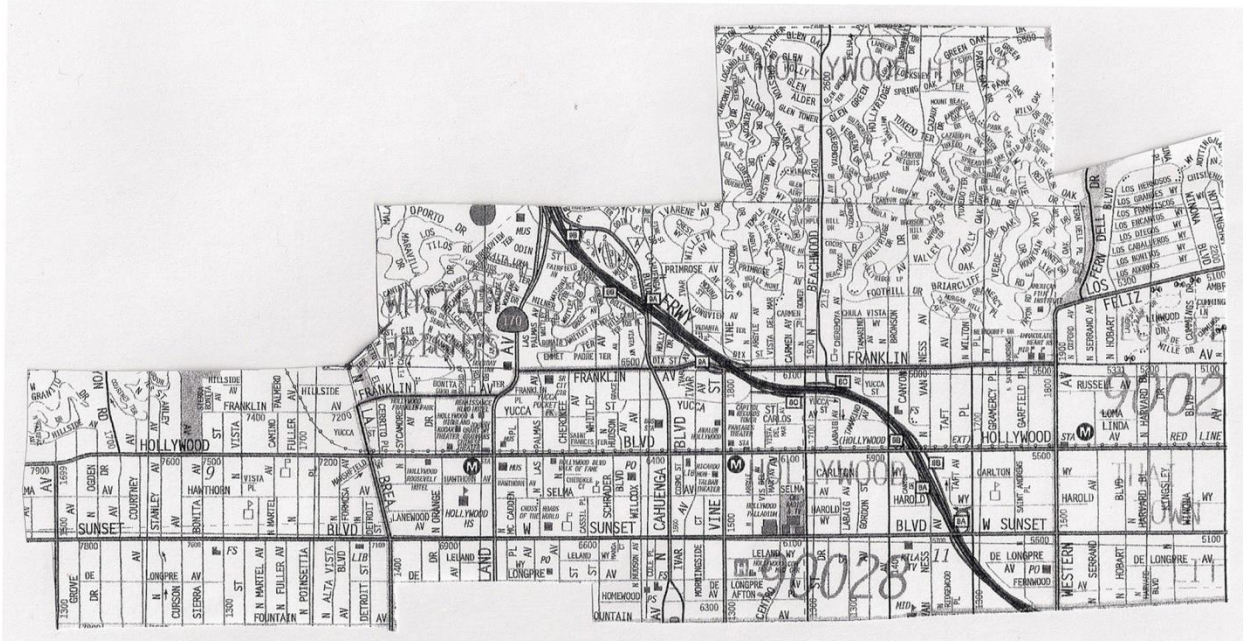
¹⁶⁶ Palmer, *History of Hollywood*, map between 128-129.

¹⁶⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 1903.

¹⁶⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1903.

Instead of incorporating, Hollywood should wait two or three years and then combine with Los Angeles, once the larger city had expanded to reach it.¹⁶⁹

The vote on incorporation, held in November of 1903, was fairly close. Those in favor of incorporation made up about 53 percent. Most likely the ability of an independent Hollywood to enact prohibition was the deciding factor. Dry sentiment had long been strong in Hollywood. Wilcox had been a Prohibitionist, and Whitley placed limits on alcohol in his developments. The members of the new city's Board of Trustees, selected in the incorporation election, ran on a Temperance platform.¹⁷⁰



*Hollywood city limits at incorporation and consolidation
(From “Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, City Boundaries and Annexations”)*

The new city voted for Prohibition in a referendum in January of 1904 and the Board of Trustees soon acted. In March of 1904 it passed an ordinance making public drunkenness a crime. That same month it voted to outlaw blind pigs, or illicit saloons, and to appoint a city marshal with primary responsibility for enforcing the ordinance. A 1905 booster brochure put out by the Board of Trade listed the highlights of “Hollywood – The City of Homes” and stated in large capitalized bold print **NO SALOONS**.¹⁷¹

By early 1905 Hollywood's population had reached an estimated 2000. Along with this growth came a concern for improved infrastructure. Within a few years of its incorporation, the young city provided

¹⁶⁹ Keith, *The Father of Hollywood*, 177-178; *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1903; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 47.

¹⁷⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1903, December 22, 1903; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 25, 43, 49.

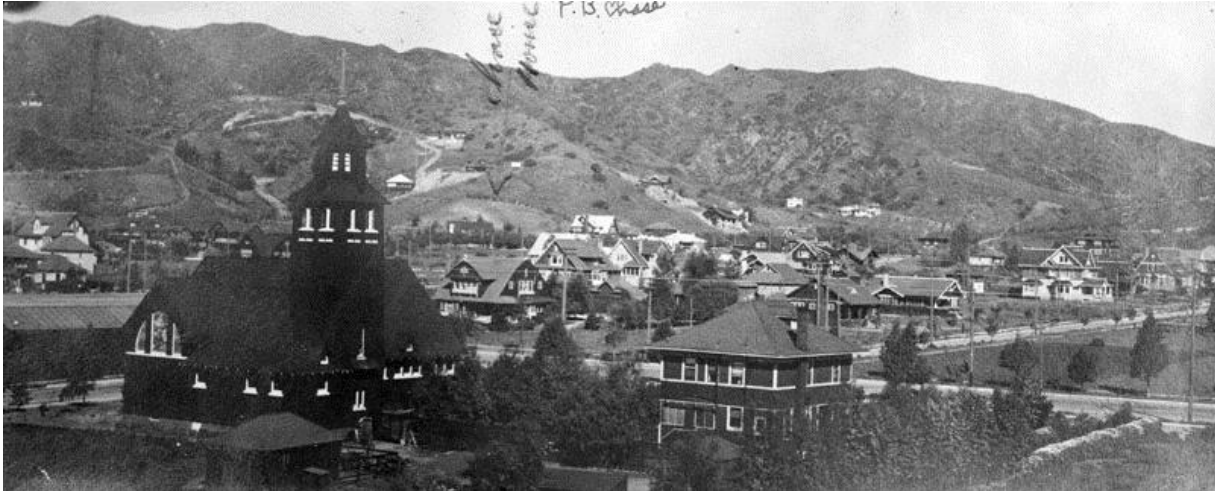
¹⁷¹ Croswell, *The Story of Hollywood*, n.p. (29); *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 1904, March 8, 1904, March 11, 1904; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 49-50.

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just about all of the expected services of a modern suburb: water, gas, electricity, and telephones. Only the lack of a sewer system prevented it from offering all the advantages of living in the big city.¹⁷²

It also managed to improve the main routes of Prospect, Sunset, Highland, and Cahuenga, while the less-trafficked residential streets were graded and often oiled by subdividers. By 1909, on the eve of consolidation, Prospect had received its first surface of hard paving. Only Sunset outside the limits of the new city, as it headed to the southeast toward Los Angeles, remained unsatisfactory.¹⁷³



*View toward the northwest near Prospect (Hollywood Boulevard) and Cherokee, circa 1905
Roman Catholic Church of the Blessed Sacrament in the foreground
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The new city also established churches, as befitting its sedate suburban self-image. The Christian Church predated the coming of the interurban. The Methodist Church and the Methodist Church South built in 1903, as did the Episcopal Church. The Roman Catholics constructed their church in 1904. The Baptists had a small chapel by 1908 and the Presbyterians possessed a new church in 1909. They are all gone.¹⁷⁴

Schools were also of prime importance for a culturally-elevated suburban community. Improving the public school system was one of the reasons that Hollywood incorporated. By the time of consolidation Hollywood had three grammar schools and a high school. None of the pre-consolidation structures have survived. It also had, somewhat distant from the center of population but still within the city limits, the Immaculate Heart Convent and school for girls, on the northwest corner of Franklin and Western. The institution still exists but the pre-consolidation building is gone.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Keith, *The Father of Hollywood*, 215; *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1902, July 1, 1902, December 6, 1903, April 3, 1904, February 4, 1905, April 13, 1905; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 43.

¹⁷³ *Los Angeles Times*, December 29, 1903, February 4, 1905, March 5, 1907, November 3, 1907, August 18, 1909, November 22, 1909; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 45.

¹⁷⁴ Torrence, *Hollywood*, 52; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 38-39.

¹⁷⁵ Torrence, *Hollywood*, 52; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 26.

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Hollywood gained its Carnegie Library, yet another requirement for a quality suburb, in 1907. Designed by Marsh and Russell, the firm responsible for Abbot Kinney's Venice-of-America, it was an English Tudor composition complete with an asymmetrically detailed façade, half-timbering, and a steep gabled roof. It occupied the northwest corner of Prospect and Ivar. It too no longer exists.¹⁷⁶

Compared to its Carnegie Library, the Hollywood City Hall was the least monumental of buildings. It was actually not much more than a modest bungalow, constructed on land donated by the Beveridge family on the west side of Cahuenga, between Prospect and Selma. It was seen as temporary when it was built in 1904. It also is gone.¹⁷⁷

By the time of consolidation in early 1910 Hollywood had just about completed its infrastructure. The city had installed one hundred fire hydrants and contracted for forty more. It had put in place five hundred incandescent street lamps. The water company had changed its name in 1906 to the Union Hollywood Water Company to acknowledge the importance of the city as a base for customers.¹⁷⁸

Business in Hollywood

Hollywood marketed itself as a suburban residential community. But, considering its relative isolation, it required a minimal business district to serve its residents. It actually developed two. One was the intersection of Prospect and Highland. The other was the intersection of Prospect and Cahuenga. Separating the two was Prospect Avenue, the north side of which was generally limited to residential use only. As one historian writing in the 1930s noted, "Thus the village was divided into two ambitious business centers by a strip of a half-mile of restricted territory through which ran the only common carrier of the town."¹⁷⁹

Highland at Prospect was the more impressive. The development of Highland into a business district was part of Whitley's plan for the Ocean View Tract, and he made sure that there was a monumental edifice to attract attention. This was the forty-room Hollywood Hotel, on the northwest corner. It was built by George Hoover, Whitley's partner in the Ocean View Tract, in a Mission Revival-Craftsman style to plans by Dennis and Farwell, the architects of the Janes House. It opened in 1903 and became the social center of the new Hollywood.¹⁸⁰

The Hollywood Hotel was enlarged 1905, when Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey added 104 rooms. The resulting rambling establishment took up the frontage along a full block of Prospect from Highland west

¹⁷⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, July 15, 1906; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 28.

¹⁷⁷ Torrence, *Hollywood*, 62; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 30; 1907 Sanborn Map.

¹⁷⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, August 23, 1906, November 22, 1909.

¹⁷⁹ Palmer, *History of Hollywood*, 117.

¹⁸⁰ Keith, *The Father of Hollywood*, 138; *Los Angeles Times*, June 8, 1902, June 22, 1902; Palmer, *History of Hollywood*, 108; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 43; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 56.

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to Olive (no longer in existence). The hotel continued as a center for social life long after consolidation and was not demolished until 1956.¹⁸¹



*Enlarged Hollywood Hotel, circa 1905
Original portion is at the far right
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Along with the hotel, the intersection was anchored by the Bank of Hollywood, incorporated in August of 1902 and including Whitley, Hoover, and Griffith among its directors. It was first housed in a Dennis-and-Farwell-designed building on the east side of Highland, about seventy-five feet north of Prospect. By 1906 it had moved to a new home on the northeast corner of Prospect and Highland. By 1907 three of the four corners of the intersection were filled.¹⁸²

In competition with Whitley's business district along Highland was the second district along Cahuenga. This was the creation of the Beveridge family. In 1905 the family completed the Wilcox Building, named in honor of Mrs. Beveridge's first husband. It contained, along with its first-floor storefronts, an assembly space and quarters for the Hollywood Club on the second floor. It also contained Hollywood's second bank. This was the Hollywood National Bank, organized in 1905. Associated with it was the Citizens Savings Bank.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ *Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 1906, January 1, 1907, Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 56; 1907 Sanborn Map.

¹⁸² Keith, *The Father of Hollywood*, 138; *Los Angeles Times*, September 21, 1902, June 25, 1906; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 67; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 36-37; 1907 Sanborn Map.

¹⁸³ *Los Angeles Times*, November 13, 1904, March 14, 1906; Palmer, *History of Hollywood*, 72; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 46; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 29.

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By 1907 the Wilcox Building had been joined by a pair of adjoining and matching two-storefront business blocks directly to the south on Cahuenga, and a three-storefront block directly to the east on Prospect. Still functioning was the Sackett Hotel on the southwest corner. While not as impressive as the Whitley center on Highland, with its Hollywood Hotel as the anchor, the Cahuenga district symbolized the position of the Wilcox-Beveridge family.¹⁸⁴

Interspersed elsewhere in Hollywood were individual businesses which required more space and were less pleasing to the senses. In 1907 the Hollywood Fuel and Feed Yard was on the east side of Cahuenga just north of the intersection with Sunset. The Sunset Livery and an adjacent garage for the ever-more-popular automobile were on the south side of Sunset facing Cahuenga. (Cahuenga south of Sunset jogged to the east prior to consolidation.) A carriage and motor car facility occupied the southeast corner of Vine and Selma. A billiards parlor and bowling alley operated among residences on the east side of Ivar halfway between Prospect and Ocean View (today's Yucca).¹⁸⁵

A contentious issue was the placing of businesses along Prospect Avenue. Whitley wanted to maintain Prospect as a boulevard of elegant homes. Whitley's own house, the former Hurd mansion, and the Janes House were what he had in mind. He was partially successful. In 1907 non-residential construction on the north side was limited to Whitley's bank, the Hollywood Hotel, the Public Library and a single office in a tiny cottage set back from the street, most likely for real estate sales. But the south side of Prospect was a different matter. By 1907 it contained a lumber yard, a freight shed, and rail yard served by a spur off the interurban line, three churches, and a skating rink.¹⁸⁶

There are few business structures remaining from pre-consolidation Hollywood. None has maintained its architectural integrity. There are two structures which, although greatly altered, have maintained their overall massing and pattern of fenestration. One is the automobile garage from 1909 at 6422 Selma Avenue. It still has its overall form with a gabled parapet, corner piers, and three-bay façade.¹⁸⁷

The other is the two-story business block at 1632-1638 Cahuenga. It was built in 1905 as part of the commercial cluster around the Beveridge-financed Wilcox Building, and first altered in 1925. The building still maintains its original pattern of two storefronts separated by a stairway serving the second floor, and also what appears to be its second floor pattern of fenestration. The adjoining structure to the north at 1640 Cahuenga was originally identical and built at the same time. While maintaining its second floor pattern of fenestration, it has completely lost its first-floor arrangement of storefronts separated by a stairway.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 29; 1907 Sanborn Map for Hollywood.

¹⁸⁵ 1907 Sanborn Map.

¹⁸⁶ 1907 Sanborn Map.

¹⁸⁷ The garage is called out in *Historic Resources Survey, Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area*, prepared by Chattel Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Inc., for the Community Redevelopment Agency (February 2010).

¹⁸⁸ Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 29; 1907 Sanborn Map.



Business Block
1632-1638 Cahuenga Boulevard
(Photo by author)

Even with the development of the two business districts and the growing number of scattered businesses throughout the city, Hollywood remained an overwhelmingly residential community. Its businesses merely served its residents. On the eve of consolidation, the *Los Angeles Times* made a point of this. “What Pasadena is to the northeast, Hollywood is to the northwest of the City of the Angels – with one important difference. Pasadena, with its mansions of the rich, has also a large commercial development, while Hollywood has become essentially a city of beautiful homes. Its residents, except for a few shop-keepers and agents, have their businesses in the city.”¹⁸⁹

Rail Improvements on the Eve of Consolidation

With its single interurban route down the center of Prospect Avenue, Hollywood’s original relationship to Los Angeles was much like that of a commuter suburb to a central city. This relationship changed, however, in the years just before consolidation. Improvements to the Prospect Avenue line, and construction of two additional lines, connected Hollywood more closely both to Los Angeles and to the growing communities surrounding it. Hollywood became more like a close-in neighborhood of the larger city. The population growth that came with the improved interurban service threatened to

¹⁸⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1909.

overwhelm the little city, and made consolidation attractive even to those who had previously opposed it.

Both of the additional lines began operation in 1908. To the west was the Highland line. It was the first part of the railroad's planned extension through the Cahuenga Pass and into the San Fernando Valley. Track was laid in Hollywood and the unincorporated territory to the south. It quickly reached Highland's intersection with Santa Monica Boulevard and service began in January of 1908. By the next year, 1909, service went as far north as the current location of the Hollywood Bowl. Along with the installation of the track came improvements to Highland itself.¹⁹⁰

The other new route was the Western-Franklin line. It began at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and Western, extended up Western to Franklin, turned west on Franklin and ran to today's Argyle. It then curved southwest to Vine, and then south to Prospect. The Western-Franklin line provided service to the eastern and northeastern sections of Hollywood. The new line initially provided passenger service along a single-track narrow gauge route beginning in early 1908, with one car operating at half-hour intervals to Santa Monica Boulevard.¹⁹¹

In addition to these two new lines, Hollywood saw a major improvement to its original line running down the center of Prospect Avenue. This improvement was the opening of the Hill Street tunnels in 1909. They eliminated the need to detour around Bunker Hill. Along with this improvement came upgrading of the track from streetcar to standard railroad gauge. This allowed of the use of larger and faster cars. The *Los Angeles Times*, optimistic as always, predicted that the travel time from Hollywood to downtown Los Angeles would be reduced from thirty-five minutes to a mere twenty. The improvements actually cut about twelve minutes from the commute.¹⁹²

Suburban Residential Hollywood

Hollywood presented an image of itself as a second Pasadena. At the same time, particularly in its southern and western sections, it resembled, perhaps more than it wanted to admit, the typical streetcar neighborhood of the day. Relatively small bungalows occupied narrow lots, interspersed, here and there, with the occasional apartment house.

This variety was typical of the districts outside of the Whitley tracts. The areas to the east and south of the Whitley projects were subdivided by a number of smaller developers, each taking responsibility for

¹⁹⁰ *Lines of the Pacific Electric*, 92; *Los Angeles Pacific*, 25, 55; *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1908, September 23, 1909;

¹⁹¹ *Lines of the Pacific Electric*, 84; *Los Angeles Pacific*, 25; Myers and Sweet, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 62, 64.

¹⁹² *Los Angeles Pacific*, 57; *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1909, September 24, 1909; Myers and Sweet, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 22, 27, 31, 62; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 59; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 29. The Hill Street tunnels, often referred to at the time as the Hollywood Tunnel, were separate from the tunnels constructed in the 1920s by the Pacific Electric system that extended outward from its Subway Terminal Building.

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laying streets and delineating lots. Typically, they, like Whitley, sold only the land, and left it to the owner to find a contractor and construct a house. By 1907 the city required building permits, but municipal land use and design controls remained loose. Instead the city relied upon restrictions included in the individual deeds of the subdivisions.¹⁹³

Construction of suburban-style houses began soon after the interurban started regular service along Prospect Avenue in 1900, and there was a bit of a building boom for a few years. The pace had slowed by 1908, but picked up again on the eve of consolidation. The opening of the new Highland and Western-Franklin car lines and the improved service along Prospect Boulevard most likely was the cause. The eve of consolidation also saw the coming to Hollywood of developers who would both sell a lot and construct a house.¹⁹⁴

There are a number of residences remaining which illustrate the variety of forms present in suburban Hollywood. They can best be categorized by scale. The first group consists of the estates and mansions of the very well off. The second are the generous homes of the upper-middle class. The third are the more modest bungalows of the working and lower-middle class. Together they illustrate the range of social groups that made up Hollywood during its brief period as an independent suburb.

Estates for the very well off are represented by two landmarks. The first is the Wattles Mansion on the Wattles Estate at 1824-1850 North Curson Avenue (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 579). The Mansion is a two-story Italianate structure designed by Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey, the Pasadena-based architects of the addition to the nearby Hollywood Hotel. It was built in 1907 by a wealthy Omaha banker, Gordon Wattles, as his winter home.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Keith, *The Father of Hollywood*, 215; *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 1903, March 22, 1903, January 10, 1904, September 25, 1904, July 27, 1907, September 27, 1908

¹⁹⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1908; January 6, 1909; November 7, 1909.

¹⁹⁵ Jeffrey Hart, editor, *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, 2002), 145, 468.



Wattles Mansion

L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 579

(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

The second is known today as the Magic Castle at 7001 Franklin Avenue (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 406). It was originally built in 1909 as a home for Rollin Lane, a banker, real estate developer and philanthropist. Like so many other buildings in pre-consolidation Hollywood, it was designed by Dennis and Farwell. It is in the Chateausque style and was patterned after the 1897 Kimberly Crest House in Redlands.¹⁹⁶

Generous homes for the upper-middle class were typical of those to be found in the fashionable suburban neighborhoods of the day. They were generally two-stories in scale and in the sprawling relaxed forms of either the Craftsman or a loosely interpreted Colonial Revival style. Extant examples tend to be concentrated in the northern and eastern section of pre-consolidation Hollywood, north of Franklin Avenue or east of Wilton Place.

There are three landmarks that typify the upper-middle residence. Both the Dunning House at 5522 Carlton Way (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 441) from 1905 and the Tornborg House at 1918 North Tamarind Avenue (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 687) from 1907 are in the Craftsman style. The Toberman House at 1749 North Harvard Drive (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 769) from 1907 is in a somewhat free version of the Colonial Revival by ever-active architects Dennis and Farwell. It is notable as well for its owner. James R. Toberman served as mayor of Los Angeles from 1872 to 1874 and again from 1878 to 1882.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Hart, *Landmark L.A.*, 136, 454.

¹⁹⁷ Hart, *Landmark L.A.*, 137, 154, 457, 476; “Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments,” LosAngelesMonumental.Blogspot.com; *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1904, June 7, 1904, September 5, 1906, July 14, 1907.



Toberman House

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, No. 769
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

An upper-middle class area to develop late was that opened up by the Franklin Avenue car line. Of particular significance are a number of residences located north of Franklin between Canyon Drive on the west and St. Andrews Place on the east. Most are from 1909, the last year of Hollywood's independence. A good example is 1937 Gramercy Place. Built in 1909, it is a Chalet form oriented away from the street and toward the view to the south.



Residence

*1937 Gramercy Place
(Photo by author)*

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More modest homes for the working and lower-middle classes are variations of the bungalow form, either single story or with a second level served by a dormer. They are on relatively small lots and tend to be located in the southern and southwestern sections of pre-consolidation Hollywood. A good example is 6008 Carlton from 1908. While not necessarily individually significant themselves, bungalows of this type in clusters create significant historic districts.



*Residence
6008 Carlton Way
(Photo by author)*

Independent Hollywood liked to present itself as a community of single-family homes. Generally this was true, particularly for the Whitley developments north of Prospect and west of Cahuenga. But the 1907 Sanborn map shows that, here and there, multi-family dwellings were beginning to appear. Sited on the east side of Vine, one-half block north of Prospect, was the Marjorie Apartments. South of Prospect, between Highland and Cahuenga, were a handful of individual structures simply identified as “flats.” One was on the west side of Dakota (now McCadden) just south of Prospect, another on the northwest corner of Selma and Eulalie (now Cherokee), and two more on Highland between Selma and Sunset.

Consolidation

At the end of 1909 Hollywood had about 5000 residents. It seemed to be a success as a community. Yet it was ready, even eager, to give up its status as an independent suburb and join Los Angeles. This was in part because it needed to. It required access to services such as water and especially sewer that only Los Angeles could offer. But it was also because, finally, it could. The boundaries of the two cities met in 1909 and consolidation was now legally possible.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ Security Trust and Savings Bank, *In the Valley of the Cahuenga*, 31; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 9; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 53.

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Suburban Hollywood had, from its beginning, a significant proportion of its population that wanted to be part of Los Angeles. They gained support as the need for a dependable water supply became apparent. The solution was the proposed Los Angeles Aqueduct. A more urgent problem was the city's lack of a sewer system. Landlocked Hollywood, dependent upon cesspools and honey wagons, needed a connection to the Los Angeles outfall sewer, a connection that could only come with consolidation.¹⁹⁹

Yet, so long as there remained an unincorporated gap between Hollywood and Los Angeles, consolidation was impossible. Finally, in October of 1909, the unincorporated Colegrove district to the south of Hollywood annexed to Los Angeles. Hollywood finally had its common border with Los Angeles. Within weeks Los Angeles approved a Hollywood attachment to its outfall sewer if consolidation were to occur. Matters then moved swiftly.²⁰⁰

In January of 1910 Hollywood voted 409 to 18 to consolidate with Los Angeles. What made consolidation acceptable to the vast majority was that the local ban on the sale of alcohol would, at least for the time being, remain in effect. Consolidation became official on February 7 and Hollywood as an independent city ceased to exist. One of the last things that the Board of Trustees did before it disbanded was to change the name of Prospect Avenue to Hollywood Boulevard.²⁰¹

Conclusion

The first years of post-consolidation Hollywood were architecturally a continuation of the final years of independence. This is particularly true for residential construction. The trends of the last years of independence simply accelerated. Gracious sprawling Craftsman-style homes went up along the blocks above Franklin such as Wilton and Gramercy. Further to the south and west, stretches of new bungalows provided housing for the working and middle classes. Some blocks, such as the east side of Curson between Sunset and Hollywood Boulevard, are still filled with bungalows built between 1910 and 1919.

The architectural line between the old Hollywood and the Hollywood of later fame is more accurately the years of the First World War. It was in the early twenties, when construction resumed after a war-imposed lull, that Hollywood Boulevard began its transformation into a commercial street of truly urban scale. It was also during these years that the motion picture companies moved from their original modest settings, often in converted barns, into large-scale studio and office facilities. And it was during these years that the multi-story urban apartment house became the new norm for blocks near Hollywood Boulevard, while construction of single family dwellings moved from the relatively flat areas to the under-populated Whitley Heights and the newly opened Hollywoodland. A stylistic switch from Craftsman to Spanish Colonial and other revival styles marked the break.

¹⁹⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1903, August 13, 1905; September 3, 1905; November 20, 1909.

²⁰⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1909, November 16, 1909; Torrence, *Hollywood*, 56; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 54.

²⁰¹ *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1910; Wanamaker and Nudelman, *Images of America: Early Hollywood*, 65; Williams, *Story of Hollywood*, 54.

It is hard to imagine, given today's Hollywood, what the pre-consolidation city was like. However, certain streets off the major thoroughfares provide hints. Wilton Place north of Franklin retains much of its earlier upper-middle class graciousness. South of Hollywood Boulevard, a street such as Carlton Way between Gower and Gordon, with its cluster of bungalows, gives a flavor of the more modest neighborhoods.

Resources from Pre-Consolidation Hollywood

Because consolidation was made official on February 7, 1910, the theme considers only resources built in 1909 or earlier. Most of what is commonly known as the Hollywood Hills was contained within the boundaries of independent Hollywood but was laid out after consolidation.

Extant resources are considered Criterion A/1/1. Some of these A/1/1 resources are also significant under Criterion B/2/2. One individual warranting Criterion B status is H. J. Whitley. There are a number of resources linked to him and discussed above. Three other individuals, Harvey Wilcox, his widow Daeida Wilcox Beveridge, and her second husband Philo Beveridge, are also significant. At this point no resources related to them are known to remain.

Also worthy of significance under Criterion C/3/3 is the architectural firm of Dennis and Farwell. Preliminary research indicates that they were probably the pre-eminent architectural firm in pre-consolidation Hollywood. Numerous extant resources associated with this firm are noted above. Resources associated with the firm would be evaluated under the "Architecture and Engineering" context.

Non-residential resources from pre-consolidation Hollywood are extremely rare. The few that have survived have been altered to the point that they no longer retain integrity. Residential resources have fared better. There are a fair number with integrity scattered throughout pre-consolidation Hollywood.

There are two City-designated Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs) within the boundaries of pre-consolidation Hollywood. One is the Hollywood Grove HPOZ. Although under consideration for expansion, it currently covers the block north of Franklin and includes Canyon Drive, Van Ness Avenue, Taft Avenue, Wilton Place, Gramercy Place, and St. Andrews Place. It contains a number of significant pre-consolidation residential resources. The other is the Whitley Heights HPOZ. Although it was laid out during the pre-consolidation years, it is significant primarily for its Spanish Colonial Revival style houses that date from the 1918-1928 period.²⁰²

Bungalows from the pre-consolidation period can best be considered as part of a district. One such district has been identified in the 6000 block of Carlton Way. Five bungalows on the south side of the street as contributing to a potential district. Four of the five date from pre-consolidation Hollywood

²⁰² Whitley Heights HPOZ Preservation Plan, Office of Historic Preservation, City of Los Angeles.

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(listed in the California Register through the Section 106 Review process, 1994). They are 6000 Carlton (909), 6008 Carlton (1908) 6012 Carlton (1908), and 6016-18 Carlton (1907). The other, 6004 Carlton, dates from 1910.

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT HOLLYWOOD

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement and social history for its association with the early development history of Hollywood as an independent city prior to consolidation with Los Angeles. Resources include residences, places of work, and sites for social life and are increasingly rare.

Period of Significance: 1887-1910

Period of Significance Justification: Hollywood was platted as a subdivision in 1887. Hollywood consolidated with Los Angeles in 1910.

Geographic Location: Within the 1910 city boundaries of Hollywood when it consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History

Criteria: NR: A/B CR: 1/2 Local: 1/2

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Residential Single Family, Bungalow
Property Type: Residential Single Family, House
Property Type: Residential Suburb, Streetcar Suburb
Property Type: Commercial/Retail, Retail Store

Property Type Description: Bungalow: Domestic dwelling on a private lot, generally modest in size, single-story in height
House: Domestic dwelling on a private lot, generally two or more stories in height
Retail Store: Facility for transacting commerce with general public

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are all significant under Criterion A/1/1. Buildings under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation Hollywood lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life. Some property types are also significant under Criterion B/2/2. Buildings under this criterion are directly related to significant individuals in pre-consolidation Hollywood in addition to illustrating how residents lived.

Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from the pre-consolidation period of Hollywood
- Is associated with the formation, settlement, and/or development of Hollywood

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- Under Criterion B/2/2 is directly associated with the productive life of a person who played an important role in the formation, settlement, and/or development of Hollywood
 - Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to early settlement and development of Hollywood.

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Related to the life of pre-consolidation Hollywood by showing how residents lived, worked, and socialized
- Indicative of the citrus-growing years and the years as a suburb of Los Angeles
- For residential properties (Criterion B/2/2) individual must have resided in the property during the period in which he or she achieved significance
- May be associated with groups or individuals important in Hollywood's early ethnic/cultural history
- For Historic Districts:
 - Conveys a strong visual sense of overall historic environment from the period of significance
 - Must retain the majority of the original planning features including street patterns, building setbacks, and landscape and street features
 - Typically associated with streetcar residential or commercial development and may also be significant within these themes.

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within Hollywood for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed
- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria
- For Historic Districts:
 - District as a whole should retain integrity of Location, Setting, Design, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
 - May include some infill of resources constructed outside the period of significance

THEME: SAWTELLE, 1896-1918



*Sawtelle Fire Department and Bicycle Doctor, early 1900s
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Today it is difficult to envision Sawtelle as an independent city. For most Angelenos, Sawtelle is the site of the Veterans Administration Center. Other than that, it is simply the stretch of Los Angeles between Westwood and Santa Monica, with the 405 Freeway along its eastern edge and Santa Monica Boulevard cutting through its center.

This lack of identity is nothing new. Sawtelle historically had a difficult time defining itself. It began as a settlement of veterans who chose to enjoy the benefits of the Soldiers' Home, as the V.A. Center was then known, but live outside the grounds in dwellings of their own. It grew to serve the surrounding farms, and later became a bedroom community for those who looked west to Santa Monica, or later east to Los Angeles, for their identity.

These various populations each saw Sawtelle differently. Some wanted it to remain an undeveloped rural enclave linked to the Soldiers' Home and the surrounding agriculture. Others wanted to join Santa Monica or Los Angeles as soon as possible. In the middle were those who hoped to develop an

independent Sawtelle with its own civic institutions, and who were willing to tax themselves to do this. But they were always in the minority.

As a result, and given the relatively short time it was independent, Sawtelle was not able to develop all those public institutions that were typical of cities of the day. There was no City Hall or Carnegie Library. The one institution that received widespread support was the public school, and an example from the early years appears to have survived.

Creation of the Community

Sawtelle owed its creation to two events: the establishment of the Soldiers' Home and the construction of the interurban railroad. The Soldiers' Home appeared first. In the 1880s Congress authorized a "National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers" to be located somewhere west of the Rocky Mountains. The site was selected and the facility opened in 1888.²⁰³

The interurban rail line arrived eight years later. The line followed the course of current-day Santa Monica Boulevard, from Hollywood and Beverly Hills, through Sawtelle and then on to Santa Monica. The segment from Beverly Hills west to Sawtelle and Santa Monica was completed in 1896, and the connection from Beverly Hills east to downtown Los Angeles was in place a year later, in 1897. The Sawtelle stop was the station serving the Soldiers' Home.²⁰⁴

There were two other rail lines through Sawtelle. An older Southern Pacific spur line ran along the eastern edge of the settlement, paralleling what is now Sepulveda Boulevard. It shipped freight to the Soldiers' Home. A second interurban line was built in the early 1900s, which ran along what became Exposition Boulevard at the southern edge of Sawtelle. But it was the so-called Sawtelle Division line along Santa Monica Boulevard, and its stop for the Soldiers' Home, which allowed the town of Sawtelle to develop as it did.²⁰⁵

Two entrepreneurs, R. F. Jones and R. C. Gillis, saw the possibilities presented by this combination of the Soldiers' Home and an interurban stop. They formed the Pacific Land Company and in 1896 purchased 225 acres directly south of the Soldiers' Home from Moses Sherman and Eli Clark, the builders of the rail line. The right-of-way for the interurban line ran through the property, and the site for the Soldiers' Home station was located on it. This 1896 purchase by Jones and Gillis is considered the founding date for the community of Sawtelle.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Jan Loomis, *Images of America: Brentwood* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing Company, 2008), 7.

²⁰⁴ "Lines of the Pacific Electric: Western Division," *Interurbans*, Volume 15, Number 6 (December 1957), 46; *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1901.

²⁰⁵ "Lines of the Pacific Electric: Western Division," 52; William A. Myers and Ira L. Swett, *Trolleys to the Surf: The Story of the Los Angeles Pacific Railway* (Glendale: Interurban Publications, 1976), 16

²⁰⁶ Luther A. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History: Santa Monica Bay Cities* (Los Angeles: Luther A. Ingersoll, 1908), 345.

