



CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 38, No.4

Fall 2017

Our Equine Past

By Ryan Vincent

Amidst today's hustle, bustle, and gridlock, it can be amazing to think back to a time before cars, when there were clopping hooves instead of purring engines, and the only horns were for music, or a bugle's call.

Morning reveille would have been heard at Camp Latham, the Civil War encampment near Overland and Jefferson where as many as 6,000 soldiers and their horses were stationed between 1861-1862.

But it was the Spanish missionaries that brought horses to Southern California, beginning with the Portolá expedition of 1769. Eventually their Spanish breeds begat the California Vaquero horse, and vaquero herding culture, the basis of the American working cowboy.

In 1819 Agustín Machado rode as far and wide as he and his horse could manage from sunup to sundown, claiming what was to be known as Rancho La Ballona. Machado became famous as a horseman, for horse-trading, and grand fiestas that had horseracing and rodeos.

In 1922 Harry Culver founded the Pacific Military Academy, where the accompanying photo of Culver on horseback was taken.

The city's horse racing track opened in 1923, but by December 1924 it was replaced by "Los Angeles Speedway," in much the same way cars replaced horses. Eventually the infield became Carlson Park.

Horses were used in Culver City productions like Thomas Ince's silent era Westerns, 1939's *Gone With The Wind*

and *Bonanza*, which filmed intermittently on the 40 Acres backlot until 1969. During the 1930s-50s Charlie Flores was the livery stable owner who loaned his horses to MGM productions.

In the 1950s, during the early days of Fiesta La Ballona, descendants of Culver City's first families paraded on horseback. This tradition remains to some degree with the pony rides at the current day Fiesta.

Today, horse property in the Los Angeles area is few, far between, and disappearing fast. One day when the oil in Baldwin Hills dries up, that land should by all rights become a park. Perhaps with public stables named after Charlie Flores, and riding trails named after Agustín Machado.



Harry Culver at the Pacific Military Academy he founded in 1922.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 18, 2017 General Meeting and Program
In Search of Family History with Steven Rose
Multipurpose Room, Veterans Memorial Building, 7PM

If you have not already heard, Steve Rose is retiring as President/CEO of the Culver City Chamber of Commerce. What will he do with his free time? At our next general meeting, Steve will explain his plans to dive deep into his family history, which is splintered among many generations and family trees and branches. All four lines of his family are believed to have roots in Germany, where records have been kept for centuries. Steve will outline his plans for tracing his genealogy, how and what he has gathered so far, and share poignant anecdotes of his family's journey over the last three centuries. (See photo on page 2.)

Many branches of his family immigrated to America in the 19th century, settling in Northern or Southern California as well on the East Coast. They were involved in various aspects of the development of early California. Along the way, Steve has acquired many stories, fact and fiction.

The public is invited to this free program. The entrance to the Archives and Resource Center is from the back parking lot.

The Archives will be open that evening for you to come and see the latest exhibits.



Steve Rose
(Culver City Chamber of Commerce)

YOUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Michelle Bernardin



Dear Members and Friends,
Happy Autumn!

I have thoroughly delighted in the programs that we brought to you during the course of the city's celebration of our Centennial. From highlighting Culver City families, their businesses, and history, to exploring our city's history by bringing back our Historical Bus Tours, we hope you have equally enjoyed them. We might still have a few Centennial celebratory moments left in us

