

Culver Historical Highlights

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CC HISTORICAL SOCIETY FINDS AN INTERIM HOME AT WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE

ARCHIVAL & DISPLAY OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO MEMBERS & PUBLIC

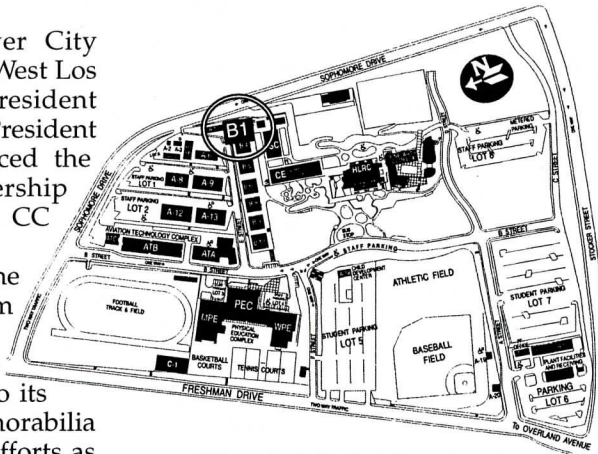
At the January 24 Culver City Chamber of Commerce mixer, West Los Angeles College (WLAC) President Frank Quiambao and CCHS President Don Rogers formally announced the formation of a new partnership between the College and the CC Historical Society.

The agreement will give the Historical Society an interim home for archival purposes, allowing both Society members and the public greater access to its collection of artifacts and memorabilia for research and preservation efforts as well as viewing in specific display areas.

The Society was founded in 1980 to preserve the history of the area. Members have actively worked over the past two decades to collect and catalog memorabilia, photos and printed material. It also sponsors historic tours, lectures, documentaries, and has marked nine historic sites to date.

A goal since its formation has been to find a permanent home for the Society's growing collection, which is currently housed in several locations, including

The Antique Guild and Freeman Properties, thanks to the generosity of Lee Bixler and Stu Freeman.



WLAC-CCHS site: Bungalow B-1 (circled at top)

The offer from WLAC for space was met with great excitement when the Society voted to accept it at their January meeting. The Historical Society will be located within a bungalow at the college (*see map*), with opportunities to display items in the new Fine Arts Building, which also offers theater space.

President Don Rogers commented that "it was fitting that the Historical Society

Cont'd on page 3)

IT'S FIESTA TIME! MAY 19 & 20

by Don Rogers

Yes, once again, it's time for *Fiesta La Ballona* – Culver City's annual two-day celebration of its rich heritage. This year it will be held on Saturday and Sunday, May 19 and 20, 2001, from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, both days.

In recognizing the theme of this year's *Fiesta*, "A Rainbow of Colors," I thought it appropriate to give a bit of background and history of this very special community event.

It was 50 years ago in 1951 that the *Fiesta* got its start in Culver City as "La Ballona Valley Days," in conjunction with the opening of the Culver City Municipal Plunge.

Cont'd on page 3)



early Fiesta parade, c. 1950s

APRIL 17TH GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

• Spotlight on the History of the Culver City Fire Department •

The next General Membership Meeting of the Culver City Historical Society will be held on Tuesday, April 17th at 7:00 pm in the Lethbridge Garden Room at the Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue, Culver City.

Our planned guest speaker for the January General Meeting was to have been firefighter and paramedic, Bill Heins, who was to present the history of the Culver City Fire Department. As fate would have it, Bill was unavoidably detained by a snowstorm! But happily, we will have another opportunity to hear Bill speak. Having inherited the historic memorabilia collection of retired Assistant Fire Chief Charles Liedtke and continuing to add and augment this collection with his own personal research, Bill will speak on the development of the Fire Department since it was established in 1927 and discuss the changes and challenges it has faced through the years. Many historic photos will be displayed.

This promises to be a very informative, evening and the public is invited to enjoy the free program. Students are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served following the program.

For more information, please call Cathy Zermeno at (310) 839-7688.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Don Rogers



I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a number of exciting things that are happening in the Culver City Historical Society.

First of all, through a joint partnership with the Historical Society and West Los Angeles College, spearheaded by the efforts of the community-minded spirit of the College's Interim President, Frank Quiambao, we now have a room on the West Los Angeles College campus for the Historical Society (*see Page One*). We will use this facility for sorting and cataloging the Society's collection of photos and other memorabilia, and it will also provide an opportunity to develop displays which will be exhibited at College and

other local venues.

Chair Reba Yudess and her Ways and Means Committee are the force behind the fabulous CCHS throws depicting historical sites in Culver City. They have been an instant hit and if you have not purchased one, you will have the opportunity at the Society's booth at the upcoming Fiesta La Ballona (*see accompanying article*). And don't forget to tell your friends about our annual tours of the City's historical sites on Saturday, May 19.

The Historical Society is also reorganizing membership and enrollment procedures. You will all be receiving a letter from Julie Lugo Cerra, Membership Chair, shortly explaining the changes.