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The new settlement that emerged was originally named Barrett, after the Army officer who managed the Soldiers' Home. It began with the laying out of Fourth Street (now Sawtelle Boulevard), from the entrance to the Soldiers' Home at Ohio Avenue south to the interurban rail line along what would become Santa Monica Boulevard, and the opening of a sales office in 1897. There was a store, at the intersection of Fourth Street and the rail line, and a few scattered houses.²⁰⁷

Jones and Gillis turned the day-to-day matter of selling lots over to local agents. The most important of these was W. E. (William Edward) Sawtelle. He became part owner of the Pacific Land Company in 1899 and later its president, taking over entirely from the original developers. W.E.'s role was so significant that the settlement took his name when the Post Office decided that Barrett was too close in spelling to an existing California town called Bassett.²⁰⁸

The prime customers for Sawtelle's land were veterans. The government permitted members of the Soldiers' Home to enjoy its benefits, such as meals and clothing, and still live outside its grounds in privately-owned houses. This permission had been obtained by Jones and Gillis. They devised a program by which the veterans could buy lots on the installment plan and make payments as their pensions arrived from the Federal Government.²⁰⁹

With lots priced between eighty and one-hundred dollars, the opportunity proved attractive. Soon veterans and their families, as well as workers employed at the Home, settled in the area stretching from the Soldiers Home on the north to well past the interurban tracks on the south, and extending from present-day Sepulveda Boulevard (then known as the Military Road) west to Federal Avenue. The role played by these veterans in town affairs lasted throughout independent Sawtelle's life.²¹⁰

By the first year of the twentieth century, under W. E.'s leadership, the infant town of Sawtelle began to take shape. The *Los Angeles Times* estimated its population at several hundred. The beginnings of a water system were in place. A one-room school house, a church, and a public meeting hall had been constructed. There was even a plan to install electric lights in the hall.²¹¹

Early Growth and Incorporation

In the years after 1900 Sawtelle continued its primary role as a service center for the veterans. At the same time, it began to take on two additional roles. One was as an agricultural shipping point. The other, and eventually more important, was as a suburban community, first in relation to Santa Monica and then later to Los Angeles.

²⁰⁷ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 345-346; Myers and Swett, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 38.

²⁰⁸ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 345, 349, 364-65; Myers and Swett, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 38.

²⁰⁹ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 345, 347-48; *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1917.

²¹⁰ Loomis, *Images of America: Brentwood*, 7; *Los Angeles Times*, December 30, 1907.

²¹¹ *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 1899, October 12, 1900.



*Interurban rail line through Sawtelle in the early 1900s
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Allowing this was the continuing improvement of interurban railway service. In 1900 the Santa Monica line was made double track. In 1903 the existing lines were torn up and replaced by heavier rails, allowing for larger cars and more frequent runs. By 1904 the *Los Angeles Times* noted that Sawtelle was the busiest shipping point, for both passengers and freight, between Santa Monica and Los Angeles.²¹²

With this improved service came population growth. The area of settlement expanded beyond the original center south of the Soldiers' Home, and stretched westward toward Santa Monica. In 1902 the population was estimated to be somewhere between 500 and 780. This grew to about 1200 by 1905.²¹³

With growth came pressure to incorporate as an independent city. Issues included the lack of good fire protection, the need for street improvements and, above all, a desire for better law enforcement. Of greatest concern were the so-called blind pigs around the Soldiers' Home. These were unlicensed saloons that, along with alcohol, offered gambling and prostitution. To suppress them, an unincorporated Sawtelle was dependent upon the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and had to make do with a single law enforcement officer.²¹⁴

²¹² *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1899, December 9, 1903, May 18, 1904; Myers and Swett, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 38, 77.

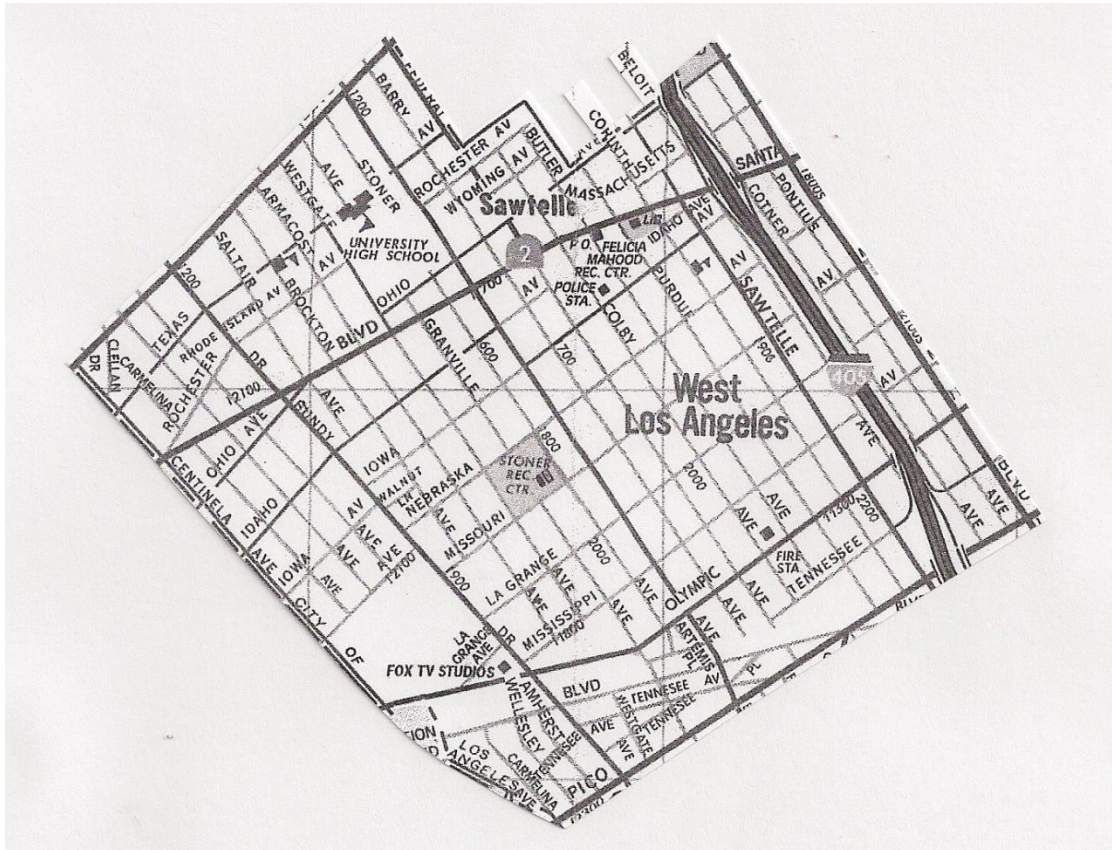
²¹³ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 349; *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1902, January 1, 1905.

²¹⁴ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 350; *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1904, January 9, 1905

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The presence of these illegal enterprises, ironically, was the result of a Federal regulation that prohibited the selling of alcohol within one-and-one half miles of the Home. Originally, the various Soldiers' Homes around the country had canteens where the residents could at least get beer. However, the canteens were later abolished, and the veterans had to look outside the grounds of the Homes. The ban on legal saloons near the Homes inevitably meant the rise of the blind pigs.²¹⁵



*Sawtelle city limits at incorporation and consolidation
(From "Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, City Boundaries and Annexations")*

Sawtelle had at least three blind pigs in 1904. One was housed in the rear of a cigar store, while the other two appeared at first glance to be private residences. Two were actually run by veterans, while the third was managed by what the *Times* referred to as a "French gambler." All three offered gambling as well as liquor, and at least one served as a brothel.²¹⁶ The outraged *Times* described it as "the first house of prostitution that had the brazen effrontery to flaunt itself at the very door of the government reservation."²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 348; *Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 1915.

²¹⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1904, April 13, 1904.

²¹⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1904.

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The blind pig issue encouraged support for incorporation. However, under dispute was the geographical extent of the new city. The proposed boundaries included a better-off section to the west that had no desire to be part of what it considered a less-than-respectable Sawtelle. Instead it wished to join Santa Monica. It was already part of the Santa Monica school district, and that city supported its objections.²¹⁸

Sawtelle proceeded in spite of this, and the election on incorporation took place in August of 1905. It lost by what the *Times* called an “overwhelming majority” of 79 in favor to 130 against. Santa Monica then annexed the area in contention, and supporters of Sawtelle’s incorporation considered a more modest size for their proposed city. The second election took place in November of 1906. This time incorporation passed by a vote of 241 in favor to 58 against.²¹⁹

Yet there was continual dissatisfaction. Many felt that a city government was unnecessary and wished to revert to unincorporated status. The *Times* attributed this to reasons that ranged from fear of higher taxes to resentment against regulations that would prohibit residents from pasturing their cows and planting their gardens in the city streets. This anti-city sentiment remained a permanent part of Sawtelle’s political life, and manifested itself in frequent opposition to taxes for funding improvements and in occasional movements to disincorporate.²²⁰

Perhaps because it was the one issue that most factions agreed upon, the new city leaders moved vigorously against the blind pigs. The approach taken was to declare the entire new city dry. Gambling was banned as well. The only traditional vice allowed was the pool hall.²²¹

These efforts were generally successful in eliminating the blind pigs, or at least driving them further into hiding. But Sawtelle continued to worry about its image as a center for disreputable behavior. When a move to disincorporate gained support in 1916, the *Times* feared “that the lessening of police protection, which the removal of city officers would make inevitable, would open the way for the appearance of all the civic vices from which Sawtelle suffered while it was only part of the county.”²²²

Social Life

Sawtelle’s population grew steadily if not spectacularly during the first two decades of the twentieth century. There was never a particular event to trigger a sudden spurt of growth. Nor did incorporation change the pace or geographical direction of growth. Sawtelle’s population was somewhere between

²¹⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 1905, June 13, 1905, June 18, 1905.

²¹⁹ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll’s Century History*, 350; *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 1905, September 24, 1906, November 16, 1906,

²²⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1907, June 15, 1916, June 19, 1916.

²²¹ *Los Angeles Times*, December 26, 1906, March 23, 1907, April 4, 1907, May 10, 1907, August 3, 1907, September 6, 1907, September 13, 1907.

²²² *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1916.

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1200 and 1500 at the time of incorporation in 1906. The 1910 census officially placed the population at 2143. It rose to around 2350 in 1912 and 3500 in 1915.²²³

By 1912 most parts of Sawtelle had basic city services. Those that could be installed relatively cheaply, such as electrical service using overhead wires, were in place. Gas lines had started to be laid in 1911, when the Santa Monica gas system installed a main under Santa Monica Boulevard in Sawtelle and began extending laterals under the streets to the north and south. By 1916 the system was generally complete and sold to Southern Counties Gas Company.²²⁴

Sawtelle residents could also rely on two water systems. One was part of the original Pacific Land Company development. It was soon reorganized into a separate entity, the Sawtelle Water Company with W. E. Sawtelle as its president, and expanded its service to cover new customers. A second, smaller company served residents in parts of the town not reached by the first. But many of the outlying residences still relied on individual wells with either windmills or gasoline-driven pumps.²²⁵

Independent Sawtelle had the social institutions typical of small towns at the turn of the twentieth century. At first they were generally rural and working-class in style, reflecting the nature of the early veteran-oriented and agricultural population. Only later, with the establishment of St. John's Episcopal mission after 1907 and the creation of the Woman's Club in 1909, did more middle-class suburban-style social institutions appear.²²⁶

As was typical in small-town America, churches were the most important private social institutions. As early as 1901 the Holiness and the Methodist denominations had organized. By 1904, they had been joined by the Baptists, the Disciples of Christ and the Seventh Day Adventists. Interestingly, the Roman Catholic parish that serves Sawtelle, St. Sebastian's, was not established until 1924. It appears that Sawtelle was an overwhelmingly Protestant town, at least until the early 1920s.²²⁷

Of these congregations, only the Baptists chose to erect a major structure on a prominent location. It dated from around 1902, and stood on the southwest corner of Purdue and Santa Monica. It was a large frame structure featuring a steeply pitched roof with its ridge running parallel to the Boulevard. The steeple remained unfinished. The structure no longer exists.²²⁸

²²³ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 350; *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1912, January 1, 1915.

²²⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 1911, January 1, 1912, January 27, 1916.

²²⁵ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 349; *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 1903, August 29, 1903, January 6, 1904, January 12, 1904, January 28, 1904, January 29, 1904, July 6, 1904, July 14, 1904, December 16, 1904, December 20, 1904, March 16, 1907. Sanborn Maps from 1905, 1907 and 1912 show routes of pipes and location of pump house.

²²⁶ St. John's Episcopal Mission does not appear on the 1907 Sanborn map, but it does appear on the 1912 Sanborn Map. The institution appears as a church, rather than a mission, on the 1921 Sanborn Map

²²⁷ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 349; St. Sebastian Parish, Los Angeles, Website; 1921 and 1924 Sanborn Maps.

²²⁸ Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 352; 1905 Sanborn Map.

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All the other congregations built more modest structures located on the residential side streets off Santa Monica and Sawtelle Boulevards. The First Methodist Church was on Butler between Santa Monica and Iowa (a later Methodist church stands in its place), the Disciples of Christ Church was on Idaho between Purdue and Sawtelle, the Adventist Church was on Purdue between Santa Monica and Ohio, and the Holiness Chapel was on Cotner and Massachusetts. None of these original structures remains.²²⁹



*South side of Santa Monica Boulevard, circa 1910
Sawtelle Grammar School to the left and First Baptist Church in the center
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Second only to the churches as private social institutions were the fraternal lodges. The first of the lodges was the Independent Order of Good Templars, which organized in 1901. A large portion of the membership consisted of veterans associated with the Soldiers' Home. The second lodge to establish itself was the International Order of Odd Fellows in 1903. No lodge structures remain, with the possible exception of 1538 Sawtelle Boulevard, discussed below.²³⁰

²²⁹ 1907, 1912 and 1921 Sanborn Maps.

²³⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1901, July 14, 1901, July 31, 1903, November 3, 1903.



*Sawtelle Woman's Club
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Of particular significance among the private social institutions was the somewhat later Woman's Club. It was perhaps the most important institution for the small but growing middle class interested in improving the cultural tone of the community. The Woman's Club was first organized in 1909. By 1914 it was able to construct a clubhouse on Purdue Avenue, one-half block south of Santa Monica Boulevard. The clubhouse contained a club room, auditorium, dining room and kitchen. It also housed the local branch of the county public library, and was the location of the Chamber of Commerce. The clubhouse unfortunately no longer exists.²³¹

²³¹ *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1909, August 9, 1914; 1921 Sanborn Map; *Sawtelle Tribune*, June 2, 1916, January 5, 1917.



*Fourth Street School (probable)
1747 Sawtelle Boulevard
(Photo by author)*

The only governmental endeavor that received widespread voter support was the public school. The district was organized in the 1890s and built a new two-story structure in 1903. It stood on the southeast corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Purdue Avenue, to the east of the Baptist Church. This school was destroyed by fire in 1912.²³²

Before the fire, a bond issue had been passed to construct two additional schools. After the fire, the School Board decided not to rebuild on Santa Monica Boulevard, but rather to enlarge the size of the new schools. One school was built to serve the area north of Santa Monica Boulevard. This northern school building was demolished sometime after consolidation and replaced by the present-day Brockton Avenue School.²³³

The other school was built to serve the area south of Santa Monica Boulevard. In 1913 funds were appropriated for purchasing the land and constructing this southern school. The building was erected on the northwest corner of Sawtelle and Nebraska. The current building that sits on this site is most likely the southern school, then known as the Fourth Street School. It has been transformed from brick to stucco and has lost much of its detailing, but its massing and fenestration remain intact.²³⁴

²³² Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 346; *Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 1898, October 14, 1898, May 11, 1903, September 29, 1903, November 30, 1912; 1905 Sanborn Map.

²³³ *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 1912.

²³⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 1913, October 18, 1921; 1921 Sanborn Map. The problems encountered in documenting this structure are discussed below under the Resources in Pre-Consolidation Sawtelle section.

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Sawtelle never had its own high school. State law allowed its residents to attend Santa Monica High School without paying tuition. In 1907 voters did approve a tax measure to hire one additional instructor who would teach the equivalent of ninth grade in the Sawtelle school, also an arrangement allowed by state law. But this was a close as independent Sawtelle came to creating a high school of its own.²³⁵

Commercial Life

Sawtelle's commercial district owed its existence to the interurban railroad stop. The stop brought customers to an increasingly dense commercial core around the intersection of Santa Monica and Sawtelle Boulevards (at the time named Oregon Avenue and Fourth Street). Later, upgrades to Santa Monica Boulevard made it possible for automobile-borne customers to patronize businesses along the length of that thoroughfare. But this emergence of Santa Monica as an auto-oriented shopping strip was just beginning when Sawtelle consolidated.

A major change to interurban service came with construction of the Westgate Line. This new route served the Soldiers' Home and the emerging elite residential areas of Brentwood and Pacific Palisades to the north. It extended from Santa Monica Boulevard into the alley between Purdue and Butler Avenues and toward the Soldiers Home. It then crossed through the Home, where it had a station, and proceeded along the center of San Vicente Boulevard. Service began as far as the Soldiers' Home and the immediate stops beyond in September of 1905.²³⁶

The Westgate Line transformed Sawtelle from a station into a junction. It was accompanied by a new combination passenger-freight station on the north side of Santa Monica Boulevard, between Corinth Avenue and Sawtelle Boulevard, complete with a short spur that allowed for the loading of freight. By the end of 1908 the existing narrow streetcar-gauge tracks along the entire Sawtelle Division line had been replaced by standard railroad-gauge tracks, allowing for the use of larger and faster cars. The Sawtelle business district now had one of the best interurban connections of any town in the region.²³⁷

Improvements to Santa Monica Boulevard itself were not as easy to accomplish, as they required political action on the part of the residents. Some were willing tax themselves to provide upgrades that would link them closer by road to Santa Monica and Los Angeles, while others preferred lower taxes and small-town isolation. Because of this political division, Sawtelle continually found itself lagging behind adjoining cities in paying for its share of Santa Monica Boulevard improvements.

The road that originally ran alongside the interurban line could at best be described as an undeveloped service alley. In 1904 the Pacific Land Company, working together with the county, began to grade,

²³⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1907, March 29, 1909, September 20, 1909.

²³⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 1901, December 9, 1903, March 6, 1905, March 19, 1905, April 18, 1905, September 19, 1905; "Lines of the Pacific Electric: Western Division," 59; Myers and Swett, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 76.

²³⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 1905. March 4, 1907, May 15, 1908; Myers and Swett, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 76; 1907 Sanborn Map.

gravel, and oil the roadway west toward Santa Monica. In 1907, after a lengthy discussion over how to pay for it, the Sawtelle Board of Trustees finally passed an ordinance calling for grading and oiling the remaining portions of the route within the city limits.²³⁸

The year 1909 saw the completion of Santa Monica Boulevard from the Sawtelle city limits eastward toward Los Angeles. Yet the City of Sawtelle remained reluctant to improve its section of this new highway. In 1913 the *Los Angeles Times* noted that all of Santa Monica Boulevard had been paved except for the stretch through Sawtelle. The Sawtelle Board of Trustees proposed that all property owners in the city be assessed for the cost. The issue remained unresolved for more than two years, with opposition leading to a movement to disincorporate.²³⁹

The issue divided Sawtelle along familiar lines. According to the *Times*, “Merchants are willing to see the extra taxation in order to bring automobile traffic through the town, but a large part of the population consists of veterans and their families, many of whom desire to see the town retain its old aspect of the country.”²⁴⁰ The petition to disincorporate was rejected by the Board of Trustees and, by November of 1916, Sawtelle’s section of pavement was finally completed.²⁴¹

The original business district was centered along Sawtelle Boulevard, from the entrance to the Soldiers’ Home at Ohio Avenue to just south of the interurban line at the intersection of Sawtelle and Santa Monica Boulevards. The first major structure was a single-story brick business block on the northwest corner of Sawtelle and Santa Monica. It was built in 1904 by the Pacific Land Company, and housed offices for the land company, the Sawtelle Water Company, and Sawtelle’s first bank, a branch of the Bank of Santa Monica. The force behind its construction was W. E. Sawtelle, who also maintained offices for his real estate firm, “Sawtelle and Company” in the building. It was destroyed by fire in 1914 and rebuilt. It no longer exists.²⁴²

²³⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1899, October 15, 1904, October 23, 1904, October 30, 1906, February 4, 1907, June 7, 1907, October 3, 1907.

²³⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1909, March 27, 1909, August 26, 1909, November 6, 1909, November 10, 1913, June 15, 1916, June 19, 1916.

²⁴⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 1916.

²⁴¹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 15, 1916, August 3, 1916, October 8, 1916, December 17, 1916.

²⁴² Loomis, *Images of America: Brentwood*, 8; *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1904, July 19, 1904, March 12, 1914.



*Northwest corner of Santa Monica and Sawtelle Boulevards (Oregon and Fourth), circa 1905
Pacific Land Company Business Block in the background
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

In 1907 the center of business was firmly established at the corner of Sawtelle and Santa Monica, and commercial structures had been built on all four corners of the intersection. At the same time, the location of the new interurban terminal slightly to the west of this intersection brought about a shift of focus for future construction from Sawtelle Boulevard to Santa Monica Boulevard. Helping to finance this new construction was the city's second bank, the Citizens State Bank. It was founded in 1906 and had W.E. Sawtelle as one of its officers.²⁴³

No intact commercial structures remain from this business district. Perhaps the one that retains the most of its original form is the two-story block at 1538 Sawtelle. Its date of construction is unclear. The Los Angeles County Assessor gives it as 1918. However, both the 1912 and 1921 Sanborn Maps show it, in the same footprint, with two storefronts below and a meeting hall above. It could well have been the gathering space for one of the fraternal lodges, although no evidence has yet been uncovered to determine this.

²⁴³ *Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 1906; September 10, 1911; 1907 Sanborn Map.



*Business Block
1538 Sawtelle Boulevard
(Photo by author)*

Although it has been stuccoed and its first floor storefronts altered beyond recognition, its upper level retains some original features. The pattern of the second-floor fenestration appears to be original, even though the windows have been replaced and, in the process, probably have had their proportions changed. The bracketing and the pent roof with end piers above the second floor windows appear to be original. Finally, the configuration of a lower cornice along the street, and a parallel higher stepped parapet behind it, fits with the original use of the second floor as a meeting space, with offices in front.

By 1912 there are hints of an emerging automobile-oriented strip along Santa Monica Boulevard. A handful of commercial structures occupied a few of the intersections of the side streets with Santa Monica Boulevard to the west of Sawtelle Boulevard. There was an office across from the Baptist Church at Purdue (probably in a converted residence), a bicycle repair shop between Butler and Colby, a bakery on the corner with Colby, a plumbing store between Colby and Federal, and three grocery stores, one between Federal and Barry, a second on the corner with Barry, and a third on the corner with Granville. At the same time, many of the lots were still vacant, while other contained houses and the occasional institutional structure such as the Baptist Church.²⁴⁴

This pattern of concentration, combined with a bit of dispersal, remained much the same as late as 1921. There was increasing density around the intersection of Santa Monica and Sawtelle. Most of the vacant lots along Santa Monica had been filled with storefronts for about a block and a half to the east

²⁴⁴ 1912 Sanborn Map.

and west. But, after that, commercial development remained spotty, with residences and vacant land still predominating. It is only after a legal dispute over consolidation was settled in 1922 that construction of business blocks begins to spread in a solid way to the west on Santa Monica.²⁴⁵

Agricultural Life

Sawtelle's primary economic role was that of a service point for the Soldiers' Home. But it had a secondary role as a center for agriculture. The southern sections of the city were primarily agricultural, as was the land south of the city limits. Crops included potatoes, barley, and strawberries. Lima beans were particularly important. As late as 1911, after Sawtelle had incorporated as a city and grown in population, the *Times* noted that its economy still contained a major agricultural component.²⁴⁶

What made local agriculture successful was the ability of the interurban railway to ship these crops. Typical of the interaction between agriculture and the railroad was the lima bean cannery that operated from 1912 until 1920. The cannery was located along the eastern edge of the city. There it was serviced by the old Southern Pacific Railroad spur line. The Los Angeles-Pacific Railroad (later the Pacific Electric) had leased and electrified it, and had made it part of its interurban system.²⁴⁷

A second and more suburban form of agriculture was the plant nursery. It flourished particularly in the southwestern section of town. The best known of these enterprises was the Walter Armacost Nursery at Armacost and La Grange Avenues.²⁴⁸ The *Santa Monica Outlook* in 1914 described it as "perhaps one of the largest of the state, covering several acres and including fifteen large glass houses, three acres of lath houses and some fields for outdoor plants, as well as an up-to-date pumping system, with reservoirs, and enormous reserve power, and modern heating appliances, sending steam through the piped hot houses."²⁴⁹

The existence of this nursery business was of social significance. It was one of the reasons for the creation of the Japanese community of Sawtelle, as the nursery jobs provided employment for immigrants. By the 1920s a Japanese commercial district had developed along Sawtelle Boulevard south of Santa Monica Boulevard. The community's primary cultural center, the Japanese Institute of Sawtelle, was incorporated in 1929. A bungalow from the pre-consolidation years, at 2126 Corinth Avenue, is now a facility of the Institute.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ 1921 and 1924 Sanborn Maps.

²⁴⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, August 17, 1902, February 13, 1903, September 10, 1911.

²⁴⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 1903, January 1, 1905, June 30, 1912, July 29, 1912, January 1, 1914, October 16, 1920; Myers and Swett, *Trolleys to the Surf*, 40.

²⁴⁸ 1921 and 1924 Sanborn Maps.

²⁴⁹ *Santa Monica Outlook*, April 1, 1914.

²⁵⁰ Jack Fujimoto, *Images of America: Sawtelle, West Los Angeles's Japantown* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 7, 11.

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One structure with a fair degree of architectural integrity appears to be related to agriculture. This is the residence at 2103 Colby Avenue, built in 1908. The 1912 and the 1921 Sanborn Maps shows that the street grid had not been completed this far south yet. The position of the house on its abnormally large site supports the idea that it was originally a farm or ranch house.



*Farm House
2103 Colby Avenue
(Photo by author)*

Residential Life

The homes still standing north of the agricultural district reflect the demographic character of pre-consolidation Sawtelle. The early years, from the creation of the settlement in 1896 to incorporation in 1906, saw the construction of cottages and bungalows that are overwhelming modest in scale and working-class in style. Such working-class residences continued to be built in the later years, from incorporation in 1906 until consolidation in 1918. These later years also saw the construction of houses that were clearly middle-class in scale and style.

A residence with integrity that dates from the period before incorporation in 1906 shows the modesty of early Sawtelle. It is a tiny cottage at 11322 La Grange Avenue, from 1902 and possibly moved to the site from elsewhere. It is a simplified worker's cottage from the turn of the century, and could well have been a pre-cut design ordered from catalogues.



Residence
11322 La Grange Avenue
(Photo by author)

A home from after incorporation is also modest in scale, but shows a bit more style. It is located at 1854 Sawtelle Boulevard and dates from around 1913. It has a smattering of ornamental detailing, including lattice infill for the gable of the porch and bungalow-like rake bracketing.



Residence
1854 Sawtelle Boulevard
(Photo by author)

At the same time, there was a growing middle class that insisted on more expansive homes. Typical of these is 11260 Mississippi Avenue, dating from 1915. It is a classic California bungalow of the period, with a low-sloped roof, wide eaves, and a full-width porch across the front.



Residence
11260 Mississippi Avenue
(Photo by author)

The Struggle over Consolidation

By 1917 Sawtelle was ready to consider consolidation. Its growth had been such that it needed the water offered by the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Its two water systems relied on local wells, and it had become apparent that they could not keep up with increasing demand. But, like so much else in Sawtelle's political life, the process of consolidation was not a smooth one.

The struggle was perhaps inevitable, given the historic division within Sawtelle society. On one side were the business community and the middle-class suburbanites. They were quite willing to abandon Sawtelle's independence and join with Los Angeles. On the other side were those who had consistently wanted a more rural Sawtelle with less regulation and lower taxes. In the past they had opposed city status. But when faced with joining the larger, more regulated and higher-taxed Los Angeles, they saw an independent Sawtelle as preferable.

As early as 1912, local businessmen had predicted the need for additional water. By 1913 they were willing to give up Sawtelle's independence to get it. But there remained the problem that, at that time, Sawtelle did not share a common boundary with Los Angeles. Sawtelle requested that Los Angeles

extend a proposed annexation to create the needed common boundary. Los Angeles took the necessary action in June of 1916 by annexing up to the Sawtelle city limits.²⁵¹

By February of 1917 petitions were circulated calling for an election on consolidation. The election was held in May. Despite the strong support of local businessmen, consolidation only passed by the small margin of 519 to 516. Immediately the validity of the election was called into question by opponents of consolidation. The result was a series of events that reinforced Sawtelle's reputation for being both politically divided and somewhat colorful in its behavior.²⁵²

The struggle over consolidation took place in two arenas. The more seemly and, in the end, more important, was that of the courts. A series of legal cases kept the question in doubt from 1917 through 1921. The more colorful was within Sawtelle itself. The old city government refused to disband. The Board of Trustees continued to meet and to pass regulations affecting city life. At the same time, in January of 1918, the city of Los Angeles declared the consolidation valid and considered Sawtelle as simply another neighborhood subject to its laws and served by its institutions.²⁵³

Thus Sawtelle had two city governments, both claiming jurisdiction. By 1921 Los Angeles had established a clear dominance. Sawtelle's streets were patrolled by Los Angeles police officers. Its schools were governed by the Los Angeles school board. Its buildings were protected by the Los Angeles fire department. Its construction was subject to Los Angeles city permits and inspections. Its citizens could borrow books from the Los Angeles Public Library and vote in the election for mayor of Los Angeles. Yet the old Sawtelle Board of Trustees declared itself still in existence as the only legitimate government for the community.²⁵⁴

Then, in September of 1921, the State Supreme Court determined that the 1917 election had been conducted improperly. Sawtelle reverted to its pre-consolidation status as an independent city. Los Angeles city services were withdrawn, including fire protection and the nine patrolmen policing its streets. Only the schools remained part of the Los Angeles district. The old local Board of Trustees was once again the sole government in charge.²⁵⁵

This return to independence lasted for ten months. Petitions were quickly circulated and, in June of 1922, Sawtelle residents again voted to consolidate. This time there was no doubt as to the sentiment. The vote was 1287 in favor of consolidation to 210 against. Apparently the appeal of Los Angeles city

²⁵¹ *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1912, April 21, 1912, September 13, 1912, November 27, 1913, March 15, 1914, June 7, 1916.

²⁵² *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1917, May 5, 1917; A good summary of these events is found in *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1963.

²⁵³ *Los Angeles Times*, July 14, 1917, September 16, 1917, January 25, 1918, January 26, 1918, January 27, 1918, February 1, 1918, February 5, 1918, February 6, 1918, February 9, 1918, February 10, 1918, September 30, 1918, November 14, 1919, March 12, 1920, July 28, 1920, December 22, 1920.

²⁵⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1921, June 8, 1921, August 21, 1921, September 16, 1921, September 17, 1921.

²⁵⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, September 16, 1921, September 25, 1921, October 16, 1921; October 18, 1921, October 28, 1921.

services for the older residents, as well as a loyalty to Los Angeles from newer residents who had no nostalgia for independence, overcame those who wished to retain a separate identity. In July of 1922 Sawtelle once more gave up its independence and became a part of Los Angeles.²⁵⁶



*Santa Monica and Sawtelle Boulevards in the 1920s
Showing rebuilt Pacific Land Company Business Block
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Conclusion

Pre-consolidation Sawtelle quickly disappeared in the building boom of the 1920s. As Santa Monica Boulevard became an automobile shopping strip, the few monumental structures such as the Baptist Church made way for storefronts, business blocks, theaters, and garages. The residential suburbanization that had begun in the pre-consolidation years filled in the lots to the north and south of Santa Monica Boulevard. By the end of the decade Sawtelle seemed to be simply another of the numerous Los Angeles neighborhoods.

The disappearance of pre-consolidation Sawtelle became more pronounced in the period after the Second World War, as pre-consolidation single-family residences gave way to apartment houses.

²⁵⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, April 20, 1922, June 3, 1922, July 14, 1922.

Perhaps the only facet of pre-consolidation social life that remained was the development of the Japanese-American community. Even though most of its growth occurred after consolidation, it was the pre-consolidation existence of the nurseries and truck gardens in south Sawtelle that allowed for its creation. Resources associated with Los Angeles' Japanese communities are discussed in detail in the Japanese American Historic Context.

Resources from Pre-Consolidation Sawtelle

Extant resources are considered under Criterion A/1/1. There is one individual who qualifies for consideration under Criterion B/2/2. This is W. E. Sawtelle, the developer for whom the city was named. He is known to have been associated with a single resource, the business block on the northwest corner of Santa Monica and Sawtelle Boulevards, which contained the offices of his land company. However, this block no longer exists. Upon further research, extant resources may be found which are associated with him and would be significant under both Criterion A1/1/ and Criterion B/2/2.

Non-residential resources from the pre-consolidation years are rare. The few that have survived, such as the business block/lodge hall discussed above, have been altered to the point that they have lost integrity. One school structure, the probable Fourth Street School at 1747 Sawtelle Boulevard, is believed to still exist as a resource; there are, however, questions about its provenance that remain to be determined. It was renamed the Sawtelle Boulevard School after consolidation. Today it is the Sterry Early Education Center, part of the Nora Sterry Elementary School. While no documentation has yet been found to confirm that the Sterry Center is the historic Fourth Street School, the current building matches the location on the lot and the footprint of the building shown on the 1921 Sanborn Map.

Nor has it been possible to document a precise date of construction. As a public building, there is no construction date listed by the Los Angeles County Assessor. Evidence indicates that it was built sometime between late 1913 and early 1915. The funds for it were allocated, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, in October of 1913.²⁵⁷ *The Santa Monica Outlook* noted in May of 1915 that the school board had met there.²⁵⁸ But neither of the newspapers contains information on the date of its construction. The records of the Los Angeles Unified School District show the school as opening in 1918. However, the records also show the northern school as opening in 1918.²⁵⁹ Thus this date appears to be the date when, by consolidation, the Los Angeles school district acquired the already existing buildings.

Finally, it has not been possible to confirm the Fourth Street School's original appearance. The *Sawtelle Tribune* in June of 1916 described it as a "handsome brick" structure but provided no illustration.²⁶⁰ The earliest photo of it in the LAUSD archives dates from the 1930s. This photo contains a partial view of the east façade, and shows a brick masonry structure in a modified Georgian style with a stone or cast stone

²⁵⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 1913.

²⁵⁸ *Santa Monica Outlook*, May 8, 1915.

²⁵⁹ History of Schools (Chronology), Los Angeles Unified School District, in the Archives of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

²⁶⁰ *Sawtelle Tribune*, June 2, 1916.

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arched portico over the main entrance. The massing and fenestration are identical to that of the existing building. This most likely was its original appearance.²⁶¹

If so, the school has experienced three major alterations. Its original entrance portico has been removed, its eave detailing has been altered, and its masonry exterior has been covered or replaced by stucco. However, the overall massing and the pattern of fenestration appear to be intact.

Even though it has lost much of its integrity, it deserves to be included as a resource because of its status as the only remaining civic building from Sawtelle's time as an independent city. (The "Historic Schools of the Los Angeles Unified School District," a 2002 study done for the LAUSD, lists the building as meeting the criteria for inclusion in either the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources.²⁶²)

Residential resources have fared better. There are a number of residential resources scattered throughout pre-consolidation Sawtelle. They reflect the divisions within the Sawtelle community. Originally housing appears to have been limited to modest working-class dwellings typical of those for retired veterans. The years after incorporation in 1906 saw continued construction of modest-scale housing, but also the construction of middle-class housing for those inhabitants not tied to the Soldiers' Home. There are also occasional residential resources that appear to be related to agriculture.

²⁶¹ Photo A-10171A, "Fourth Street / Sawtelle Blvd School," LAUSD Archives.

²⁶² *Historic Schools of the Los Angeles Unified School District*, by Leslie Heumann, with Anne Doehne (Pasadena: Science Applications International Corporation, 2002), 6-7.

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT SAWTELLE

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement and social history for its association with the early development history of Sawtelle as an independent city prior to consolidation with Los Angeles. Resources from this time include residences, places of work, and sites for social life and are now rare.