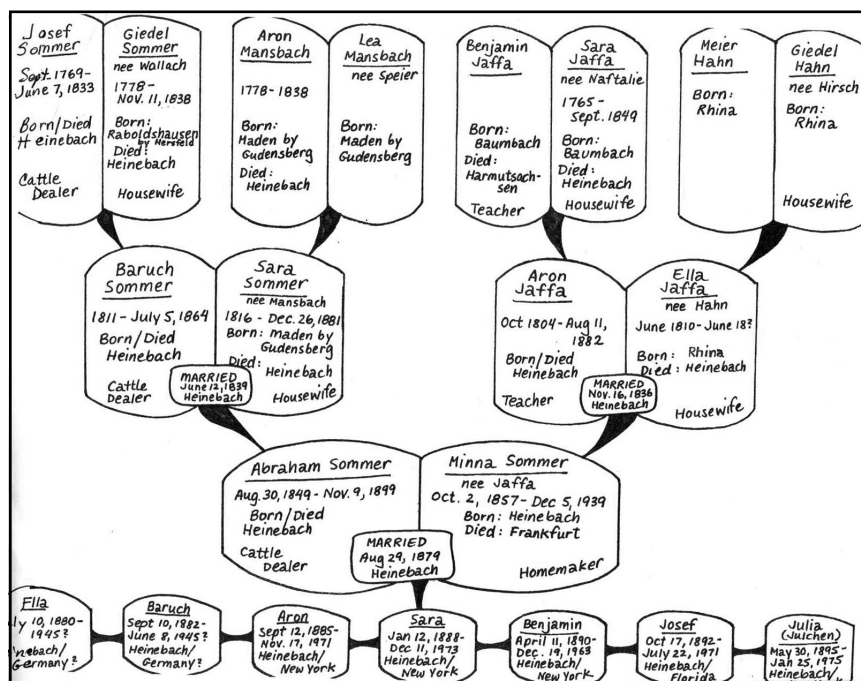
as we close out 2017 and ring in a New Year, so don't put away your streamers just yet.

This is my final newsletter message as the Historical Society's president. It has been my honor and privilege to represent this mighty organization during such a notable time in our city's evolution. As we stand on the edge of our city's next 100 years, I can only imagine the legacy we will leave to our young "Culverites." History has and will continue to play a vital role in our city's shape. Your Culver City Historical Society pledges to be advocates of this mantra for as long as we are part of this community.

Visit our website and like or follow us on the social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to stay connected with us!

As always, thank you for supporting your Historical Society! We cannot do this without you.

#ThisPlaceMatters



Steve Rose's maternal grandmother's family going back to her generation.
(Steve Rose)

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.

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STAY CONNECTED

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MEMBERSHIP

The Culver City Historical Society exists because of the involvement and generosity of people like you. Please help strengthen our voice for preserving Culver City's architectural and cultural heritage by becoming a member.

CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/membership

In Memoriam

Karen Coyle

Madeline Ehrlich

Ross Hawkins

George Jones

Welcome Our New Members

Karen Carpenter

John Gregory

Steven & Teru Heyl

Beverly Peterson

Fred Puza

Teresa Raschilla

Alan Tsubota

Abigail Vincent

Celebrations During The Last Week of the Centennial



Opening Ceremonies at the Birthday Party in the Park on September 16 featured comments from members of the Culver family and Culver City officials. Pictured (L to R) Robert Battle; Aaron and Becky (Battle) Blosser; Vice Mayor Thomas Small with daughter Lyra Brody Small; Eva Battle; Amy (Battle), Addison, Culver and Michael McMillan; Dr. John Battle (Harry Culver's elder grandson and father of all named Battle pictured here); Councilmember Jim Clarke; Mayor Jeff Cooper; Centennial President Paul Jacobs; and City Historian Julie Lugo Cerra. (Kevin Lachoff)



Lining up for the Historic Bus Tours – More than 200 riders enjoyed learning about Culver City's past as Society docents pointed out historic locations to five different tours. They were greeted by Society members Denice Renteria; Adrienne Bernardin; and Michelle Bernardin. (Kevin Lachoff)



Let's Get On the Bus – (L to R) Culver City Historical Society President Michelle Bernardin; City Historian Julie Lugo Cerra, Samantha, Michele, and Nicholas Lachoff; Dr. John Battle, and Robert Battle get ready to enjoy a bus ride. (Arthur Litman)



The Culver Family meets at the Harry Culver Sculpture at the Culver Hotel. (R to L) Dr. John Battle, Harry Culver's elder grandson holds his own grandson, Culver McMillan; Aaron and Becky Battle Blosser; Robert Battle; Eva Battle; and Michael, Amy Battle and Addison McMillan. (Kevin Lachoff)



