



THE ORIGINS OF THE SONY LOT AND THE SHORT-LIVED TRIANGLE FILM CORPORATION

MICHAEL POTTERTON – AUTHOR / RESEARCH ARCHIVIST, CCHS

Walking down Washington Blvd. alongside the Sony Pictures lot, you will find a small plaque with “Historic Landmark” embossed at the top. The plaque briefly describes the founding and construction of the 40+ acre lot. Its first line recounts: *On this site in the year 1915 was founded the first motion picture studio in Culver City, built by Thomas H. Ince.* The plaque was provided by the

Native Daughters of the Golden West, a nonprofit group that has been venerating California pioneers since 1886.

Those familiar with the history of California’s early film studios know Thomas Ince, a film pioneer often credited with laying the foundations of the Hollywood studio system, churning out films like factories. However, the plaque’s reference to Ince’s founding of the

studio belies another fascinating history — that of the short-lived Triangle Film Corporation, a critical factor in the studio’s construction.

Ince was a prominent film producer and General Manager of the New York Motion Picture Company. His filming headquarters, colloquially called “Inceville,” sat in the Santa Monica mountains. He made headlines in September 1915 when Harry Culver donated property on Washington Blvd. to him to build a new film production studio — the first of its kind in Culver City. *The L.A. Times* reported the significant deal, proclaiming “Inceville Moves to Culver City.”

This week Culver City receives the biggest boost in its history... The coming of the New York Motion Picture Corporation will create a veritable boom in Culver City real estate.

continued on inside page →

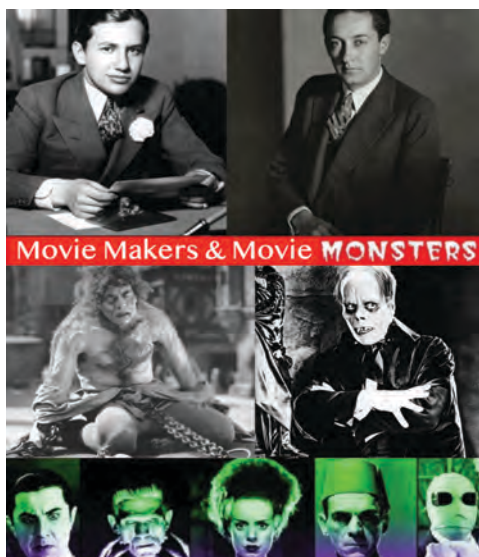
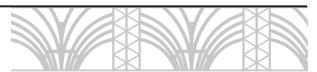


LEFT: Thos. Ince – Triangle Studios marquee signage, Culver City, 1916



RIGHT: Inceville – Santa Ynez Canyon, Sunset & Pacific Coast Highway

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING & PROGRAM



Movie Makers & Movie Monsters
Multipurpose Room
Veterans Memorial Building
Tuesday, October 28 @ 7PM

Presenting a special Halloween-themed program exploring the amazing history of two of Hollywood’s most influential movie moguls — the renowned Irving Thalberg of MGM and the almost-forgotten Carl Laemmle, Jr. of Universal. Both men held the title of Head of Production while still in their early twenties, with Thalberg being responsible for making arguably the first Universal Studios’ monster film, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, before moving to MGM.

A few years later, Carl Laemmle, Jr., known simply as “Junior,” was put in charge at Universal and pushed the Monster Cycle to a whole new level when he fought to make the first sound horror films, *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. Over the years, these crosstown rivals’ lives intertwined with fascinating parallels.

Julian David Stone, author of *It’s Alive!*, which tells the story of Junior’s quest to get the 1931 classic *Frankenstein* made, will share a special presentation on both men, and the Universal Monster Cycle as a whole. Copies of Julian’s novel will be for sale after the program, and he will be happy to sign them.

This event is free to the public.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It has been a great summer here in beautiful Culver City; at the Historical Society, we've had several exciting events.

In late May, staff and volunteers participated in our Costume Day. Valerie Meyer, our Costumes Chairperson, spearheaded this event that provided a complete picture of our costume collection. A number of costumes have been worn onscreen by actors such as Gene Kelly, Doris Day, and Barbara Stanwyck. Costumes were examined, photographed, catalogued, and boxed for proper preservation.