Note: No resources within pre-consolidation Sawtelle were identified as significant for their association with important individuals. Should any be discovered as the result of additional research then eligibility standards for Criterion B/2/2 will be developed.

Period of Significance: 1896-1918

Period of Significance Justification: The land for Sawtelle was purchased in 1896. Sawtelle first consolidated with Los Angeles in 1918. (This consolidation was invalidated by the State Supreme Court in 1921. Sawtelle again consolidated with Los Angeles in 1922.)

Geographic Location: Within the 1918 city boundaries of Sawtelle when it first consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History

Criteria: NR: A CR: 1 Local: 1

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Residential-Single Family, Bungalow/house
Property Type: Residential-Single Family, Farm House
Property Type: Commercial-Retail, Retail Store/lodge hall
Property Type: Institutional-Educational, Elementary School

Property Type Description: Bungalow/house: Domestic dwelling on a private lot, within a town or city setting
Farm House: Dwelling located on large expanse of land, assumed to be inhabited by farmer or rancher
Retail Store/lodge hall: Buildings providing ground floor commercial space, combined with office and/or meeting hall space above
Elementary School: Public buildings intended for primary education

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are all significant under Criterion A/1/1. Buildings under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation Sawtelle lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life.

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Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from the pre-consolidation period of Sawtelle.
- Is associated with the formation, settlement and/or development of Sawtelle

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Associated with activities typical of city life of pre-consolidation Sawtelle, and indicative of the city's life as a support center for the Soldier's Home, an agricultural community, and a growing suburb of Los Angeles
- May be associated with groups important in Sawtelle's early ethnic/cultural history

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within Hollywood for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed
- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria

THEME: EAGLE ROCK, 1886-1923



*View of Eagle Rock in the early 1900s
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Eagle Rock was perhaps the most typically suburban of the pre-consolidation cities. It had nothing like San Pedro's harbor or Venice's amusement zone. Nor was it an experiment in low-cost land ownership like Watts or in communitarianism like Tujunga.

Eagle Rock was simply a land development for single family homes. In this it was most like Hollywood and Hyde Park. But it was far more distant and topographically isolated from Los Angeles. The spread of the metropolis did not seem inevitable. Even today, the sense continues of Eagle Rock as a place separate from the districts to the south.

As a residential suburb, independent Eagle Rock was a success. It had schools, a library, and a small but impressive city hall. It had a business district that served its residents well. It also had attractive neighborhoods that took advantage of its varied topography and provided single-family homes for a variety of income levels.

These homes ranged from impressive mansions at the high elevations, through comfortable Craftsman houses for the middle class on the slopes, to modest working-class bungalows on the valley floor. This diversity, combined with isolation from the pressures of later development, has resulted in an impressive array of intact pre-consolidation buildings.

Ironically, it was the attractiveness of Eagle Rock that led to its end as an independent city. It simply could not accommodate the rapid growth that occurred in the early 1920s. The local water supply was woefully inadequate, and access to the Los Angeles Aqueduct was the only solution. The local elite acknowledged reality and supported consolidation. If there is a lesson from Eagle Rock's experience, it is that even the most prudent of leadership cannot save a successful city if the resources needed for survival are beyond its reach.

The Coming of the Streetcar

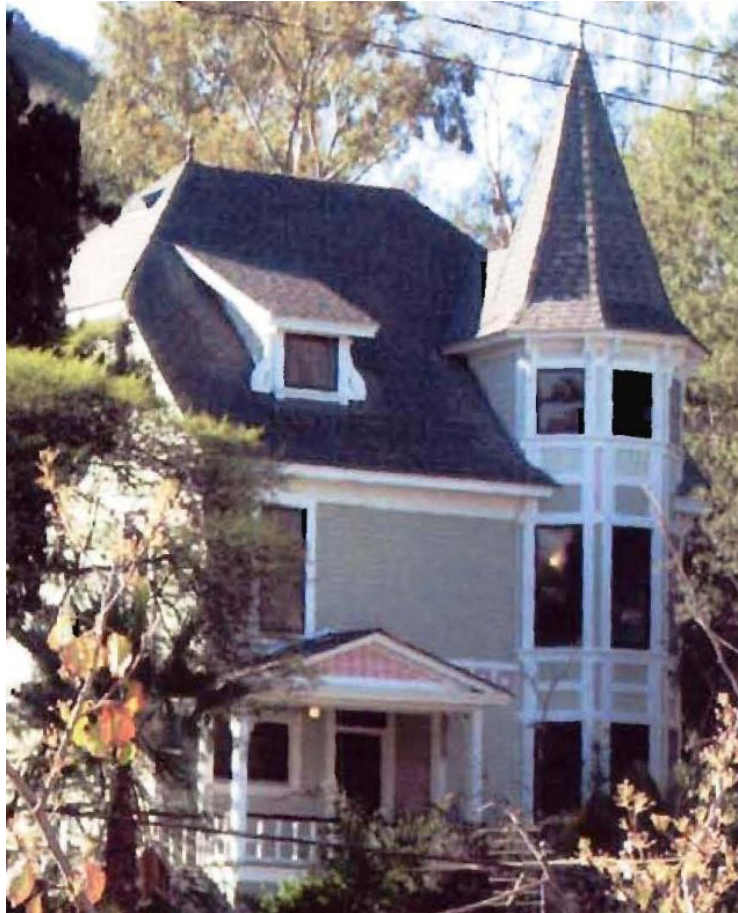
Eagle Rock lies far to the north of downtown Los Angeles, in a valley ringed by hills that separate it from surrounding districts. A pass to the southwest leads to Glassell Park, and a somewhat less level path to the west connects it to Glendale. The hills provide Eagle Rock with a natural feature that gives the valley its name – a rock outcropping at the northeast edge, the shape of which produces a shadow that resembles an eagle in flight. This iconic outcropping is L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 10.

Because of this isolation, Eagle Rock valley was slow to develop. It was opened to agriculture in 1886, at first limited to dry-land farming. Soon, however, settlers began growing perishable crops by irrigation. The Eagle Rock valley became best known for berries, with the Gates Strawberry Ranch, situated northeast of the present intersection of Eagle Rock Boulevard and Yosemite Drive, as the largest producer.²⁶³

There are a few architectural remnants remaining from the agricultural years. The most imposing are large frame houses for those of means. Some of these individuals were successful farmers and ranchers, while others were professionals and businessmen who desired country homes. One of the latter was Howard Sale, a druggist by trade. In 1888 he constructed a two-and-a half-story dwelling that combined late Stick style with early Queen Anne elements. It was named Castle Crag, and still sits a few blocks south of Colorado Boulevard near the Glendale line, well elevated above the road. It is now L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 931.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, December 11, 1913; Eric H. Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 7, 12, 16-17.

²⁶⁴ Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 15.



Castle Crag

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 931
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

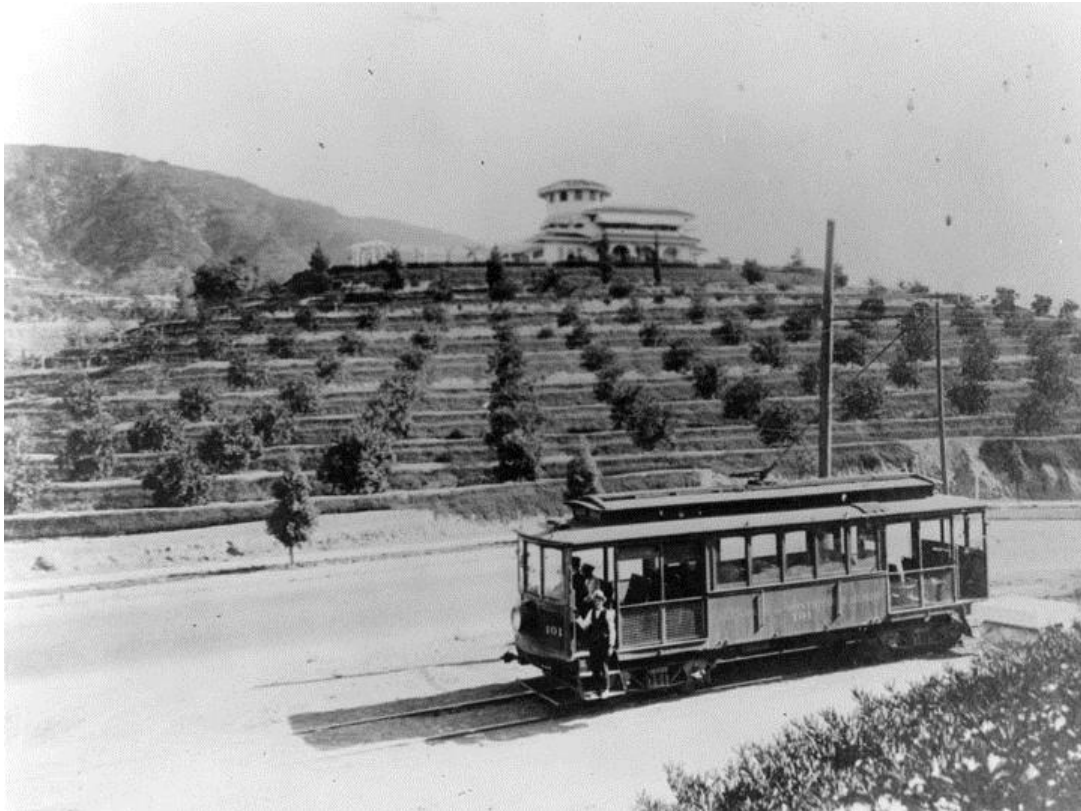
By the early 1900s the Eagle Rock valley had matured as an agricultural settlement. Yet it remained relatively unpopulated. As late as 1908, one estimate placed the total residents of the Valley at only about 100. But the coming of the trolley soon changed that.²⁶⁵

Train service to Eagle Rock was provided by the Los Angeles Railway (LARY), the narrow-gauge streetcar service for the city of Los Angeles. The Eagle Rock line was an extension of an existing line serving Glassell Park. It ran north along what is now Eagle Rock Boulevard to Colorado Boulevard, and then east on Colorado to Townsend Avenue. Service began in 1906. By 1912 trains ran from before six in the morning until after midnight, with cars leaving every 15 minutes during weekday rush hours and every 30 minutes the rest of the time.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, December 27, 1911.

²⁶⁶ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, February 1, 1912, February 22, 1912; Los Angeles Railway Corporation, *History of the Los Angeles Railway Corporation and the Predecessor Companies* (Los Angeles: Research Department, Los Angeles Railway Company, 1939), 35; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*. 101.

There also was a second line, the Glendale & Eagle Rock, which was later renamed the Glendale & Montrose. Regular service on it began in 1910. The route went from the intersection of Eagle Rock and Colorado Boulevards west along Colorado, and eventually reached Brand Boulevard in Glendale. It ran from 6:30 in the morning to 11:30 at night, at half-hour intervals. Once in Glendale there were direct connections with both the Pacific Electric Interurban and the Southern Pacific steam railroads.²⁶⁷



*Glendale and Montrose Line streetcar with the Bessolo Residence in the background, circa 1914
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Besides normal traffic, the Glendale & Montrose streetcar line provided two essential services. The first was transporting students to a high school, for Eagle Rock had none of its own. The second was the delivery of freight. By 1917 the tracks had been re-laid in standard railroad gauge, and freight cars could be shuttled from the main lines in Glendale.²⁶⁸

The LARY's Eagle Rock line and the Glendale & Montrose line were Eagle Rock's two main routes out of the valley. There was also a third streetcar line that served the far eastern edge of the community. It

²⁶⁷ Jeffrey Moreau and James Walker, Jr., *Glendale & Montrose* (Los Angeles: Pacific Bookwork, 1966), 11-14, 18; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 22.

²⁶⁸ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, November 13, 1913; Moreau and Walker, *Glendale and Montrose*, 16; "The Days of Toonerville Trolley" by Emil Swanson in *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, August 20, 1961; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 22, 65.

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was an extension of the Los Angeles Railway's Figueroa Street line in Garvanza. It reached Figueroa and Buena Vista in 1907, and in 1910 was extended to provide weekend service to a park at the foot of the Eagle Rock.²⁶⁹

This line was also temporarily lengthened shortly thereafter to aid construction of what is without doubt pre-consolidation Eagle Rock's most impressive structure. This is the Pacific Light and Power Company's Substation, completed in 1913. Now owned by Southern California Edison, it still stands at the north end of Figueroa. Unfortunately it can only be viewed from a great distance.²⁷⁰

Creation of the City

The streetcar allowed Eagle Rock to grow at a steady, if not spectacular, rate for the next fifteen years. There was something like 600 within the boundaries of Eagle Rock at the time of incorporation in 1911 and 1450 in 1914. The U.S. Census lists 2256 residents in 1920.²⁷¹

Eagle Rock incorporated as a sixth-class city in 1911 by the relatively close vote of 72 in favor to 57 against. Those opposed to city status petitioned for a vote a year later to disincorporate. It was defeated by a two-to-one margin. After that, the supporters of returning to an environment without city government contented themselves with continually opposing bond issues for improvements.²⁷²

In spite of these internal divisions, Eagle Rock exercised its municipal functions with a fair degree of success. The result was that, by the mid-teens, most of the residents of the city had gas, electricity, and telephone service brought through franchises granted to private companies. The city itself provided fire, police, and road maintenance. It also controlled building through a system of permits and inspections.²⁷³

Of the city services, water was by far the most problematic. Initially, it was supplied by the privately-held Eagle Rock Water Company. From the beginning there were complaints, primarily about rates. In November of 1916 the city voted, 744 to 175, to buy the water company. In spite of municipal ownership of water, however, rates and fear of an adequate supply continued to be of concern.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁹ Los Angeles Railway Corporation, *History of the Los Angeles Railway Corporation*, 36; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 89.

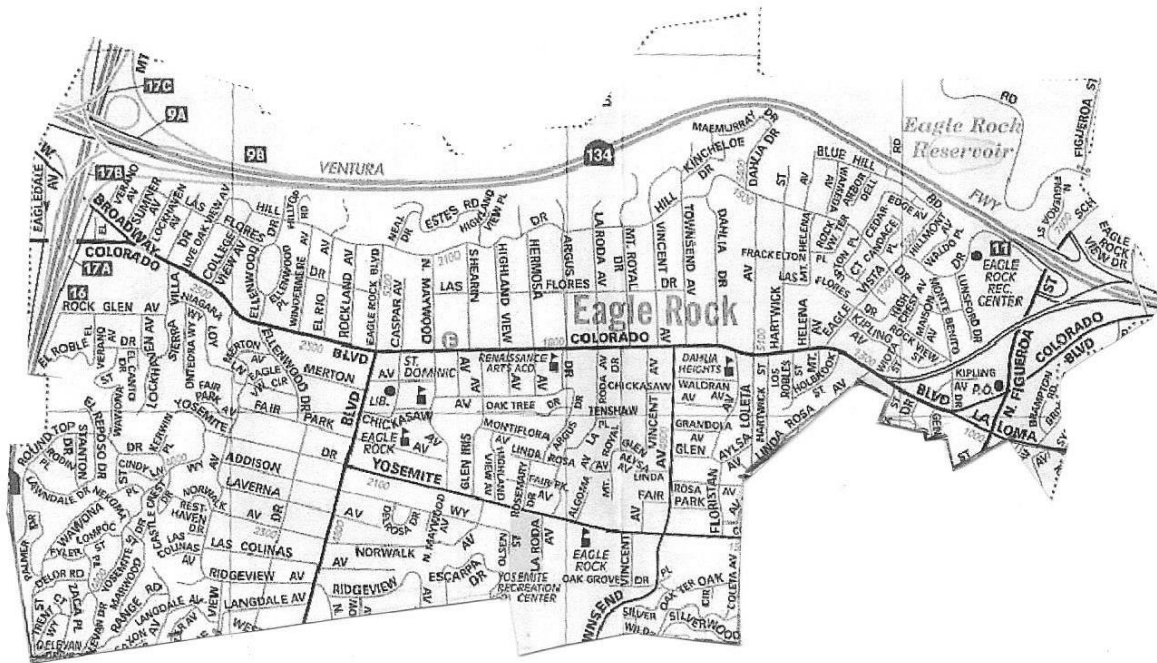
²⁷⁰ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, November 6, 1913; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 92.

²⁷¹ Betty Welcome and Henry Welcome, "The History of Eagle Rock," in *A First Collection of Eagle Rock Histories* (Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society, n.d.), 4.

²⁷² *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, March 1, 1911, February 29, 1912, March 7, 1912, April 11, 1912, January 30, 1919.

²⁷³ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, May 6, 1910, April 5, 1911, April 19, 1911, June 21, 1911, August 30, 1911, October 26, 1911, June 20, 1912, August 29, 1912, November 7, 1912, November 21, 1912, February 28, 1918, January 3, 1919, November 20, 1919; Danny Howard and Ray Youngans, *Highland Park, Eagle Rock, Mt Washington and the Hansbergers* (no place, no publisher, 1990), 14.

²⁷⁴ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, February 15, 1912, April 23, 1914, December 9, 1915, June 29, 1916, September 13, 1917, September 27, 1917, February 21, 1918, February 28, 1918, April 11, 1918, May 24, 1923.



*Eagle Rock city limits at incorporation and consolidation
(From "Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, City Boundaries and Annexations")*

Civic Institutions

The city of Eagle Rock created, in its short life of twelve years, a remarkable amount of notable civic architecture. Four buildings in particular remain as symbols of community pride. Three were public: the Carnegie Library, the Central School, and the City Hall. The fourth, the Twentieth Century Women's Club, was home to a private organization. But its activities were directed toward civic improvement, and the club could be considered in many ways an arm of city government.

The Library (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 292) was the first. The architect was W. E. Kleinpell and the building was completed by March of 1915. In the Mission Revival style, it differed from the standard symmetrical layout of a Carnegie Library and, with its L-shaped footprint, was designed specifically for its corner lot. The building was drastically remodeled in 1927 in a somewhat more simplified Spanish Colonial Revival style. But the general footprint, overall massing and relationship of the building to the street remained the same.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁵ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, July 9, 1914, March 25, 1915; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 122.



Eagle Rock Carnegie Library
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 292
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

Equal to the Carnegie Library as a symbol of Eagle Rock’s status as a city was the Central School. The architect was John C. Austin, who did a great deal of work for the Los Angeles School District. The building is single story and fronts on Chickasaw Avenue. The style was originally Romanesque Revival—referred to as “Byzantine” by the *Eagle Rock Sentinel*—with a reddish-brown brick facade, light grey cast stone trim and a “deep red burnt clay tile” roof.²⁷⁶

Construction began in the latter part of 1917 and was completed in January of 1918. In 1927, after consolidation, a large wing in the original Romanesque Revival style was added to the south facing Fair Park Avenue. This new section, with its two-story center portion, became the primary entrance. After the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, the entire structure was seismically retrofitted and the original brick stuccoed over. But the original massing and trim of the single story portion facing Chickasaw Avenue remain.²⁷⁷

The City Hall of 1922 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 292) was the last of the three public structures. Architect William Lee Woollett provided the city in 1922 with an elegant Italian Renaissance Revival design, featuring smooth stucco walls and a red-tile roof. It was monumental in concept, despite

²⁷⁶ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, April 19, 1917, September 20, 1917.

²⁷⁷ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, January 31, 1918; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 57-59.

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its relatively small size. Its massing consists of a high basilica-like center portion flanked by lower wings. It sits on a slight rise, set back from Colorado Boulevard, on the northeast corner with Maywood Avenue. The building also originally contained a garage for the city's fire engine.²⁷⁸



Eagle Rock City Hall

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 292
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

The fourth of the civic structures was built for a private institution that played an important public role in the life of pre-consolidation Eagle Rock. This structure was the clubhouse for the Twentieth Century Women's Club (Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 537). Founded in 1903, the Club was Eagle Rock's first non-religious social organization. In addition to such broader political activities as working for women's suffrage, it cooperated with the Chamber of Commerce on such matters as getting the Carnegie Library grant. It clearly needed a clubhouse commensurate with its standing in the community.²⁷⁹

The Twentieth Century Women's Club got its clubhouse in 1915. It was built on the northwest corner of Colorado Boulevard and Hermosa Avenue. The architect, Frank M. Tyler, gave the club what amounted

²⁷⁸ Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 107.

²⁷⁹ Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 46.

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to an enlarged craftsman cottage. The roof was manipulated to give the impression of a single story building asymmetrically arranged, and there was originally a mammoth chimney (removed after the 1933 Long Beach earthquake) in the center of the front façade.²⁸⁰



*Twentieth Century Women's Club
Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 537
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

Commercial Development in the Age of the Streetcar

Before the coming of the streetcar, the Eagle Rock valley had nothing that could be considered a business center. In 1907, one year after the completion of the streetcar line, Eagle Rock's first true commercial building went up at the final stop, on the southwest corner of Colorado Boulevard and Townsend Street. Designed by architect S. Tiden Norton, it was a two-story brick business block, with four storefronts below and apartments above. It still exists but has unfortunately been stripped of its character-giving detail.²⁸¹

It stood alone for many years. Eventually, the intersection began to develop. By 1916, there was another block of stores on the southeast corner of Colorado and Townsend, and by 1924, the year after

²⁸⁰ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, October 8, 1914; February 25, 1915; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 46.

²⁸¹ Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 100.

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consolidation, a third block on the northeast corner. But well before these improvements, Eagle Rock's downtown had moved elsewhere.²⁸²

The Glendale & Montrose streetcar line had established its terminus at the intersection of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards. Here, where the Glendale & Montrose and the Los Angeles Railway lines intersected, the city's true commercial district developed. This was made official in 1910 when the Eagle Rock Bank left the business block at the corner of Colorado and Townsend and moved into an elegant little Italian Renaissance Revival style building of its own (now gone) on the northeast corner of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards.²⁸³

Joining it a year later in 1911, a half block south on Eagle Rock Boulevard, was the Masonic Lodge Hall. Now known as the Old Mason's Hall, it still stands although greatly altered. Besides the bank, by December of 1911, the city contained three grocery stores, a hardware store, two plumbing stores, a dry goods store, and a barbershop. Most were clustered around the intersection of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards.²⁸⁴

Eagle Rock made this downtown official in 1914 by defining a Fire Limit Zone to assure that future commercial buildings met urban building standards. It extended along Colorado Boulevard one block west and two blocks east of Eagle Rock Boulevard, and one block south on Eagle Rock Boulevard. The ordinance required all new construction within the zone to have outside walls of masonry or reinforced concrete, and non-combustible roofs protected by two-foot parapets. Structural posts and columns had to be non-combustible. Any building over two stories had to have fire escapes.²⁸⁵



*Edwards and Wildey Building
Southeast corner of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards
(Photo by author)*

²⁸² Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 101-102; 1916 Sanborn Map.

²⁸³ Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 109; *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, February 17, 1916.

²⁸⁴ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, March 28, 1911, August 16, 1911, December 27, 1911; 1916 Sanborn Map; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 114.

²⁸⁵ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, October 8, 1914; October 22, 1914.

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The first major addition to this district to be built after the regulations were passed was the Edwards and Wildey Building on the southeast corner of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards. Completed in 1916, it is a two-story business block in restrained NeoClassical style featuring what the *Sentinel* described as “ivory dull glazed brick inlaid with medallion brick.” It contained three stores facing Colorado with offices above. It still stands generally intact as a remnant of Eagle Rock’s streetcar downtown. Its only major alterations are a pent roof at the cornice, which conceals the original parapet, and a mammoth billboard on stilts added on top.²⁸⁶

Residential Development in the Age of the Streetcar

Residential development began quickly after the extension of the streetcar line in 1906. It involved laying out streets and subdividing land into building lots. Some developers provided oiled streets with concrete curbs and sidewalks, and with gas and water lines ready for hookup, while others simply sold tracks of land on streets only roughly graded.

The first area to be developed was between the intersection of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards and the end of the streetcar line at Colorado and Townsend. The next section was to the west, coinciding with the construction of the Glendale & Montrose streetcar line in 1910. The final section was along the southern edge of the city, adjoined the new campus of Occidental College.²⁸⁷



*Intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Mt. Royal Drive, circa 1911
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

²⁸⁶ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, January 27, 1916; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 111.

²⁸⁷ 1911 and 1923 City Maps, in the collection of the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society; Welcome, “The History of Eagle Rock,” 3.

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A comparison of street maps from 1911 and 1923 shows that subdivision was generally complete by 1911. The *Sentinel* noted that in 1911 there were about 400 building lots ready to accept construction. The only areas that had streets added between 1911 and 1923 were those south of Yosemite Drive, and those in the far northwest and northeast corners, where Hill Drive was extended in both directions.²⁸⁸

Some of the developments were rural in character, with lots as large as an acre-and-one-half, and few if any services. But most were suburban in character and better served. Typical was a lot of 55 by 160 feet, facing an oiled street with concrete curbs, sidewalks, and a nine-foot parkway. Gas and water mains were installed at the developer's expense. Lots in better-off districts came with restrictions such as requiring houses to cost between \$3000 and \$3500 and to be set back 40 feet from the front property line.²⁸⁹

In most of the subdivisions the lot was sold separately from the house. Sometimes the subdivider of the land would also, under a separate contract, build the house as well. Otherwise an independent builder would erect the house. The prime years of construction before the First World War were between 1911, when about 60 houses were constructed, through 1916, when about 40 went up.²⁹⁰

One of the most prolific of the local contractors is believed to have been Walter B. Brown. He was particularly active south of Colorado and East of Eagle Rock Boulevards. Houses attributed to Brown are at 2358 and 2362 Colorado Boulevard; 1223, 1227, 1231, 1243, 1247, 1253, and 1257 Yosemite Drive; and 5030, 5052, 5058, 5064 and 5070 Floristan Avenue.²⁹¹

As was often the case in foothill cities, class seemed to correlate with elevation. The highest point, economically as well as topographically, was Hill Drive. It ran parallel to Colorado Boulevard and was located on two rather long blocks to the north. It was possible to walk to the streetcar line, but the assumption seemed to be that residents would have automobiles. It was initially planned to be about two miles in length, and was later extended in both directions. Hill Drive meandered to follow the contour line of the hillside, and passed near two of the large-scale houses remaining from the pre-streetcar period, the Broxham/Cook House and the Hickson House.²⁹²

Between Hill Drive and Colorado Boulevard the district could be considered middle and upper-middle class. Typical of the upper-middle class homes is the Hanson Puthuff House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 752). It is located on College View Avenue, on the west side of town in the area opened up after the construction of the Glendale & Montrose streetcar line. It occupies three suburban lots and was designed and built by the New York Building Company in 1912.²⁹³

²⁸⁸ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, February 22, 1911, 1; Maps in the collection of the Eagle Rock Historical Society; "Recall Horse and Buggy Days in Old Eagle Rock" in *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, August 13, 1961.

²⁸⁹ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, April 22, 1910, February 8, 1912.

²⁹⁰ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, December 27, 1911, January 11, 1917.

²⁹¹ Information on Walter Brown is from Eric Warren of the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society.

²⁹² *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, November 12, 1910: Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 13, 15.

²⁹³ Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 22.

It can best be described as an enlarged version of an Airplane Bungalow. Craftsman in style, it has a spreading first level with broad porches, and a smaller second story centered in the mass of the first level. But it is significant more for its owner than its architecture. Hanson Puthuff was an original member of the California “plein air” school of painting, which advocated painting landscapes at their actual site and not in a studio.²⁹⁴



Hanson Puthuff House

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 752
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

Similar, if somewhat smaller, is the Alfred W. and Grace D. Hare Residence of 1910 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 738). It, too, is a Craftsman of generous proportions on an oversized lot. Its location south of Colorado and west of Eagle Rock Boulevards indicates that this section was emerging as a solid middle-class neighborhood, if not of the same status as the blocks north of Colorado.

The more modest neighborhoods were to be found in the flatter areas south of Colorado and east of Eagle Rock Boulevard. A good example is Harvard Park, a development of the Edwards and Wildey Company. It was in the area south of Yosemite that was developed after 1911 and linked to the coming of Occidental College. Advertisements for its opening in 1913 stated that it was one block from the car line. All improvements were installed, and a buyer of one of its 38 lots had to build a house on it, thereby eliminating the problem of speculators holding onto empty land.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 22.

²⁹⁵ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, May 1, 1913, December 11, 1913, October 15, 1914.



*Harvard Park
Del Rosa Drive, off Addison Way
(Photo by author)*

It can best be experienced along Del Rosa Drive. The drive is a horseshoe-shaped street that connects to Addison Way. Along the drive is a collection of modest single-story Craftsman bungalows, with a unity of design that comes from the fact that those along the outer arc were constructed in 1913 and 1914, probably by the same builder. This cluster was considered significant enough to merit an illustration on the front page of the *Sentinel*.²⁹⁶

Several residences are significant for their inhabitants, who are indicative of the types of individuals who made Eagle Rock their home. One was Fred E. Biles. He was the owner of the Eagle Rock Bank during most of the time when the city was independent. His house, built in 1921, still stands at 5132 Hermosa Avenue.²⁹⁷

Another was Cromwell Galpin. Galpin was a long-time resident of the Valley, having settled there in 1894. His influence continued into the years during which Eagle Rock became a city, and he served as Mayor in 1914. There are two adjacent houses associated with him, One, greatly altered, is his original ranch house from 1912 at 2354 Addison Way, and the other is his second house next door from 1918 at 2368 Addison Way.²⁹⁸

James Ferdon was a developer. He built many structures in the first decades of the twentieth century. His most notable pre-consolidation building still existing is the Masonic Lodge Hall of 1911. In 1904

²⁹⁶ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, October 15, 1914.

²⁹⁷ Dr. Mary LeClere, "Flowers, Skunks, Streams, and Tomatoes: Recall Horse and Buggy Days in Old Eagle Rock," in *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, August 13, 1961; "Early Eagle Rock Banker was Business and Social Leader," *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, August 27, 1961; "Important Dates in Eagle Rock History," Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society Website; HPOZ Property/People Database on file at the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society.

²⁹⁸ Cromwell Galpin, "Cromwell Galpin," edited by Henry Welcome, from the collection of the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society; "Notable Eagle Rock People" and "Important Dates in Eagle Rock History," Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society Website; HPOZ Property/People Database on file at the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society.

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Ferdon moved into a large Craftsman house on an elevated section of land south of Yosemite Drive and east of Townsend Avenue. He lived in it four years, and sold it in 1908 to Frances Silverwood, the owner of a chain of well-known menswear stores. The house still stands at 1635 Silver Oak Terrace.²⁹⁹

Perhaps less well-known as a public figure, but influential in business circles, was Orlando J. Root. Root made his fortune as an automobile manufacturer in Illinois. He moved to Eagle Rock in partial retirement and became active in local affairs. In 1912 Edwards and Wildey built a larger Craftsman-style house for Root on the southwest corner of Hill and La Roda, at 5269 La Roda Avenue.³⁰⁰

Different in status and style was Emil Swanson and his home. Swanson bought the Eagle Rock Lumber Company in 1920. His house at 2373 Addison Way, built in 1921, is a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, Number 542. Essentially a Craftsman-style cottage, it is characterized by siding that resembles logs.³⁰¹

Of particular interest in the social history of pre-consolidation Eagle Rock was Dr. Mary LeClere. The LeClere family settled in Eagle Rock in 1913, and Dr. LeClere graduated from the Los Angeles College of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons in 1920. She decided upon graduation to return to Eagle Rock and opened a practice there in 1921. In 1923 she organized the Eagle Rock Business and Professional Women's Club. The house into which her family moved in 1913 and in which she lived as an adult still stands. It is a typical suburban bungalow of the period and is located on the northwest corner of Rockland Avenue and Los Flores Drive, at 5203 Rockland Avenue.³⁰²

The Role of Occidental College

No history of pre-consolidation Eagle Rock is complete without mention of Occidental College. It played an ambiguous role in the life of the city. On one hand, Eagle Rock considered the college to be an integral part of its community. On the other hand, Occidental made an early decision not to become part of Eagle Rock, and instead worked to annex itself to Los Angeles.

Occidental decided to move from its Highland Park campus in 1910, when a group of developers offered land slightly to the northeast of the present intersection of Eagle Rock and York Boulevards in what was then unincorporated territory. Progress on developing the campus proceeded more slowly than

²⁹⁹ HPOZ Property/People Database on file at the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 21, 114.

³⁰⁰ HPOZ Property/People Database on file at the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 25.

³⁰¹ HPOZ Property/People Database on file at the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 118.

³⁰² Dr. Mary LeClere, "Flowers, Skunks, Streams, and Tomatoes: Recall Horse and Buggy Days in Old Eagle Rock," in *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, August 13, 1961; HPOZ Property/People Database on file at the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society.

expected, but Occidental was able to hold its 1914 commencement ceremony on the new campus and from then on considered this its home.³⁰³

The college had access to both the Eagle Rock streetcar line and a branch of the Figueroa Street line, which ran along York to Avenue 50 and was completed in 1907. In spite of the easy connection to Eagle Rock via the car line, the school looked to the south and Los Angeles for its identity. This became clear in 1911 when the proposed boundaries for Eagle Rock city were drawn. There was every intention of including the college land in the new town. But the college stated publicly that it did not want to be included. Thus the south boundary of the city stopped just short of the north edge of the campus.³⁰⁴

This decision did not go down well with the leaders of Eagle Rock. The city's most important developer, Godfrey Edwards, wrote a letter to the *Sentinel* stating that he opposed incorporation without Occidental. The paper printed the letter on its front page. Nonetheless, Occidental stayed outside the new city's borders, and Eagle Rock proceeded to incorporate without it.³⁰⁵

Despite the college's preference for Los Angeles, Eagle Rock considered the college to be an integral part of its community. The *Sentinel* regularly ran stories about the school, and local subdividers created "Occidental Heights," "Occidental Terrace," and "Occidental Annex," all within the Eagle Rock city limits.³⁰⁶

Godfrey Edwards

Operating both on his own and through the Edwards and Wildey Company, Godfrey Edwards was widely acknowledged to be the most important individual in pre-consolidation Eagle Rock. His real estate developments were the most numerous, and his role in civic affairs exceeded by far that of any other citizen.³⁰⁷

Edwards was a civil engineer by profession. His construction firm of Edwards and Wildey, later Edwards, Wildey and Dixon, did business throughout the region in the first decades of the twentieth century. The firm had multiple subdivisions, and constructed houses, apartments, and commercial buildings. It also built civic structures, most notable of which were the Shrine Auditorium and the Memorial Coliseum.³⁰⁸

Edwards as an individual was active in the first stages of the valley's development. He was one of the original stockholders in the Eagle Rock Water Company when it was founded in 1906. He was also one of the two developers of the 1907 business block at Colorado and Townsend. By 1909 the Edwards and

³⁰³ Robert Glass Cleland, *The History of Occidental College* (Los Angeles: Occidental College, 1937), 43-45.

³⁰⁴ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, January 11, 1911, February 8, 1911; Los Angeles Railway Corporation, *History of the Los Angeles Railway Corporation*, 36.

³⁰⁵ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, February 8, 1911, 1.

³⁰⁶ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, February 8, 1911, July 25, 1912, September 26, 1912, February 13, 1913, October 22, 1914.

³⁰⁷ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, July 8, 1910, October 10, 1912.

³⁰⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1928.

