



CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 42, No.2

Fall 2021

The P.E. Camp

By Amanda Heredia Chacon

The first line of my father's 2010 obituary reads, "Fred Heredia was born at the Pacific Electric Railway camp for track laborers in downtown Culver City in 1938." When I wrote that line, I assumed everyone in Culver City knew about the "PE Camp," which was housing provided by the Pacific Electric to Mexican and Mexican American employees and their families. I have since learned that the wooden, barrack-like buildings of the camp were essentially "invisible" to the residents of Culver City at the time and that the stories of the "traqueros" (track laborers) who lived in the PE Camp with their families are on the verge of being forgotten.

Four generations of my family, including my great-grandparents, grandparents, father, aunts, uncle, and a first cousin, lived in the PE Camp over a 30-year period from at least 1920 through 1950. My father didn't talk much about the camp, but he loved talking about Culver City. He told me about selling newspapers to "studio people" at the age of six in front of the Backstage on Culver Boulevard, and of my Uncle Ruben playing with Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer in La Ballona Creek.

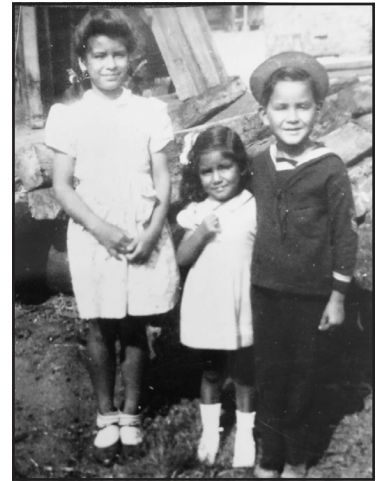
What my father didn't tell me was how it felt living in poverty right around the corner from the glitz and glamour of the movie studios. He didn't tell me about the dirt floors or outdoor communal restrooms and showers in the camp, or that his family didn't have a Christmas tree or presents

until they were given plastic stockings with fruit by the Culver City Fire Department.

Despite the hardships, my father loved Culver City until the day he died. He would be astounded to learn that anyone was interested in the PE Camp, and would be especially grateful to the Culver City Historical Society for helping to preserve the history of the traquero families and their contributions to the growth of Culver City.



Above: Middle to right - Aunt Molly Janeiro (middle), Aunt Carmen Rosales, and Uncle Ruben Heredia with friends.



Right: Fred, Irma, and Rosie at Camp (Amanda Heredia Chacon)

Editor's Note: Please visit the Society's YouTube channel to watch our interview with Amanda and her aunt Rosie Soto. <https://bit.ly/38B4iaU>

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 20, 2021 General Meeting and Program *Hollywood's Trains & Trolleys* presented by Marc Wanamaker Rotunda Room, Veterans Memorial Building, 7PM



1929 promotion of Paramount's sound films. World's first fleet of Sound Trains. (Marc Wanamaker)

Have you started traveling again? Hop on board and travel, Hollywood-style, with film historian and author Marc Wanamaker as he shares stories from his and the late Josef Lesser's new book *Hollywood's Trains & Trolleys*. Learn about how the development of the transportation system in Southern California intertwined with the motion picture industry, starting over 100 years ago. Special focus will be given to the Culver City area.

Marc is always entertaining and a great storyteller. This program will not disappoint! There will be a book signing after the presentation. The book would make a great holiday gift for train and Hollywood enthusiasts alike.

Following COVID guidelines, masks are required inside Veterans Memorial Building.

Pre-registration is required via Eventbrite. Please visit the Culver City Historical Society website for the link. The public is invited to this free program.

YOUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Hope M. Parrish



Hello Members, Friends, and Neighbors,

Hard to believe that it is Fall 2021. I am not sure about you, but this year flew by! Even though we have not been open to the public, we have been very busy inside the Historical Society. I want to thank Clare Denk for aiding us in presenting our first virtual program to the public. It was a wonderful collaboration of shared Culver Theatre history by Eric Sims, Associate General Manager, Center Theatre Group, and our Interim Programs Vice-

President Clare Denk. But the great surprise was that Mark Morris, our Media Archivist, got it up on our YouTube channel in less than 48 hours for everyone to view! Great job, everyone.

Our volunteers have been working hard putting the final touches inside the museum, with a fresh coat of paint, new exhibits, new store items, and a fresh look on the outside, too.

We have missed you all so very much. Please know there is nothing like being in person, so we have decided to take a stab at doing just that. September 19, 2021, marks our 104th year as an incorporated city, and we at the Culver City Historical Society think what better way to launch our reopening. Please keep an eye on our website for updates, as well continue our practice of the City of Culver City and the Veteran's Memorial Building protocols for safe public events.

Speaking of that... our beloved Marc Wanamaker is coming in October. Please see Clare's cover story!

I want to take a moment to thank all of you for your continued support to the Culver City Historical Society. With your contributions our museum committee has made great strides this past eight months, making sure the collection is being preserved properly and entered in our database. This is very tedious and time-consuming work. Thank you to our museum committee and our most recent volunteers Jack Bommarito, Kathleen McCann, and Abigail Gregor for their dedication to this collection. It truly takes a village!

Hope

Renew Your Membership!