Our July program, "The Wizard of MGM" by author Robert Welch, was very popular. After hearing the presentation, many attendees purchased Robert's book about his grandfather, Arnold

"Buddy" Gillespie, MGM's Head of Special Effects. Thanks to Mark Morris, V.P. of Programs, for coordinating this event.

In late July, people enjoyed Culver City's Movies in the Park, with our own Hope Parrish dressed as the Wicked Witch of the West.

We wrapped up summer activities in August with Culver City's annual Fiesta La Ballona celebration. We hosted a stream of visitors during Fiesta weekend with a display of Fiesta costumes and T-shirts in the Museum.

The Historical Society has new volunteers joining our team with backgrounds in library science, film history, and art history. Additionally, we welcome our new student interns from Culver City High School, thanks to Ms. Adrienne Madrid, Career Counselor.

In September, the Museum extended its hours; it's now open 12-3pm the first through fourth Sundays. If you want to volunteer, please contact Jack Bommarito or Museum VP Maureen Fleming.

We look forward to seeing you at our October 28th program, which should get you in the Halloween spirit!

— Jack Bommarito

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, EARL!

Our warmest wishes to our friend Earl Eskridge, who celebrated his 98th Birthday at Fiesta!

Earl has been an active member of this community since he came home from his service after WWII. He has dedicated his life to his family, friends and Culver City. With his love for sports and baseball, Earl began the CC Little League back in the 1950s. Earl has also been active in service clubs and organizations for over 80 years.

His love for his work, making flower arrangements, made Culver City Flower



Tami Eskridge, Earl Eskridge,
and Chuck Eskridge

Shop the go-to shop for many. We thank you, Earl, for what you have done for our wonderful City and its residents!

OUR MISSION

The Culver City Historical Society was created for the purpose of collecting, preserving, and exhibiting the history, cultural, and civic accomplishments of Culver City and its environs.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Donald & Lorri Wressell
Daniel Martinez & Noel Fedosh
Laurie's Gifts, Phyllis Bagdadi,
Carol Ramirez

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Jack BommaritoPresident
Hope M. Parrish.....President Emeritus
Mark Morris...VP Programs/Media Archives
Maureen Fleming VP Museum
Douglas Newton.....VP Development
Mara BommaritoSecretary
Carolyn Wispe Burns.....Treasurer
Michael LaaseParliamentarian
Jeanne Conklin..... Membership Chair
Beverly Peterson.....Membership Co-Chair
Valerie Meyer.....Costumes Chair
Ron Peterson.....In-House Photographer
Anissa Di Vincente Webmaster
Michael ChiabaudaPhoto Archives
Hope M. Parrish.....Historic Sites Chair
Andrew Weissman.....Government Liaison
Holly Strother Newsletter Designer

ARCHIVE/RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS

Hope M. Parrish, Tami Eskridge,
Jeanne Conklin, Michael Potterton,
Dana Benton, Dennis Parrish,
Elizabeth Voncannon, Joshua Insel,
Kate Ni, Steve Newton and Amelia Kh

INTERNS

Sophia Vegas, Samanta Pandey,
Hailey Garcia, Josiah Joya,
and Noelle Warner

COSTUMES IN THE BUILDING



ATTENTION ALL COSTUME BUFFS!



Again, we have another unknown MGM costume in our collection. This is a cotton green-and-white striped gingham full-length dress. It features a cream lace bodice waistband with dark brown embroidery, and full-length sleeves with an embroidered cuff that is lined with lace. The dress has decorative pieces that start at the shoulders and drape down the back on both sides. Those decorative accents are the same embroidered cream lace as the sleeve cuffs and waistband. If you are familiar with this dress, please contact Valerie at: info@culvercityhistoricalsociety.org.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Fox Hills Mall is celebrating its Golden Anniversary this month!

The 1970s marked the beginning of development in Culver City. Our redevelopment agency consisted of our Council Members, meeting on alternate Mondays to develop three project areas of Culver City, with one area being Fox Hills.

Opened October 6, 1975, the Fox Hills Mall was one of the first three-level malls in California. It covered 50 acres, had 902,566 sq. feet of retail, and a \$70 million price tag. In 1998, the mall became part of the Westfield Shopping Town-Westfield Group.

A prime shopping destination for fifty years, we wish the Fox Hills Mall a very Happy Anniversary!