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Willey Company was advertising lots for sale in the valley. In 1910 the company operated out of a downtown Los Angeles office, as well as a small wooden building on the southwest corner of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards.³⁰⁹



*Edwards and Willey Real Estate Office, Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards, circa 1910
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The locations of Edwards and Willey's activity followed the pattern of the city's development. The company first focused on the streets north and south of Colorado between Townsend and Eagle Rock Boulevard. After the construction of the Glendale & Montrose streetcar line, its activity sifted to the west side. It was also involved in the improvements to Hill Avenue. Once Occidental College announced its plan for a new campus, Edwards and Willey moved to the area south of Yosemite Drive. Harvard Park was in this district.³¹⁰

The *Sentinel* noted in October of 1911 that three of the six tracts opened for sale in the past five months had been developed by Edwards and Willey. By 1913 their subsidiary land companies included the Oak Forest Land and Water Company, the Eagle Rock Land Company, the Ellenwood Heights Land Company, the Occidental Heights Land Company, the Glenwood Park Land Company, the Artesian Heights Land Company, and the Kenilworth Land Company.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, March 31, 1910, December 14, 1916; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 19, 100.

³¹⁰ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, April 15, 1910, August 20, 1910, January 25, 1911, March 28, 1911, June 7, 1911, July 12, 1911, October 19, 1911, December 26, 1912.

³¹¹ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, October 12, 1911, March 27, 1913.

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The various Edwards and Wildey subdivisions were known as quality products. The company included all improvements as part the cost of the lot, including concrete curbs and sidewalks, gas and water mains, and some kind of treatment to a graded street, generally an oiled or “petrolithic” surface. Often Edwards and Wildly included street trees as well.³¹²

Like some of the other subdividers, Edwards and Wildey offered to build the house as well as sell the lot. The construction arm of the firm was the California Bungalow Company. It built throughout the Los Angeles area and offered a variety of house sizes. In 1910, customers could buy a lot in Eagle Rock for as little as \$300 and a house for as little as \$2250. The California Bungalow Company at first built only to order, but soon it was building on speculation for sale. Between May of 1913 and May of 1915 Edwards and Wildey built forty-four homes, and by the end of 1915 were planning to construct ten more on East Sycamore Drive.³¹³

As contractors, Edwards and Wildey also built what would be called today custom homes. One example is the house of Orlando Root, noted above. A second example of Edwards and Wildey’s work is the impressive English Craftsman style house from 1918 at 5148 Mount Royal Drive. Even though it was remodeled in 1925, it still retains its original character.³¹⁴

Edwards and Wildey also worked in Eagle Rock as a large-scale non-residential construction company. It built both the Women’s Twentieth Century Club in 1915 and the Central School in 1917. The Company’s most obvious mark on the cityscape was the Edwards and Wildey Building, located on the southeast corner of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards and built in 1916.³¹⁵

Edwards did not limit his involvement in Eagle Rock to the business interests of the Company. Even more striking was his presence as an individual in the political and social affairs of the city. Whenever an important event was debated or an organization was formed, Edwards seemed to have had a hand in it.

He was aided in this by Harry S. Bourne. Bourne was the Manager of Edwards and Wildey’s Eagle Rock Department. In the political and social life of the city, Bourne was Edwards’ representative. But the community still looked to Edwards himself for leadership in times of crisis. When the *Sentinel* called for a mass meeting in 1912 to discuss whether or not Eagle Rock should disincorporate, Edwards was chosen as the Chairman. Under his leadership, the meeting voted to remain a city.³¹⁶

³¹² *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, April 15, 1910, July 8, 1910, February 8, 1911, March 28, 1911, December 27, 1911; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 19.

³¹³ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, March 31, 1910, November 19, 1910, December 17, 1910, December 19, 1910, June 7, 1911, June 27, 1912, December 19, 1912, May 6, 1915, December 2, 1915.

³¹⁴ HPOZ Property/People Database on file at the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 25.

³¹⁵ Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 46, 57, 111.

³¹⁶ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, November 19, 1910, October 26, 1911, March 7, 1912.

Edwards assumed perhaps the city's most significant public office when the city took over the Eagle Rock Water Company. Edwards was the Vice President of the Company, and was the individual who negotiated with the city over the price and terms of the purchase. Once the purchase was complete in 1917, Edwards emerged as the Chairman of the new municipal Water Board. He remained on the Water Board for the remainder of Eagle Rock's existence as an independent city, through the vote on consolidation in 1923.³¹⁷

Edwards' general approach to influencing city affairs was to work for specific improvements which would enhance Eagle Rock's status as an attractive place to live. His vehicle for this was the Chamber of Commerce. Gaining the Carnegie Public Library was probably his proudest achievement. He convinced both the Chamber of Commerce and the city government to support it, he headed the board that selected the architect and oversaw construction, and he was placed in charge of arranging, and speaking at, the celebration once it was finished.³¹⁸

The Early 1920s

By the time of America's entry into the First World War, in 1917, Eagle Rock appeared stable. But the pause in construction during the war years proved to be brief. The population was 2256 in 1920. By early 1923, a brief three years later, it had more than doubled to approach 5000.³¹⁹

The cause of this rapid growth was the automobile. The passenger car was not new to Eagle Rock. Perhaps one third to one half of the pre-war residents had cars. But in the early 1920s, just about all prospective buyers of buildings lots also had autos, and could consider sites beyond walking distance of a trolley line. Plots previously thought too remote now rapidly filled up.³²⁰

This residential boom was accompanied by a marked increase in commercial construction. Building permits issued in 1922 included a theater and seven commercial buildings. Most impressive was the replacement of the 1910 Eagle Rock Bank Building with a new bank and office building, on the same corner as the old. It began construction in February of 1923.³²¹

³¹⁷ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, June 29, 1916, September 21, 1916, January 11, 1917, March 8, 1923.

³¹⁸ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, December 4, 1913, December 18, 1913, June 11, 1914, December 3, 1914, December 10, 1914.

³¹⁹ Welcome, "The History of Eagle Rock," 4.

³²⁰ Car ownership estimate based on building permits and the 1916 Sanborn Map. The September 4, 1913, *Eagle Rock Sentinel* reported permits issued for 24 houses and 10 garages. On December 31, 1914 it reported 56 buildings (residential and commercial) and 34 garages. The Sanborn Map from 1916 (the only Sanborn available for the pre-consolidation years) shows that about forty percent of the houses in the area it covered had garages. Anecdotal information on auto use is found in "Honeymooners of '09 Chose Eagle Rock as a Homesite" by May M. Blumer in *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, September 3, 1961.

³²¹ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, January 4, 1923, February 1, 1923; Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 110.



Business Block from the early 1920s
5041 Eagle Rock Boulevard
(Photo by author)

But most of the commercial construction was more modest. Typically it was a single-story brick block with storefronts, in the early twentieth-century commercial vernacular style. Ornament was limited to a decorated parapet and perhaps detailing on the piers that separated the storefronts. A good intact example of this from 1922 is 5041 Eagle Rock Boulevard.³²²

Consolidation

Consolidation was not a new idea. Some residents had considered it earlier, but had to wait until Los Angeles reached Eagle Rock's southern boundary before taking action. By 1915 annexation of the area to the south was imminent, and a petition drive was successful in calling for an Eagle Rock election on whether or not to join Los Angeles. The supporters of consolidation were premature. A vote in December of 1915 resulted in a defeat of 299 in favor to 398 against.³²³

By 1923 the sentiment had changed. In announcing its support for consolidation, the *Sentinel* cited improved schools, in particular a local high school, a sewer system, and above all an adequate water supply, as the reasons for joining Los Angeles. There was some opposition over the loss of control of the local schools. But there was no ambivalence about the twin crises of a shortage of water and a lack of sewers. Godfrey Edwards, speaking for the Water Board, issued a sobering report on a looming shortage in January of 1923.³²⁴

Then In March, just before a second vote on consolidation, Edwards announced at a mass meeting that residential cesspools had contaminated the water. He endorsed consolidation as the only practical solution. Cars full of consolidation supporters toured the city on the day of the vote with big banners

³²² Warren, *Images of America: Eagle Rock*, 115

³²³ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, October 28, 1915, December 2, 1915.

³²⁴ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, March 15, 1923, March 22, 1923.

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calling for “No More Bugs in the Water.” The vote was held on March 27th, in one of the largest turnouts ever for a local election. Out of almost 3000 registered voters, almost 2000 voted. Consolidation passed 1107 in favor to 810 against. In May of 1923, Eagle Rock city ceased to exist.³²⁵



*Intersection of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards in the 1920s
New Eagle Rock Bank Building to the left, Edwards and Wildey Building beyond
Circular waiting shelter for streetcar passengers in the center
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Conclusion

The shift in 1923 from independent city to urban neighborhood was actually a relatively minor event in shaping the architecture of Eagle Rock. The Craftsman-style McNay House of 1923, L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 889, attests to the continuity in residential design. There was a modest increase after 1923 of multi-family dwellings, primarily duplexes and bungalow courts. But Eagle Rock retained to a surprising degree its suburban middle-class nature.

³²⁵ *Eagle Rock Sentinel*, March 22, 1923, March 29, 1923, April 19, 1923, May 24, 1923.

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Residential Eagle Rock has managed to save much of this character. There are blocks of elegant middle and upper-middle class Craftsman houses along the higher elevations, and enclaves of more modest bungalows, such as Harvard Park, in the level sections. The great number of Spanish Colonial Revival homes that filled in the vacant spaces during the mid and late 1920s simply added an attractive and properly scaled mix.

The commercial districts have not fared so well. Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevards have lost most of their pre-consolidation architectural character through demolition or alteration. But interspersed are such landmarks as the Edwards and Wildey Building. Most significant are the continuing existence of the institutional symbols of independent Eagle Rock – the City Hall, the Carnegie Library, the Central School, and the Twentieth Century Women’s Club. Eagle Rock is still very much a place apart.

Resources from Pre-Consolidation Eagle Rock

Extant resources are considered Criterion A/1/1. Some of these resources are also significant for their association with significant persons under Criterion B/2/2. Godfrey Edwards is one such person.

There are a number of residential resources that date from the agricultural period, before the arrival of the streetcar in 1906. Some residential resources that date from the post 1906 period may also be related to agriculture in terms of the individuals who lived in them.

Resources related to suburban Eagle Rock, encompassing the period from 1906 to 1923, include institutional, commercial, and residential types. Most of the known institutional resources have a great deal of architectural integrity, with perhaps the exception of the Central School, discussed above.

Commercial resources vary greatly in their degree of integrity. Some of the earliest known resources, such as the business block on the southwest corner of Colorado and Townsend, have lost all of their character-defining features, as noted above, while others, such as the Masonic Lodge Hall of 1911, also discussed above, have been greatly altered. Other, generally later, resources have fared better.

There is, in contrast, a great number of intact residential resources. They range in scale from large Craftsman houses to modest bungalows. Some have received individual designation and are noted above. Others, particularly the neighborhoods of smaller bungalows, warrant evaluation as potential historic districts, such as the Harvard Park development noted above. Also deserving attention as a group are bungalows constructed by certain builders, such as Walter B. Brown, discussed above.

Finally, there is at least one infrastructure resource of note. This is the Pacific Light and Power Company Substation from 1913. Others may be identified.

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EAGLE ROCK STREET NAME CHANGES

(Courtesy of the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society)

<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
Acacia Avenue	Alverne Avenue /Argus Dr.
Angelus Avenue	Algoma Avenue
Adams Avenue	Addison Way
Belleview Avenue	Grandola Avenue
Castle Avenue	Casper Avenue
Central Avenue	Eagle Rock Boulevard
Delmar Avenue	Vincent Avenue
Dean	Rydal Street
Douglas Avenue	Lockhaven Avenue
Eddy Avenue	El Rio Avenue
Ellenwood Drive	Ellenwood Place
Ellis Avenue	El Verano Avenue
Fairmont Avenue	Maywood Avenue
Fairview Street	Linda Rosa Avenue
Fairfield Avenue	Las Flores Drive
Florence Place	Tenshaw Place
Florida Way	Niagara Avenue
Glen Eyrie	Glen Iris Avenue
Grandview Avenue	Live Oak View
Harlan Avenue	Los Flores Drive
Harvard Avenue (or Drive)	Del Rosa Drive
Highland Avenue	Highland View
Hill Avenue	Hill Drive
Hillcrest Avenue	Highcrest Avenue
Kenilworth Avenue	Hermosa Avenue
Lawrence Avenue	Langdale Avenue
Linden Way	Maywood Avenue
Lucille Way	Ontearo Way
Marcello	Las Colinas
Mariposa	Las Colinas
Malfolda	Chickasaw Avenue
Myrtle Avenue	Merton Avenue
Osborne Way	LaVerne Avenue
Palm Avenue	LaVerne Avenue
Paloma Avenue	Shearin Avenue
Park Avenue	Fair Park Avenue
Pearl Street	Shearin Avenue
Royal Drive/Rinehurst Avenue	Mt. Royal Drive
Ridgeway Avenue	Ridge View Avenue
Rosemont Avenue	Dahlia Drive
Rowland Avenue	Rockland Avenue
Satsuma Avenue	La Roda Avenue

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Sierra Vista Drive Sierra Villa
Stanley Avenue Chickasaw Avenue
Summit Drive Escarpa Drive
Sycamore Avenue Yosemite Drive
Valley Drive Ellenwood Drive
Virginia Avenue Vincent Avenue
West Street Ward Street
Wideway Broadway

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT EAGLE ROCK

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement and social history for its association with the early development history of Eagle Rock as an independent city prior to consolidation with Los Angeles. Resources from this time include residences, places of work, and sites for social life and are increasingly rare.

Period of Significance: 1886-1923

Period of Significance Justification: Eagle Rock valley opened for agricultural development in 1886. Eagle Rock consolidated with Los Angeles in 1923.

Geographic Location: Within the 1923 city boundaries of Eagle Rock when it consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History

Criteria: NR: A/B CR: 1/2 Local: 1/2

Associated Property Type/subtype:

- Property Type: Residential-Single Family, Bungalow
- Property Type: Residential-Single Family, House
- Property Type: Residential- Suburb, Streetcar Suburb
- Property Type: Commercial/Retail, Retail Store
- Property Type: Institutional-Education, Elementary School
- Property Type: Institutional-Social Clubs, Clubhouse
- Property Type: Institutional-Government, City Hall
- Property Type: Institutional-Government, Library
- Property Type: Infrastructure-Water & Power, Utility Building

Property Type Description:

- Bungalow: Domestic dwelling on a private lot, generally modest in size, single-story in height
- House: Domestic dwelling on a private lot, generally two or more stories in height
- Retail Store/Business Block: Facility for transacting commerce, with offices and/or meeting space on the upper floor
- Institutional – Education, Elementary: A public building intended for primary educational use
- Institutional – Social Clubs, Clubhouse: A building intended for meetings of a social organization, designed to reflect its community role

Institutional – Government, City Hall: A public building intended to house city government, designed in an appropriate monumental style

Institutional – Library: A public building intended to house a free lending library, often designed in an appropriate monumental style

Infrastructure – Power, Utility Building: A building constructed as part of the infrastructure improvements, typically of industrial scale and/or monumental form

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are all significant under Criterion A/1/1. Buildings under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation Eagle Rock lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life. Some property types are also significant under Criterion B/2/2. Buildings under this criterion are directly related to significant individuals in pre-consolidation Eagle Rock, in addition to illustrating how residents lived.

Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from the pre-consolidation period of Eagle Rock
- Is associated with the formation, settlement, and/or development of Eagle Rock
- Under Criterion B/2/2/, is directly associated with the productive life of a person who played an important role in the formation, settlement, and/or development of Eagle Rock
 - Individual must be proven to have made important contributions to the early settlement and development of Eagle Rock

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Related to life in pre-consolidation Eagle Rock by showing how residents lived, worked, and socialized
- Indicative of both the agricultural years and the years as a distant suburb of Los Angeles
- May be associated with groups or individuals important in Eagle Rock’s early ethnic/cultural history
- For Historic Districts:
 - Conveys a strong visual sense of overall historic environment from the period of significance
 - Must retain the majority of the original planning features including street patterns, building setbacks, and landscape and street features
 - Typically associated with streetcar residential or commercial development and may also be significant within these themes.

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within Wilmington for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed
- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria
- For Historic Districts:
 - District as a whole should retain integrity of Location, Setting, Design, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
 - May include some infill of resources constructed outside the period of significance

THEME: HYDE PARK, 1887-1923



*Hyde Park Congregational Church and Sunday School Building in the 1920s
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Hyde Park was a city that never intended to be one. For thirty-four years, from 1887 until 1921, it was content to remain an unincorporated hamlet. With its stop on a branch line of the Santa Fe railroad, it served a surrounding agricultural region. Its few hundred inhabitants clustered around the Congregational Church and a handful of storefronts at the intersection of today's Crenshaw and Hyde Park Boulevards.

But this agrarian settlement found itself in the path of relentless suburban growth. First came the trolley and then the automobile. In 1921 the village incorporated itself as a defensive move to prevent being devoured by a fast encroaching Los Angeles. It did not work. Newcomers saw themselves as Angelenos rather than Hyde Parkers, and quickly outnumbered the older residents. Within less than two years these newcomers were able to reverse the decision to remain independent and, in early 1923, join Hyde Park to Los Angeles through consolidation.

Creation as an Agricultural Settlement, 1887-1902

Hyde Park began as one of many towns platted during the boom of the late 1880s. It had the good fortune to be located along a rail line that survived the collapse of the boom. While it failed in its early years to live up to the promises of its developers, Hyde Park entered the twentieth century as a stable if small service point for the surrounding farms and ranches that relied on its rail stop.

In January of 1887 the *Los Angeles Times* announced the creation of the town of Hyde Park along the deceptively-named Los Angeles and Santa Monica Railroad, then under construction. The rail line was to be about seventeen miles long and to run from the Santa Fe depot on Second Street in downtown Los Angeles to a wharf at Ballona Harbor. The town of Hyde Park was to be situated midway on this line, adjoining two ranches.³²⁶

The original Hyde Park subdivision extended from today's 60th Street on the north to Florence Avenue on the south and from Eighth Avenue on the east to West Boulevard on the west. Typical was a lot of sixty by one hundred ninety feet, at a price of one hundred dollars, with terms of forty dollars down and ten dollars a month with no interest, and the promise of water piped to each lot.³²⁷

The *Los Angeles Times*, as was its tendency during the boom, continued to boost the development. In June of 1887, it described Hyde Park as "an elevated plateau overlooking the whole surrounding country" which "makes up a beautiful townsite."³²⁸ In July it maintained that lots had increased in price to one hundred twenty-five dollars each.³²⁹ Two years later, in August of 1889, the *Times* was still pushing the towns along the rail line. In comparison to nearby Inglewood, "Hyde Park is no less charming for situation, and is a most inviting place for homes."³³⁰

Like most of the other townsites created in the late 1880s, Hyde Park remained undeveloped once the boom collapsed. However, the railroad continued to serve it. By the 1890s control of the line had passed to the Santa Fe and reliable service was established. Because of this Hyde Park did not disappear but rather lived on to provide a commercial center and shipping point for the surrounding farms and ranches.³³¹

Hyde Park's identity as an agricultural district continued into the twentieth century. The California Vegetable Union, a shipper of produce in carload lots, handled the crops of local growers and supported a packing and loading station near the Hyde Park railroad stop. As late as 1913 the Hyde Park Dairy maintained its yards along Florence one block west of Crenshaw. In 1922, on the eve of consolidation

³²⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1887, April 28, 1887.

³²⁷ Los Angeles County Assessor's Map; *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1887, February 28, 1887.

³²⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, June 15, 1887.

³²⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 1887.

³³⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 1889.

³³¹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1892, July 24, 1893.

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with Los Angeles, the *Times* still described the immediate area around Hyde Park as primarily agricultural, characterized by truck farms and poultry ranches.³³²

Although lacking most urban amenities, the agriculturally-oriented residents quickly moved to establish a school. Hyde Park and the surrounding area petitioned to form a district in June of 1888. Together with this came the right to issue school bonds. By the early 1890s the district had two teachers and an estimated 140 children. The Hyde Park schoolhouse also served as the voting center for the surrounding Ballona Township. The Hyde Park precinct of Ballona Township had 138 registered voters in 1896, which placed it at about the same size as Sierra Madre, with 126, and La Cañada at 136.³³³

The Early Suburban Community, 1902-1921

The original town of Hyde Park, in the quadrangle bordered by 60th Street, Eighth Avenue, Florence Avenue and West Boulevard, gained a second chance to boom when the trolley arrived in the early 1900s. The line was first proposed by the Los Angeles and Redondo Railway Company. Its scheme called for an electric line from Los Angeles to Redondo Beach by way of Hyde Park and Inglewood. The *Times*, once again acting as a booster, maintained that the prospective coming of the line resulted in the sale of one hundred pieces of real estate.³³⁴

The railroad asked the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for a franchise running south on Crenshaw (then called Angeles Mesa Boulevard) to the existing Santa Fe line, and then southwest adjacent to the Santa Fe. The franchise was granted, construction began and the line was completed by the end of 1902. Initially service ran every ninety minutes from downtown Los Angeles via Hyde Park and Inglewood to Redondo Beach between 8:30 am and 11:30 pm. The little hamlet now had two rail connections to the outside world.³³⁵

The new electric route soon became part of the Los Angeles Railway (LARY). It was known as the Eagle Rock Valley and Hawthorne Line, and was the longest single line in the LARY system. Cars traveled from Eagle Rock to downtown Los Angeles, then south on Main and Grand to what is now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, west along King to Third Avenue, diagonally southwest through open country (today's Leimert Boulevard) to Crenshaw, and then south on Crenshaw to the Santa Fe tracks in Hyde Park. From there the line continued southwest alongside the Santa Fe tracks and then south to Inglewood and Hawthorne.³³⁶

The service along this line was more interurban than city streetcar. It used 52-seat cars, the largest that the LARY had, and ran for much of its distance on a private right-of-way. The result was that the Eagle Rock Valley and Hawthorne Line ranked number one in the system in car-miles-per-car-hours, a measure

³³² *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1912, December 14, 1913, November 12, 1922.

³³³ *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1888, August 8, 1888, January 13, 1892, October 29, 1892, August 18, 1896.

³³⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, March 6, 1902.

³³⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, November 28, 1902, December 10, 1902.

³³⁶ Jim Walker, *Los Angeles Railway Yellow Cars* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 39.

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of speed. This placed Hyde Park within 30 to 35 minutes of downtown Los Angeles. By 1919 service was every 20 minutes during the day and every 30 minutes at night, with seven minute headways during rush hour.³³⁷

With the arrival of the trolley Hyde Park began to develop as a small-scale suburb. No population figures are available, but it is safe to assume that, by the time of the First World War, the town had several hundred residents. By 1916 Hyde Park had a branch of the Los Angeles County Public Library. Also by 1916 its business community had organized itself into the Hyde Park Improvement Association.³³⁸

Unfortunately, there is little documentary evidence on social life in pre-consolidation Hyde Park. Because the community was not incorporated until 1922, there are no good census numbers. What little information there is indicates that Hyde Park was generally a middle-class Protestant community.

This accounts for the strong anti-alcohol stance of the voters. They voted twice to ban saloons. In 1902 the vote was 23 in favor and 49 against them. In 1904 it was 43 in favor and 91 against. In 1903 a local resident, who operated what was called a “pickle and vinegar factory” out of his home, applied to the county for a liquor license. One hundred out of the one hundred twenty voters in Hyde Park precinct signed a petition opposing the application. The owner withdrew it.³³⁹

There was a Roman Catholic Church, St. John’s, as early as 1909, but the parish seems to have encompassed both Hyde Park and Inglewood.³⁴⁰ The only other evidence of diversity dates from 1912. A story in the *Times* called Hyde Park a “pretty little suburb” with a significant German population. Members of this population complained to the school board when “their children were given the undignified sobriquet of ‘sauerkraut’ by some of the youthful Yankees in the school.”³⁴¹

Consistent with its Protestant, middle class character was the important role played by the Hyde Park Congregational Church. Congregationalists had been a strong presence in the area since the early 1890s and held services in the school house for many years before completing their own building. In 1901 the congregation constructed a new sanctuary, funded by Captain F. B. Clark as a memorial to his daughter.³⁴²

³³⁷ Board of Public Utilities and California Railroad Commission, *Report of Service, Operating and Financial Condition of the Los Angeles Railway Corporation*, (Los Angeles, 1919), 11, 17, 41, 44, 67.

³³⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 1916, October 14, 1916.

³³⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1903, November 11, 1904.

³⁴⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1909, June 4, 1922.

³⁴¹ *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1912.

³⁴² *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1901, February 7, 1901, February 11, 1901, October 13, 1902. The photo collection of the Los Angeles Public Library contains a photograph of the home of Captain Frank B. Clark (order number 00037562) that appears to date from the 1880s. The photo gives no location more specific than Hyde Park. There is a second photograph (order number 000037563) that shows the side view of a house that is identified as belonging to Captain George Clark. It was located between 62nd and 63rd Streets and 11th and 12th Avenues. It looks to be the same house, and may have been mistakenly identified. It no longer exists.

By the time of consolidation in 1923 the Congregational Church consisted of a three-building compound on the southwest corner of Crenshaw and Hyde Park Boulevards. The 1901 Sanctuary stood on the corner. To its south, facing Crenshaw, was an equally monumental Sunday School Building. To the west, facing Hyde Park Boulevard and separated by open space from the other two structures, was the Community or Social Hall.³⁴³

Both the Sanctuary and the Sunday School Building are gone, although the site of the Sanctuary is designated as L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, Number 18. But the Social Hall remains. It was built in 1922 in a simplified Craftsman style. It is single story, with a central entrance placed between two protruding bay providing a bit of symmetrical formality. Its most distinguishing feature is its clipped gabled or jerkinhead roof.³⁴⁴



*Hyde Park Congregational Church Social Hall
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Along with the Congregational Church, as a significant institution in pre-consolidation Hyde Park, was the school. The Hyde Park School District included both the original Hyde Park settlement and the Angeles Mesa neighborhood north of 60th Street. The Hyde Park district realized that it was not large

³⁴³ Sanborn Map for Los Angeles, Volume 25 (1927).

³⁴⁴ Jeffrey Herr, editor, *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, 2002), 16, 422; *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1922. Construction date is from the Los Angeles County Assessor.

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enough to support a high school and as early as 1905 voted to join with Inglewood and surrounding rural districts to form a unified high school district.³⁴⁵

But Hyde Parkers were intent on maintaining their own locally controlled elementary school. By 1914 the district, consisting of the original Hyde Park settlement and the Angeles Mesa community, had about 800 residents. In February of that year these residents decided to build two new schools. One was to be in the Angeles Mesa area and called the Angeles Mesa School. The other was to serve the original Hyde Park and be called the Hyde Park School. The Hyde Park School was to consist of a five-building complex on the south side of Hyde Park Boulevard between Eighth and Eleventh Avenues. The architect was G. A. Howard. The cluster of five buildings was completed in the fall of 1915.³⁴⁶



*View of Hyde Park School toward the Northeast
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

By early 1922 the Hyde Park School needed to be enlarged. Bonds amounting to \$64,000 were approved and issued. Sources are unclear as to what happened next, but it appears that four buildings

³⁴⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 1905, October 12, 1913.

³⁴⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1914, August 26, 1914, June 27, 1915, September 7, 1915.

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were added to the original five to create a campus of nine structures in a unified architectural style. An aerial photograph, taken in 1926, shows the campus. The classroom building at the far right is believed to have survived. (See the section on Resources from Pre-Consolidation Hyde Park below.)³⁴⁷

The coming of the trolley led to the development of a small commercial district around the Congregational Church at intersection of Crenshaw and Hyde Park Boulevards. Commercial activity remained modest and Hyde Park had no bank of its own until 1921, when Citizen's Savings Bank of Inglewood considered opening a branch. The most architecturally imposing building was a two-story business block on the southeast corner of Crenshaw and Hyde Park that dates from 1911. It still stands, but has lost all its character-defining architectural features.³⁴⁸

The homes of Hyde Park typically matched those of an outlying middle-class neighborhood in Los Angeles. Three survivors have maintained a good deal of integrity. All three are within the original Hyde Park subdivision. The first two, from 1903 and 1910, are south of Hyde Park Boulevard and closer to the old center. The third, from 1915, is larger and more stylish, and north of Hyde Park Boulevard toward the Angeles Mesa development.

The smallest of the three is a single story bungalow is located at 6607 South Crenshaw Boulevard. It dates from 1910, and features Colonial Revival style detailing in the low arch over the porch and in the porch columns.



*Residence
6607 South Crenshaw Boulevard
(©2015 Google Street View)*

³⁴⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1922, March 21, 1922.

³⁴⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1921, December 15, 1921. Construction date is from the Los Angeles County Assessor.

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The second and somewhat larger home is located at 3111 West 71st Street. It dates from 1903, and is a story-and-a-half Craftsman with a front bay window and a tapered brick porch pier.



Residence
3111 West 71st Street
(SurveyLA)

The third and largest is located at 6122 South Victoria Avenue. It dates from 1915 and is an ample version of a so-called Airplane Bungalow. Its second story is actually large enough to qualify it as a two-story Craftsman.



Residence
6122 South Victoria Avenue
(©2015 Google Street View)

Expansion, Incorporation and Consolidation, 1921-1923

What happened to Hyde Park in the early 1920s can best be seen in the construction dates of still-standing buildings within the pre-consolidation city limits. The number built in 1910 is 3. It rises to 7 in 1911 and to a pre-war high of 14 in 1912. It then drops to 8 in 1913, 9 in 1914, 7 in 1915, and 8 in 1916. With the coming of the First World War it drops further to 1 in 1917 and 2 in 1918. It sees a slight increase to 4 in 1919, and 10 in 1920. Then things change rapidly. There are 54 still-standing buildings from 1921 and 144 from 1922. The numbers clearly show that, in 1921 and 1922, Hyde Park went from a small, stable suburb to a fast-growing outer neighborhood of Los Angeles.³⁴⁹

This growth was previewed in the years before the First World War by what happened to Angeles Mesa. This neighborhood, north of 60th Street, was outside the original Hyde Park subdivision but was part of the Hyde Park school district. Development in Angeles Mesa was so rapid that, by 1915 its assessed property values were more than double that of old Hyde Park. The result was constant conflict between the two, with the voters in the southern part of the district unwilling to support the completing of a separate Angeles Mesa School.³⁵⁰

Soon Angeles Mesa decided to go its own way. As early as 1913 the neighborhood had considered annexing to Los Angeles, primarily as a means of having the city pay for street improvements. The disputes over schools decided the matter. The neighborhood north of 60th Street joined Los Angeles in 1917 as part of the West Coast Annexation. Hyde Park was contained on its north.³⁵¹

The Shoestring Annexation of 1906 had already brought Los Angeles to Van Ness Avenue on Hyde Park's eastern flank. Eighth Avenue now became a dividing line between old Hyde Park to its west and a newer district, still unincorporated but oriented toward Los Angeles, to the east between Eighth and Van Ness. Developers created a new grid of streets consisting of smaller blocks aligned, not with the grid of old Hyde Park, but rather that of Los Angeles.³⁵²

While there was some commercial and industrial development along the Santa Fe rail line, the overwhelming portion of this new area was residential. The most publicized residential development was Reid's Hyde Park Tract which opened in January of 1922. It extended for a few blocks south of 60th Street and east of Eighth Avenue. The sales office was at Eighth Avenue and 65th Street (now Hyde Park Boulevard), across from what advertisements called the "famous Hyde Park School." Directions were

³⁴⁹ Construction dates are from the Los Angeles County Assessor. While perhaps underestimating the number of structures from the period before 1920 due to demolitions, the numbers still point to a dramatic increase in the rate of development.

³⁵⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 1915, April 9, 1916, June 13, 1916.

³⁵¹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1913; Public Works Annexation Maps for Cities in Los Angeles County (Los Angeles County Web Site).

³⁵² California Bank Maps of Los Angeles and Vicinity, 1924 (Los Angeles Public Library).

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given both to streetcar riders and to automobiles, which were to travel west on Slauson and then south on Eighth to reach the development.³⁵³

Six months later, in June of 1922, George W. Dilling, a former mayor of Seattle, started developing the section to the south, stretching from the Santa Fe tracks to Florence and from Eighth to Van Ness. Other developers worked throughout the rest of 1922, subdividing the remaining vacant land east of Eighth Avenue. Many were involved in similar developments to the north of 60th Street in Angeles Mesa, and the line between what was inside Los Angeles and inside Hyde Park was often left unclear in the advertisements. By the end of 1922 Hyde Park had five new subdivisions, consisting of 156 acres containing 863 lots.³⁵⁴

Some land developers offered home building services, and regional home builders now saw Hyde Park as a location for profitable activity. The construction company of Dilling & Lichty had one of its three branches in the sales office of Reid's Hyde Park Track at Eighth Avenue and 65th Street. The company offered to construct a four-room bungalow for \$4250, with terms of \$500 down and \$50 per month, including interest. The bungalow included hardwood floors, built-in buffet, bookcases and a linen closet. It also featured a bath with tub, a breakfast nook and a fireplace.³⁵⁵

This residential development brought with it the inevitable specter of annexation to Los Angeles. Unlike similar communities, such as Eagle Rock and Hollywood, Hyde Park had chosen in the past to remain unincorporated. Now, however, faced with an increasing number of newcomers who hoped to join Los Angeles, older residents saw incorporation as a defensive move. Enough locals signed petitions to call an election in April of 1921.³⁵⁶

Hyde Park voted, 162 in favor to 104 against, to incorporate as a city of the sixth class. The *Times* was blunt in its analysis of the results. "Hyde Park people said that they desired to incorporate as a city for purposes of self-preservation."³⁵⁷ The opposition was also clear in stating that Hyde Park would be better off as part of Los Angeles. It was obvious, given the continued rapid growth, that the matter was far from settled.³⁵⁸

The new city of Hyde Park placed its hopes on the development of a commercial and industrial base. In November of 1921 the newly formed Chamber of Commerce placed an advertisement in the *Times* that called Hyde Park "the baby city at the southwest gateway to Los Angeles" and stressed its service by the Los Angeles and the Santa Fe Railways. "It is easy to see that Hyde Park has the advantage over any

³⁵³ *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1922.

³⁵⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1922, July 9, 1922, October 8, 1922, March 25, 1923.

