

proofs



issue 5
07/01/08

2 year anniversary collector's issue



Cemetery buffs take a break for a group photo at the Los Angeles Pet Cemetery in Calabasas. See Joe Walker's article on page 5 for more info on the event. Photograph by Bob Drwila.

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The Studio for Southern California History seeks to critically chronicle the region's social history in order to foster sense of place.

NEWS NOTES

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the STUDIO!

The Studio celebrates its 2nd YEAR ANNIVERSARY on June 24, 2008.

The ANNENBERG FOUNDATION

awards the Studio funding towards the LA History Archive, an online forum and mediabase dedicated to local history. Thank you, Annenberg Foundation!

THE CANDELARIA FUND

renews its support of the Studio with a grant towards general operating costs. Thank you, Candelaria Fund!

THANKS to GREG KORTZ

Studio benefactor Greg Kortz has donated dozens of books to the Studio's reference library, now over 1,000 titles. Thank you, Greg!

NEW STUDIO SCHEDULE!

Beginning July 1 the Studio will be open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 8:00 pm.

CONGRATULATIONS to Stephanie!

Former Studio Education & Outreach Coordinator, Stephanie Christian received her degree from CSUF and found a new position at the Newport Harbor Nautical Museum. Way to go!

MOVIES AT THE STUDIO

The Studio will show movies on its big screen each night beginning at 6:00 pm.

Movies to be screened each week:

July 6: **Blade Runner** (1982)

July 13: **Criss Cross** (1949)

July 20: **Rebel Without a Cause** (1955)

July 27: **The Omega Man** (1971)

August 3: **Zoot Suit** (1981)

August 10: **Twilight** (1992)

August 17: **Xanadu** (1980)

These films feature Los Angeles in historical, archetypal & fantastical roles.

Film titles may be switched by vote on each night. Free popcorn will be served.

No critics or haters allowed.

THE LA HISTORY ARCHIVE

Beginning in July, Studio director Sharon Sekhon will begin working full time on building and refining the LA History Archive. This online forum and mediabase will highlight past Studio programming (oral histories, images, textual documents) and invite visitors to share history and best practices for integrating local history into the classroom.

We are currently looking for individuals from all walks of life to assist in testing and evaluating the Archive beginning in the Fall of 2008.

VOLUNTEER AT THE STUDIO

Are you a history buff? Do you enjoy research? Are you an avid weekend photographer? Did you recently move to Southern California yet feel that your knowledge of its rich history isn't as strong as it could be and would like to know more? Do you know a relevant story about our history that you want to share in our newsletter?

Or, if you're already a member and would like to explore other ways to contribute, how about becoming a volunteer for one of our many programs? Current volunteer opportunity projects include our LA History Archive, the Ventura School for Girls History Project, walking tours, fundraisers, symposia and upcoming exhibits. Opportunities may include anything from evaluating our online programming, scanning and digitizing images and ephemera from our collection, to assisting at events and fundraisers.

If you are interested in participating, contact us at 213 - 229 - 8890.

PROFILES IN COURAGE: TOM FLOYD

In our last issue, we began profiling one of the Studio's oral history subjects in each issue of the newsletter. In this issue we highlight Tom Floyd. I met Tom while teaching a class at the Tom Bradley Family & Youth Center on West Pico in the Spring of 2006. "An Introduction to Computers for Senior Citizens" was organized by Karen Wade of FSS Project Tech, a nonprofit that works with many communities in the West Adams and West Pico neighborhoods of Los Angeles (www.fsstech.org). Tom was my student. He always came to class early and immediately impressed me with his quick wit, humor and patience in learning a new technology. At the end of the class, I asked if any students were willing to be interviewed as part of the Studio's oral history program. To my delight, Tom volunteered and we set a date. When Tom arrived at the Studio he brought his wife Toni and we conducted a joint interview. Tom grew up in Pasadena and his family has deep ties to Los Angeles. He spent his childhood doing lots of chores (according



Tom Floyd with his car circa 1950.

to him--he did everything) and spending time with his extended family, which included visiting the Doheny mansion on Figueroa on a regular basis-- Tom's aunt was the cook for the Doheny family and made legendary meals. Tom's knowledge of cooking came to assist him when he was drafted into the Army at 18 during World War II. Tom served his country proudly as a cook and fed the surviving troops on the beaches of Normandie and at the Battle of the Bulge. When he returned after World War II, Tom worked as a machinist throughout Southern California in the booming defense industry.

Tom spoke to me very frankly about the racism he faced as an African American man throughout the United States--from the restaurant in

continued on last page.