PAST PROGRAM

Many thanks to Robert Welch for sharing the history of his grandfather, A. Arnold "Buddy" Gillespie, and his history at MGM as the wizard behind all of the special effects from MGM's inception in 1924 to 1965.

We also want to say thank you for Robert's very generous donation of 60 copies of his book, which you can purchase in our museum. This is an amazing donation that will benefit us for a long time. Thank you Mark for making this all happen!

To view this program on YouTube, please see link below.



The Wizard of MGM: Look Behind the Special Effects Curtain

bit.ly/3UR39nR

MEET LEORA O'CARROLL



Leora is our city's newly-appointed Chair for the Cultural Affairs Commission. She is joined by Vice-Chair Ehsaan Mesghali and Commissioners

Tania Fleischer, Shona Gupta and Nikki DiLoreto. Congratulations!

MARK'S CHOICE

A View of Culver City
From Way Up High

In June 1960, Rich Langsford shot 8mm film of the city from the top of the Veterans Memorial Tower.

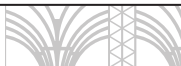
bit.ly/46EsMi7



BACK IN STOCK!

Our popular blanket is available at the museum in brown or green.

OPEN SUNDAYS!



Happy 99th Birthday to Cathy (Mascaro) Zermeno! Cathy and her husband George came to Culver City in 1954 and raised their two children. Cathy joined the El Rincon PTA, became a Cub Scouts den mother, co-leader for the Brownie and Girl Scout Troupe, and the Culver High All-Night Grad Party from 1977-1983. As President of the CC Guidance Clinic guild for two terms, they raised thousands of dollars for the Family and Child Guidance Clinic and for the Didi Hirsch Mental Health Center. Cathy served as a Civil Service Commissioner, Vice Chair (1983) and Chair (1984) and a member of the "Fiesta La Ballona: A Festival of the People" from 1980-2000.

From 1980-1991, Cathy volunteered with the Westside Opportunity Workshop and Residence, which acquired a home for developmentally handicapped young adults on Barman in 1991.

In 1977, Syd Kronenthal asked Cathy to inventory the Costume Collection he had acquired from the MGM Auction; this was the beginning of our current Historical Society, born in 1980. Cathy served as the first President of the Culver City Historical Society, and the first fundraiser was a fashion show! We love you Cathy and all that you have done for our City!

→ Triangle continued from front page

The finished lot was topped with a massive marquee sign, with "Thos H. Ince" displayed above the words "Triangle Studios." This bottom portion of the sign refers to an entity formed just months before construction of the studio was announced: The Triangle Motion Picture Company. While Ince oversaw the building of the physical studio, it couldn't have been done without the backing of Triangle, founded by another film trailblazer – Harry Aitken.

Harry Aitken, along with his brother Roy, had become prominent players in the early film industry when opening their first Nickelodeon in 1905, then founding the Mutual Film Corporation in 1912. In June 1915, Aitken teamed up with three of the most famous producer-directors of the time: Mack Sennett, D.W. Griffith, and Thomas Ince.

This group announced a plan to create a chain of theaters featuring premium pricing for the best seats; the following month, the Triangle Motion Picture Company was officially born.

Sennett, Griffith and Ince each produced their films in California, and distributed and exhibited through Triangle, run by Aitken in New York. It was Ince's participation in Triangle that secured the funding necessary for him to build his Culver City studio.

Ultimately, Triangle was short-lived, partly because its films weren't drawing wide enough audiences to justify the higher ticket fees. By 1917, Ince's relationship with Triangle leadership rapidly deteriorated and the three producer-directors began leaving Triangle. After fighting to secure his ownership over the land where Triangle Studios sat, Ince ultimately sold his stakes in Triangle and moved his production a few blocks east to what is now The Culver Studios.

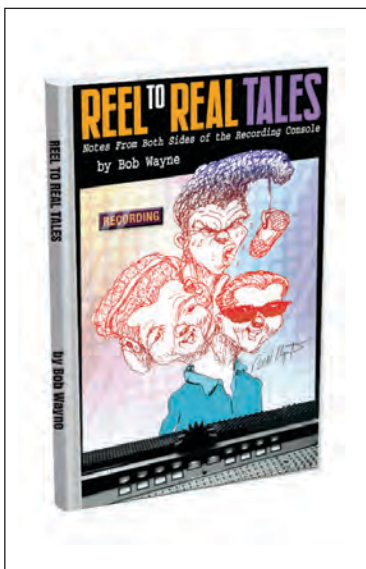
Aitken's Triangle company ceased production by 1919 and the studio land was eventually sold to Samuel Goldwyn. Shortly after, the lot became MGM's production headquarters, ensuring the continued use of the landmark that brought film production to Culver City.