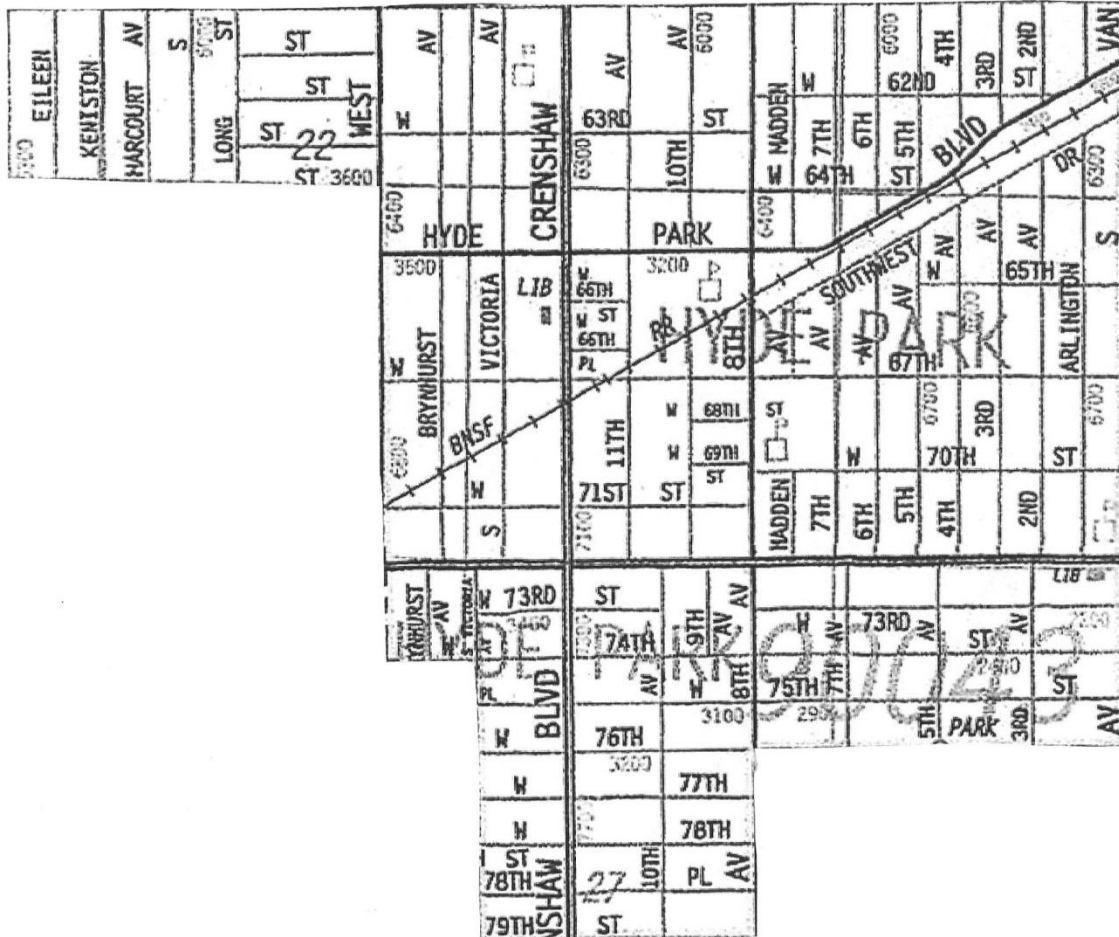
³⁵⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1922. February 7, 1923.

³⁵⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1921.

³⁵⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1921.

³⁵⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1921.

other city as a manufacturing center.”³⁵⁹ Some developers took up the idea, but not enough to give the city an adequate tax base.³⁶⁰



*Hyde Park city limits at incorporation and consolidation
 (From “Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, City Boundaries and Annexations”)*

Despite the best efforts of the old Hyde Parkers to make a success of independence, the little city lasted less than two years. It simply could not meet the demand for services that followed from the increase in population. In August of 1922 pro-Los Angeles residents began a new campaign, promising cheaper gas, water, telephone and insurance rates, better and cheaper streetcar service, better fire and police protection, and better schools. They also promised that property values would increase.³⁶¹

By early 1923 Hyde Park had grown from a few hundred to an estimated three thousand residents. Supporters of consolidation succeeded in calling for a new election, and voters again went to the polls in

³⁵⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, November 27, 1921.

³⁶⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1923.

³⁶¹ *Los Angeles Times*, August 20, 1922.

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March of that year. In a turnout that exceeded seventy-five percent of the registered voters, the result was 493 in favor of consolidation and 271 opposed. The determining factor was simply the growth of the pro-consolidation population in the new subdivisions. The total number of voters in the 1921 incorporation election was 266. The total voting in 1923 was 764.³⁶²

Conclusion

Hyde Park is a prime example of incorporation as a defensive move. Old Hyde Park seemed content to maintain its rural ways based on its public school and the Congregational Church. Perhaps Hyde Park is most significant, not for its existence as an independent city, but as a remnant of an older type of community. In retrospect it seems to have been a Southern California version of the rural New England Congregationalist settlement, in which religion and education played an interconnected role. The two remaining non-residential resources, the Congregational Church Social Hall and the Hyde Park School classroom building, are remnants of that community.

Resources from Pre-Consolidation Hyde Park

Extant resources are considered Criterion A/1/1. At this time, no individuals have been identified as significant enough to justify a Criterion B/2/2. If additional research uncovers any, such as Captain F. B. Clark, eligibility standards for Criterion B/2/2 will be developed.

There are two known institutional resources remaining. One is the Social Hall of the Congregational Church. It is generally intact. Some of the features, such as the original doors and the attic window, have been altered.



*Current view of Hyde Park Congregational Church Social Hall
Hyde Park Boulevard, East of Crenshaw
(Photo by author)*

³⁶² *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1923, March 21, 1923.

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The other is an apparent classroom building that was one of nine that made up the Hyde Park School at the time of consolidation. This 1922 Mission Revival style building appears to be the easternmost (far right) of the nine school buildings shown in the aerial photo above. Further research may be required to confirm if this is indeed one of the school buildings, if the 1922 construction date is accurate, and if the architect for the original five structures, G. A. Howard, also designed the latter four.



*Current view of probable Hyde Park School building
6525 Eighth Avenue
(SurveyLA)*

Commercial resources are few and appear to lack any architectural integrity. Residential resources, on the other hand, are both more plentiful and more intact. They can be considered in two categories.

The first consists of those constructed before the First World War and located within the original Hyde Park subdivision. They can rightly be considered part of pre-consolidation Hyde Park. Three have been identified and discussed above.

The second category is made up of the much more numerous residences built after the war. They more correctly should be considered under the theme of city-wide suburbanization, rather than as part of the theme of pre-consolidation Hyde Park, for the reasons presented in the narrative.

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT HYDE PARK

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement and social history for its association with the early development history of Hyde Park as an independent city prior to consolidation with Los Angeles. Resources from this time include residences, places of work and sites for social life and are now rare.

Note: No resources within pre-consolidation Hyde Park were identified as significant for their association with important individuals. Should any be discovered as the result of additional research then eligibility standards for Criterion B/2/2 will be developed.

Period of Significance: 1887-1923

Period of Significance Justification: Hyde Park was subdivided in 1887. Hyde Park consolidated with Los Angeles in 1923.

Geographic Location: Within the 1923 city boundaries of Hyde Park when it consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History

Criteria: NR: A CR: 1 Local: 1

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Residential-Single Family, Bungalow/House
Property Type: Commercial-Retail, Retail (Business Block)
Property Type: Institutional-Religious/Spiritual, Church
Property Type: Institutional-Education, Elementary School

Property Type Description: Bungalow/House: Domestic dwelling on a private lot
Retail Store: Facility for transacting commerce with general public, possibly with offices and/or meeting space above
Church: Place of worship denoted by denomination
Elementary School: A building housing instructional for elementary grades

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are all significant under Criterion A/1/1. Resources under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation Hyde Park lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life.

Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from pre-consolidation period of Hyde Park

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- Is associated with the formation, settlement, and/or development of Hyde Park

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Associated with activities typical of city life of pre-consolidation Hyde Park, in particular the role of important institutions such as the Congregational Church and the Hyde Park School
- May be associated with groups important in Hyde Park's early ethnic/cultural history

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within Sawtelle for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed
- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria

THEME: VENICE, 1901-1925



*Woodward Avenue, circa 1905
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Venice began as an idea. This was the belief that a seaside entertainment spot could combine monumental architecture with a good time. Visitors could come to the beach to be educated as well as amused. One individual, Abbot Kinney, has this vision, and put a great deal of money and effort into realizing it.

It did not quite work out the way that Kinney had hoped. Entertainment triumphed over education. The monumental structures of his original effort were soon overwhelmed by the Los Angeles version of Coney Island. The beachfront became lined with piers, dance halls, and pleasure rides, all housed in the temporary architecture of fantasy, and all now vanished. Only a remnant of Kinney's arcaded core remains.

Alongside this was a second Venice, that of homes. With it came more conventional institutions and businesses. Much of this residential Venice served visitors to the beachfront entertainment district. But, as the city grew to the east, permanent residents built a community that resembled other suburbs in its social life and architecture. Much of this Venice remains.

The fate of Venice, in particular the entertainment zone, was tied to changes in transportation. Beachfront Venice was a product of the interurban railroad. It was dense and pedestrian oriented. It did well so long as visitors came by train. But once they chose to come by car, the setting simply could not accommodate them and declined.

The more suburban sections to the east coped better with the automobile. Instead of failure, the car produced growth and a demand for service that could not be met by the existing city government and its limited resources. The result was, not decline, but consolidation with Los Angeles.

The Setting

To understand the history of Venice, it is best to start with a map. The one below shows the railroads and major streets around 1918.

Today's Pacific Avenue was the Trolleyway for the Lagoon Line interurban route. Today's Venice Boulevard was the Short Line interurban route. They were both dedicated rights-of-way for trains, and neither one served as roads. (What was called Venice Boulevard then is today's Venice Way.)

Washington Boulevard, the primary auto route from Los Angeles at that time, stopped well short of the beach. Instead it angled toward the northwest as the current Abbot Kinney Boulevard. The Speedway was a service alley that ran behind the structures along Ocean Front Walk, a pedestrian-only path fronting the beach.

The Inglewood Line railroad pre-dated the creation of Venice. It was a steam line, completed in 1892, which connected Santa Monica with Inglewood. During the years of pre-consolidation Venice it was primarily a freight line. It separated the Beachfront section and Abbot Kinney's Venice of America from the less-densely populated Back Country.³⁶³

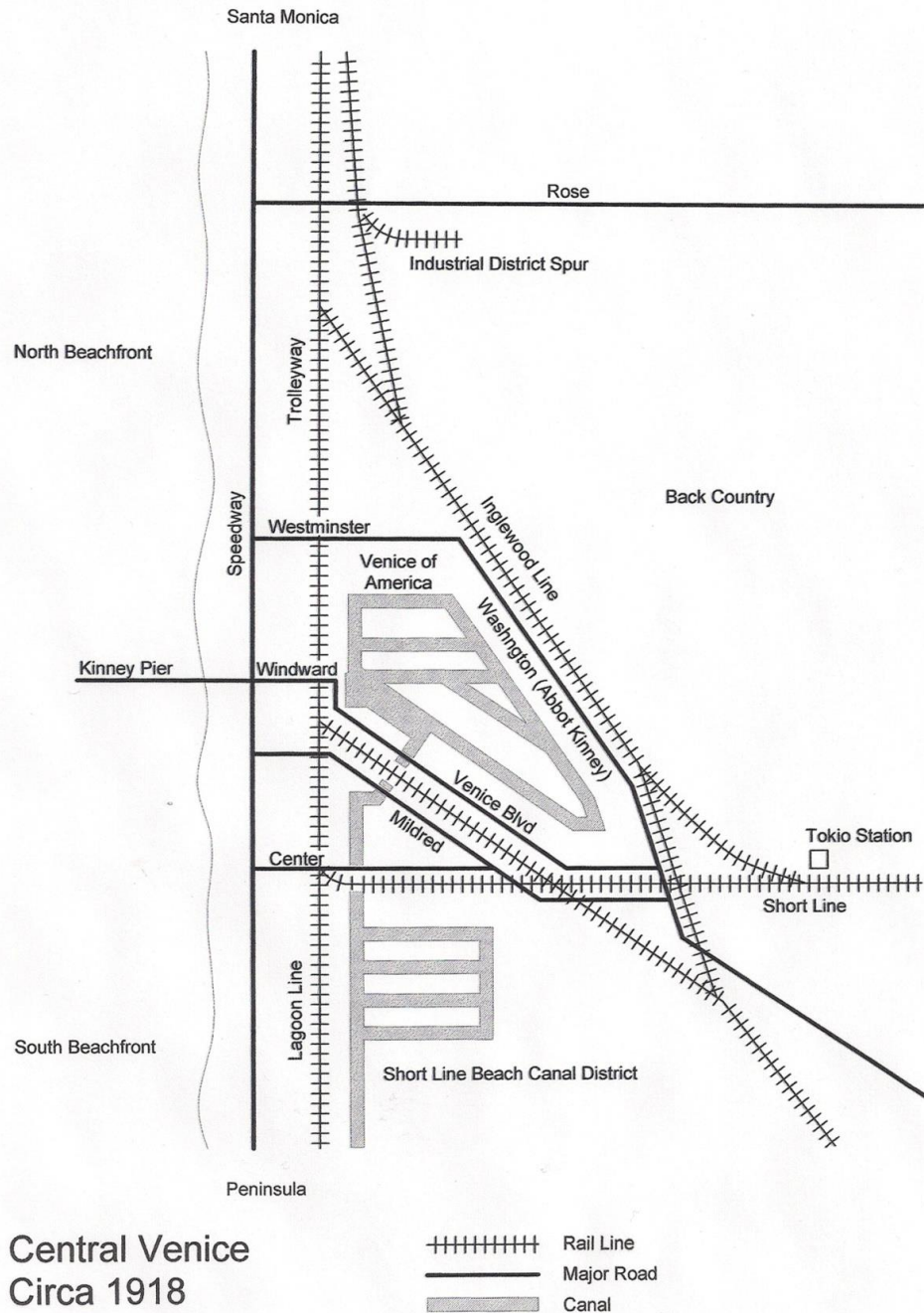
The Lagoon Line, running on the Trolleyway, its dedicated right-of-way, was the first interurban railroad to reach Venice. In 1901 it was extended south from its existing terminus at Marine Avenue in Santa Monica as far as Clubhouse Avenue. This 1901 extension is considered the beginning of Venice. By 1904 the line had been continued down the peninsula, crossed the mouth of Ballona Creek on a wooden

³⁶³ *Lines of the Pacific Electric: Western Division*, Volume 15 Number 6 of *Interurbans* (December 1957 [1967]), 53.

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trestle and reached Playa del Rey. Its stop at Windward Avenue was the station for Venice-of-America.³⁶⁴



Data from William Myers & Ira Sweet, *Trolleys to the Sea*, and Sanborn Map for Santa Monica and Venice 1918

³⁶⁴ William A. Myers and Ira L. Street, *Trolleys to the Sea: The Story of the Los Angeles Pacific Railway* (Glendale: Interurban Publications Inc., 1976), 73.

The Short Line was completed in September of 1904 as a direct interurban route from downtown Los Angeles. It entered from the east along the path of present-day Venice Boulevard, and followed the route of the future boulevard until it reached the Lagoon Line. At that point it turned north and used the Trolleyway of the Lagoon line to end in Santa Monica. Its Tokio Station served the Back Country and its stop at Windward Avenue served Venice of America.³⁶⁵

A number of connecting rail lines and spurs added additional barriers that separated Venice into sections. Along Mildred Avenue there emerged what was an industrial service district for Venice of America. A second small industrial zone developed near Rose Avenue.

The Lagoon Line ran on top of a sandbar that separated the beachfront from a marshy district to the east. Two canal networks, Venice of America to the north and the Short Line Beach Canal District to the south, were constructed to drain the marshland. The Venice of America canals have been filled in. The Short Line Beach Canal District is now an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, Number 270, and known as the Venice Canal System.

Abbot Kinney and Venice of America

Taking advantage of the Lagoon Line extension was Abbot Kinney. In partnership with other investors, Kinney had purchased oceanfront land in 1891 that stretched from just south of Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica to 18th Avenue in present-day Venice. Between 1901 and 1903 Kinney and his partners developed and marketed building lots between the Trolleyway and the beach along the newly-opened interurban line.³⁶⁶

In 1904 Kinney split with his partners. The partners assumed control of the land within the Santa Monica city limits, while Kinney took the remainder to the south, between the Santa Monica city limits and 18th Avenue. Kinney then worked through the Ocean Park Improvement Association to make his new acquisition into an independent city. An election was held in February of 1904 and residents of the area voted 54 to 2 to incorporate as a city of the sixth class, calling itself Ocean Park and thereby creating constant confusion with the adjacent Ocean Park neighborhood to the north in Santa Monica.³⁶⁷

Kinney wanted more than another beachfront cottage settlement. He envisioned a planned community of sophisticated design and high entertainment standards. This vision grew out of his infatuation with

³⁶⁵ Myers and Street, *Trolleys to the Sea*, 27, 57, 59; *1918 Sanborn Map*; Jeffrey Stanton, *Venice, California: Coney Island of the Pacific* (Los Angeles: Donahue Publishing Company, 1987 [1993]), 21-22.

³⁶⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1903; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 4.

³⁶⁷ Lynn Craig Cunningham, *Venice, California: From City to Suburb* (Ph.D. Thesis, UCLA, 1976), 13-14; *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 1903, February 13, 1904; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 18.

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the City Beautiful ideal and its realization in the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. He was particularly taken with the image of the Fair's Lagoon, with its waterways surrounded by imposing structures.³⁶⁸ Kinney announced the plan for his new community in April of 1904. It was called Venice of America and was loosely patterned after the original Venice in Italy. Its site consisted of a 750-foot portion of the sand bar along the ocean front, stretching from Market Street on the north to 17th Avenue on the south. This connection to the sea extended back 900 feet, just to the east of the Trolleyway. At that point it opened up in a fan-like manner to encompass a rough triangle of 120 acres.³⁶⁹

A plaza located at the Windward Avenue Trolleyway stop allowed visitors to disembark and be directed toward a variety of attractions. To the west was the block-long stretch of Windward Avenue, where Kinney planned to erect a California version of Saint Mark's Square. Both sides of the avenue were to be lined with Venetian style buildings, at the base of which were to be uniform sets of arcades. Beyond Ocean Park Walk was to be a pleasure pier extending into the Pacific.³⁷⁰

The expanse of marshland to the east of the Trolleyway required some system of drainage to make it usable. Kinney's plan called for a network of canals that would both remove the stagnant ponds and provide the waterways needed to complete his vision of a Venice of America. The lots fronting on the canals were to be served by alleys at the rear.³⁷¹

Providing the architectural design and site plan for Kinney was the Los Angeles firm of Norman Marsh and Clarence Russell. Marsh had worked in Chicago before coming to Los Angeles. He had seen the 1893 Fair and was familiar with its City Beautiful layout. Marsh and Russell were responsible for the town plan and the conceptual sketches that Kinney used to market his scheme, and provided plans for many of the buildings on Windward Avenue and along the canals.³⁷²

Construction proceeded rapidly. The canals were dug, the roads and bridges installed, and utilities put in place. To maintain the Venetian look along Windward Avenue, Kinney installed cast iron columns as armatures for the arcades, and left it to other developers to construct the buildings with arcades according to his plan. On July 4 of 1905 Venice of America was opened to the public.³⁷³

Matters did not go exactly as Kinney had hoped. During the next few years, much of Windward Avenue emerged according to Kinney's vision. The north side in particular, with the Saint Mark's Hotel on the corner with Ocean Park Walk, filled out well. But the opposite corner on the south side never received its planned-for hotel, and the armatures for the proposed arcades remained protruding from the sidewalk as reminders of the project's incomplete status.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁸ Stanton, *Venice, California*, 18.

³⁶⁹ Abbot Kinney Company, *Venice of America, Ocean Park, California* (Los Angeles: Out West Publishing, n.d.), 6.

³⁷⁰ Abbot Kinney Company, *Venice of America*, 6.

³⁷¹ Abbot Kinney Company, *Venice of America*, 6, 8.

³⁷² Cunningham, *Venice, California*, 15; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 21.

³⁷³ Stanton, *Venice, California*, 25, 28-30.

³⁷⁴ Stanton, *Venice, California*, 30, 118.



*View of Windward Avenue, looking west from the Trolleyway toward the Pier
Showing the cast iron column armatures for future arcades
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The fate of the canals was even more of a disappointment. Sales of residential lots were unexpectedly slow. The few houses that went up were not the imposing, architect-designed villas envisioned by Kinney and Marsh. Instead, they were typically the more modest vacation bungalows seen elsewhere along the shore.³⁷⁵

Kinney himself was partially responsible for this lowering of the canal district's architectural tone. To provide an immediate source of income he constructed what was supposed to be a temporary tent city to house visitors alongside the Grand Canal. It was immense, consisting of about 150 tent-cottages. The tent city was said to be Kinney's primary source of income. It did not disappear until 1926 when a newly consolidated Venice began filling in its canals.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ Stanton, *Venice, California*, 46-48.

³⁷⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1907, December 11, 1907; 1918 *Sanborn Map*; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 59.

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As early as 1907, in an interview with the *Times* entitled “Dream and Disappointment and Hope of Venetian Doge,” Kinney himself acknowledged the architectural failure of the canal district.³⁷⁷ This architectural failure accompanied a more general failure to maintain a high cultural tone. Kinney saw Venice of America as a kind of on-going Chautauqua, where visitors would partake of lectures, demonstrations, and other pastimes that would elevate their educational and moral level. But, as one historian has noted, the public “came to Venice to be entertained, not educated.”³⁷⁸

Kinney soon gave in to reality and let Venice of America go its less elevated way. In September of 1906 he announced that he was halting all construction related to his Venetian vision and firing all the workers. From then on the Abbot Kinney Company functioned as a straightforward land developer and as a proprietor of entertainment concessions. The area around the Lagoon, which Kinney had originally intended for educational demonstrations, became the site of a carnival midway and a roller coaster.³⁷⁹



Venice Arcades

L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 532

Beyond to the left is the Hotel Gondolier

(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

³⁷⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1907.

³⁷⁸ Myers and Street, *Trolleys to the Sea*, 47.

³⁷⁹ 1918 Sanborn Map; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 52.

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By 1912 he turned over ownership of all the streets, including Windward Avenue, to the city. Three years later, in the summer of 1915, he auctioned off the remaining 145 unsold lots in the Venice of America development. Kinney now portrayed himself as simply a businessman operating amusements.³⁸⁰

Unfortunately, most of Venice of America has disappeared. Remaining are portions of the Venice Arcades, complete with columns and capitals (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 532). One small commercial district at the intersection of Pacific and Windward avenues was identified for SurveyLA and is significant as the original commercial district for Venice of America. The most intact of the buildings is 75 Windward Avenue, from 1911. It was originally the Hotel Gondolier. It has lost its cornice and much of its ornament. Its window frames have been altered. But the overall massing remains and the window openings cut into the masonry are unchanged. Most important, its arcade is intact.³⁸¹

There are a few other buildings that are remains of Venice of America. One is the University of the Arts building, located a bit away from the amusement district at 1304 Riviera Avenue. It is attributed to architects Marsh and Russell and most likely built in 1904-05. It was to be part of a larger institute that fit with the original ideal of Venice of America as home for high culture. It is a prime example of the Prairie style softened by Craftsman touches.³⁸²



*University of the Arts
1304 Riviera Avenue
(Photo by author)*

³⁸⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 1912, July 4, 1915.

³⁸¹ All construction dates come from the Los Angeles County Assessor, unless otherwise noted.

³⁸² The 1904-1905 date is from David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *An Architectural Guide to Los Angeles* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2003), 74. The 1909 *Sanborn Map* shows the structures as a two-family dwelling unit. This conversion may have taken place between 1905 and 1909. The Los Angeles County Assessor gives the construction date as 1914, perhaps due to an additional alteration that year.

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A second was an effort to encourage sales. The so-called Venice of America House is now an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, Number 724. It is a large, two-story frame structure with a Moorish-style porch complete with arches and topped by a dome. It was built by the Abbot Kinney Company, and possibly designed by Marsh and Russell. It is an example of type of house that Kinney wanted to line his canals.



Venice of America House

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, Number 724
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

Also remaining from Venice of America, although not on its original site, is the Kinney-Tabor Home at 1310 Sixth Avenue (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 926). It was originally the Cosmos Club and occupied the intersection of the Grand Lagoon and the Lion Canal (today's Grand Boulevard and Windward Avenue). It later served as Abbot Kinney's home. After his death, it was moved to its present location and greatly altered.

The Beachfront

Flanking Venice of America on the north and south is a variety of residential architecture. It ranges from the most modest vacation bungalow to the multi-story apartment hotel. There also emerged innovative forms of pedestrian spaces in place of traditional streets. Particularly notable and unique to Venice, in addition to the canals, are the so-called residential "walk streets." They consisted of sidewalks, in place of roads, fronting building lots, with service alleys in the rear.

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Most prevalent during the first years were vacation rental bungalows, often constructed in clusters. One of the best known was the United States Island Bungalow camp (SurveyLA identified a United States Island Historic District). It occupied the trapezoid formed by Windward, Cabrillo, Altair, and Andalusia Avenues. (Windward, Cabrillo, and Altair Avenues were originally canals on which the bungalows fronted.) There were originally 34 bungalows. Three examples remain in good condition, at 336, 338 and 340 Windward Avenue. They date from 1913.³⁸³



*United States Island Bungalows
336, 338 and 340 Windward Avenue
(Photo by author)*

Next in scale were the individual residences. These homes provided both temporary and permanent housing. There was an occasional large home of the well-off. An example of this is the Warren Wilson Beach House of 1911 at 15-17 30th Avenue (listed in the National Register). But most were more modest cottages. One of the earliest of these is a shingle-style cottage with Craftsman detailing, constructed in 1901 and located at 523 Ocean Front Walk.



*Residence
523 Ocean Front Walk
(Photo by author)*

³⁸³ *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1917, March 18, 1917.

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Wood-frame multi-family apartment buildings became common as the beach grew in popularity. Most were similar to apartment buildings of the day in denser suburban neighborhoods of Los Angeles. A good example is the two-story Craftsman apartment house from 1912 at 22 East 20th Avenue.



*Apartment Building
22 East 20th Avenue
(Survey LA Photo)*

There were also a few larger buildings using wood frame construction. A rare intact example is the La Faz Apartments from 1914 at 209 North Venice Boulevard. It is an apartment building in a rustic Craftsman lodge style. Although much altered, its overall form, eave detail, and particularly its elaborate porch are intact.



*La Faz Apartments
209 North Venice Boulevard
(Photo by author)*

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The most imposing architecturally were the masonry apartment hotels that began to appear around 1912. After a devastating fire on Santa Monica's nearby Ocean Park pier, Venice created a fire limit zone that took in the entire ocean front west of the Trolleyway from the Santa Monica city limits to the Short Line Beach. Within it nothing but what were then considered fireproof structures were allowed. This generally meant buildings with masonry walls, parapets, and roofs covered by flame-resistant materials.³⁸⁴



*Hotel Waldorf and the Potter Apartments in the early 1920s
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The Potter Apartments and the Hotel Waldorf have survived as good examples. The Potter, at 1305 Ocean Front Walk and constructed in 1912, was typical of the masonry apartment structures that began appearing on both the Walk and the immediate side streets that extended to the Trolleyway. In an article entitled "Brick Taking the Place of Wood," the *Times* praised it "as one of the most noteworthy of the recent apartment-house projects." Its 32 two- and three-room apartments were served by a marble entranceway and a mahogany-trimmed lobby.³⁸⁵

The Waldorf at 1217 Ocean Front Walk came a bit later and was even more urban in its scale and style. It was designed by R. H. Walker of the Western Architectural and Building Company of Los Angeles in a tasteful Classical Revival mode, and was constructed in 1913-1914. A unique feature was the division of the top floor into distinct three-room bungalows.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 1912, September 12, 1912,

³⁸⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1912.

³⁸⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1914.

The Short Line Beach Canal District

There was one development for single family homes that followed Kinney’s model. This was a second canal district south of the Short Line interurban. Here developers faced the same problem that had challenged Kenney. The district on the sandbar was sound, but the land to the east was a swamp. Again canals were the solution.³⁸⁷

The Short Line Beach Venice Canal Subdivision Number 1 included the Carroll, Linnie, Howland and Sherman Canals, running east to west, as well as the connecting Eastern Canal running north to south. Connecting this canal system to Kinney’s Venice of America to the north and Ballona Creek Lagoon to the south was the Grand Canal.³⁸⁸

This Grand Canal was the means of maintaining circulation in both canal systems. It ran south from Kinney’s system, under Mildred Avenue and what is now North and South Venice Boulevards, and connected to the western ends of Carroll, Linnie, Howland, and Sherman Canals. The Grand Canal then continued its path south and opened onto Ballona lagoon. The *Times* described the entire endeavor as “Little Holland.”³⁸⁹



Venice Canal System

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 270
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

³⁸⁷ Cunningham, *Venice, California*, 15.

³⁸⁸ Venice Canal System File Number 270, Office of Historic Resources, City of Los Angeles.

³⁸⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, December 16, 1904.

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The Short Line Beach Canal Subdivision was completed in January of 1906. As in Kinney's Venice of America development, it was laid out as a pedestrian district. Lots fronting on the canals, with walkways along their sides, were served by rear alleys. Bridges spanned the waterways to connect these alleys to surrounding streets.³⁹⁰

The Short Line Beach Canal District was not a financial success. By 1911 only six cottages had been constructed, all west of Dell Avenue. Perhaps only half of the lots had been built upon by the end of the 1920s. The canal district fell on hard times during the next several decades, but was eventually recognized as significant. It is now an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 270, known as the Venice Canal System, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. (It should be noted that the designation includes the canals only and not the adjoining lots or the buildings on them.)³⁹¹

The Back Country

The Short Line interurban line opened the so-called Back Country. This district extended east from the Inglewood Line to today's Lincoln Boulevard, and from Rose on the north to the Short Line tracks on the south. The Short Line stop was Tokio Station, so-called because of the Japanese-inspired design of its passenger waiting shelter.

The Back Country was as a mix of the Beachfront and suburbia. The older section, around the station, contained walk streets and service alleys patterned after those along the Beachfront, while other sections were conventionally laid out with standard streets. Even there, however, the lots were small and the streets narrow, although many had service alleys at the rear. Most of the Back Country had been subdivided by the time of the First World War, in 1917, when building slowed dramatically.

The northern section of the Back Country was the home of Venice's African American community. It was centered on Westminster and San Juan Avenues at their intersection with Electric Avenue. The African American population was 33 in 1910 and 102 by 1920. The center of the community was the Baptist Church (no longer extant) located on the north side of San Juan Avenue just east of Fifth Avenue.³⁹²

The residential architecture of the Back Country was overwhelmingly single family, with a few bungalow courts and multiple houses on the same lot. Typical is the Sturdevant Bungalow at 721 Amoroso Place (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 927). It is believed to have been built on spec in 1914 by William G. Laurensen. Laurensen was active in Venice and Santa Monica, and later worked in the San Fernando Valley. It appears that he built from a stock set of plan, and that the Sturdevant Bungalow was one of five he built in Venice.³⁹³

³⁹⁰ Stanton, *Venice, California*, 28, 39; Venice Canal System File Number 270, Office of Historic Resources, City of Los Angeles.

³⁹¹ Stanton, *Venice, California*, 49, 169.

³⁹² Cunningham, *Venice, California*, 173-174; *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1912; *1918 Sanborn Map*.

³⁹³ Sturdevant Bungalow File Number 927, Office of Historic Resources, City of Los Angeles.



The Sturdevant Bungalow
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 927
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

Ocean Park Becomes Venice

Although popularly known as Venice, the official city name remained Ocean Park until 1911. By 1910 it had 3119 permanent residents and wanted to clarify its identity, citing confusion with the adjacent district in Santa Monica with the same name. In 1911 an election was held and Ocean Park city became the city of Venice by a vote of 331 in favor to 65 against.³⁹⁴

In 1911 the city of Venice also annexed vast territories. To the south along the beachfront it took in the rest of the peninsula and the area of present Playa del Rey all the way to current-day Los Angeles International Airport. Elsewhere it extended from Lincoln Boulevard to Walgrove Avenue on the east, to the Santa Monica city limits on the north, and to Zanja Street on the south. The addition to the east took on the formal name of the Walgrove district. Informally, it was called the grasslands, and remained empty until after the First World War.³⁹⁵

The gain of territory was accompanied by a gain in population. From 3119 in 1910 Venice grew to an estimated population of around 5000 in 1912. By 1913 this was estimated to have reached 8000. This

³⁹⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1908, March 16, 1911, May 30, 1911; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 58.

³⁹⁵ *1918 Sanborn Map*; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 79.

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was matched by increased levels of new construction, which reached their pre-World War I high points in 1912 and 1913.³⁹⁶

Venice city government, despite this increase in area and population, did a fair job of providing basic services in the years before the war. It relied for the most part in granting franchises to private corporations. But relying on the private sector for water remained a constant problem. By 1913 there were several private companies supplying water to different sections of Venice. They all relied on local wells. Water service to the Back Country was a particular concern.³⁹⁷

Two buildings remain as civic monuments. The first is the City Hall. Its site was a matter of contention. Some felt that it should be located on or near Windward Avenue. Others saw its location as a means of encouraging land sales in the Back Country. The second faction won, and it was placed near the Tokio Station.³⁹⁸



Venice City Hall

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 749
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

³⁹⁶ Cunningham, *Venice, California*, 33; *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1913, January 1, 1916.

³⁹⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, November 23, 1905, December 10, 1908, December 29, 1908, May 10, 1909, November 12, 1912, November 16, 1913, March 17, 1914.

³⁹⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 1906; Tom Moran, "The New City Hall and Tokio," *The Argonaut*, October 9, 1975, in the Venice City Hall File Number 749, Office of Historic Resources, City of Los Angeles.

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The City Hall (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 749) was completed in 1907 and located on North Venice Boulevard at Shell Avenue. Designed by architects Bixby and Garrett, it is in an irregularly massed Mission Revival style that has lost some of its original detailing. Its architecture was never a matter of complaint. But its location continued to be an issue.³⁹⁹

The second surviving civic monument is a fire station, located on the northeast corner of Rose Avenue and Main Street, just to the east of the Trolleyway. Work began in late 1907 and was completed in early 1908 (the Los Angeles County Assessor dates it from 1909). It is a two-story wood-sided three-bay structure built in a simplified Craftsman style. Only a parapet projecting from the center bay provides it with a bit of Mission Revival flair. Despite alteration to what were presumably openings for fire-fighting equipment, its integrity is generally intact.⁴⁰⁰



Venice Fire Station

Northeast corner of Rose Avenue and Main Street

(Photo by author)

There is also a surviving building that served as a private social institution. This is the Christian Church of 1906, on the northeast corner of Rose Avenue and Hampton Drive. It was the first church to be built in the new city and served residents of the northern sections of Venice and residents of Santa Monica's Ocean Park neighborhood. The Christian Church is in a simplified Craftsman-Gothic style. It has been altered greatly over the years, but it still maintains its overall massing.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ Moran, "The New City Hall and Tokio."

⁴⁰⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 1907, February 20, 1908.

⁴⁰¹ *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1906.



*Christian Church
Northeast corner of Rose Avenue and Hampton Drive
(Photo by author)*

Commercial Venice

Unfortunately most of early Venetian commercial architecture has vanished or been altered beyond recognition. Perhaps the most significant remnant is the trio of storefronts at 64-76 Market Street, one block north of Windward. Number 64, to the right, was built in 1913, and numbers 72 and 76 in 1914. All three are simple one-story brick business blocks typical of the time. But they show an attempt to continue the Venice of America ideal in their simplified version of the Windward Avenue arcades.



*Storefronts
64-76 Market Street
(Photo by author)*

Once building resumed after the First World War, commercial construction flourished throughout Venice. The product was, however, less evocative of Abbot Kinney's image. Instead, it was generally in the brick masonry commercial vernacular of the day. It could be found in the older Beachfront districts. It could also be found in the emerging business district of Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

By the early 1920s, commerce had shifted to today's Abbot Kinney Boulevard (then the northern leg of Washington Boulevard) from Westminster Avenue on the north to North Venice Boulevard on the south. It became the general purpose business district that Venice had previously lacked. (SurveyLA identified this area as the Abbot Kinney Boulevard Commercial Planning District; it does not meet eligibility requirement for designation although it merits consideration in local planning.) Some of the structures reflected an earlier, more casual beachfront design. Most, however, followed the masonry commercial style of the period. The Bundy Building from 1923, at 1327-1335 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, is a particularly elegant example.⁴⁰²



Bundy Building
1327-1335 Abbot Kinney Boulevard
(Photo by author)

The Walgrove

The building boom of the early 1920s affected all parts of Venice. But it had particular impact on the section east of Lincoln Boulevard, known as the Walgrove. It had remained substantially unsubdivided before the war. But by the early 1920s Rose Avenue had been extended to the east, and several developments were underway.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1924, April 3, 1924, February 2, 1925; 1918 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁰³ *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 1923, August 23, 1923, December 28, 1923, March 16, 1924.