MY NEIGHBORHOOD PHOTO/ESSAY CHALLENGE

Are you up to it?

The Studio for Southern California History is now accepting entries from Southern California residents responding to the "My Neighborhood" Photo-Essay challenge. The Studio seeks to cover communities in the region to reveal a truly unique and diverse population set well apart from traditional stereotypes. Examples of past winners are featured on the LA History Archive at www.lahistoryarchive.org. Each entry must include FIVE (5) PHOTOGRAPHS taken in Southern California along with a 500 - 1,000 WORD ESSAY that explains how the images illustrate "my neighborhood." This is an ongoing challenge and an Ipod Nano will be awarded to the quarterly winners. Each submission must include the following information:

Photographer's Name

Where you can be reached:

Home Address (Number, Street, Apt #)

City, State, Zip code

Phone Number

E-mail address (optional)

500-1,000 Word Essay

Photographs with title, location and date for each image

*The deadlines for this
quarterly challenge are*

August 1 & November 1, 2008

GUIDELINES: Each submission must contain original, analytical or interpretive photographic images that have not been formally published elsewhere. Photographs should be a minimum size of 5" x 7"; film transparencies must be in 35mm format (no glass); digital images must be no less than 300 dpi. If submitting by mail, digital entries should be sent on a CD-Rom. Group and/or joint-projects cannot be accepted. One entry per person. All entries will be judged anonymously and will become property of the Studio for Southern California History and included in the LA History Archive. Submissions must be postmarked, or your email dated, on or before the contest deadline. Submit entries by mail or electronically to: thesocalstudio@gmail.com.

Symposium for Playing Place: A Meeting of Brawns & Brains

The April 5 meeting of the minds at the Chinatown Public Library was a lively discussion of the role of sports in creating place in Southern California. Speakers included Jose Alamillo, Joan Johnson, Carole Oglesby, La'Tonya Rease Miles & Sandra Uribe. Each presenter explored one facet of sports and local history by answering the following questions: **How would you define sports? What have different sports (or a particular sport) done for your life? Which specific sports individuals made a difference in your life? Why are sports important?** Audience members and panelists cited individuals like Billie Jean King, Sammie Lee and Fernando Valenzuela as high profile athletes who inspired them. Others included local coaches from elementary school through college and an individual who set up a baseball diamond for migrant workers in Ventura. The visibility of certain sports over others and the lack of role models for young athletes were also topics explored. All of the panelists provided both professional expertise and personal experience in discussing the role of sports. The Story Symposium will be available online through the LA History Archive or at the Studio itself.

Beneath Los Angeles; Southern California's Graves of the Famous, the Infamous and the Just Plain Dead to be released in 2009

Steve Goldstein's long-awaited book, "Beneath Los Angeles; Southern California's Graves of the Famous, the Infamous and the Just Plain Dead," will be released by Schiffer Books in Spring 2009. Ten years in the making, this will be a guide book that readers can bring with them to over ten area cemeteries to locate the most interesting gravesites in Southern California.

Some of the graves in the book include: early film stars such as Rudolph Valentino, Douglas Fairbanks, and the world's first movie star, Florence Lawrence; Hollywood Pioneers John T. Gower and his daughter, Mary Love Gower, the area's first school teacher; Griffith J. Griffith, who donated the 3,000 acres now known as Griffith Park; Harvey & Daieda Wilcox, who gave Hollywood its name; Cecil B. DeMille & Jesse Laskey, who shot the first full length motion picture here in 1914; animal actors Toto (Terry) from the Wizard of Oz, Old Blue (the horse of Tom Mix) and Pete from Our Gang; author Edgar Rice Burroughs; former slave turned philanthropist Biddy Mason, Grocer George A. Ralphs, comic legends Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, Milton Berle, and George Jessel; early black performers like Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Jolly John Larkin, Matthew "Stymie" Beard, Hattie McDaniel and Louise Beavers; tragic female performers like Natalie Wood, Minnie Riperton, Dorothy Stratten, Dominique Dunne and the most visited grave of all -- Marilyn Monroe. The book will include maps, photographs, directions and biographies, as well as humorous anecdotes from his many travels to these historic places. The book may also be enjoyed at home, where it will recreate the thrill of the grave hunt. Readers will also learn of graves that are not in cemeteries including those under parking lots, backyards and freeway overpasses.

THE LA PET CEMETERY IN CALABASAS BY JOE WALKER

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon in Calabasas this May when expert guide Steve Goldstein and his partner Joe Walker welcomed a group of curious Los Angeles area residents to the first tour that the Studio for Southern California History had done at the Los Angeles Pet Memorial Park (www.lapetcemetery.com).