CULVER'S CORNER



REEL TO REAL TALES: NOTES FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE RECORDING CONSOLE

BY BOB WAYNE



Maybe you know the local band Big Daddy from local venues, or even our City's early summer concert series. Lead vocalist and local resident Bob Wayne has written a very in-depth book about his life in music.

Bob opened his studio, Sunburst Recording, in Culver City in 1982. Since then, Bob has produced over 300 albums, winning a Grammy for George Carlin's audiobook *Napalm & Silly Putty*, and a gold record for the soundtrack to the 1996 film *Swingers*. Bob has also worked with Adam Sandler, Micky Dolenz, and Dr. Demento, to name a few.

Throughout the 1980s and 90s, Bob and Big Daddy toured the U.S. and internationally, releasing four albums on Rhino Records from 1983-1992, and *The Best of Big Daddy* in 2000. If you love music, this is a must read! Available at www.reeltorealtales.com.

YOU ASKED!



We received an email asking, “What happened to the Seven Families bronze at Carlson Park? Was it stolen?” I had thought this might be so, until I started asking around. Dani Cullens with PRCS told me, “We have it! It’s in our greenhouse, and we aren’t sure why. Possibly for protection?” I was thrilled!

Two years ago, we had a rash of stolen bronze plaques in our city, notably the Veteran’s Memorial Building, and two of the CC Historical Society’s — one in front of Vets and another marking La Ballona School as our first school.

The marker and palms were placed

here by the CC Chamber of Commerce and an early version of the Historical Society. This marking is important to the many ancestors of the original Spanish settlers that settled in the La Ballona Valley. The seven original families in the La Ballona Valley were Machado, Ybarra, Talamantes, Lugo, Higuera, Rocha, and Saenz. The three palm trees were moved to this location from local ranchos.

Currently, I am working with Cultural Affairs and PRSC on a material that will be less desirable to local thieves and will begin the replacement process.

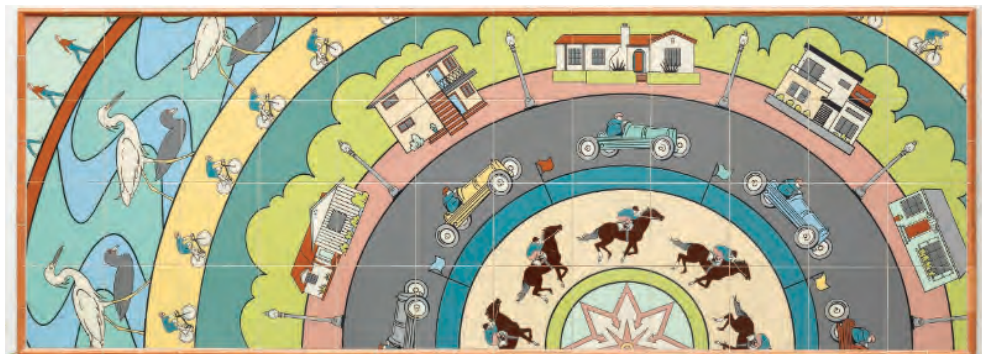
— Hope M. Parrish



FARRAGUT CONNECTOR PUBLIC MURAL



Meet Sonia Romero. As part of the Farragut Connector beautification project, Sonia captured this neighborhood’s history with her playful, colorful public art mosaic *The Speedway*, featured beside the new pathway. We thank our City, Cultural Affairs and all involved who brought this long overdue project to life!



IN MEMORIAM

Whether at a local event, city meeting, celebration, or just around town, you would’ve run into David Vonnannon. David and wife Elizabeth came to Culver City in 1999 and made this their home. David loved Culver City, and was very active in our community. He was hard to miss!

David passed away on July 27, and is survived by Elizabeth and son John, a resident of North Carolina. We lost a great man and a friend to all.



WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR
THE GENEROSITY OF





P.O. Box 1356
Culver City, CA 90232
info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
(310) 253-6941

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

ARC OPEN SUNDAYS

1ST, 2ND, 3RD & 4TH SUNDAYS; 12-3PM
October-December

OCTOBER 2

TITO'S FIESTA MEXICANA; CULVER CITY ARTS FOUNDATION
3-8pm; Tito's Tacos

OCTOBER 18

LA AS SUBJECT – ARCHIVES BAZAAR; CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY OF LA
10am-3pm; Golden Eagle Ballroom

OCTOBER 18

ART WALK & ROLL; CULVER CITY ARTS FOUNDATION
10:30am-7pm; Arts District

NOVEMBER 13-16

AVPA: "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"
Nov. 13-15: 7pm; Nov. 16: 2pm; Kirk Douglas Theater

DECEMBER 4

TREE LIGHTING: CITY OF CULVER CITY
5pm, Culver Steps

These fine Culver City area businesses support our work to preserve Culver City history for future generations. Show your support by your patronage of their services and products.

BENEFACTORS

Culver City Arts Foundation	Jim B. Clarke	(424) 209-9148
The Culver Studios	Mike Recine	(310) 473-8900
Freeman Properties	Stuart Freeman	(310) 839-7593
Leonardo Wilborn	Leonardo Wilborn	
Meghan Sahli-Wells & Karim Sahli	The Sahli Family	
The Wende Museum	Justin Jampol	(310) 216-1600

CORPORATE & NON PROFIT SPONSORS

Culver City Exchange Club	Dr. Bob Montgomery	(310) 499-4840
The Culver Hotel	Melina Alunni	(310) 558-9400
History For Hire	Pam and Jim Elyea	(818) 765-7767
Sony Pictures Entertainment	Kristin Cavanaugh	(310) 244-5368
Marcus Accounting Services	Richard A. Marcus	(310) 721-9908

BUSINESS MEMBERS

Anne Tower Productions, Inc.	Anne Tower	(310) 699-9261
Cavanaugh Realtors	Dannie Cavanaugh	(310) 837-7161
George Petrelli Famous Steaks	Marie Petrelli	(310) 902-5899
Göran Eriksson / Techtrans	Göran Eriksson	(310) 841-2901
JLF Appraisals & Estates	Joel and Linda Forman	(310) 837-7455
Ken Harada, D.D.S.	Ken Harada	(310) 837-5121
Law Offices of Ronald K. Ziff	Ronald K. Ziff	(323) 342-2819
MHB Sports, Entm't & Advisory Svc	Marc Brodnax	(323) 864-4417
MJB Fine Homes & Realty	Melanie Brodnax	(310) 736-6224
OpulNet	Michael J. Lupo	(860) 951-2513
Richard S. Hibbs, C.P.A.	Richard Hibbs	(310) 836-2029
Santa Maria BBQ	Jim Rodrigues	(310) 930-5174
Sorrento Italian Market	Albert Vera	(310) 391-7654
Steller & Skoog	Jack & Charlyn Barton	(714) 343-7756
Tower Insurance Associates	Janice Beighey	(310) 837-6101
Wells Fargo Home Mortgage	Jeff Cooper	(310) 344-8033

RENEW OR BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY TODAY!

Preserve the "Heart of Screenland" history – support the Culver City Historical Society Archives and Resource Center (ARC). We can't do it without you!

☐ NEW MEMBER ☐ RENEWAL

- ☐ Benefactor (\$1,000+)
- ☐ Corporate Sponsor (\$500)
- ☐ Family Lifetime Member (\$500)
- ☐ Individual Lifetime Member (\$300)
- ☐ Patron Member (\$100)
- ☐ Business Member (\$50)
- ☐ Family Member (\$35)
- ☐ Individual Member (\$25)
- ☐ Non Profit Organization (\$15)
- ☐ Youth Member (\$10)

Name/Company _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Email _____ Phone _____
Voluntary Contribution to Museum Fund \$ _____
Voluntary Contribution to Julie Lugo Cerra Scholarship Fund \$ _____

Please indicate membership type and enclose your check payable to:
The Culver City Historical Society, P.O. Box 1356, Culver City, CA 90232
Or join online at CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/membership

Tax Deductible 501 (c)(3) #95-4188800