Important in drawing residents to the Walgrove district was the presence of the new high school on the southeast corner of Venice Boulevard and Walgrove Avenue. When completed in 1914 it served students from as far away as Palms, with a stop of its own on the Short Line. At the same time, the Walgrove remained poorly served by utilities, particularly water, ultimately making it one of the most pro-consolidation areas when the vote came.⁴⁰⁴

By 1925 subdivision of the Walgrove was progressing and clusters of suburban-style homes were being built. They were commonly in the Spanish Colonial Revival style popular at the time, and sat on lots large enough to accommodate automobiles. Also found, particularly in the newer areas south of the Short Line, were bungalow courts, again commonly in the Spanish Colonial Revival style and in layouts more spacious than those of the vacationers' courts at the Beachfront.

Along with the residential development of the eastern districts came the emergence of Lincoln Boulevard as a business strip. Lincoln Boulevard was just beginning to transform itself from a rural route to an automobile-oriented shopping destination when consolidation occurred in 1925. There were a few new storefront buildings started before consolidation. They featured, like those on Abbot Kinney Boulevard, the brick commercial style of the 1920s.⁴⁰⁵

Consolidation

By many measures, Venice in the early 1920s was an urban success. Its population in 1920 was 10,385. It had two local newspapers, the *Vanguard* and the *News*. It had four grammar schools and a combined junior-senior high school. It had begun to lose its label as the Coney Island of Los Angeles and instead was referred to as the somewhat more respectable Atlantic City of the Pacific Coast.⁴⁰⁶

Yet there were serious infrastructure problems, in particular the long-standing issue of water. By the early 1920s, the system, with its dependence on local wells and multiple suppliers, was clearly inadequate, and access to the Los Angeles Aqueduct was considered urgent. The same problems of inadequacy plagued the sewers of Venice, which had been designed to serve a city of 3000, and could be solved only by attachment to the larger city's system.⁴⁰⁷

Making things more difficult was the decrease in city revenues once Prohibition was enacted. The city government's primary source of revenue, fees for yearly liquor licenses, disappeared. Added to this was a general decline in the fortunes of the amusement district. Fewer visitors were taking the interurban and spending a day on Windward Avenue.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁴ Cunningham, *Venice, California*, 31, 36; *Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 1911, May 21, 1913, March 11, 1914.

⁴⁰⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 1913, January 10, 1914, June 1, 1924, October 15, 1924, November 2, 1924, January 29, 1925, July 9, 1925, September 27, 1925; *1918 Sanborn Map*; *Venice Vanguard*, April 14, 1923.

⁴⁰⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1925; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 102.

⁴⁰⁷ Cunningham, *Venice, California*, 71; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 126.

⁴⁰⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1919.

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In 1923 consolidation with Los Angeles was considered and rejected by the voters. By September of 1925, conditions had so deteriorated that the Board of Trustees itself asked for a repeat of the vote. Generally homeowners and real estate interests supported it, while the amusement operators were in opposition, fearing greater control over their activities.⁴⁰⁹



Venice city limits at consolidation
(From "Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, City Boundaries and Annexations")

When the election was held in October, consolidation carried by 3130 in favor to 2215 against. Support as expected was strongest in the Back Country and the Walgrove, and weakest along the Beachfront. Consolidation was completed on November 25, 1925, with the official acceptance of Venice as a part of

⁴⁰⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1923, October 1, 1925; Stanton, *Venice, California*, 129, 143.

Los Angeles.⁴¹⁰

Conclusion

Beachfront Venice did not cope well with the motor car. Abbot Kinney and the other developers made a point of designing their communities to be served by the interurban. The pedestrian-oriented, small-scale layouts that worked for the trolley-borne visitor made Venice inhospitable to the automobile. The result was decline and demolition.

The first to go were the Venice of America canals. They had never functioned properly, and filling them began in earnest in the late 1920s. The arcaded Windward Avenue buildings were slower to disappear. Enough have survived to give a flavor of what the Avenue was like in its prime. The declaration of the surviving arcades as City Historic-Cultural Monuments has helped to preserve the remnant.



*View from the Lagoon down Windward Avenue toward the Pier
Photo taken through the window of Villa City Boating
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Beyond the amusement zone, a good deal of pre-consolidation Venice remains, albeit in altered condition. The city hall and the Rose Avenue fire station stand as civic monuments, as does the Christian

⁴¹⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 1925, November 25, 1925.

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Church as a private social institution. Commercial buildings, in particular the brick business blocks from the early 1920s remain. More important, there is a vast amount of residential architecture, from tiny cabins to the Hotel Waldorf, still in place.

Perhaps most significant was the survival of the Short Line Beach Canal District. Long considered a literal backwater, the district remained intact through neglect. It became unattractive during the oil boom that disfigured the southern part of Venice during the years after consolidation. There was simply no call to spend the money to fill in the canals, and so they sat. Eventually they, like the rest of Venice, again became attractive to those looking for a diverse and somewhat gritty neighborhood. By the time the canals had to be either abandoned or rebuilt, the district was fashionable enough to support the cost of restoration.

Also still intact is the unique layout of pre-consolidation Venice. There are three interrelated facets to this layout, and they can all best be seen in the Beachfront district. The first is density, created by small lots and narrow streets. The second is a mixture of scale and use, where tiny cottages sit next to commercial buildings and multi-story apartment houses. The third is pedestrian-based circulation, with Ocean Front Walk and the adjoining walk streets.

To be sure, current-day Venice has its social problems. At the same time, its popularity may be the greatest threat to the surviving pre-consolidation architecture. Pressure to replace modest cottages with something grander is more to be feared than the neglect and decay of the past.

Resources in Pre-Consolidation Venice

Extant resources are considered Criterion A/1/1. Some are also significant under Criterion B/2/2. This includes resources related to Abbot Kinney and/or Venice of America. Many are known and have been designated, although more may be uncovered with further research. There are at this time no other individuals that are known to qualify as Criterion B/2/2.

Resources related to life in pre-consolidation Venice, and which qualify for consideration under Criterion A/1/1, are numerous and varied. Although most have been altered, they remain significant in the areas of settlement, social history and community planning and development. They can best be considered by resource type.

First, there are the vacation bungalows and modest cottages that fill the Beachfront district. The vacation bungalows are often in clusters, while the cottages stand alone on small lots. The vacation bungalows are generally utilitarian in design, while individual cottages are more elaborate and reflect the styles of the day, from Queen Anne through Craftsman.

Second are larger homes, usually for permanent residents. They are in the styles of suburban neighborhoods elsewhere in Los Angeles. They are more typically found in the Back Country and the

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later Walgrove district, although they can occasionally be found in the Beachfront district, particularly south of Windward Avenue and along the Peninsula,

Third are the multi-story apartment hotels. They include both wood-frame forms, particularly prevalent among the earlier and more modest resources, as well as more elaborate, and generally later, masonry forms. As with the vacation bungalows and cottages, they are typically in the Beachfront district.

Fourth are the institutions, both public and private. These resources are relatively large in scale, consciously designed to stand out as community monuments, and follow the architectural styles of the day, with Craftsman and Mission Revival predominant.

Fifth are the commercial buildings. Earlier resources, from before the First World War, are either attempts to fit into the Venice of America style, or are in the casual Craftsmen forms of the surrounding residences. One small commercial district was identified for SurveyLA. It is significant as the original commercial district for Abbot Kinney's Venice of America development. Later commercial buildings, from around 1919 onward, are in the common masonry commercial style of the early 1920s found elsewhere in Los Angeles.

Sixth are a handful of light industrial structures, usually located near rail lines that served the needs of Venice of America and other local businesses. They follow the general vernacular industrial forms of the period.

There are, in addition, significant landscape/town planning resources. One is the designated historic South Beach canal system, noted above. A second example is the potential historic district that covers the properties within the boundaries of the "lost canals," the filled-in Venice of America canal system (the Lost Venice Canals Historic District for SurveyLA). A third example is a potential district that covers the "walk streets" along the Beachfront north of Windward Avenue (North Venice Walk Streets Historic District for SurveyLA) and a fifth is the potential district that covers the "walk streets" further east, north of Venice Boulevard (Milwood Venice Walks Streets Historic District for SurveyLA). These potential districts are also significant within the "Residential Development and Suburbanization" context within the theme of "Streetcar Suburbanization" and some construction of residences in these areas occurred after the period of pre-consolidation.

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VENICE STREET NAME CHANGES

(From Lynn Craig Cunningham, *Venice, California: From City to Suburb*, and 1909 & 1918 Sanborn Maps)

Original Name	Initial Change	Final Change
Aldebaran Canal		Market (east of Main)
Altair Canal		Altair
Aurora	46 th Avenue	Outrigger
Azure	48 th Avenue	Quarterdeck
Billows	37 th Avenue	Fleet
Cabrillo Canal		Cabrillo
Carroll		23 rd Avenue
Center	21 st Avenue	North Venice Boulevard
Clark		28 th Avenue
Coral	47 th Avenue	Privateer
Coral Canal		Main (south of Westminster)
Dorothy		20 th Avenue
Elena		Sunset (east of Pacific)
Evangeline	33 rd Avenue	Buccaneer
Fink		Harding
Florence		19 th Avenue
Gage	52 nd Avenue	Union Jack
Grand Canal		Grand Blvd
Green	54 th Avenue	Westwind
Hamilton	53 rd Avenue	Voyage
Howland		25 th Avenue
Island	32 nd Avenue	Anchorage
Lagoon	42 nd Avenue	Ketch
Lake (north of Brooks)	Washington	Hampton
Lake (south of Brooks)	Washington	Abbot Kinney
Lakeview	41 st Avenue	Jib
Leona	31 st Avenue	Washington Boulevard
Linnie		24 th Avenue
Lion Canal		Windward (east of Main)
Lorelei		17 th Avenue
Mermaid	36 th Avenue	Eastwind
Mildred (west of Pacific)		18 th Avenue
Nautilus	35 th Avenue	Driftwood
Neptune	43 rd Avenue	Lighthouse
Ocean Spray		30 th Avenue

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Original Name	Initial Change	Final Change
Olive		29 th Avenue
Petrel	45 th Avenue	Northstar
Progress Club	39 th Avenue	Hurricane
Recreation	49 th Avenue	Reef
Ruth		27 th Avenue
Saltair	51 st Avenue	Topsail
Scott	55 th Avenue	Yawl
Second Avenue		Main (north of Westminster)
Sherman		26 th Avenue
Strand	40 th Avenue	Ironsides
Strong's Drive (south of Washington)		Via Mar
Swan	44 th Avenue	Mast
The Semicircle		Narcissus
Tide	50 th Avenue	Spinnaker
Trolleyway (interurban right of way)		Pacific
Venice Boulevard		Venice Way
Venus Canal		San Juan (west of Cabrillo)
Virginia	22 nd Avenue	South Venice Boulevard
Vista	34 th Avenue	Catamaran
White Caps	38 th Avenue	Galleon
Zephyr		Market (west of Main)

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT VENICE

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement, social history, and/or community planning and development for its association with the early development history of Venice prior to its consolidation with Los Angeles. Extant resources are becoming increasingly rare and cover a wide variety of property types including residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial properties as well as cultural landscapes and historic districts. Some resources are directly associated with Abbot Kinney and his distinctive Venice of America development.

Period of Significance: 1901-1925

Period of Significance Justification: The community that became Venice received its first interurban stop in 1901. Venice consolidated with Los Angeles in 1925.

Geographic Location: Within the 1925 city boundaries of Venice when it consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History, Community Planning and Development

Criteria: NR: A/B CR: 1/2 Local: 1/2

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Residential-Single Family, Bungalow/House
Property Type: Residential-Suburb, Streetcar Suburb
Property Type: Residential-Multi-Family, Apartment House
Property Type: Commercial-Lodging, Hotel/Apartment Hotel
Property Type: Commercial-Retail, Retail Store
Property Type: Commercial District-Neighborhood Commercial Center
Property Type: Institutional-Government, City Hall
Property Type: Institutional-Government, Fire Station
Property Type: Institutional-Religious/Spiritual, Church
Property Type: Institutional-Recreation, Amusement Facility
Property Type: Industrial-Manufacturing, Factory
Property Type: Landscape, Designed Landscape

Property Type Description: Bungalow/House: Domestic dwelling on a private lot
Apartment-Hotel: Large-scale facility providing both transient and resident lodging
Retail Store: Facility for transacting commerce with the general public
City Hall: Facility for city government
First Station: Facility for housing fire-fighting equipment and personnel
Church: Place of worship denoted by a denomination

Amusement Facility: Facility for public amusement (may involve different building forms and landscape features based on amusement provided)

Factory: Light manufacturing facility of medium scale

Designed Landscape: The extant Venice Canals

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are all significant under Criterion A/1/1. Buildings, structures, and historic districts under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation Venice lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life. Some property types are also significant under Criterion B/1/1. Buildings under this criterion are directly related to significant individuals in pre-consolidation Venice, in particular Abbot Kinney, in addition to illustrating how residents lived.

Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from the pre-consolidation period of Venice
- Is associated with the formation, settlement, and/or development of Venice
- May be related to Abbot Kinney (Criterion B/2/2) and Venice of America

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Related to the life of pre-consolidation Venice by showing how residents lived, worked, shopped, and socialized
- May be associated with amusement architecture in general and Abbot Kinney and Venice of America in particular
- May be associated with individuals/groups important in Venice's early ethnic/cultural history
- For historic districts:
 - Conveys a strong visual sense of overall historic environment from the period of significance
 - Typically associated with streetcar residential or commercial development and may also be significant within these themes.
 - Must retain the majority of the original planning features and design concepts, particularly in the "walk streets" residential neighborhoods.

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within Sawtelle for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed

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- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria.
- For Historic Districts:
 - District as a whole should retain integrity of Location, Setting, Design, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
 - May include some infill of resources constructed outside the period of significance

THEME: WATTS, 1902-1926



*Pacific Electric Track, north from Main (103rd) Street
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Pre-Consolidation Watts was a kind of experiment. Could an independent city exist on its own, based on a population of homeowners with modest means and diverse backgrounds? Could it survive without industry or large-scale commerce as a source of revenue? After almost a quarter century of trying, between 1902 and 1926, the residents of Watts said that the answer was no and voted to consolidate with Los Angeles. Yet the experiment of independent Watts, despite its difficult life, left behind a neighborhood that still functions in many ways as it was intended.

Watts began as a railroad-oriented community of tiny lots for the less well-off. Land was priced so that just about anyone could afford it. Those who could bought two or three lots and combined them into a building plot in line with their means. At the same time there was no restriction on who could buy or on what the buyer could do. Various groups, including Latino and African American residents, found a

place in Watts, where they could raise chickens or grow a truck garden as well as live in a little cottage on a plot of their own.

The flaw in this arrangement was that there was never enough money to make Watts work. There was no industry to speak of, and the commercial district was just large enough to service the residents. The city government was constantly searching for funds, and turned to saloons. But dependence on the income from liquor licenses fed into Watts' reputation as a less than respectable place, not suitable for the enterprises or the middle-class residents that it needed.

Watts managed to survive as an independent community until the early 1920s. Then rapid growth that tripled its population between 1920 and 1926 made it impossible to continue on its own. The city government, always limited in funds, simply could not serve the newcomers. As soon as the boundaries of Los Angeles reached its western edge, Watts gave up its independence and joined the larger city.

The Coming of the Railroad

The community of Watts was a child of the Pacific Electric Railroad. It was created by the railroad, was crossed by three lines and two junctions, was the site of railroad support facilities, and provided homes for many of the railroad's workers. The *Los Angeles Times* referred to Watts as the "Electric Town."⁴¹¹

In 1874 surveyors laid out the southeast section of Los Angeles County, and opened it for dry farming and ranching. One of the larger landowners was Charles Watts. He had migrated to California from the Midwest and became one of the original settlers of Pasadena. In 1886 Watts established himself on a 220-acre ranch three miles northeast of the present city of Compton and began purchasing adjacent parcels. When the time came for the Pacific Electric Railroad to obtain a right-of-way for its Long Beach line, it acquired acreage from his family and, in turn, named the station that served the area after him.⁴¹²

The Pacific Electric interurban system was created in 1901 from the consolidation of a number of separate existing lines. In 1902 the PE built a new line, running from downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach. It was one of the first interurban routes to be both standard gauge and double-track, allowing for larger, faster cars and more frequent trips.⁴¹³

The PE began service from the Watts Station in July of 1902. The east-west country road serving the stop – today's 103rd Street – became Main Street for the settlement that grew around the stop. At the southeast intersection of Main Street and the tracks the PE constructed a combination passenger depot

⁴¹¹ *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1907.

⁴¹² Mary Ellen Bell Ray, *The City of Watts, California: 1907 to 1926* (Los Angeles: Rising Publishing, 1985), 5-8.

⁴¹³ Donald Duke, *Pacific Electric Railway: Volume III The Southern Division* (San Marino: Golden West Books, 2003), 209/9.

and freight house. It appears to have been identical to the station constructed at the same time further south at the Compton stop.⁴¹⁴



Watts Station

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 36
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

Watts Station greatly resembles depots found in the small towns of the Midwest from the same era. It is long and narrow, placed parallel to the tracks, with a low-pitched hipped roof flared at the eaves. It consists of a three part plan: a passenger waiting and ticketing area in the front, an office in the center with a projecting bay window to view the track in both directions, and a freight storage room in the rear. The Watts Station is an L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument, Number 36.

During the next two decades service became increasingly frequent. In 1907 the line added two more tracks, laid parallel to the existing double tracks, from Watts Junction to downtown Los Angeles. By 1911 trains between downtown Los Angeles and Watts ran every six minutes during morning rush hour, every ten minutes during the day, every five to seven minutes during evening rush hour, and then every

⁴¹⁴ Duke, *Pacific Electric Railway*, 213/13-214/14; John Heller, editor, *Pacific Electric Stations* (Long Beach: Electric Railway Historical Association of Southern California, 1998), 102-103, 118; Jeffrey Herr, editor, *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, 2002), 259, 263, 423; Ray, *City of Watts*, 8.

fifteen minutes until 1:30 am. By 1923 cars made the trip between Watts Station and downtown in twenty minutes.⁴¹⁵

During the next decade, the Pacific Electric increased its physical presence and came to dominate the landscape around Watts Station. First to be built was the Watts Junction and the Santa Ana Line. The new line was completed in October of 1905 and service began in November. Watts acquired its second junction and third line when the Pacific Electric constructed a new route that extended west from the Long Beach line and joined it just south of Watts Junction. Work on this line was completed through Watts in November of 1911.⁴¹⁶

The Pacific Electric also maintained a set of structures alongside the depot. The most notable was a large electric substation just to the south. In 1916 the substation was joined by a car barn that performed minor repairs. The depot, the substation and the car barn, along with associated tracks, filled the blocks between present-day Grandee and Graham Avenues from 103rd to 108th Streets. (Both the substation and the car barn are gone.) The result of all this railroad construction was the division of Watts into sections separated by busy rail lines.⁴¹⁷

The railroad also had a social impact on the population. Watts was where the Pacific Electric placed its company-owned camp for unskilled laborers, mostly Latino, and their families. The camp was located southwest of the station. Work cars transported laborers between the camp and rail lines under construction. The camp's housing consisted first of boxcars and tents, and later four-room houses. Each of the houses served two families who shared a common wash shelter.⁴¹⁸

The camp appears to have been a temporary establishment that existed during the construction of the Santa Ana line and was then dismantled. But many inhabitants may have decided to stay on in Watts, taking advantage of the low cost of lots and the absence of restrictive covenants in the deeds. At the same time the publicity about the camp in media such as the *Los Angeles Times* gave Watts an early reputation as a home for those near the bottom of the social ladder.⁴¹⁹

Early Subdivision

The character of Watts was determined early on by the nature of its subdivisions. They consisted of small lots inexpensively priced. They also were apparently free of the deed restrictions that often were found elsewhere. There was no limitation on the size or kind of building that could be built. Nor was there any limitation on the racial, ethnic, or religious background of potential owners. Watts from its

⁴¹⁵ Spencer Crump, *Ride the Big Red Cars: How Trolleys Helped Build Southern California*, Fourth Edition (Corona de Mar: Trans-Anglo Books, 1970), 162; Duke, *Pacific Electric Railway*, 212/12, 263/63; *Los Angeles Times*, September 9, 1923.

⁴¹⁶ Duke, *Pacific Electric Railway*, 273/73.

⁴¹⁷ Duke, *Pacific Electric Railway*, 213/13, 263/63; 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴¹⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1905; Ray, *City of Watts*, 15.

⁴¹⁹ Neither the 1910 Sanborn Map nor the 1922 Sanborn Map shows any sign of the camp.

beginning was a community where individuals of modest means and diverse backgrounds could become property owners and build as they pleased.⁴²⁰

The first subdivision was the Watts Junction Tract, and it set the pattern for later developments. Lots were one hundred thirty feet deep but only twenty-five feet wide. There were none of the improvements that better-off suburbs offered: no curbs, no sidewalks and no water lines. There were, however, alleys at the rear of the lots. The expectation was that a property owner would erect a small cottage and barn or stable, install a well, windmill and water tank, and combine small-scale farming with earning a living as a wage worker. The *Times* in 1904 described the typical Watts family as a husband who worked for the Sunset Telephone Company and a wife who raised chickens in the back yard.⁴²¹

The most important marketer of residential lots in Watts was the Golden State Realty Company. Golden State sold property in a number of areas, but it was best known for its Watts advertisements. By November of 1904 it claimed to have eight subdivisions in Watts containing about 2500 lots. It first sold its lots for as little as seventy-five dollars each. It also offered financing of one dollar down and one dollar a week. According to the *Times* the offer resulted in sales of several hundred lots in a week and instances of one hundred lots in a single day.⁴²²

Buyers general purchased more than one lot. House often occupied two lots, or fifty feet of frontage. Prices eventually stabilized at twenty-five dollars down and ten dollars a month for a fifty-foot wide plot. Yet even these prices were comparatively low. At the same time, smaller building plots consisting of a single lot still existed and were often the location of rentals. The result was that tiny cottages, sometimes more than one to a lot, provided housing for those of the most modest income levels.⁴²³

Watts Becomes a City

Watts grew steadily after the establishment of the station in 1902. In 1904 the *Times* referred to it as a "little suburban bailiwick."⁴²⁴ By 1906 the settlement had about 1400 inhabitants and decided to incorporate as a sixth-class city. After three attempts that failed because of debates over boundaries and sloppy ordinance writing, Watts finally achieved cityhood in the spring of 1907. The vote was 101 for and 24 against.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁰ "Watts: Historical Background," Typescript from the Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering, 1983 (Los Angeles Public Library, California Vertical File), 2.

⁴²¹ *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1904; Ray, *City of Watts*, 10.

⁴²² *Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 1904, October 23, 1904, November 6, 1904, March 5, 1905, September 11, 1910

⁴²³ *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1910, April 4, 1912, July 13, 1912; "Our Community Watts: Originally Called Tarjuata, 1850-1941" (Los Angeles City Planning Department, 1965), in the collection of the Los Angeles Public Library. 3.

⁴²⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1904.

⁴²⁵ Ray, *City of Watts*, 12-14.

City services were limited. The most important was water, and the city's supply was a continual problem. There was never a citywide system as such, and most residents continued to rely on their own wells, using windmills, during the first years after incorporation. What piped water there came from the privately-owned Conservative Water Company.⁴²⁷

By 1910 water service existed only along Wilmington Avenue north of Main (103rd) Street and along Main from just east of Wilmington to Compton Avenue.⁴²⁸ In 1912 the *Times* described this water service as "very unsatisfactory, and in many cases people are unable to get service at all."⁴²⁹ By 1922 perhaps three quarters of the city had water service. The largest section remaining without service was the entire area south of the Santa Ana line and east of the Long Beach line.⁴³⁰

Other services were also slow in coming. Interestingly, Watts' residents were more concerned about getting gas than electricity.⁴³¹ By early 1911 a main reached Watts and by April of 1912 service had been extended to what the *Times* referred to as the "principal business and residential sections." Los Angeles Gas and Electric Company promised to extend service to other areas "as rapidly as the demand arises – even in advance of it."⁴³² In November of 1912 LAG&E asked for an exclusive gas franchise to cover the entire city of Watts.⁴³³

Street improvement was the one public service that the Watts City government could not leave to the private sector. By 1913, Main (103rd) Street and Compton Avenue had received a covering of crushed rock and oil embedded with a heavy steam roller. Other streets had been graded and improved.⁴³⁴

Community Life in Early Watts

The first years of Watts' cityhood saw steady growth. The *Times* observed that in 1904 Watts consisted of one store and "a few scattered houses."⁴³⁵ By 1905 a second store had joined the first. By 1906, a year before incorporation, Watts contained three grocery stores, a dry goods store housing the post office, a lumber yard, a hardware store, and a saloon.⁴³⁶

⁴²⁷ Biographical Note for the Records of the Conservative Water Company, 1900-1967, Huntington Library; "Our Community Watts," 3-4.

⁴²⁸ 1910 Sanborn Map.

⁴²⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1912.

⁴³⁰ "A Picture of Watts in 1913 and History of its Growth until that Time," *Watts Advertiser-Review*, 1965, in the collection of the Los Angeles Public Library; 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴³¹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 1910.

⁴³² *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1912.

⁴³³ *Los Angeles Times*, November 18, 1912.

⁴³⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1908, February 4, 1909, May 27, 1909, December 7, 1910, December 14, 1911, July 30, 1913.

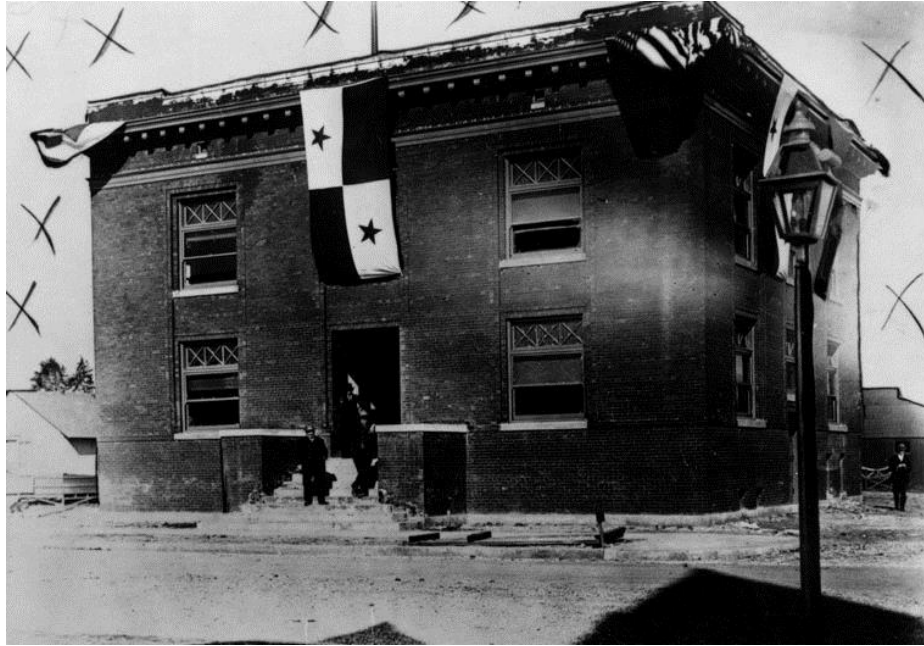
⁴³⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1907.

⁴³⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, February 10, 1907, September 11, 1910; "Our Community Watts," 3.

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Incorporation in the spring of 1907 quickened the pace. Property values were said to have increased twenty-five to thirty-five percent between the spring and late summer. “There has been a material advancement in building here this summer. On every side is heard the pounding of hammers and rasping song of the saws on new buildings going up.” One “modern two-story business block” was under construction and a second planned.⁴³⁷



*Watts City Hall
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

To mark its emergence as a community of significance, in December of 1908 the residents of Watts voted in favor of a bond issue of nine thousand dollars for a city hall. The contract for construction was let in 1909. The resulting building was a severe symmetric two-story cube of pressed brick on the northwest corner of Main (103rd) Street and Stella Avenue (an intersection that no longer exists), one block west of the Pacific Electric tracks. The building has since been demolished.⁴³⁸

In 1910 Watts recorded a population of 1922. Its businesses by then included, according to the *Times*, a bank, two newspapers, a moving picture theater, two restaurants, two hardware stores, a lumber yard with a planing mill, a drug store, a furniture store, two clothing stores, a windmill factory, a carpet factory, two hay dealers, and a bicycle repair shop. Its professionals included two attorneys, two doctors, three barbers, two real estate agents, and a blacksmith. There were ten grocery stores scattered around Watts and the surrounding countryside. There were also two saloons, two pool

⁴³⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1907.

⁴³⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1908, July 25, 1909; 1910 Sanborn Map.

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rooms, and a wholesale liquor business, all indicative of the city's tolerant attitude toward entertainments not permitted elsewhere.⁴³⁹

As a counter to the saloons and pool halls, the Watts of 1910 had Baptist, Methodist, and Free Methodist churches. It also had a Catholic parish. Of particular pride was the Tajauta Public School, named after the historic ranch whose land Watts occupied, but known popularly as the Watts School. Originally two rooms, it had recently been enlarged to ten. It was located on the northeast corner of Main (103rd) Street and Wilmington Avenue. It would soon be replaced by a grander structure.⁴⁴⁰



*Main (103rd) Street, looking east toward Watts Station, circa 1912
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

By 1910 the Watts business district had taken shape. It centered on the PE station on the south side of Main Street and west of Electric (Graham) Avenue. To the south on Electric, with its back to the tracks, was the Watts Lumber Company. Most businesses were on Main Street. They formed a solid line along the first block east and the first block west of the station and tracks, concentrated on the north side of the street.⁴⁴¹

Most impressive of these commercial structures was the two-story brick business block on the northwest corner of Main Street and the PE right of way. This block housed the bank and became a sort of landmark. Sharing the business block with the bank were a dry goods store and a bakery.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1910; Ray, *City of Watts*, 17.

⁴⁴⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1910.

⁴⁴¹ 1910 Sanborn Map

⁴⁴² "Electric Railroad Train Preparing to Stop at One Hundred Third Street in Watts, 1910," digital photo library, University of Southern California; *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1910.

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Businesses to the east of the tracks along the north side of Main Street occupied smaller, less impressive structures, often with separate small houses in the rear. These businesses included a barber shop, a hardware store, a drug store, a grocery store, and several offices. They also included the two saloons and the two billiard parlors.⁴⁴³

What was perhaps the largest business in 1910 Watts was actually one block south of Main Street on the north side of Diller Street about a half block east of the PE tracks. This was the Calamyrna Carpet Factory. Little is known about this business and the building was vacant by the early 1920s. Both the building and this portion of Diller Street have vanished.⁴⁴⁴

Social institutions were a bit more scattered around the city of 1910. The school, at Main and Wilmington, was well to the east of the depot. The First Baptist Church occupied what was perhaps the most prominent location, on the south side of Main Street about half a block west of the station. The Free Methodist Church was also on Main Street, but east of the station and surrounded by houses. The First Methodist Church was further to the east and close to the school, on the west side of Wilmington one-half block south of Main. The most remote was the Catholic Church. It was located on the east side of Compton Avenue just south of Palm Drive (101st Street).⁴⁴⁵

What is striking about residential Watts in 1910 is how scattered houses were. Perhaps one-quarter of the lots within the city limits were built upon. Clusters or rows of adjacent houses were extremely rare. Typically individual houses were positioned alone among the vacant lots. Only along the south side of Main (103rd) Street east of the station and also east of the tracks along Tajauta Street (one block north of 103rd Street and no longer existing) was there anything close to a continuous row or cluster.⁴⁴⁶

Also of note is that most dwellings occupied plots wider than the standard twenty-five feet. Perhaps only twenty percent were placed on a single standard narrow lot. Most of the rest occupied two lots, for a fifty-foot wide plot, some occupied three and a few took up four. At the same time, it was common to construct two or more dwellings on a single plot. Finally, setbacks varied. Some dwellings were close to the street and others placed well back on the lot. Watts in 1910 bore little resemblance to the well-ordered middle-class streetcar suburb of the day.⁴⁴⁷

Two houses from this early period of independent Watts are typical of what the better-off citizens built. Both are in subdivisions of twenty-five foot wide lots, but occupy more than one lot. The smaller of the two is the Queen Anne cottage at 2271 East 108th Street from 1903. It is a simple single-story home with a projecting bay-windowed wing as its primary feature.

⁴⁴³ 1910 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁴⁴ 1910 and 1922 Sanborn Maps.

⁴⁴⁵ 1910 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁴⁶ 1910 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁴⁷ Los Angeles County Assessor; 1910 Sanborn Map.



Residence
2271 East 108th Street
(SurveyLA)

Somewhat larger is the one-and-one-half story cottage from 1909 at 2118 East 113th Street. It is a simplified Queen Anne form combined with a degree of Colonial Revival restraint in details such as the porch column.



Residence
2118 East 113th Street
(SurveyLA)

The Public Image of Watts

From its beginning Watts had what could be considered an image problem. This may have been due to the fact that it was marketed as a town for working people, with lots at one dollar down and one dollar a week. It may also have been due to its early identification with the laborers who lived in the Pacific Electric settlement.

Soon after its founding, Watts became a subject of ridicule in a comic routine called “Lonesome Town” by the vaudeville duo of Kolb and Dill. In 1909 a local businessman blamed the duo for his lack of customers. “If there is a Rube, he came from Watts; if there is a dark scene, vacant, it is Watts on a busy day; if there is a joke as old as Methuselah’s grandfather – it is new in Watts.” Because of this comic routine, “Watts is a sort of clowning synonym in showdom for everything that is pedantic, plodding or punk.”⁴⁴⁸ At the same time, while the stage routine may have annoyed residents, the *Times* noted that it was publicity nonetheless, and may have encouraged sales of building lots.⁴⁴⁹

More damaging to the reputation of Watts were its saloons. The willingness of Watts to accept them was in part a reflection of its diverse population, with many residents coming from cultures in which alcohol was a normal part of life. But it was also a rational economic decision. The lack of an industrial or a large commercial district left the city dependent upon taxing residential property. Saloons and the wholesale liquor trade were seen as a means of raising additional revenue.⁴⁵⁰ The goal, as one historian has put it, was to make Watts a place for “fun and relaxation away from home.”⁴⁵¹

The new city voted in a slate of candidates for its first Board of Trustees that openly supported the licensing of saloons.⁴⁵² In August of 1907 the *Times* ran an article entitled “Saloon Taxes Run the City.” In describing the policy of “Wetness for Profit,” it quoted the City Clerk. “We have two retail saloons and one wholesale [store] as a result, and an income that more than pays our running expenses. In fact, we have several hundred dollars in the treasury. The voters, who admitted the saloons, looked upon it as a business proposition. While many of them are not really in favor of having them in our midst, the expedient was adopted for giving us a working fund.”⁴⁵³

By 1910 liquor license fees were the primary source of the city’s income. But this did not go unchallenged. The population of Watts split into Wet and Dry factions, which constantly fought it out at the polls and sometimes in the streets. In the spring of 1912 the Drys threw out the Wets and shut down the saloons. Two years later, in the spring of 1914, the Wets had their revenge and narrowly defeated the Drys by a vote of 545 to 531. The saloons were back. Within the next few years they were

⁴⁴⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1909.