Ellen Newth, one of the managers of the Park, met the group and was eager to show the crowd many of the famous pets interred there over the years. Ms. Newth proved to be an invaluable resource throughout the tour--especially by placing different pets within their historical contexts. Among the pets highlighted was Topper, the horse of cowboy star Hopalong Cassidy, Kabar, the trusty pooch of famed actor Rudolf Valentino and Pete the Pup from the Little Rascals/Our Gang comedies. A very interesting story was related about a cat named "Room Eight," who visited a classroom in Elysian Heights Elementary School for many years and had a book (in the Studio's Reference Library) and television reports done about her dependability and devotion to thousands of children over the years. Coincidentally, the Echo Park Historical Society hosted a moving and comprehensive history on Room Eight last month and has a short article on this much loved cat from its newsletter at www.historicechopark.org/id126.html.

Mi Ciudad by Nancy I. Bautista

Three years ago I was uprooted from my urban mecca to a place where public safety is not an issue, prices are ridiculously high, and parking is a nightmare. Currently, I reside in two communities, but belong to only one. Bell can be considered a small haven amidst the true ghetto; a community that has never lost its "urban" edge, whatever that means. **Bordered by gangland to the South and the dirty L.A. River to the West, Bell takes some time and lots of love to get used to.** Although gunshots, concrete factories down many of our main avenues, inadequate school systems, and an overworked working class perfectly describe this southeast part of Los Angeles, I would not trade my neighborhood for all the commodities in the world.

The juxtaposition of different mindsets in the same environment is not hard to detect but extremely complicated to understand. The few Mercedes' and BMW's outside well manicured lawns do not coincide with the clusters of want-to-be thugs hanging outside Paul's bar down Gage Avenue, at 11 a.m. on a Monday morning. To a newcomer, the graffiti that clearly delineates different crew's territories is aesthetically unpleasant and somewhat frightening. To those of us that know the realities of growing up in the hood, walking through the written-on streets with Veteranos blasting old school and drinking 40s is a very normal occurrence. Even though Bell residents have very different ideologies, we have mostly learned to live in peace with each other.

Although we are an underprivileged community, we make the best with what we have, and little by little big changes are taking place. I like to think the latter, in part, is due to the inevitable optimism that results from the struggle to survive and rise above the poverty level; when the present is far from great we find comfort in the possibility of a better future. New and improved schools are being built (Maywood Academy is one of the most promising ones), innovative community programs spring up every year, crime rates have decreased and roads have been improved, amongst many other things. Call it naivety, but one day Bell will be a thriving community where a college education will be the norm, and teenage pregnancies as well as drop out rates will mostly be extinct.

My second residence, chosen by necessity, lies in the opposite side of town (or the rich side as I like to say). Westwood claims to be part of Los Angeles, but anyone who has experienced the real heart of Los Angeles would easily disagree. Westwood, to me, represents an outsider's incorrect image of what the City of Angels is like. The glamour of expensive boutiques and sushi restaurants overshadows the sight of homeless people rummaging through the trash for survival. It is disgusting to see how many business-type people look the other way because the discomfort of watching someone

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wrench in hunger is hard to digest. Additionally, twenty year olds sporting the latest, very expensive trends in prepubescent-like bodies, and an addiction to caffeine from upscale coffee shops do not depict the larger Angeleno population. Based on personal experience, most Westsiders find it amazing that 20 minutes East on the 10 Freeway will transport them to a place where people do not roll around in ridiculously expensive cars because they would rather buy groceries.



Although I have spent most of my college career in Westwood, I cannot wait for my permanent return back home. My neighborhood is special because it was on her rundown streets that I experienced everything from my first kiss to my first drive. Additionally, although Bell is a working class community, we find brightness in our streets, as depicted in my rainbow photograph. I am not wealthy but I find happiness in my environment simply because



Bell is where my heart is.



Our Valley by Rosa Mazón

When people in L.A. speak of 'the valley,' they are usually not talking about anything east of downtown L.A. Usually, they are talking about "the valley," the San Fernando Valley. But looking at a map you will definitely see that the San Gabriel Mountains continue to rise mightily eastward, hovering above a vast area known as the San Gabriel Valley.

The San Gabriel Valley shares the same 'El Rancho' history as much of the rest of the Los Angeles area; but like its surrounding neighbors, it has evolved into its own entity. Alhambra, named after the Washington Irving book, "Tales of Alhambra," is a suburb that sits rightly so between two different worlds; East L.A. to the south and South Pasadena to the north, calling itself, the "gateway" to the San Gabriel Valley. This is my neighborhood.