Finally, we invite you to attend in the Historical Society reception at our new facility at the West Los Angeles College campus on Tuesday, May 22, from 5-7 pm.

Your Board of Directors is making a number of advancements in promoting the awareness of the Historical Society and in our efforts to accomplish the goals of the Society. Thank you for your support and we look forward to even greater involvement by more of the members of the Society.

Don Rogers

Notes from Your City Historian

by Julie Lugo Cerra



CULVER, INDIANA!

Is there another city named Culver? Indeed, there is a Culver, Indiana!

It is located in Marshall County, 101 miles from Chicago, Illinois, and 107 miles from Indianapolis. Located along the shores of Indiana's second largest lake, Lake Maxinkuckee, the 1990 census counted a population of 1,404 in Culver. Their form of government is a Town Council, with five members, and a Clerk-Treasurer. It is an incorporated city of 2.3 square miles, with 812 housing units, according to their Chamber of Commerce.

The Town Council wanted to rename Marmont to Culver City, in honor of Henry Harrison Culver, but the post office refused because it was too small to be a city! There was *another* community of Culver, which changed its name, thereby clearing the way for the *new* Culver in 1897.

Robert B. D. Hartman, the Historian and Archivist for the Culver Educational Foundation in Indiana, has been researching *our* H.H. Culver

(Harry H. Culver, born in 1880). His H.H. Culver, (Henry Harrison Culver, born 1840), whose source of wealth is attributed to his Wrought Iron Range Co. in St. Louis, founded the Culver Academy in 1884. It became the Culver Military Academy a year later.

From information we were able to put together, with some help from Pat Culver Battle, the daughter of *our* city founder, the *other* H.H. was a cousin. Of course, *our* Culver founded the Pacific Military Academy....

For more interesting tidbits I would suggest you check "Hartman on History" on their website: www.culver.org. Note their Culver logo!

It seems like yesterday's annual picnic that Matt Matheson shared his recollections of the CCFD exercise at the Egyptian house. Our condolences to Vivian Matheson and the Matheson family. Losing Matt was a loss for us all.

CALENDAR

April 28:	St. Augustine School 75th Anniversary
May 19:	Culver City High School Alumni Dance
May 19-20:	Fiesta La Ballona
May 22:	WLAC Site Dedication Reception

Culver Historical Highlights

PO BOX 3428 • CULVER CITY, CA • 90231-3428
(310) 838-1073

The Culver City Historical Society, founded in 1980, is a non-profit membership organization created for the purpose of collecting, preserving and exhibiting the history of Culver City and its cultural and civic accomplishments.

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

We're all excited about the new WLA site and hope you'll all come out on Tuesday, May 22 for the dedication reception. It's a giant step toward our Heritage Museum.

A belated thank you goes out to Pam Robinson, Veterans Complex & Theatre Manager of the Human Service Dept., for the wonderful presentation of MGM costumes at the October General Meeting. She was great and the history of the costumes was fascinating! Many thanks also to David Oliver, owner of Ames, for the loan of the dress stands to display these wonderful treasures.

In January, the CC Library was renamed the Culver City Julian Dixon Library by the Board of Supervisors in recognition of Julian Dixon, the Representative for the 32nd U.S. Congressional District who passed away last December. Rep. Dixon spent many of his years in public service working closely with educational institutions and libraries that positively impact the lives of children. A wonderful tribute.

There's word afoot that the Centinela Adobe is facing serious problems from the proposed LAX expansion plans. We'll be following this closely and reporting on it and our support in future issues.

And we all wish a speedy recovery to our dear Ralph Larkin who's been under the weather for a time now - we miss his cheerful addition to the Board meetings! Also, we regret the resignation of our wonderful Parliamentarian Edna Larkin and wish her well in the future.

REEL LIFE IN CULVER CITY

by Ross Hawkins



ERICH VON STROHEIM'S GIFTS TO ST. AUGUSTINE'S

According to Paul Pitti and Father Alfred Burnham, the current pastor of St. Augustine Church, the stained glass window in the parish hall and one of the statues in the Church were donated by early film director, Eric von Stroheim.

Infamous for his extravagance and exacting attention to details, von Stroheim was eventually fired from his monumental opus [it originally ran eight hours!], Greed, by then MGM head of production, Irving Thalberg in the mid-1920s.

He later became a character actor in the 1930s, distinguishing himself in Jean Renoir's masterpiece, *Grand Illusion*, and as Gloria Swanson's chauffeur/ex-husband in Billy Wilder's classic *Sunset Boulevard*.

Hardly a role model for altar boys in real life, von Stroheim was long gone from MGM by 1936 when the second Church (now the Parish Hall) was built which makes his gifts to the Church even more interesting. Anyone who has a clue as to what prompted von Stroheim's generosity can contact me at (310) 204-6920 or email: rjhculvercity@aol.com.



Eric von Stroheim



von Stroheim's
stained glass

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. AUGUSTINE SCHOOL!

September 2001 will mark the 75th Anniversary of the opening of St. Augustine School by the Daughters of Mary and Joseph.

