



CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Revisiting “Dream Street”

By Judy Stangler

It was my great pleasure to meet the legendary director George Sidney just before the turn of the millennium, while I was program director for the American Cinematheque. I was concurrently the newsletter editor of our Society newsletter, Culver Historical Highlights. George was kind enough to write a piece for the Winter 2000 newsletter, entitled “Dream Street,” his homage to Washington Boulevard. In my view, this was his love letter to the film history of Culver City. Enjoy these excerpts and visit our website for his entire article.

Everyone has a favorite street—Broadway, Bond Street, Canal Street, Rue de la Paix, State Street, Via Veneto, even the Yellow Brick Road. I first saw mine and walked on my “dream street” in 1930: Washington Boulevard in Culver City.

My footprints shared the path with the entertainment greats—factual, historical and fictional who worked at

the studios of the reel cinema world which were created and built along its curbs, such as Triangle, MGM, RKO, Pathé, and Desilu.

From Ince, DeMille, Mayer, Roach, and Selznick came forth a mecca of creativity which encouraged the talents of Thalberg, Freed, Stromberg, Welles, Ford, Stevens, Capra, and Fleming, as well as Minnelli, Lubitsch, Wilder, Leonard, Frankenheimer, and Spielberg, among so many others.

My footsteps echoed alongside those of the Munchkins, Garbo and Lassie, *Trader Horn* and Lena Horne, Clark Gable and *Captains Courageous*, Lawrence Tibbet and Elvis (along with Frank and Bing), Astaire and Kelly, and the Nicholas Brothers.

I watched Mickey and Judy grow up; *Our Gang* remaining kids forever; *Tom and Jerry* wreaking havoc. I experienced the burning of Atlanta and *Gone with the Wind*, the San Francisco earthquake, locusts and *The Good Earth*, and

Singin’ in the Rain.

I strutted along with all of these stars and celluloid giants who paved the way for those who will continue to matriculate on this street for the entertainment of 2000 and beyond. It all happens on my “dream street” in Culver City.



George Sidney’s cover letter to the article he originally submitted in 1999. (Judy Stangler)

UPCOMING EVENTS

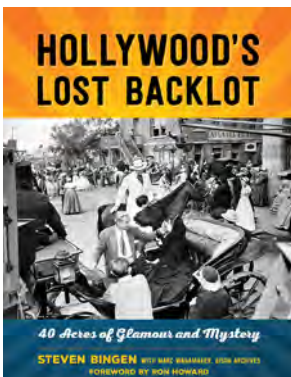
April 17, 2019 – General Meeting and Program From Barney Fife to Beats: Culver City’s 40 Acres Backlot Multipurpose Room, Veterans Memorial Building, 7PM

From 1927-1976, the backlot known as 40 Acres played host to Tarzan, Superman, Rhett Butler, King Kong, Captain Kirk, Batman, and Gomer Pyle. It was roughly bordered by Higuera to the north, Lucerne to the west, and Ballona Creek and Jefferson to the south and east.

At various times, the 40 Acres Backlot was owned by Cecil B. DeMille, David O. Selznick, Howard Hughes, Desi Arnaz, and Lucille Ball. It had areas known as the African Jungle Set, Mayberry, the Arab Village, Stalag 13, and Tara.

Today, the area that included and surrounds what was 40 Acres has become known for architectural marvels by Eric Owen Moss, offices that are home to companies like Apple’s Beats by Dre and restaurant Vespertine.

Authors and historians **Marc Wanamaker** and **Steven Bingen** will give a presentation based on their book *Hollywood’s Lost Backlot: 40 Acres of Glamour and Mystery*. Copies of the book will be for sale. After the program there will be a book signing. The public is invited to this free program. The entrance to the ARC is from the back parking lot.



YOUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Hope M. Parrish



With so much rain, we are guaranteed a beautiful Spring!

When I joined the Culver City Historical Society in 2008, I had no idea that I would be as involved as I have become. I needed a little something to do while I was recovering from back surgery. I was given some fun tasks to research, which started my curiosity about our town. Hours were spent in our volumes of printed newspapers, dating from 1920 – mid 1930's, reading about the stars,

the studio executives – not just MGM, but all the studios in Culver City – even scandals of the day! As a person who loves history, especially ours, it was very exciting for me to read and absorb what Harry Culver and our forefathers did to bring us homes, schools, jobs, and community services.