Suburbs often get lost in the shuffle, and not surprisingly; most share too many similarities with hundreds of other cities to be taken too seriously. When I was asked to write a short essay on 'my neighborhood,' I thought it couldn't have come at a more perfect time in my life. I have spent most of my 29 years overlooking what my community means to me and what it has to offer; believing that because I lived in a suburb, it was not worthy of exploration or recognition.

I am able now to embrace the yin and the yang of Alhambra; the monotony and safety net of a suburb, and the individuality and uncertainty of a funky part of town. Recently, I've become immersed in our thriving Chinese community, one of the largest in the country. A few years ago, I came across an article in "National Geographic Traveler," about good restaurants in the L.A. area. I was confused to find my humble suburb among the cities listed, along with neighboring San Gabriel, Temple City, Monterey Park and Rosemead. It turned out that the San Gabriel Valley



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was the place to go for authentic Chinese food, even matching Chinatown. I was surprised, pleased and embarrassed all at once; all I knew was the newest dish at Panda Express. I realized I had been living side by side with an abundance of excellent Chinese cuisine (not your everyday takeout) and culture, never looking beyond the numerous signs on the streets and venturing into the communities within the shops and restaurants. Since then I have set out to get to know the tastes of the San Gabriel Valley, thus getting to know the local culture and my neighbors a little better.

The hub of Chinese culture in the area is Valley Blvd. I have driven through my city for many, many years, but have rarely strolled around. Driving condenses everything around you, minimizing life into a single blur. Not surprisingly, life has a much stronger pulse when you are walking down the street of any city or town, arousing all of your senses, making each moment significantly more enjoyable and informative. Walking just three blocks on Valley Blvd instantly shattered my outdated impression of the busy boulevard: English is virtually obsolete, Chinese dialects and characters communicate the lives of its residents, international financial centers tower impressively over the street, blocking the remaining sunlight of the day, young, successful and hip recent Chinese immigrants chat and smoke at local cafes, alongside tantalizing smells of regional delicacies. There was a whole other world, existing just a few blocks from where I lived. For a moment, I almost forgot where I was, feeling like a tourist in my own hometown. It was awesome.

Beyond Valley exists a very different part of town, centered mostly around Main Street (originally called Boabdil Street, but changed because it was too difficult for Americans to pronounce), where Alhambra struggles to embrace the future, and preserve the past. New urban projects spring up all the time, including the recently rejuvenated "downtown," with its somewhat impressive lineup of trendy nightlife. Many small businesses have been fortunate and have managed to survive or flourish side by side with these new arrivals; like Olde Peking Arts and Antiques, Fosselman's old-fashioned ice cream parlor, and the up and coming Nucleus art gallery. But as I walked the streets, I saw not everyone was so lucky. There was a significantly high number of stores, both American and Chinese, that had been open for years, yet looked like the doors had not been unlocked for some time. There were also many stores with boarded up windows or completely vacant with "For Lease" signs in the window. It was an interesting, unsettling discovery.

As I get older, I realize it is not about 'suburb' or 'downtown' or 'ghetto,' but about the communal ties that bind, something that crosses all city limits. I now find myself eager to discover the local treasures within each city of Los Angeles county, from Santa Monica to South Gate to Monrovia. Every city has a beat to keep the people moving. So try to get on over to Alhambra and the rest of the San Gabriel Valley, it's simply a loss for any Angeleno to neglect this little hub on the eastside.

Have a relevant story about Southern California history you think belongs in our newsletter? We are always accepting submission. Contact the Studio at 213 - 229 - 8890.

The Studio partners with TOWN HALL Los Angeles for October Walking Tour in Westwood.

October 11: the Saturday Walking Tour at Pearce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park

Time: 10 am – 12 pm

Cost: Free but reservations are required by calling 213 – 628 – 8141 or by registering online at www.townhall-la.org/programs (for this Studio event only).

Meeting Place: (Entrance) Pearce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park, 1218 Glendon Ave, Los Angeles CA 90024.

This cemetery is over 100 years old, but until 1962, no “famous” burials had taken place yet. The very small cemetery is just off Wilshire Blvd and Glendon Ave, behind high-rise office buildings and a movie theatre. Many famous and infamous Los Angelenos are at Westwood Village Memorial Park including Susan Dorsey, pioneer L.A. educator and the first female Superintendent of L.A. schools. Famed historians Will & Ariel Durant are there, side by side. They died within a few weeks of each other never knowing the other had died. Ray Bradbury’s widow, Maggie Bradbury, is there. She worked so her husband could write, thus making an invaluable contribution to modern American literature. Danny Sugerman was a rock fan who as a teenager got to meet and become a roadie for his favorite band, the Doors, going on to become their manager and eventual biographer.