(L to R) Michele and Samantha Lachoff join Dr. John Battle in admiring the chalk drawings during the Centennial Birthday Party. (Kevin Lachoff)



Culver City is 100 years old! City officials and visiting guests celebrate Culver City's 100th birthday and the ending of the Centennial at the Incorporation Day Ceremony at City Hall on September 20, 2017. (Kevin Lachoff)



Our July 19 General Meeting and Program featured Culver City's Fire Chief David L. White who presented a PowerPoint presentation about the history of the Fire Department. Former Fire Inspector Jim Forte and former Captain/Chief Jim Gilbert shared heartfelt stories about their experiences during their careers in the department. (Kevin Lachoff)

As part of the Centennial celebrations Alicia Mayer visited the Archives and Resource Center in August prior to her talk about her great uncle, Louis B. Mayer, co-founder of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. Alicia, who lives in Australia, is the curator of the Louis B. Mayer family legacy. (Michelle Bernardin)



Veterans Memorial Auditorium was the site for the Exchange Club's Non-Profit Organization Fair on August 12. The Culver City Historical Society participated and members enjoyed meeting with residents to explain how they can volunteer to help support these organizations' activities. Councilmember Jim Clarke and Exchange Club members are pictured on the stage. (Michelle Bernardin)



More than 65 years have passed since the first La Ballona Fiesta took place, but the spirit lives on in the Archives and Resource Center. Pictured are the first La Ballona Queen and a princess in 1951 wearing the same specially designed dresses that were on display during Fiesta La Ballona 2017. Other mementos from early Fiestas were also exhibited. Now that's history! (Culver City Historical Society Collection and Michelle Bernardin)



Preserving History

The Culver City Historical Society, like most non-profits, was established for all the right reasons! The effort was led by former Fire Chief John Kearney and his wife, Mildred, Parks and Recreation Director Syd Kronenthal, and many others like Clarita Marquez Young, (our madrina), Frank McCann, Cathy Zermeno (first president),

Charles Lugo, Rusty Kostick, Esther Tarn, and a host of others who have taken leadership roles over the years. Their motivation and selfless gifts of time and energy continues to preserve the incredible story of people who brought Culver City, the Heart of Screenland, to life and renewal.

Volunteering generally brings good feelings from our work. One of my early experiences in the Historical Society, which encouraged me, started with a call from a gentleman who found an oversized "book of clippings" about a man named Harry H. Culver! The Inland Empire church, where it had been found, wanted to return it to its rightful owner. My husband was happy to take it on as a "family adventure" so we picked it up miles away. It was, as we hoped, the big book of newspaper clippings all about our city founder. Harry Culver's daughter, Patricia Culver Battle, spoke of it