In the Archives, we also have volumes of newspapers on microfilm, which until now could not be accessed without the proper equipment. With a very generous donation from Society members and current Vice-Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells and Karim Sahli, we now have a state-of-the-art microfilm machine (see photo below). Our microfilm rolls start in the 1940's and continue to the 1980's. I can't wait to discover the history in them!

As Culver City continues its growth, I am also thrilled with the many opportunities to meet and help our local neighbors and students on our open Sundays. They come to the ARC looking for information for their various projects. We will now be able to help access more information, so this is exciting!

Our docents are in the process of digitizing these rolls. If you would like to get in on the fun and get involved with this and other projects at your Culver City Historical Society, please contact us at info@culvercityhistoricalsociety.org.

We can't do this without you!
Hope



Vice-Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells and Karim Sahli with Society president Hope Parrish and the Society's new microfilm machine, made possible from the Sahli donation. (Kevin Lachoff)

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

Welcome Our New Members

Marc Bauer	John Kent
Susannah and Peter Baxendale	Mark H.L. Morris
Lori and John Boat	Marlene McClure
Jeanne Folger	Luc Ouyang and Rodney Vito
David Frost	Charles Shoup
Karen Griffo	Cheryl Stone
Debbie Jefferies	Emily Sulzer
Lory Johansson	Albert Vera Jr.
The Kann Family	

Notes From Your City Historian

By Julie Lugo Cerra



Our Newspaper Treasures

Culver City's history always amazes me! From early times when our Native Americans traversed this area, using natural resources wisely, to our Spanish ancestors who shared their customs, to the continuing influx of amazing immigrants who expand our cultural wealth every day.

Newspapers serve as incredible sources of information from early times on a daily basis! Our Culver City Historical Society has been lucky to receive, save, and protect early newspapers like *The Culver City Star*, *Evening Star News*, and *The Citizen*. The front page pictured is dated September 22, 1927 and notes that it is "Published Daily Except Sunday." It clearly validates our information that Col. Charles A. Lindbergh, who is posed next to movie actress Marion Davies, visited the MGM movie lot, and met Louis B. Mayer, who was "manager of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio." Culver City's mayor, Reve Houck, is pictured on the far right. Note the studio is illustrated above, with the Washington Boulevard frontage. Palms are recognized to the north, also on the right.

Many of you are aware that we had a "Culver City Airport" which was in the area of Jefferson and Sepulveda Boulevards. City founder Harry Culver kept his plane there, and it was from that airport that Culver flew across the country with his wife Lillian and daughter Patricia, during his tenure as president of the National Real Estate Association. Our collection includes a book of letters, clippings, and photos documenting that trip. Many years ago, I received a call from a church in the Inland Empire asking if we would like a book of Culver photos. After rescuing the amazing treasure, the Society surprised the Culvers' daughter, Patricia Culver Battle, by returning it to her at one of our meetings. A delighted Patricia graciously turned the table on us and left it in our care. We are grateful that Patricia's descendants, who now live out of state, continue to support our society with photos and details of Culver history!



Official credentials from Culver City Airport, c. 1934. (Julie Lugo Cerra)



Headline from *The Star* on September 22, 1927, commemorating Col. Lindbergh's visit to Culver City. (Julie Lugo Cerra)



During WWII, the Culver City Airport operator Pete Leaman (pictured on right) gave flying lessons for \$8. One of our members, Jean Barker, has vivid memories of her lessons with Leaman, who asked her early on if she had "ever lost her cookies," an unfamiliar phrase. In her three lessons, she gratefully never had that experience! (Julie Lugo Cerra)



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CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org
(310) 253-6941

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 17 – General Meeting and Program
Multipurpose Room, VMB, 7PM

May – Historic Preservation Month
For more info: www.savingplaces.org

July 17 – General Meeting and Program
Multipurpose Room, VMB, 7PM

ARC OPEN DATES – 1st and 3rd Sundays, 1-3PM
Apr. 7, Apr. 21 (CLOSED), May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16, July 7

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

If you received an envelope in this newsletter, it means that we have sadly not received your membership renewal, which was due in January 2019. You can also 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! Obviously, you don't need to renew if you are a Lifetime member, but please consider making a donation. We count on the support of our members to maintain the Archives and continue the promotion and preservation of Culver City history. Your continued support is always greatly appreciated. Thank 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.

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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 (\$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 _____

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Voluntary Contribution to Museum Fund \$ _____

Please check type of membership and enclose your check payable to:
The Culver City Historical Society, P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428

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