⁴⁴⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1910.

⁴⁵⁰ Ray, *City of Watts*, 71-72.

⁴⁵¹ Ray, *City of Watts*, 71.

⁴⁵² *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1907.

⁴⁵³ *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1907.

joined by a café and five clubs, all licensed to sell liquor. It was not until the coming of nationwide Prohibition that Watts became permanently dry.⁴⁵⁴

During Watt's first dry years, between 1912 and 1914, there were efforts to change the city's reputation. One of the most publicized was the "Watts Booster Trip." In the summer of 1912 locals rented a three-car Pacific Electric special train that traveled from Watts to Hollywood, Sawtelle, Venice, Redondo Beach and then returned through Gardena. Each of the cars had two-foot-high signs attached to its sides that read "Watts Boosters." Working with the slogan "Lucky Watts," riders passed out literature at the stops that promised that "Watts has been born again."⁴⁵⁵

Another idea proposed by the boosters was beautification. A campaign was started to line the residential streets of Watts with acacia trees. The *Times* expressed its approval. "One of the incentives in the matter lies in the fact that people in other places have referred to this city so often in a joking manner, and the citizens here are determined to overcome the idea that there is any joke about Watts."⁴⁵⁶

Apparently these efforts were not enough to change the popular image. Instead, there arose in early 1913 the idea of changing the name of the city. "A prominent real estate dealer in Los Angeles, who has the sale of a new addition to Watts, undertook to bring out some prospective purchasers, but when they learned that they were to take the car for Watts, they backed out." To prevent this sort of thing, it was proposed to change the city's name to South Angeles. Nothing came of this movement in 1913, but it would resurrect itself six years later.⁴⁵⁷

In 1919, once the Wet-Dry controversies had been settled, Watts again considered changing its name. The head of the city's Board of Trustees was blunt. "Watts has sort of got a bad reputation in Southern California, somehow or other. I guess Watts is a good enough name, but a good many of us feel that the liquor element left a black mark upon the community's name, and we believe that the town would get along a lot better under some other name. Towns are something like people. They can live up to a good name easier than they can live down a bad name." He had no ideas for a new identity, but thought that what was needed was "some practical name which will sound good and enable the people to forget Watts."⁴⁵⁸

Mature Watts

In spite of its image problems Watts continued to grow. By 1920 the city had 4529 inhabitants. Of these, 1835, or about forty-one percent, were native whites of native parents. Another 1038, or about

⁴⁵⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, April 9, 1914. May 16, 1914, April 10, 1918; "Our Community Watts," 19; Ray, *City of Watts*, 19.

⁴⁵⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, May 17, 1912, June 2, 1912.

⁴⁵⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1912.

⁴⁵⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, January 17, 1913.

⁴⁵⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1919.

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twenty-three percent, were native whites of foreign-born or mixed parentage, and 963, or about twenty-one percent, were foreign-born. African Americans numbered 632, or about fourteen percent of the population, and others – including Native American, Japanese and Chinese – numbered 41 or less than one percent.⁴⁵⁹



*Watts Backyard, circa 1919
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Watts continued to be home for many current and retired employees of the Pacific Electric Railroad. At the same time, along with other new communities in southeastern Los Angeles County, it attracted residents who worked in the growing number of factories that were coming to the area.⁴⁶⁰ In 1923 the *Times* predicted that “Watts, Compton and Lynwood will someday be a part of the contiguous metropolitan district which will stretch from Pasadena on one side to the ocean.”⁴⁶¹ At the same time, Watts remained entirely residential, with none of the revenue-creating industrial establishments found in the other towns.

As its population grew, the commercial district of Watts around the Pacific Electric station became more impressive. By 1912 a Fire Zone had been established along Main (103rd) Street from Compton Avenue on the west to Wilmington Avenue on the east. Masonry and concrete business blocks gradually replaced most of the remaining older wooden buildings.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ 1920 U.S. Census, Volume 3, *Composition and Characteristics of the Population by State*, 122.

⁴⁶⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, September 16, 1919, May 16, 1920.

⁴⁶¹ *Los Angeles Times*, September 9, 1923.

⁴⁶² *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1912; “A Picture of Watts in 1913;” 1922 Sanborn Map.

Linked to this was the passing of a building ordinance that required contractors to take out a building permit before beginning construction. However, there were no specific limits on what could be built and no means of City enforcement. It appears that the building permit ordinance was simply a way for the City to raise money.⁴⁶³

There was also some commercial development off Main Street. Around 1913 the Odd Fellows built a combination commercial structure and lodge hall on the northwest corner of Grand Avenue (102nd Street) and Rosella Avenue (Beach Street), one block north of Main. At the time of construction it was the largest building in Watts. In addition to the meeting hall on the second floor, the first floor housed a printer, bicycle shop, candy store, and the town's undertaker.⁴⁶⁴

What mature Watts continued to lack was any sort of large-scale commercial or industrial enterprise. Nor were there large tracts of land set aside for industrial or large-scale commercial use. The few industries there were, such as the Seven Grain Milling Company, a flour mill on the southwest corner of Ruoff (97th) Street and Gordon Boulevard (Grandee Avenue), were scattered among dwellings.⁴⁶⁵

Well distributed throughout the residential sections were small-scale grocery stores, serving those without automobiles. Also scattered were the newer churches, continuing an older pattern. The newer congregations included the Shorb Avenue (92nd Street) Presbyterian Church, on the southwest corner with Fir Street (Anzac Avenue), the Shorb Avenue Christian Church, on the southwest corner with Firth Boulevard, Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church on the southeast corner of Ruoff (97th) Street and Rosella Avenue (Beach Street), the First Church of Christ Scientist on the northwest corner of Grand Avenue (102nd Street) and Wilmington Avenue, and the Methodist Episcopal Church Grand Chapel on the northeast corner of Compton Avenue and Fountain Avenue (108th Street).⁴⁶⁶

Serving the African American community were three churches. They were the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church on Ramsaur Avenue (109th Street) west of Compton Avenue, the Macedonian Baptist Church on the northeast corner of Thaxter Avenue (114th Street) and Howard Street (Graham Avenue), and the nearby Apostolic Faith Church on the north side of Thaxter between Howard and James (Maie) Avenue. All were in the southwest section earlier established as the African American section of town.⁴⁶⁷

Mature Watts had its share of monumental public buildings. In addition to the City Hall of 1909, there were two others that gave Watts a sense of community pride. One was the Carnegie Library. It was completed in 1914 and located in a park occupying the entire block defined by Gordon Boulevard, York

⁴⁶³ *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1912; "A Picture of Watts in 1913;" 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁶⁴ "Our Community Watts," 4; 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁶⁵ 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁶⁶ 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁶⁷ The 1922 Sanborn Map specifically labels these churches as "Colored."

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Street, Stella Avenue and Pacific Drive (Grandee Avenue, 99th Street, Maie Avenue and Century Boulevard).



*Watts Carnegie Library
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

It was a classic Carnegie form by architect E. R. Jeffrey, with a monumental pedimented portico on the façade of a single-story raised basement masonry block. Its front faced Gordon Boulevard and the Pacific Electric tracks, and was visible to riders in the PE cars from Los Angeles as they slowed to stop at Watts Station. It was demolished in the 1970s.⁴⁶⁸

Unfortunately, like so much else in Watts, the City's goals for itself in building the library were larger than its financial resources. The Carnegie Foundation donated the money for the library building with the understanding that the City would provide funds for acquiring a collection and for maintaining a staff. Within two years, by 1916, the City could not keep its part of the agreement. Instead the new building was given to Los Angeles County to become part of its library system.⁴⁶⁹

The other building of pride was the Wilmington Avenue School. By 1922, Watts actually had four schools. But Wilmington Avenue was the city's premier institution. It was illustrated whenever the *Times* did a feature on Watts. It was on the site of the earlier Tajauta Public School, on the northeast

⁴⁶⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1913; Ray, *City of Watts*, 31; 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁶⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1916.

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corner of Wilmington and Main (103rd) Street. A two-story brick structure containing twelve classrooms, it was built in 1911 in what was described as Spanish Style and designed by architect Paul Tuttle of Glendale. It stood until 1933 when it was damaged by the Long Beach earthquake. Its location is now the playground for a newer school.⁴⁷⁰

By 1923 the *Times* estimated that the city's population had approached 12,500. The *Times* also maintained that over eighty percent of the residents owned their own homes. Yet these homeowners continued to suffer from poor services. The water system, while improving, still failed to reach outlying areas. Electrical service was also spotty, and as late as 1920 only a few of the more prosperous families had power. There were sporadic attempts to create a municipal sewer system in the early 1920s, but the high cost and the lack of a good outflow point limited success. Homes generally relied on cesspools, which were a problem because of a high water table and soil that did not drain well.⁴⁷¹

By 1922 subdivision within the city limits was practically complete. Only the southwest corner, west of Compton Avenue and south of the Redondo Beach line, retained a large tract of vacant land. Also still unsubdivided, but soon to be, was a small tract of land east of Willow (Croesus) Avenue between Robin (107th) Street and the Santa Fe tracks. The twenty-five foot wide lot remained the basis of subdivision. But some of the newer subdivisions experimented with wider lots of thirty, forty, and fifty feet.⁴⁷²

By 1922 perhaps two-thirds of the lots were built upon. Certain blocks, particularly those directly to the north and south of Main (103rd) Street, began to resemble an orderly suburbia with an even, continuous line of dwellings along the street. Elsewhere, the earlier pattern of scattered individual houses on plots of different sizes continued from the earlier period. Again setbacks varied and more than one dwelling often occupied the site.⁴⁷³

The pattern that would characterize Watts well into the twentieth century was established. The population might be dense, but the mode of housing was overwhelmingly single family. Only during the last few years of independence would multi-family housing appear, such as the paired cottages in the form of a minimal bungalow court at 9916 Beach Street and the two-story apartment building at 1637 East Imperial Highway, both from 1923.⁴⁷⁴

Finally, there are the Watts Towers of Simon Rodia (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 15, California Historical Landmark No. 993). Rodia, an Italian immigrant, bought his property on the north side of Robin (107th) Street in 1921 and began construction that same year. To be sure, they are significant primarily as Folk Art and are directly related to the story of pre-consolidation Watts only in the timing of

⁴⁷⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1911, March 5, 1911, September 9, 1923, August 3, 1924 ; "Our Community Watts," 7; 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁷¹ *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1916, March 23, 1922, May 27, 1922, February 6, 1923, March 2, 1923, March 3, 1923, October 22, 1923; Ray, *City of Watts*, 48-49.

⁴⁷² Los Angeles County Assessor; 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁷³ 1922 Sanborn Map.

⁴⁷⁴ Dates from Los Angeles County Assessor.

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their construction. But this resource points out the economically accessible and socially tolerant nature of the community. Only in a place like Watts could someone of Rodia's modest background build something as fantastic as this.⁴⁷⁵



*Towers of Simon Rodia, or Watts Towers
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 15
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

Consolidation

Between 1920 and 1926 Watts more than tripled in size, from 4529 inhabitants to an estimated 16,000.⁴⁷⁶ A city government that had always had difficulties in providing services for its residents was simply overwhelmed. One historian describes Watts as consisting of “an over-assessed and under-serviced citizenry, desperately needing additional paved and improved streets, water and a sewer system.”⁴⁷⁷ The city government, dependent upon residential property taxes levied on citizens of

⁴⁷⁵ Herr, *Landmark L.A.*, pp 259, 260, 422.

⁴⁷⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, May 6, 1926.

⁴⁷⁷ Ray, *City of Watts*, 45.

modest means, gave in to reality and sought consolidation with Los Angeles. But consolidation would have to wait until the city limits of Los Angeles reached those of independent Watts.

The school system could move faster. The Los Angeles City School district extended beyond the Los Angeles City limits and thus enabled Watts to join without the two cities sharing a common border. By 1925 the Los Angeles City School district had incorporated Watts and the surrounding area, noting that “the need for new buildings is more imperative than in any other section of the Los Angeles school district,” and began a program of construction.⁴⁷⁸ Of particular importance was the creation of David Starr Jordan High School. Completed in 1926 and located just outside the Watts city limits, it meant that residents of Watts no longer had to send their children to the more distant Compton High School.⁴⁷⁹

The problem of having no common border was finally solved in March of 1926, when Los Angeles annexed the unincorporated block of land between its so-called Shoestring, extending south to the harbor, and the western edge of Watts. Consolidation was opposed by the Watts Chamber of Commerce but was supported by the city Board of Trustees. A scant month after the common border was established Watts ignored its Chamber of Commerce and voted to consolidate by a margin of over two to one. Consolidation became official and Watts ceased to exist as an independent city in May of 1926.⁴⁸⁰

Conclusion

Time has not been kind to the architecture of pre-consolidation Watts. Gone are just about all the major institutional buildings. Particularly missed are the City Hall, the Carnegie Library, and the Wilmington Avenue School. The few that remain, such as Colored Methodist Episcopal Church and the Shorb Avenue Christian Church, have been altered. Only the Watts Station remains.

At the same time much of the housing that dates from before consolidation continues to be used. Successive waves of residents have altered the homes to fit their needs. In this way, the residential building stock has maintained itself through the most pragmatic means of preservation.

Resources from Pre-Consolidation Watts

Extant resources are considered under Criterion A/1/1. Non-residential resources for pre-consolidation Watts are extremely rare. Where they do exist, such as the two churches discussed above, they have been altered and generally do not retain integrity. Only the two designated resources, the Watts Station (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 36) and Towers of Simon Rodia (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 15, California Historical Landmark No. 993) are architecturally intact.

⁴⁷⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1925.

⁴⁷⁹ Ray, *City of Watts*, 20-22.

⁴⁸⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, April 3, 1926; Ray, *City of Watts*, 69, 71.

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There are, however, a great many residential resources remaining. They can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of those built before 1920 and the great expansion in population that took place after that date. They can be considered solely under the category of pre-consolidation Watts. The second group consists of those built in 1920 and after, during the years of great expansion.

WATTS STREET NAME CHANGES (Based on 1919 Board of Trustees Map)

Original (1919-1922)	Current
Alabama Street	Evers Avenue (south portion)
Albert Street	105 th Street
Alta Avenue	115 th Street (west portion)
Anne Street	Antwerp Street (north portion)
Aurora Avenue	Anzac Avenue (center and south portions)
Arland Avenue	111 th Street (west portion)
Beaver Street	99 th Street (west portion)
Bosshard Street	95 th Street (center portion)
Christian Street	104 th Street
Council Avenue	115 th Street (center and eastern portion)
Cypress Avenue	Juniper Street
Diller Street	103 rd Place
Dunbar Court	Grandee Avenue (south portion)
Eagle Street	112 th Street (east portion)
Edwards Street	106 th Street
Electric Avenue	Graham Avenue (center portion)
Emily Avenue	Bandera Street
Ellen Street	95 th Place
Elm Street	Wilmington Avenue (north portion)
Federal Avenue	100 th Street
Fern Street	Willowbrook Avenue
Fir Street	Anzac Avenue (north portion)
Fountain Avenue	108 th Street (west portion)
Gardner Avenue	112 th Street (west portion)
Glen Avenue	Mona Boulevard
Gordon Blvd	Grandee Avenue (north portion)
Grand/Tajuata Avenue	102 nd Street
Hart Avenue	Grape (center portion)
Howard Street	Graham Avenue (south portion)
Ivy Street	Croesus Avenue (north portion)
James Avenue	Maie Avenue (south portion)
John Street	114 th Street (east portion)
Jones Avenue	110 th Street (west portion)
Lark Street	111 th Street (center and west portions)

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Lealma Avenue	95 th Street (east portion)
Liberty Street	111 th Place
Lillian Street	108 th Street ((center portion)
Locke Street	Gorman Avenue (south portion)
Lynwood Road	Imperial Highway
Main Street	103 rd Street
Manhattan Street	113 th Street (west portion)
Melvin Avenue	Graham Avenue (north portion)
Mill Street	95 th Street (west portion)
Mobile Street	Antwerp Street (south portion)
Morton Avenue	107 th Street (west portion)
Mountain View Ave	Grape Street (center portion)
Myrtle Avenue	Lou Dillon Avenue
Oak Avenue	Kalmia Street
Pacific Drive	Century Boulevard
Palm Avenue	Weigand Avenue
Palm Drive	101 st Street
Pearl Street	113 th Street (east portion)
Pine Avenue	Gorman (north/center portion)
Queen Avenue	98 th Street (west portion)
Ramsaur Avenue	109 th Street (west portion)
Robin Street	107 th Street (center and east portion)
Rose Avenue	Hickory Street (center portion), Grape Street (south portion)
Rosella Avenue	Beach Street
Rudolph Avenue	Holmes Avenue
Ruoff Street	97 th Street
Shorb Avenue	92 nd Street
Stella Avenue	Maie Avenue (north portion)
Sunland Avenue	96 th Street (west portion)
Tajuata/Grand Avenue	102 nd Street
Thaxter Avenue	114 th Street (west portion)
Villa Avenue	Grandee Avenue (center portion), Monitor Avenue
Victor Street	109 th Place
Wall Street	Evers Avenue (north portion)
Walton Avenue	110 th (center and eastern portions)
West Street	109 th Street (center portion)
Willow Avenue	Croesus Avenue (center and south portions)
York Street	99 th Street (center portion)

Streets No Longer Existing

Blaine Avenue
Huntington Avenue

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT WATTS

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement and social history for its association with the early development history of Watts as an independent city prior to consolidation with Los Angeles. Resources dating from this time include residences, places of work, and sites for social life and are now rare.

Period of Significance: 1902-1926

Period of Significance Justification: Watts Station was created and named in 1902. Watts consolidated with Los Angeles in 1926.

Geographic Location: Within the 1926 city boundaries of Watts when it consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History

Criteria: NR: A CR: 1 Local: 1

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Residential-Single Family, Bungalow/House
Property Type: Infrastructure-Transportation-Rail, Depot
Property Type: Institutional-Visual Arts, Folk Art

Property Type Description: Bungalow/House: Domestic dwelling on a private lot
Rail, Depot: Building to serve stop on a rail line with facilities for passengers and/or freight
Folk Art Sculpture: Sculpture by untrained and/or non-professional artist in non-traditional form

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are all significant under Criterion A/1/1. Buildings and structures under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation Watts lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life.

Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from the pre-consolidation period of Watts
- Is associated with the formation, settlement, and/or development of Watts

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Associated with activities typical of city life of pre-consolidation Watts, in particular activities that illustrate the diverse population.
- May be associated with groups important in Watt's early ethnic/cultural history

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within Sawtelle for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed
- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria

THEME: BARNES CITY, 1919-1926



*View of Barnes Circus Zoo toward the southeast in the mid-1920s
The major road in the foreground is Washington Boulevard
Structure in lower center-right may be 4308 Berryman Avenue
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Barnes City was never a community. It was instead a legal device to protect a circus and zoo from attempts to regulate its activities. It lasted as an incorporated entity for less than a year and only one potential resource may remain from this time.

The settlement that became Barnes City was created in 1919 (some sources give 1920) when the Al Barnes Wild Animal Circus and Zoo moved its winter quarters from Venice to a tract of unincorporated land south of Washington Boulevard and west of Sawtelle Boulevard. The winter quarters and a zoo

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occupied the area from Washington south to Culver Boulevard and from Sawtelle west to Berryman Avenue.⁴⁸¹

Al Barnes owned additional land to the west approximately as far as the present-day Sepulveda Channel, to the south as far as Ballona Creek, and to the east as far as the existing boundary with Culver City. Between 1920 and 1927 Barnes subdivided parts of the additional land and sold lots for residential use.⁴⁸²

A permanent structure for the Barnes Circus Zoo was opened in December of 1923 and fronted on the south side of Washington Boulevard. An aerial view shows the permanent structure sitting in mid-block. The small structure in the lower right corner of the aerial view appears to be located at 4308 Berryman Avenue.⁴⁸³

In 1925 Culver City annexed a one-lot-deep strip of land on either side of Washington Boulevard as far west as Del Ray Avenue, one block short of Lincoln Boulevard. This placed the front of the Barnes property in Culver City, while leaving the remainder in unincorporated territory.⁴⁸⁴

To prevent Culver City from annexing further land, the La Ballona Improvement Association was formed and sought to organize the area between Culver City and Venice into a sixth-class city with about 2500 inhabitants. Barnes supported this move as a means of keeping control over any possible regulations that would affect his business. Voters approved incorporation as Barnes City in February of 1926. Secondary sources indicate that, of the 692 registered voters in the area to be organized, 254 worked for the circus.⁴⁸⁵

Barnes tried to control the new city. However, the large area of the new city included many residents not associated with the circus and not in sympathy with Barnes. Within a month of the February election, they were demanding a new election. A new Board of Trustees was voted into office in April of 1926, when the circus was on the road. This was followed by a petition drive calling for an election on consolidating with Los Angeles. The drive was successful and Barnes City voted in September of 1926 to consolidate. Barnes City had existed as an independent entity for seven months.⁴⁸⁶

Rather than conform to Los Angeles city regulations, in February of 1927 Al Barnes moved his circus and zoo to an unincorporated area between El Monte and Baldwin Park in the San Gabriel Valley. In 1928 the former Barnes-owned land became Barnes Square, a real estate development. The Barnes City

⁴⁸¹ Glen Howell, "Where Was Barnes City," *SoMar* (Volume 4, Issue 4, Fall 2009).

⁴⁸² Jeffrey Stanton, "Barnes City Zoo" (2006), from web site www.westland.net/venice

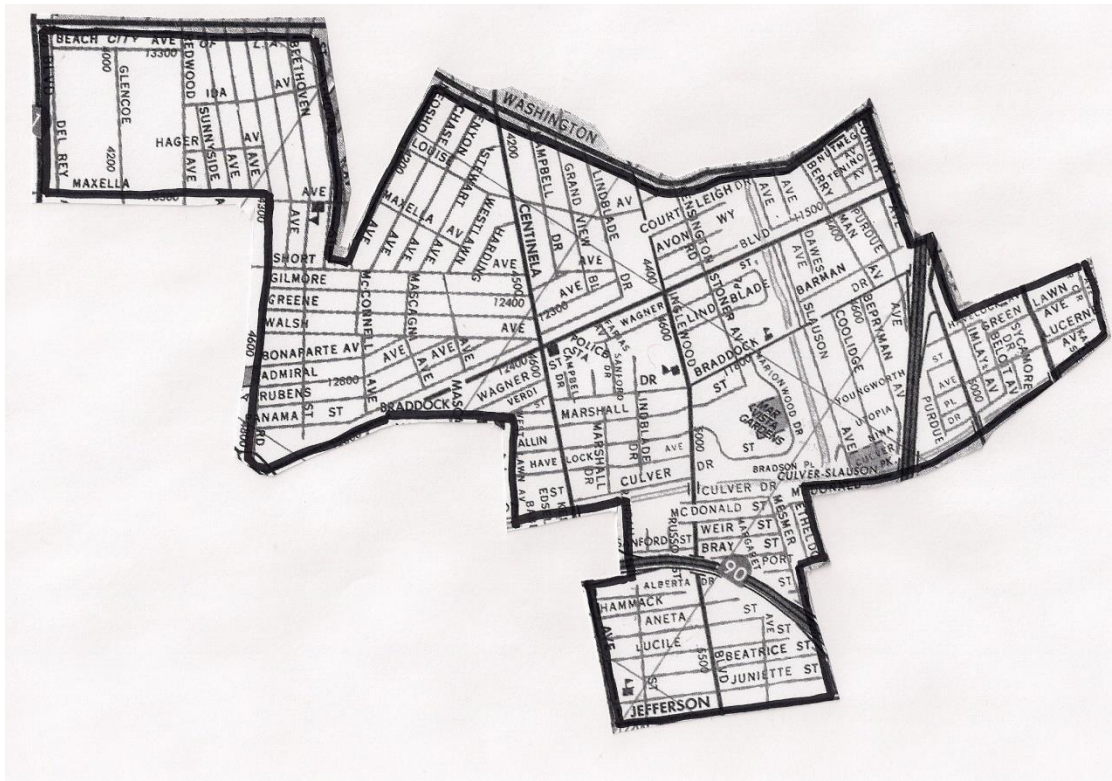
⁴⁸³ Stanton, "Barnes City Zoo."

⁴⁸⁴ Stanton, "Barnes City Zoo."

⁴⁸⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1926, September 15, 1926; Stanton, "Barnes City Zoo."

⁴⁸⁶ Stanton, "Barnes City Zoo."

consolidation itself was a subject of litigation for years, and it was not until 1930 that the courts officially declared Barnes City to be a part of Los Angeles.⁴⁸⁷



Barnes City limits at consolidation
(From “Los Angeles County GIS Data Portal, City Boundaries and Annexations”)

Resources in Pre-Consolidation Barnes City

There are no extant community-related resources, such as a city hall, library, or a school. Nor is there any documentary evidence that a community existed that identified itself as Barnes City.

The significant event in the brief life of Barnes City was the operation of the Al Barnes Wild Animal Circus and Zoo, and the significant individual was Al Barnes. There are few if any extant resources linked to the circus or to Barnes as an individual. A preliminary survey of the area identified one possible resource. It is the small residence at 4308 Berryman Avenue. It appears to match the structure in the lower right hand corner of the aerial photo of the circus property that fronts on a street that is most likely Berryman, at the western edge of the circus property. The Los Angeles County Assessor dates this from 1922, with remodeling done in 1925. This matches the time during which the circus structures were built. Additional research may verify its role as a circus building.

⁴⁸⁷ Glen Creason, *Los Angeles in Maps* (New York: Rizzoli, 2010), 164-165; Howell, “Where Was Barnes City;” Stanton, “Barnes City Zoo.”



Residence
4308 Berryman Avenue
(Photo by author)

It is difficult to link other buildings from the 1919-1926 period directly to Barnes and to the circus. There are a number of residences which may have housed circus employees. But it is difficult to separate these from similar buildings housing residents having no association with the circus, and work as a circus employee does not appear, in itself, to be a historically significant association.

There are numerous other residential resources further from the circus grounds, but within the boundaries of Barnes City which date from the 1919-1926 period. However, they are products of general streetcar and automobile related suburbanization, and should be treated under those themes. The only relationship that they have to Barnes City during its brief life was to have been caught within its broadly-drawn boundaries.

For these reasons, no eligibility standards have been developed for resources in Barnes City.

THEME: TUJUNGA, 1888-1932



*Tujunga municipal government, circa 1929
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Tujunga was different in many ways. It was by far the most isolated of the pre-consolidation communities, both by distance and topography. It never had a rail link and was totally dependent upon the automobile. It had its origins in a communitarian society, based on a cooperative economy of self-sufficient farmers. It lasted the longest as an independent city, until the Depression years of the early 1930s. Most significant, it was the only one to develop its own unique vernacular architecture, based on local materials and resident craftsmen.

The result of all this gave Tujunga a spatial layout and architectural fabric that still sets it apart. Its geography provides two distinct environments. One is essentially High Desert, with dry, treeless, rocky soil. The other is a well-watered mini-valley, shaded by the north slope of the Verdugo Mountains,

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complete with springs and lush vegetation. Into these two settings came individuals of modest means, looking for either a plot of farmland or a place of rustic retreat.

Shaping the early days was the Little Landers Colony, a group dedicated to co-operative living and subsistence agriculture. Following it was the less-idealistic California Home Extension Association, with its members focused on farming the rocky soil, and then using the rocks removed to construct their dwellings. Both these groups left Tujunga with a landscape of various-sized lots, streets that widen and narrow seemingly at whim, and a collection of unique stone buildings.

By the mid-1920s, with improved road links to other communities, Tujunga converted itself into a more traditional suburb. It had a fair degree of success, with a large number of working and middle-class bungalows and a few impressive upper-class homes filling in the empty spaces. But it never rid itself of its early uniqueness, and still retains a notably bohemian feel.

Tujunga before the Little Landers, 1888-1913

The site that became the independent city of Tujunga began in 1888 as part of the Glorietta Heights subdivision. Glorietta Heights was one of the many developments that were created throughout Southern California during the boom years of the 1880s and, as with many of them, did not live up to the hopes of its investors. There is a single resource remaining from the early Glorietta Heights days within the original city limits of Tujunga. It is the Oak Glen Ranch of 1908 (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 838).¹



Oak Glen Ranch

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 838
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

¹Marlene A. Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga: From Village to City* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 34; “Oak Glen,” Crescenta Valley Heritage Website.

In 1911 Marshall Valentine Hartranft purchased the unsold portions of the Glorietta Heights subdivision. Hartranft was best known as a writer on agriculture, having published a newspaper entitled *The Los Angeles Daily Fruit Herald* and later a periodical called *The Western Empire Magazine*. He then combined his talents as publisher and potential developer, and organized a syndicate of land investors known as the Western Empire Associates from among his magazine's readers.²

Hartranft had lived on a ranch in nearby Sunland since 1907, and was familiar with the Tujunga area. His Western Empire syndicate took control in 1911 of about 1700 acres of Glorietta Heights land between Third Street in Sunland and the high point of the valley on the east side of Tujunga. To be sure of an adequate water supply for his land, Hartranft also bought the water rights to Haines Canyon in the mountains northeast of Tujunga.³

The land was divided into parcels of two to ten acres, large enough to sustain farming along the lines outlined by Hartranft in his publications. The Western Empire enterprise continued to sell land up through 1919. At the same time, Hartranft reserved approximately 270 acres in the center for what he initially referred to as the townsite. Here he tried a very different marketing approach.⁴

The Little Landers Colony, 1913-1919

Hartranft went utopian. In 1913 he teamed with philosopher and writer William Ellsworth Smythe to create a co-operative community of self-sufficient homesteaders on the townsite. Around this experiment he continued to market larger plots to the better-off. But in the midst of these gentlemen farmers Hartranft and Smythe set out to fulfill a Jeffersonian ideal.

Smythe was the author of *City Homes on Country Lanes*, which advocated self-sufficient homesteading on small plots within a larger community organized on a co-operative plan. The proposed experimental colony in Tujunga would be based on his ideas. Colonists would grow enough to support themselves. What surplus they produced would be transported by co-operatively-owned trucks to downtown Los Angeles where it would be sold in a co-operatively-owned market. Colonists would also buy what they needed through a co-operatively-owned store within the colony. Smythe had created a community along these lines near San Diego in 1909. The members called themselves the Little Landers, because of the small size of the plots of land that they thought sufficient to support themselves.⁵

Hartranft and Smythe launched the Little Landers Colony of Tujunga in March of 1913. The subdivision was officially called "Los Terrenitos," a name that still exists as part of the legal description of the lots. The major portion extended north of Foothill Boulevard from Mountair Avenue on the west to

² Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 32-35; *Rancho Tujunga: A History of Sunland / Tujunga*, compiled by Sarah R. Lombard (Sunland: Sunland Woman's Club, 1990), 37; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 1929 Supplement.

³ *Rancho Tujunga*, 36; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, March 15, 1923, February 1929 Supplement.

⁴ *Rancho Tujunga*, 39-40; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 1929 Supplement.

⁵ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 33-34; *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1911, July 13, 1913.

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Pinewood Avenue on the east. Its northern boundary varied, reaching as far as Apperson Street between Mountair and Tujunga Canyon Boulevard. A leg extended toward the east along Tujunga Canyon Boulevard as far as Haines Canyon Boulevard. Hartranft excluded the north side of Foothill Boulevard from Commerce Avenue east for separate sale.⁶

The basis of the colony was the plot of land each owner possessed. These plots were an acre, a half-acre, or a quarter-acre in extent. The smaller lots were clustered along Commerce Avenue, which was to be a business district, and in the blocks east of Commerce between Greeley Street and Tujunga Canyon Boulevard. The relatively small size of even the largest plots, at one acre, meant that only intensive agriculture could succeed. For this a dependable water supply was required. Along with his purchase of water rights to the Haines Canyon watershed, Hartranft developed a series of reservoirs, wells, and distribution mains. Each site was promised access to water.⁷

The Little Landers map shows a site for a clubhouse, to be called Bolton Hall, a co-operative community store, and a school. Also shown is a site for a hotel, which is something that one would not expect to see in a utopian community, but was a typical element in more traditional town schemes of the day. Most interesting is a right-of-way for a proposed electric railway. The goal, never achieved, was to extent the Glendale and Montrose interurban line up the hill from La Crescenta, several miles to the east of Tujunga. Tujunga Canyon Boulevard from Pinewood Avenue eastward was laid out to accept the rail line down the center, and still retains the excessive width.⁸

From March through October of 1913, Hartranft and Smythe undertook an extensive marketing campaign to sell the Little Landers Colony. “We believe it is feasible to realize a comfortable living from a little land under intensive cultivation, particularly with the aid of expert teaching and example, and the advantage of co-operative selling direct to the consumer.” They admitted that “We certainly have to pick up the stones in a large portion of the colony tract” but went on to assure the reader that “The stones are useful for building.”⁹

During the high point of marketing in 1913, auto tours left every day from the Little Landers sales office on South Figueroa, with Smythe acting as guide. The charge was one dollar. “See for yourself how Little Landers are beginning to make their living on 70-foot home plots which are selling for only \$250, and double plots for \$500.”¹⁰ The most significant day of the campaign was the dedication of the clubhouse, Bolton Hall, in August of 1913.¹¹

⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1913; “The City of the Little Lands” Map in the collection of the Bolton Hall Museum.

⁷ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 24-35; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 1929 Supplement; “The City of the Little Lands” Map.

⁸ “The City of the Little Lands” Map.

⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1913.

¹⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1913.

¹¹ *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1913.

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Interested investors purchased a share in the Little Landers Company, which was then transferred into a deed of land ownership. The first six lots were sold in March of 1913. In 1914 the population of the Colony was estimated to be about 500. This was enough to establish a post office that year. By the time the experiment ended 340 individuals and families bought shares and became landowners.¹²



Bolton Hall

L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 2

(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

Like most utopian communities, the Little Landers Colony eventually failed. In 1919 Hartranft folded the Little Landers Company into his other businesses. Two years later, in 1921, Bolton Hall was sold to the American Legion for use as a lodge. Failure was perhaps inevitable given the poor nature of the soil, the small size of the plots, and the lack of good transportation links to potential markets. Above all, an adequate supply of water was a problem.¹³

¹² Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 97; *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 1914, April 10, 1927, January 8, 1996.

¹³ *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1917; *Rancho Tujunga*, 72; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 1929 Supplement.

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Despite the short time of the experiment, the Little Landers left two impressive buildings. The first is Bolton Hall itself, the clubhouse built in 1913 to serve as the community center (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 2). It is a stone structure with a bell tower on the northeast corner of Valmont and Commerce, and contains as its primary interior space a large meeting room with an open trussed ceiling and a monumental stone fireplace.