A celebration is planned for Saturday, April 28th, 2001 from 3 - 5 pm at the St. Augustine School. Principal Norman Mezey, will host a special short program together with former staff, alumni, and students.

There will also be an Anniversary Mass held at the Church at 5:00 pm. A reception with light refreshments will follow in the Parish Hall.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to meet the former staff and students that attended St. Augustine School. Confirmation of attendance is requested by early April.

The event is sponsored by St. Augustine School PTO, and the school is located at 3819 Clarington Ave., Culver City, CA, 90232. For additional information, please contact (310) 838-3144 and leave a contact number and/or email address.

"WLAC SITE"

(Cont'd from page 1)

should be located within an institution of learning which benefits the local community."

To finance museum space, the Society has been actively hosting fundraisers since its inception such as the "Sneak Preview of the Culver City Heritage Museum" at the Veterans Memorial Building last Fall. The CCHS-WLAC partnership is the first major step towards a real home for the vast collection of historic, social and cultural memorabilia.

The WLAC site will be formally dedicated on Tuesday, May 22, 2001 - during Historic Preservation Month - with a reception from 5 - 7 pm that the community and the public is cordially invited to attend.

"FIESTA"

(Cont'd from page 1)

The celebration was focused around a Western theme while, at the same time, recognizing the rich Hispanic history of the area.

There was an array of activities for the whole community including a citywide parade with floats sponsored by the many service organizations, a special kiddie parade, a beard-growing contest, a beauty pageant, an old-fashioned square dance ho-down, a teen dance, and the infamous "El Pokey" that went around town arresting "everyone not dressed in Western or Spanish attire." This tradition grew and then faded out in the '60s.

In 1974, Culver City's Fiesta entered a new era.



El Pokey, 1954

Several years before, the Watts riots had affected the entire L.A. Basin. Culver City, in an effort to be proactive, initiated a new program called A Festival of the People. The goal was to have various and diverse groups and organizations come together in one location at one time to celebrate their diversity and to get to know one another better. The event was established for non-profit organizations to share information about their group's efforts in providing harmony and leadership through the sharing of each other's culture through food and entertainment.

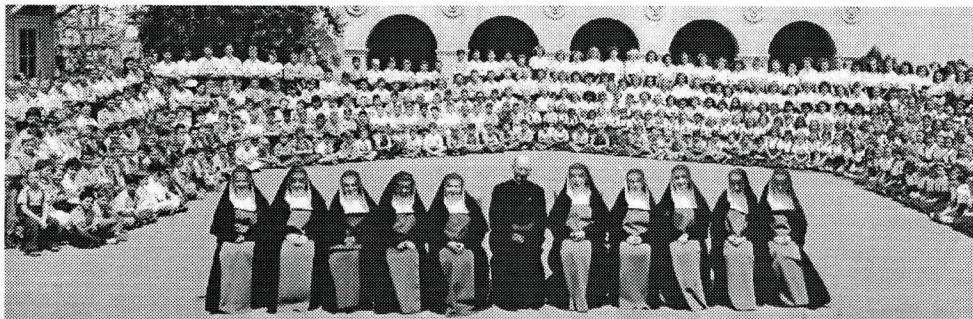
As the years progressed, the old Fiesta theme was re-infused into the "Festival of the People" effort, and it became today's Fiesta La Ballona - a Festival of the People, which is held annually at the Vets Park over a May weekend. Booths are set up by a myriad of local organizations and civic groups along with an arts and crafts fair, and both the CC Police Dept. and the CC Fire Dept. stage demonstrations for the public.

The Historical Society has conducted its popular city bus tours of historic sites since 1982 and will again this year on Saturday, May 19, hourly from 11 am to 4 pm.

We hope many of you will come out and we welcome your help in decorating our booth in prize-winning fashion for the Lois Moise Memorial Booth Contest. We also need volunteers to help man the booth during the two-day event. This is a great opportunity to be creative and to share information on the Society's work and upcoming events with the community and attract new members.

For further information and to sign up to help, please contact Ross Hawkins at (310) 204-6920 or by email: rjhculvercity@aol.com

* * *



From Royal M. Mannion, St. Augustine School Picture, 1946/47

Become a member of the Culver City Historical Society Today!

Join others in preserving the history of the "Heart of Screenland" and the efforts to create the Culver City Heritage Museum. We can't do it without you!

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

☐ Benefactor (\$1000)
☐ Family Lifetime Member (\$500)
☐ Patron Member (\$100)
☐ Family Member (\$25)
☐ Individual Member (\$15)

☐ Corporate Sponsor (\$500)
☐ Individual Lifetime Member (\$250)
☐ Business Member (\$50)
☐ Organization (\$15)
☐ Student Member (\$5)

Name/Company: _____ Telephone: _____

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Please make checks payable to **The Culver City Historical Society** and mail to
P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428. For further information, call (310) 838-1073.

Contributions of both historic and social significance as well as monetary donations are encouraged, and the CCHS
IRS tax exempt status may make such contributions tax deductible.

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Please show YOUR support by your patronage of their services and products.

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