If you have not yet had the opportunity to renew your membership, please use the renewal form on page 4 of this newsletter or renew online! Please go to our website at CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/membership. There, you will be able to pay instantly with your credit card and save a stamp! You don't need to renew if you are a Lifetime member, but please consider making a donation. Our wonderful members help us maintain the Archives and continue the promotion and preservation of Culver City history.

We know these are tough times, and we thank you for supporting us.

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.

Newsletter Editors

Michelle Bernardin
Ryan Vincent

Newsletter Design

Sue Slutzky

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Hope M. Parrish, President
Michelle Bernardin, Immediate Past President
Denice Renteria, VP, Development
Tami Eskridge, VP, Museum and Archives
Clare Denk, Interim VP, Programs
Carolyn Wispe Burns, Treasurer
Mara Bommarito, Secretary
Denice Renteria, Costumes Chair
Julie Lugo Cerra, Historic Sites Chair
Jeanne Conklin, Membership Chair
Andrew Weissman, Government Liaison
Michael Laase, Parliamentarian
Kevin Lachoff, Photographer
Mark Morris, Media Archives

HOW TO CONTACT US

T (310) 253-6941, leave a message
F (310) 253-6942
info@CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
P.O. Box 1356
Culver City, CA 90232

STAY CONNECTED

CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
facebook.com/CulverCityHistoricalSociety
twitter.com/histofculvrcity
instagram.com/culvercityhistoricalsociety

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

Sadie Cerda (S.A.V.E.S.)

Welcome Our New Members

Byron Bechler	Michael Lupo
Donna and Matthew Brown	Carolyn McDemas
Rebecca Goodman	Ray Moselle
Anne Kepple	Dawn Tucker

Pardon Our Dust!

Your friendly (and dusty) volunteers at the Historical Society have been safely working hard during the pandemic, refreshing our exhibition space. Check out these photos!

We look forward to welcoming you back as we reopen on Sunday afternoon, September 19, from 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.!! Bring your mask and your healthy self (please mind our protocols) and see how we have spruced up the ARC!



P.O. Box 1356
Culver City, CA 90232



CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
(310) 253-6941

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

October 20 – General Meeting and Program
Rotunda Room, VMB, 7PM

October 23 – 16th Annual Los Angeles Archives Bazaar
Doheny Memorial Library, USC, 9AM-5PM

December – Do your holiday shopping with us, online and in person! Wrapping and shipping available!

ARC OPEN DATES

1st and 3rd Sundays, 1–3PM

Sept. 19, Oct. 3, Oct. 17, Nov. 7, Nov. 21, Dec. 5, Dec. 19



Support (at no extra cost to you!)



We depend on your membership and donations to keep the archives running. You can also build on your support in two small ways that don't cost extra. If you are a Ralphs shopper and have an online account you can designate the Culver City Historical Society as your "Community Contribution." If you are an Amazon shopper, go to smile.amazon.com and login to your account. Under "Your Account," go to "AmazonSmile." From there, you can designate Culver City Historical Society as your charity. Every dollar counts! Both programs are a great way to help your Society without any extra cost to you.

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.

Benefactor

The Culver Studios Ryan Smith (310) 473-8900

Supporting Corporate and Non Profit Sponsors

Culver City Exchange Club Dr. Bob Montgomery (310) 499-4840

History For Hire Pam and Jim Elyea (818) 765-7767

Sony Pictures Entertainment Kristin Cavanaugh (310) 244-5368

Supporting Business Members

Appletree Music LLC Amy Loftus Panchansky (615) 268-8050

Cantalini's Salerno Beach Restaurant Lisa Schwab (310) 821-0018

Cavanaugh Realtors Dannie Cavanaugh (310) 837-7161

Culver City Flower Shop Mike Eskridge (310) 839-2344

The Culver Hotel Geeta Mallick (310) 838-7323

Freeman Properties Stuart Freeman (310) 839-7593

George Petrelli Famous Steaks Marie Petrelli (310) 902-5899

Göran Eriksson / Techtrans Göran Eriksson (310) 841-2901

Ken Harada, D.D.S. Ken Harada (310) 837-5121

Hillside Memorial Park and Mortuary..... Lori Larcara (818) 424-1619

JLF Appraisals & Estates..... Joel and Linda Forman (310) 837-7455

John Riordan Plumbing John Riordan (310) 838-4656

Keller Williams Silicon Beach Noel Boix (310) 463-4242

Santa Maria BBQ Jim Rodrigues (310) 559-5709

S.A.V.E.S. (310) 838-2702

SendOutCards Richard A. Marcus (310) 397-4696

Sorrento Italian Market Albert Vera (310) 391-7654

Tower Insurance Associates Janice Beighey (310) 837-6101

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Jeff Cooper (310) 606-9479

The Wende Museum Justin Jampol (310) 216-1600

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 (\$500)
- ☐ Individual Lifetime Member (\$300)
- ☐ Patron Member (\$100)
- ☐ Business Member (\$50)
- ☐ Family Member (\$30)
- ☐ Individual Member (\$20)
- ☐ Non Profit Organization (\$15)
- ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Name/Company _____

Contact Person _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Voluntary Contribution to Museum Fund \$ _____

Please check type of membership and enclose your check payable to:
The Culver City Historical Society, P.O. Box 1356, Culver City, CA 90232

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