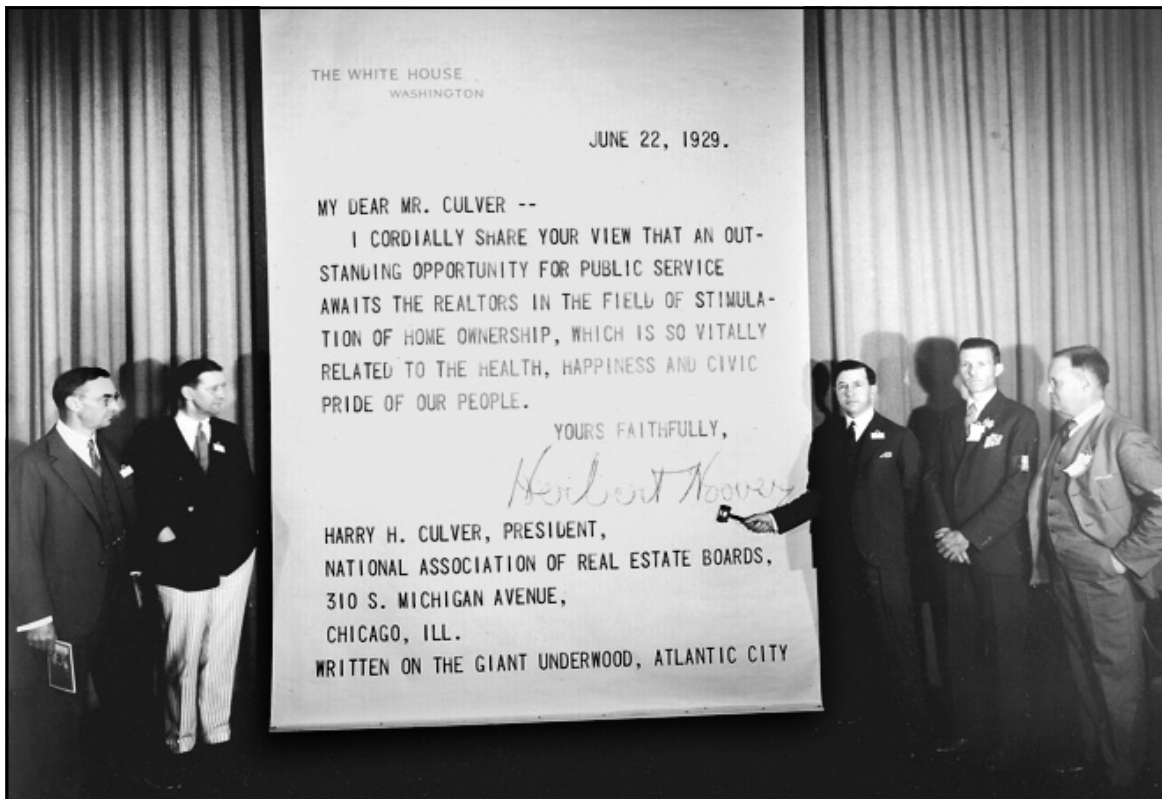
as one of her family's treasures that had a special place in their Wallace Neff-designed Cheviot Hills mansion. Sadly, it had been stolen and was never recovered.

That Inland Empire daytrip yielded gold! It was just as Pat described it, a huge book which recorded the Culver family's incredible year, flying across the country so Harry H. Culver could personally, as president of a national real estate association, deliver his message of the importance of responsible real estate development.

The Society board decided to keep this secret until Patricia Culver Battle could attend a meeting or event. Our expectation was that she would take it home to keep it safe for posterity. The evening arrived and indeed, it was a teary surprise. For when we "unveiled" the long lost book, Pat was absolutely delighted!

We were prepared to place the amazing record of Mr. Culver's productive year as president of that professional group in Pat's car after the meeting. The grown up "little girl who so admired her father" turned the table on us. She wanted it to be a part of the collection of the Culver City Historical Society. And so it is. You can see the huge copies of pages in the Society's Archives and Resource Center thanks to our city founder's kind and giving daughter and that Inland Empire church.

Friends, thank you for all you do!



A page from Harry Culver's "book of clippings" depicts Culver on the right (with gavel) standing next to an enlarged letter from then President Herbert Hoover in 1929. Culver was serving as president of the National Association of Real Estate Boards at that time.

(Culver City Historical Society Collection)



P.O. Box 3428
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Oct. 18: General Meeting and Program

Multipurpose Room, VMB, 7PM

Oct. 21: L.A. as Subject Archives Bazaar

Doheny Memorial Library, USC, 9AM-5PM

Dec. 3: Do your holiday shopping with us!

Wrapping and shipping available that day!

Archives and Resource Center, 1-3PM

Jan. 17: General Meeting and Installation of Officers

ARC OPEN DATES

1st and 3rd Sundays, 1-3PM

Sept. 17, Oct. 1, Oct. 15, Nov. 5, Nov. 19,

Dec. 3, Dec. 17, Jan. 7

Business Member Roster

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

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Please Renew or Become a Member of the Culver City Historical Society Today!

Join others in preserving the history of the "Heart of Screenland" and support the Culver City Historical Society Archives and Resource Center (ARC). We can't preserve local history without you!

- ☐ Benefactor (\$1,000)
- ☐ Corporate Sponsor (\$500)
- ☐ Family Lifetime Member (\$300)
- ☐ Patron Member (\$100)
- ☐ Business Member (\$50)
- ☐ Family Member (\$30)
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- ☐ New Member
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