The building was constructed by George Harris, of fieldstone gathered from the surrounding area. Harris began as the advertising editor for Hartranft's *Western Empire* magazine, but transformed himself into a master mason. Harris, and the masons who worked under him on Bolton Hall, later formed the group of craftsmen which was responsible for the emergence of Tujunga's distinctive stone architecture.¹⁴



Wieman Chapel

*Southwest corner of Valmont Street and Samoa Avenue
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The other remaining Little Landers landmark is the Wieman Chapel, located on the southwest corner of Valmont Street and Samoa Avenue. It housed the Tujunga Christian Federation, a cooperative effort founded in 1915 to combine all the Protestant congregations into a single entity. The Federation spent

¹⁴ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 32, 36-39.

several years raising funds, meanwhile meeting in Bolton Hall. By 1919 it had raised enough to have plans drawn up, and was able to complete construction in 1920.¹⁵

The Wieman Chapel is a modest, single-story L-shaped stone structure of a scale in keeping with the egalitarian ideals of the Colony. It is essentially a large Craftsman cottage, with only its now-missing stone bell tower marking it as a church. It has retained a limited degree of integrity. It has lost its bell tower, its stone has been painted and its attic windows covered. But its overall massing has remained intact.

The California Home Extension Association, 1919-1925

In 1919 Hartranft tried a different approach. He took the unsold sections of the Little Landers Colony, combined them with some of the unsold parts of the Western Empire subdivision, and created the California Home Extension Association. He then cut up the larger plots into smaller lots and started selling these lots for the low price of \$200 each, on terms of ten dollars down and four dollars a month.¹⁶

His marketing of these lots was similar to the marketing of the Little Landers Colony, but without the utopian co-operative ideology. The idea of the California Home Extension Association was still that of the self-sufficient yeoman farmer. The lots were called “Little Farms in the Foothills” and supposedly contained “just enough ground to grow plenty of avocados, oranges, raisins, and table grapes and other good things to eat.” To make this kind of agriculture possible, each lot was promised access to piped water.¹⁷

In place of a co-operative ideology, the California Home Extension Association stressed individual initiative. This was particularly true when it came to construction. There were no building restrictions whatsoever.¹⁸ Instead, the emphasis was on owners building their own homes from local materials. Here Hartranft’s advertising made a virtue out of the rocky nature of the land. “Free building stones and sand. Get a bag of cement and come build a cabin of your own.”¹⁹

Also different from the Little Landers experiment was the California Home Extension Association’s emphasis on Tujunga’s links to nearby communities via the automobile. Foothill Boulevard had been designated as a paved state highway as early as 1909. The state took control of this route in 1915 and began making improvements. By 1923 the California Home Extension Association’s advertisements in the *Los Angeles Times* maintained that once isolated Tujunga was easy to reach by the highway from

¹⁵ *Rancho Tujunga*, 42, 66, 70.

¹⁶ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 1929 Supplement.

¹⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1919.

¹⁸ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 1929 Supplement.

¹⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 1919.

Glendale north through the Verdugo Canyon to Montrose and then west. Supposedly Angelenos could reach Tujunga in one hour.²⁰

Accurate population numbers are hard to come by. It is safe to say that Tujunga more than doubled in size during the early 1920s. Most of the houses built during the California Extension years were single endeavors, constructed either by the owners themselves or by contactors working for individual owners. To be sure, there is evidence that some contractors were building a number of houses on speculation. But there is no evidence of clusters of similar homes as one would expect from large amounts of spec construction.²¹

By the end of 1925 Hartranft decided again to change his business arrangement and brought the activities of the California Home Extension Association to an end.²² Many blamed him for the town's haphazard appearance, due to his low pricing of the lots and the lack of building regulations. But Tujunga's newspaper, the *Record-Ledger*, was more sympathetic, maintaining that Hartranft allowed the "the man of little or no capital" to realize the dream of home ownership.²³

The Stone Architecture of Tujunga

The Little Landers and California Home Extension periods produced a distinct and significant architectural form. This was the stone house made from local materials. The techniques came from the pool of skilled masons that had worked in Tujunga since the construction of Bolton Hall. Some of the stone houses were built by the owners themselves, with advice when needed from these professional masons. Other houses were built entirely by the masons and their crews. Contractor and mason D. S. Wieman was one of most active, particularly between 1921 through 1924.²⁴

²⁰ California Highways Website; *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1923; *Rancho Tujunga*, 46; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, November 9, 1922.

²¹ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, June 12, 1924, December 3, 1925, February 1929 Supplement.

²² *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, December 31, 1925.

²³ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, January 22, 1925.

²⁴ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, July 24, 1921, July 31, 1921, May 15, 1924, May 22, 1924.



Forster Residence
10212 Fairgrove Avenue
(Photo by author)

There were two styles. One was a relatively conventional stone version of the California bungalow. This style featured the strong horizontal lines of the bungalow mode with low-pitched gabled roofs and broad overhangs. The only change was that load-bearing stone walls replaced the traditional frame construction. A good example is the Forster Residence from 1924 at 10212 Fairgrove Avenue.²⁵

The other style was more unusual. It was essentially cubic, with vertical proportions, a flat or low-sloped roof with parapet, and little if any ornamentation. It was probably the easiest style to follow for those constructing their own homes with only minimal aid from a mason. The *Los Angeles Times* thought that it showed southwest Native American themes. “The effect that natural resources had on architectural styles in Tujunga is reflected in the Indian pueblo idea carried out in many homes”²⁶

²⁵ An historic photo of the Forster Residence exists in the collection of the Bolton Hall Museum.

²⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1927.



Blarney Castle

*L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 830
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)*

The most monumental example of this is the Blarney Castle (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 830). The original stone section was constructed in 1921, and the stucco addition in 1923. The original section is a prime example of the cubic stone form. Its two-story height is unusual, as is its bay window projection. Also somewhat unusual are the full arched windows on the north elevation (partially obscured by the addition). Nonetheless it is Tujunga’s most impressive example of the cubic stone style.

More typical is the modest Cora Corregan Residence from 1923 at 10423 Fairgrove Avenue. The overall cubic form is generally intact, even though the rear section has had its stone covered with siding. The front portion has a high degree of integrity, with its symmetrical five-bay composition of center door and flanking windows topped with segmented arches.²⁷

²⁷ An historic photo of the Corregan Residence exists in the collection of the Bolton Hall Museum.



Current View of Cora Corregan Residence, 1923
10423 Fairgrove Avenue
(Photo by Author)

The Rustic Vale

Tujunga north of Foothill was dry and generally treeless. In contrast, to the south it was relatively lush and well-watered. The Haines Canyon creek, which runs along the eastern edge of the Little Landers Colony close to Marcus Avenue, turns to the west below Foothill, and then generally runs parallel to the boulevard a block or two to the south. (Today, it is a concrete-lined flood control channel, in places covered over.)

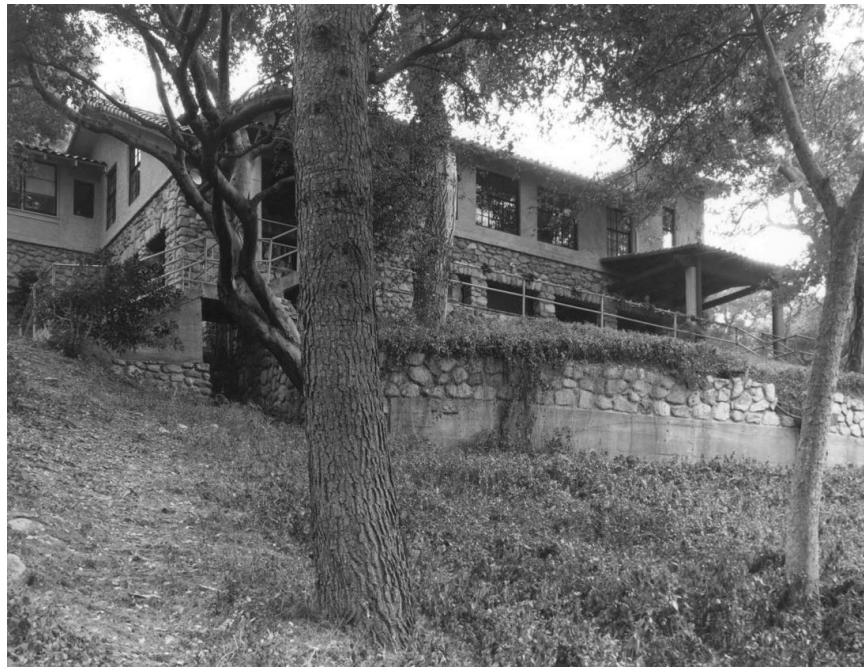
The creek here shaped the setting. This was the base of the Verdugo Hills; their northern slope started just south of the creek. The result was a vale or small valley along the course of the stream. The Verdugos provided shade to the vale, and the presence of water allowed the growth of trees and smaller vegetation. This vegetation continued up the slope of the hills, occasionally nourished by springs.

This rustic vale began attracting nature lovers in the years before the First World War, with some cabins dating from as early as 1913. Rough meandering roads ran along the creek. Houses on irregularly-shaped plots of land began lining these rough roads once building resumed after the war. They were commonly designed in the rustic forms that gave the vale its architectural character.²⁸

The attractions of this other Tujunga became known through the efforts of writer and poet John Steven McGroarty. He is remembered today as the author of the Mission Play, a popular pageant that was performed at San Gabriel, and as California's Poet Laureate in the 1930s. During the 1920s McGroarty

²⁸ Los Angeles County Assessor.

wrote a newspaper column in the *Los Angeles Times* entitled “The Green Verdugo Hills.” In it he portrayed Tujunga as kind of rural paradise, filled with beautiful scenery and eccentric people.²⁹



McGroarty Home and Grounds
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 63
(City of Los Angeles – Office of Historic Resources)

In 1923 McGroarty built his home in the rustic vale (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 63). The house, now a City-owned art center, sits south of the creek and a bit up the hill. The area around it, now a park, was the scene of cultural events throughout the twenties. McGroarty was continually holding gatherings of one sort or another around his home, which he named the Chupa Rosa Rancho.³⁰

Hartranft soon became active in the vale. In January of 1923, he began subdividing the land south of Foothill by constructing a road through the Oak Glen Ranch property. The result was the creation of the Hillhaven tract, along the southern section of Hillhaven Avenue as it presently extends south of Foothill Boulevard. This opened the land which stretched up into the hills behind the existing roads along the creek. A number of other tracks followed in the next few years so that by 1927 most of the district south of Foothill had been subdivided.³¹

The homes in the rustic vale generally followed the Craftsman forms typical of the era and the setting. But there were attempts to import the stone construction found elsewhere in Tujunga. A good example

²⁹ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 102-104.

³⁰ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 102-105.

³¹ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, November 9, 1922, January 11, 1923, November 29, 1923. January 3, 1924, April 16, 1925, March 18, 1926, August 4, 1927.

of this is the residence at 9920 Hirondele Lane, from around 1925. Here, stone is used to create a compact cabin-like bungalow appropriate to an undisturbed natural setting.³²



*Residence
9920 Hirondele Lane
(Photo by author)*

Tujunga Becomes a Suburb

Beginning in the mid-1920s, Tujunga began to take on the look of a more traditional suburb. To be sure, it never shed its original semi-rural identity. But mixed in with the stone houses of subsistence farmers and the rustic cabins of the weekend retreaters came compact Spanish Colonial Revivals and spacious Tudors. The result was the mix of different scales and styles that characterizes Tujunga to this day.

What made this possible was near universal ownership of automobiles, accompanied by the improvement of Tujunga's roadway links to other cities, in particular Foothill Boulevard. In the early 1920s, as a state highway, Foothill consisted of a sixteen-foot wide ribbon of concrete with earthen shoulders. Beginning in the mid-twenties the state embarked on an improvement program that resulted, by the early 1930s, in a completed roadway at least twenty feet wide with improved shoulders of two to three feet.³³

³² David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles*, Revised Edition (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2003), 375.

³³ *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 1931; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, May 3, 1923, May 17, 1923, November 8, 1923.

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In place of an interurban, Tujunga had to make do with the bus. In the early 1920s, an auto-stage ran once an hour between Tujunga and Los Angeles, and reached downtown in one-and-three-quarter hours. By 1932 there were 27 round trips per day, and the time each way had been reduced to seventy minutes. But the bus was secondary to the development of Tujunga. The ownership of a private automobile was assumed for the vast majority of the population.³⁴

The most important event marking Tujunga's transformation from a rural settlement into a distant auto-oriented suburb was its incorporation as a city in 1925. The town needed better services and a means of controlling its growth. In April of 1925 residents voted to incorporate as a city of the sixth class. The vote was 457 in favor and 354 against.³⁵

The new city government issued a number of regulations affecting buildings, and thereby helped to shape Tujunga's architecture. In September of 1925 the Board of Trustees passed an ordinance requiring building permits for any construction within the city limits. In 1927 Tujunga created a Planning Commission. This was formed under a new state law that allowed residents of a given neighborhood to ask that the Planning Commission declare that neighborhood to be single-family residential only, thereby enacting a form of zoning.³⁶

In April of 1929 Tujunga finally adopted a building code modeled after those of other towns of similar size in Southern California. For the first time, methods and materials of construction throughout the city were regulated. Also, by 1930, anyone wishing to obtain a permit had to employ a contractor licensed by the state. The day of owners building their own houses was officially over.³⁷

By the end of the 1920s Tujunga had gained all the modern utilities except sewers. The most important was water. The source continued to be the stream in Haines Canyon, with its dams and reservoirs, and a series of local wells. Tujunga had both telephone and electrical service relatively early. The last of the utilities to come was natural gas in 1924.³⁸

Tujunga took two steps early in 1930 that showed its aspirations to be a middle-class suburb. In the spring, after years of debate and working out of rented spaces, Tujunga purchased Bolton Hall from the American Legion to serve as its City Hall. The other may not have been as glamorous, but it also indicated a degree of suburban maturity. In January of 1930, for the first time in its history, Tujunga began city garbage collection.³⁹

³⁴ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 82; *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1922, August 26, 1923; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, November 15, 1923, December 23, 1923, January 14, 1926, January 21, 1926.

³⁵ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 86, 92; *Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 1925; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, January 22, 1925.

³⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, August 20, 1927; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, September 24, 1925.

³⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, April 7, 1929; *Rancho Tujunga*, 125.

³⁸ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 136; *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1922, November 11, 1924, June 28, 1928; *Rancho Tujunga*, 61; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, March 15, 1923, April 5, 1923, October 27, 1924, November 24, 1924, July 29, 1926.

³⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 1930, September 13, 1930.

Tujunga's Institutions

During the 1920s Tujunga gained most of the social institutions one would expect to find in a successful settlement of the era. Because of its distance from Los Angeles and its rural traditions, these institutions resembled those of a small Midwestern town rather than those of a sophisticated suburb of a major metropolis. Nonetheless, they did develop.

The 1920s saw the maturation of the public school system, at least at the primary level. From the days of the Little Landers Colony, Tujunga had its own public school, and by the mid-twenties it had two: the Pine Avenue (now Pinewood) School and the Palm Avenue School. Both had attractive buildings in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which by 1927 had combined about 400 students. However, Tujunga did not have its own high school. The city by itself was too small to support one, and so was part of the Glendale High School district.⁴⁰

Church life in Tujunga, as in most small towns of the day, was the dominant form of social activity. Joining the Community Church from the Little Lander days were the Episcopalians and the Roman Catholics. However, neither was as large as the Community Church, which eventually affiliated with the Methodist denomination, and neither left any buildings from the pre-consolidation period.⁴¹



*Community Church
7156 Valmont Street
(Photo by author)*

The Community Church in contrast constructed perhaps the most imposing building still standing from the days of independent Tujunga. This was a new sanctuary at 7156 Valmont Street, to take the place of

⁴⁰ *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1926, January 15, 1927, April 10, 1927; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 1929 Supplement.

⁴¹ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 51.

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the outgrown Wieman Chapel. Plans for its construction were announced in February of 1928. It was built under the direction of Nelson E. Jones, and its final cost was placed at \$40,000. It was dedicated in June of 1928.⁴²

The church is in an extremely simple Spanish Colonial Revival style, reminiscent of the work of Irving Gill. The only ornament of note is the terra cotta relief over the main entrance. The rest of its architectural interest comes from its massing and the pattern of its fenestration. It has maintained most of its architectural integrity. Only the original cross, the low-pitched hipped roof and the corner finials on the tower have been lost.

Secular recreation centered around two locations. One was the Garden of the Moon, created by Hartranft in 1921. It was a privately-owned amusement park, located on the south side of Foothill at the intersection with Commerce. Its primary attraction was a restaurant and dance hall. It also had a swimming pool, complete with dressing rooms, which was created by widening a portion of the rustic vale's creek that passed through the south edge of the Garden. It fell on hard times during the Depression and all evidence of it has disappeared.⁴³



*American Legion Hall
10039 Pinewood Avenue
(Photo by author)*

The other recreational center had a happier fate. This is the American Legion Hall at 10039 Pinewood Avenue. The Legion met in Bolton Hall until it was sold to Tujunga for use as a city hall in 1929. In its

⁴² *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1928, March 20, 1928, May 20, 1928, June 26, 1928.

⁴³ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 123-125; *Rancho Tujunga*, 71; 1924 and 1938 Sanborn Maps for Tujunga.

place the Legion planned for a new hall, on a lot it purchased for \$800. The hall was dedicated in August of 1930.⁴⁴

The sides and rear are of utilitarian design. The façade, however, is a prime example of the Art Deco. The composition is traditional Beaux Arts, with a central pavilion and lower wings, and with a monumental stairway leading to the front entrance. The ornament is worthy of a motion picture palace of the day. It has had some alterations, including the elimination of the windows and the addition of the canopy. But its overall form and most of its detailing remain intact.

Residential Architecture in Mature Tujunga

Residential Tujunga during the late 1920s evolved from a kind of frontier settlement into a more typical suburb. New homes numbered 22 in 1925, 42 in 1926 and another 42 in 1927. By 1930 Tujunga had grown to 2311 people.⁴⁵

Yet certain features remained from the earlier days. The most striking was the variety of street widths and treatments. Some blocks resemble what one would expect in a suburb from the twenties, with broad pavements, curbs and sidewalks. They are easily wide enough to park cars along both edges. Others are little more than thinly paved alleys, with no curbs or sidewalks and little space for parking.

These variations exist from block to block on the same street, with apparently little plan to guide which street should get which treatment. Only the upper part of Commerce Avenue, north of the business district, has any sort of uniformity. The variety of street treatment combines with the variety in scale and setback of the houses to give present-day residential Tujunga its diverse character.

This street condition stems from two decisions made early in Tujunga's life. First, unlike developers in other cities, Hartranft never went beyond rough grading of the streets in his developments. This kept costs down and fit with the rural nature of his efforts. Second, Tujunga left it to residents of each block to organize and pay for their own street improvements. The residents of some blocks desired full suburban amenities, while those of others blocks preferred to maintain their existing rural roads.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the new architecture on these streets was typically suburban. This can be seen in the work of the contractors. By 1924 masons such as D. S. Wieman were moving beyond building Tujunga's unique stone houses. His advertisements now stated that he would build "modern convenient homes"

⁴⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, December 24, 1929, August 2, 1930.

⁴⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1927, May 27, 1928.; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, January 7, 1926, July 29, 1926, May 25, 1930, June 21, 1931.

⁴⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, July 17, 1930; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, December 21, 1922, February 15, 1923, March 21, 1923, November 19, 1925, January 7, 1926.

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complete with built-ins, in more traditional styles, including half-timbered Tudor.⁴⁷ His “Wieman-Built” stonework seems to have been limited to foundations, fireplaces, and retaining walls.⁴⁸

The Craftsman bungalows of the early years were followed in the mid-twenties by Spanish Colonial Revival style cottages for the working and middle class, while an occasional Italianate villa would house the better off. More urban forms were rare. A bungalow court might make an appearance, particularly on Foothill Boulevard. But by far the vast majority of Tujunga’s residences were single-family houses.⁴⁹



Heath Residence
10418-20 Fairgrove Avenue
(Photo by author)

There were a few homes of architectural significance. Perhaps the most imposing house from the period is the Heath Residence of 1926 at 10418-20 Fairgrove Avenue. R. L. Heath was an attorney and one-time Los Angeles Chief of Police. The house’s style is hard to define, perhaps a combination of Spanish Colonial Revival, Art Deco, and Viennese Secessionist. It has remained generally unaltered except for the protruding box-like addition on the second floor to the right of the central pavilion.⁵⁰

Commercial Tujunga

The early business district of Tujunga projected a somewhat rough image. South of Bolton Hall, on both sides of Commerce Avenue, merchants built a number of single-story wood frame retail structures in the early 1920s. They were reminiscent of those found in typical nineteenth century frontier towns, with false fronts of exaggerated height screening simple gabled sheds that extended toward the rear.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, May 22, 1924.

⁴⁸ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, May 15, 1924.

⁴⁹ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, July 17, 1924.

⁵⁰ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 1929 Supplement.

⁵¹ 1924 Sanborn Map. There are four known resources remaining from the early period, when wood frame construction was the norm in the business district. Three of them, 10016, 10020 and 10024 Commerce Avenue, date from 1921, while 10028 Commerce Avenue dates from 1922.

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Tujunga soon saw a transition to masonry and concrete structures, some multi-story. The transition began early, in 1921, with the construction of two single-story blocks. One was the headquarters for the Tujunga Valley Bank, the city's most important financial institution. In that year the bank built a single-story brick structure on the southwest corner of Commerce and Tujunga Canyon, which unfortunately no longer exists.⁵²

The other was the new home of an equally important community institution, the local newspaper. In 1921 the *Record-Ledger* constructed its office and plant on the northeast corner of Commerce and Greeley, and enlarged it in 1924. It was a small but structurally advanced building of reinforced concrete. It still stands, albeit altered. A second floor has been added to the original single-story building, and the front door has been filled in. But the simple, almost industrial, lines of the original remain intact.⁵³

Two years later, in 1923, Tujunga gained its first two-story masonry business block. This was Breidt Building at 10053 Commercial Avenue. It was typical of small-town business blocks, in that it contained two storefront spaces on the first floor, housing a drug store and the post office, and a large space on the second floor that was used for lodge meetings. The Breidt Building has unfortunately lost much of its integrity. But the overall massing and form remain. A second masonry business block, similar to the Breidt, was added in 1929 to the north at 10065 Commerce. It has maintained more of its integrity.⁵⁴

The *Record-Ledger* had used the possible construction of more buildings like the Breidt as a reason for supporting incorporation as a city. Additional masonry construction was assured in early 1926 when the new city government created a Fire District that included both sides of Commerce from Valmont to Foothill. Buildings in the District had to have exterior walls of brick, concrete, tile or other "fireproof" materials, roofs of tar and gravel or some other "fireproof" material, and parapets at least two feet high. At the same time, existing non-conforming buildings were allowed to remain unaltered.⁵⁵

Property owners along Commerce Avenue also tried to create a more urbane downtown through street improvement and beautification. This included paving, curbs, sidewalks, and ornamental street lights. Despite these efforts, however, Commerce Avenue remained relatively undeveloped. Only a handful of new buildings went up along the improved stretch between Valmont and Foothill before the onset of the Depression. Vacant lots and the older wood-frame stores continued to dominate. This was particularly true for the east side of Commerce. Between 1924 and 1930 not one new building was constructed on the east side between Valmont and Foothill, and 34 of the 46 lots remained vacant.⁵⁶

⁵² *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1921.

⁵³ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, April 10, 1924.

⁵⁴ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 11, 1926, February 25, 1926, February 1929 Supplement.

⁵⁵ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, January 22, 1925, February 18, 1926, March 11, 1926, March 18, 1926.

⁵⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 1925; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, June 25, 1925, July 2, 1925, August 13, 1925, August 20, 1925, January 14, 1926, January 28, 1926; 1924 and 1930 Sanborn Maps.

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Perhaps this failure was inevitable, in that a dense business district was most common in downtowns served by streetcars. Instead, given Tujunga's lack of a trolley and its dependence on the automobile, Foothill Boulevard emerged as an alternative shopping strip. This role for Foothill was acknowledged in 1926 when the city created its first business zone, which included Foothill as well as Commerce.⁵⁷

Throughout the late 1920s both the city and the state improved the condition of Foothill. The right-of-way was widened, to allow for parking on either side. The intersection of Commerce and Foothill was re-graded to allow for business blocks to be constructed on the corner. Sidewalks were installed and plans made to extend the ornamental lighting of Commerce to Foothill.⁵⁸



*Commerce Avenue (then named Sunset Boulevard) looking north from Foothill Boulevard, circa 1929
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Despite these efforts, as with Commerce, much of Foothill remained vacant. An elegant single-story business block in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, housing a drug store, filled the re-graded northwest corner of Commerce and Foothill. A few storefronts, such as the remaining, if altered, block from 1929 at 7251-53 Foothill Boulevard, served auto-borne customers. But it was not until construction resumed after the Depression years that Foothill developed as auto-oriented commercial strip.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, March 18, 1926.

⁵⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1929; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, February 5, 1925, June 24, 1926, July 29, 1926, November 3, 1927.

⁵⁹ Los Angeles County Assessor.

Tujunga had always maintained a minimal-tax, minimal-service philosophy of city government. This was based on the low valuation of the city, given the absence of industry or large-scale commerce, and on the attitude of the voters. The *Los Angeles Times* noted in 1930 that Tujunga had the lowest total valuation of any incorporated city in the county. It had, as well, an extremely low cost of governing per inhabitant. The annual cost of city government was \$13.36 per resident. Costs in other cities of similar size ranged from El Monte at \$22.73 to El Segundo at \$59.18.⁶¹

The demands from the newcomers for better services first focused on schools. A vote on consolidation was first held in February of 1927, when the lack of a local high school became controversial. The results were 354 in favor of consolidation and 594 against. The issue was resolved when, a year later, Tujunga joined the Los Angeles City School district, with its promise of a new high school for town, while maintaining its independence as a city.⁶²

By the late 1920s concern over water replaced schools as the principle issue. The Haines Canyon watershed and local wells appeared able to provide for current needs. But it was inevitable that future growth would need other sources. Consolidation would provide Tujunga with access to the Los Angeles Aqueduct.⁶³

Proponents of consolidation were able to call for a series of votes in 1930 and 1931. Finally, on January 5, 1932, Tujunga voted to consolidate with Los Angeles by 718 in favor to 659 against. There were charges of fraud, with old-timers accusing newcomers of bringing in outsiders who registered, voted, and then disappeared. Nonetheless, the vote held and Tujunga ceased to exist as a separate city in March of 1932, when the Los Angeles City Council formally accepted the consolidation.⁶⁴

Conclusion

For several decades after consolidation Tujunga retained its pre-consolidation architectural character. There was little construction during the Depression and war years. When construction resumed in the late 1940s, it continued the historic mix of scale and style, particularly in the residential areas. There was the same juxtaposition of modest and imposing houses. Even today residential Tujunga retains a bohemian atmosphere, particularly in the rustic vale section south of Foothill.

There have, however, been a number of changes that have lessened Tujunga's sense of architectural individuality. One is the inevitable transformation of Foothill Boulevard into a commercial strip much like that found elsewhere in Southern California. Another is the loss of a good number of stone houses

⁶¹ *Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1930, November 2, 1930.

⁶² *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1926, January 15, 1927, February 16, 1927; October 13, 1928, December 15, 1928, January 8, 1929, November 16, 1930; *Tujunga Record-Ledger*, September 9, 1926.

⁶³ *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1927; Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 92.

⁶⁴ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 92-93; *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1932.

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to earthquakes. A third is the replacement of older structures with large, multi-story apartment buildings out of scale with historic Tujunga.

Resources from Pre-Consolidation Tujunga

Extant resources are considered under Criterion A/1/1. Some of these resources are also significant under Criterion B/2/2. These include resources associated with Marshall Valentine Hartranft.

Worthy of special note is Tujunga's collection of stone buildings. (Apart from Bolton Hall and the Wieman Chapel, stone construction seems to have been strictly a residential form.) The buildings also warrant separate treatment under the Architecture and Engineering Context, perhaps together with similar resources elsewhere in the northern San Fernando Valley. (In addition to those resources cited above, notable is the Hardin House from 1921, at 10226 Marcus Avenue, for which there are in-progress construction photographs in the collection of the Bolton Hall Museum.)

Apart from the stone buildings, Tujunga's architecture generally followed the styles typical of the period. This includes the few residences that date from before the building boom of the early 1920s. Commercial and institutional architecture, as well, followed general patterns. Perhaps the only exceptions are the wood frame storefront resources from the early 1920s, which reflect the early period of frontier-like construction and are discussed above. (Note that SurveyLA identified Commerce Avenue from Valmont to Foothill as the "Old Tujunga Commercial Planning District." Though not eligible for designation, it merits special consideration in local planning.)

Single-family residential properties recorded for SurveyLA under this theme generally fall into the period 1888-1919. This is because residences constructed after 1919 were ubiquitous; during the building boom of the post-war period, the architecture of Tujunga began to lose its individuality and follow trends popular elsewhere. Stone houses, a special architectural form for this area, are an exception. Those constructed up to the time of consolidation in 1932 are considered under this theme as well as under the "Arroyo Stone Buildings" theme of the "Architecture and Engineering" context.

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SUNLAND-TUJUNGA STREET NAME CHANGES

(Information from Bolton Hall Museum)

Current	Original
Alene Dr	Ridge Lane
Apperson	Los Angeles St/Hidden Oak Dr
Beckett	Citrus Ave/ Maiden Lane/Mt. View Ave
Betty Lou Lane	Kane St
Breist	Breidt
Brownstone	Canyon Dr
Cardamine	Deneville Dr
Commerce Ave	Sunset Blvd/Lynster Dr
Cora	Chapman St
Day	Frohock/Griffith/Hillcrest/Holland Way/Oak Dr
Eldora Place	Gleason Ave
Eldora Ave	El Dore St/Calhoun Ave
Elmo St	Woodruff Lane
Ennis St	Buckley Dr
Fairgrove	Beulah Court/Fairview
Fenwick	Central Ave/Wicks Rd
Fernglen Ave	Buena Vista Pl/Griswold
Fitzroy Ave	Fitzgerald
Floralita Ave	Flower St/St. James Ave
Foothill Blvd	Michigan Ave
Forsythe St	Jeannette St/Standiford Ln
France Ave	Frances Court
Gish	Georgia Lane
Glenties Lane & Way	Glenties Lane
Glory Ave	Farrel St/Glorietta Ave
Glory St	Oak St
Greenburn	Mynola St
Grenoble	Virginia St
Haines Cyn Rd	Kings Hwy
Haywood St	Haines Ave/State St
Helendale	Colby Ave/Hart/Helens
Hillhaven St	Stevens Way
Hillrose	Hill Street
Hirondelle Lane	Fisher St/Golandrina
Irma Ave	Goleta St/Valencia Pl
Jardine	Carlton/Harding Pl/Morgan Rd
Jayseel St	Grandview Ave/Irving Pl
Langmuir	Charles Ave

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Las Lunitas & Zachau Pl	Zachau Lane
Las Plumas Ln	PalomaLeo
Leolang	Lucille Ln/Valley View
Machrea	Sherwood Dr/Macrea
Marcus Ave	Marshall St
Mather	Stratford Pl
McVine	Second St
McClermont Ave	West View Ave
McGroarty St & Pl	Manzanita Dr
Memory Dr	Herbert St
Mountair	Cedar Ave
Mt. Gleason	Walnut Ave
Nassau	Delmar
Newhome	Western Ave
Odell Ave	Orange Ave
Olcott	Olive St
Oro Vista	First St
Oswego	Graham Ave
Owens	Halbert St/Reed Ave
Pinewood	Pine/Manana
Plainview	Palm
Provo	Proctor
Quinton Ln	Queens Ln
Redmont	Alden Dr/Tujunga Ave
Russett Ave	Arnold Court/William St
Samoa	San Ysidro
Scoville Ave	Page St
Shady Grove	Marshall Court
Sherman Grove	Sherman St
Silverton	Sycamore/Belden Ln
St. Estaban	Rd/Los Robles
Summitrose	Summit Ave
Thousand Oaks Dr	Cutover Ln
Topley Ln	Orchard Dr/Orchard Way
Tujunga Cyn Blvd	Fitzgerald Dr/Monte Vista Bl
Valmont	El Centro St
Wentworth	North St
Whitegate Ave	Hughes Pl/Kirschman Ln
Wilsey Ln	Wilson Ave
Woodward	Third St
Wyngate	East Lane/George St/Manzanita St/Oakwood Pl

SUB-THEME: LIFE IN INDEPENDENT TUJUNGA

Summary Statement of Significance: A resource evaluated under this sub-theme is significant in the areas of settlement and social history for its association with the early development history of Tujunga as an independent city prior to consolidation with Los Angeles. Resources dating from this time include residences, places of work, and sites for social life and are increasingly rare.

Period of Significance: 1888-1932

Note: Single-family residential properties recorded for SurveyLA under this theme generally fall into the period 1888-1919. This is because residences constructed after 1919 were ubiquitous; during the building boom of the post-war period, the architecture of Tujunga began to lose its individuality and follow trends popular elsewhere. Stone houses, a special architectural form for this area, are an exception. Those constructed up to the time of consolidation in 1932 are considered under this theme.

Period of Significance Justification: The Glorietta Heights subdivision was created in 1888. Tujunga consolidated with Los Angeles in 1932.

Geographic Location: Within the 1932 city boundaries of Tujunga when it consolidated with Los Angeles.

Areas of Significance: Settlement, Social History

Criteria: NR: A/B CR: 1/2 Local: 1/2

Associated Property Type/subtype: Property Type: Residential-Single Family, Bungalow/House
Property Type: Commercial-Retail, Retail Store/Business Block
Property Type: Institutional-Government, Meeting Hall
Property Type: Institutional-Religious/Spiritual, Church
Property Type: Institutional-Social Clubs, Meeting Hall

Property Type Description: Bungalow/House: Domestic dwelling on a private lot
Retail Store: Facility for transacting commerce with the general public,
With offices, meeting hall, or apartment above
City Meeting Hall: Facility for city gatherings and events
Church: Place of worship denoted by a denomination
Meeting Hall: Place of assembly for club or social events

Property Type Significance: The property types noted above are all significant under Criterion A/1/1. Buildings under this criterion illustrate how residents of pre-consolidation Tujunga lived by providing examples of their residences, places of work, and sites for social life. Some property types are also significant under Criterion B/2/2. Buildings under this criterion are directly related to significant individuals in pre-consolidation Tujunga in addition to illustrating how residents lived.

Eligibility Standards:

- Represents a resource dating from the pre-consolidation period of Tujunga
- Is associated with the formation, settlement, and/or development of Tujunga
- Under Criterion B/2/2, is directly associated with the productive life of a person who played an important role in the formation, settlement, and/or development of Tujunga
 - Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to the early settlement and development of Tujunga

Character Defining / Associative Features:

- Retains most of the essential physical features from the period of significance
- Related to the life of pre-consolidation Tujunga, by showing how residents lived, worked, and socialized.
- May represent architectural styles and construction techniques of the period, in particular the local stone vernacular
- For residential properties (Criterion B/2/2) individual must have resided in the property during the period in which he or she achieved significance
- May be associated with groups or individuals important in Tujunga's early ethnic/cultural history

Integrity Considerations

- Should retain integrity of Design, Location, Feeling, and Association from the period of significance
- Should maintain original location; for local HCM eligibility, may have been relocated within Sawtelle for preservation purposes
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses)
- Some original materials may have been altered, removed, or replaced
- Original use may have changed
- Because resources from this time are now rare, a greater degree of alterations or fewer extant features may be acceptable, particularly under local HCM criteria

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