



# CULVER CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2022

## From the Archives: The Gabrielinos (Fall 1997)

By Lupe Smith

The Gabrielinos extinct? Don't you believe it! Contrary to published reports in several books and articles, the Gabrielinos or Tongvas, their original name, are alive and well all over Southern California and beyond. In my limb of the family tree alone there are 31 direct descendants and more coming. Multiply that by the other nine families in the branch and you can easily come up with over 300 -- and that's only from one branch.

Tongva means "people of the earth." The name Gabrielino was given to them by the Spaniards to identify them with the San Gabriel Mission, which they helped to build.

The ancestral tribal territory encompassed the entire Los Angeles basin and parts of Orange County, from the San Bernardino and San Gabriel mountains to the Pacific Ocean, from south of the Santa Monica Mountains to Aliso Creek in Orange County. They also occupied three of the Channel Islands as well as Santa Catalina, San Clemente, and San Nicolas and made excursions to Santa Barbara Island.

The Gabrielinos/Tongvas were the original inhabitants of Culver City, which is in an area then known as Saa Angna ("ngna" was a common ending for village names;

the last "n" being dropped later as in Topanga, Tujunga, and Cahuenga).

There are several groups who are actively teaching and publishing the culture and history of our people. One such group is the Gabrielino/Tongva Springs Foundation at University High School, site of the Tongva Village of Kuruvungna.

There is a group in Catalina called the Ti-At Society, after the plank boats our ancestors used to paddle from the mainland to the islands. There is the Gabrielino/Tongva Tribal Council in San Gabriel, and the Mother Earth Clan in Riverside. There are also groups in Baldwin Park and Orange County. All these groups are dedicated to educating the public about our people, especially teaching the children about our history and culture.

We are far from extinct. We have been here for centuries and will be for centuries to come.

*Editor's Note: To watch the Society's January 2022 General Program, "Tongva Historic Sites & Recognition," please visit our YouTube channel.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### October 18, 2022 - General Meeting and Program The 1976 Explosion That Changed Everything Multipurpose Room, Veterans Memorial Building, 7PM

On June 16, 1976, a gas line exploded at the corner of Venice Boulevard and Bagley Avenue. The fire shot up hundreds of feet and dozens of fire trucks were brought in from the city of Los Angeles to help the local Culver City Fire Department. As fire inspector Jim Forte recalls, the fire was so hot that it "melted the plastic on the fire engine." The explosion resulted in nine deaths, 26 hospitalizations, and 14 critically injured, as well as millions of dollars in property damage...all due to an "18-inch utility location error." This tragic event resulted in the creation of a national toll-free number 811, which people can now call before digging in any area. Please join us for this powerful program in which we will show the short documentary "811" produced by Mark Morris followed by a Q&A with fire inspector Jim Forte and photographer Brian Haimer who were there on this historic day. We will then have a visit from the Culver City Fire Department, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

**Please note: this program is on Tuesday, October 18, 7PM.**

The public is invited to this free program. Regardless of vaccination status, L.A. County Public Health recommends that people continue to wear masks that fit and filter well in all indoor public places.



Gas Main Explosion, 1976.  
(Mark Morris)

# YOUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Hope M. Parrish



Greetings Members, Friends Volunteers and Associates...

I hope all of you have had the great summer, that our Society has had! We are thrilled that our open Sunday's are again busy. It has been wonderful visiting with our friends & members, who just popped by to say Hi and see what's new. We also met a host of first-time visitors, many becoming new members. I would like to welcome and thank you all.

This is exciting for our entire team!

This summer we also received from you many new donations to add to the Society's Collection. Our growth as a resource center depends not just on your financial donations but items you have collected about Culver City and its past. We received, photos, yearbooks, movie props, and items from personal collections that are enriching our collection. We thank you.

This summer also brought some sadness. On July 3rd, our dear friend and past President Louise Coffey-Webb passed away from natural causes. Her sudden death was a huge blow to me and our Society. Louise ( Loulou ) volunteered with our Society for many years, bringing so much knowledge to our museum committee's on proper preservation and handling of our costume collection and all items we are in trusted with. Six years ago, Louise began her work with Culver City's, Cultural Affairs division headed by Christine Byers. During this time Louise's focus was on our City's Public Art Program and Historic Preservation. She also created the "The Little Red Book," which takes you on a personal walking tour through downtown, discussing Art in Public Places and our Historic buildings.

Louise was an amazing woman who seemed to be everywhere and knew everyone. She was a huge advocate for our community and the Culver City Historical Society. She will be truly missed.

Best wishes to you all.

- Hope



On July 28, the Society welcomed the team (and new neighbors) from Audible to the Archives and Resource Center. (Hope Parrish)

## 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  
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Mark Morris, Media Archives

## INTERNS

Abigail Cregor, Madisen Matsuura

## 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

Louise Coffey-Webb  
former Society President (2012-13)

## Welcome Our New Members

Haifaa Almoammar  
Alexandra Chistolini  
Laura Foody  
Naomi Kirkwood  
Richard Hibbs  
Scott Houston

Sapna Shah  
Helen Thomson  
Leonardo Wilborn  
Melissa Wyman  
Ronald K. Ziff



## RECENT EVENTS

### Hobbit House Recap

Thanks to the dozens of attendees who came to our first offsite program at the Hobbit Houses! Bob Grant, longtime resident since 1964, discussed the work and life of architect Lawrence Joseph and his wife Martha and recalled the many famous residents who lived here including Nick Nolte, Paula Prentiss and Richard Benjamin, Zasu Pitts, Gwen Verdon, and one of the Frank Sinatra Jr. kidnappers! One of the residents even discussed the history of the turtles in

the pond out front. The residents generously opened up six of their units for tours while other attendees were able to view exhibits and enjoy live music. Thank you to Bob Grant, Critter, and the rest of the residents for opening up their homes to us! Be sure to watch Media Archives Chair Mark Morris's recording of this talk and tour entitled "Amazing Secret Hideaway" on the Society's YouTube channel. Photos courtesy of Kristin Knox



### PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

We make it convenient for you to renew your membership, which will be due in January 2023. You can do this on our website at [CulverCityHistoricalSociety.org/membership](https://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. We count on the support of our members to be able to maintain the Archives, and to continue the promotion and preservation of Culver City history. Rates for individual and family levels increased at the beginning of 2022.

***Your continued support is always greatly appreciated.***



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

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**October 18 – General Meeting and Program**  
Multipurpose Room, VMB, 7PM

**October 22 – 17th Annual Los Angeles Archives Bazaar**  
Doheny Memorial Library, USC, 10AM-3PM

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

**ARC OPEN DATES – 1st and 3rd Sundays, 1–3PM**  
Oct. 2, Oct. 16, Nov. 6, Nov. 20, Dec. 4, Dec. 18,  
Jan. 1 (CLOSED for New Year's Day)



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

Cavanaugh Realtors ..... Dannie Cavanaugh (310) 837-7161  
Culver City Flower Shop ..... Mike Eskridge (310) 839-2344  
Culver City Neighbors ..... Chiqeeta Jameson (310) 801-3445  
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  
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Santa Maria BBQ ..... Jim Rodrigues (310) 559-5709  
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  
Law Offices of Ronald K. Ziff ..... Ronald K. Ziff (310) 342-2819

### 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 (\$35)  
☐ Individual Member (\$25)  
☐ Non Profit Organization (\$15)  
☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Name/Company \_\_\_\_\_

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Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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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 1356, Culver City, CA 90232

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