In 1962, Marilyn Monroe became the first celebrity burial here, due to the fact that two of the women who raised her, Ana Lower and Grace Goddard, are buried there. Since then, Marilyn has been joined by many other celebrities including Natalie Wood, Dorothy Stratten, Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau, Billy Wilder, Carroll O’Connor, Don Knotts, Armand Hammer, Burt Lancaster, Dean Martin, Carl Wilson of the Beach Boys, Peggy Lee, James Coburn, Sammy Cahn, Buddy Rich, Nora Kaye Ross, and many others. The unmarked graves of Roy Orbison and Frank Zappa will be featured as well. This walking tour will be guided by Steve Goldstein and Joe Walker.

Since its inception in 2006, the Studio for Southern California History has been a member of TOWN HALL Los Angeles; the two institutions share a goal of promoting public discourse in order to promote civic participation and awareness. TOWN HALL has been a major cornerstone in the city since 1937, when a group of concerned citizens formed a membership organization whereby the leaders in government, industry and culture were invited to come speak and answer to Angelenos. TOWN HALL advocates for no side, represents no particular ideology and stands solidly in support of free speech, civility and a belief that knowledge is a priceless commodity. (www.townhall-la.org).

California Casualties: Remembering our Veterans

Those who have recently visited the Studio website (www.socalstudio.org) recently may have noticed the home page's slideshow: California Casualties. This slideshow features a slide for every U.S. service member who has been killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom from California. This project was spearheaded last Spring by Josh Gill, an intern at the Studio from Antioch University Los Angeles. Josh collected the names, ages, home towns, and places of death for each person. Studio staff collected photographs when possible of the person. This slideshow is housed on YouTube for more visibility, and as a result, is limited to ten minutes in length. Because of this restriction, the slideshow is 7 minutes and 19 seconds-- 1 second per casualty. It also loops on the Studio's television which faces Alpine Street in Chinatown. This slideshow is updated on a monthly basis.

As of Friday, June 20, 2008, at least 4,083 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. The figure includes eight military civilians. At least 3,323 died and over 30,000 were wounded as a result of hostile action, according to the military's numbers. 492 Californians have died as a result of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sources for this slideshow include the United States Department of Defense (<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf>); the Associated Press; and "Faces of the Fallen" by the Washington Post at (<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/fallen/>). Below: nine recent Southern California casualties.



PROFILES IN COURAGE, continued from page 3... that refused to seat Tom and his friends in the 1940s for their skin color, to the train attendants in Oklahoma who forced a uniformed Tom off the train because he was black. At the time, Tom was returning from Pasadena on leave before his deployment from Oklahoma; he was sent to the Southern European front of World War II the next day.

Meeting Tom when I did was pivotal in my development as an historian as I was then opening the Studio. It wasn't until after our interview that I learned that Tom had never shared his wartime record with anyone--he wasn't a person to call attention to himself. His experience and how he reconciled his feelings with the troubling aspects of that past was humbling. I was touched that he trusted me with his history and endeavored to perpetuate his attitude and to share his story. Tom passed away in late March from a heart condition. I will miss him.

Those interested in viewing Tom's interview will soon be able to through the **LA History Archive**. -- Sharon Sekhon

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: For more information, visit the Studio website at www.socalstudio.org or call the Studio at 213 - 229 - 8890.

September 6: Saturday Walking Tour - Evergreen Cemetery. 10 am - 12 pm. Location: 204 Evergreen Avenue, Los Angeles 90033. Meeting Place: At the front gates off of Evergreen Avenue. Park around the cemetery. Built in 1877, Evergreen is one of the oldest existing cemeteries in Los Angeles. It is also one of the city's largest cemeteries, with 300,000 grave sites. City pioneers like the Workmans, Hollenbecks, and Van Nuys families are buried here as well as lesser known but equally fascinating Los Angelenos. The cemetery has a section called the Garden of the Pines, which memorializes Issei pioneers of Los Angeles. 19th century midwife Biddy Mason, a slave who earned her freedom through the California courts, is also buried here.

September 13: Saturday Gallery Exhibit - Signs of Our Times opens at the Studio. Opening Reception 4 - 9 pm.

October 1: Deadline for My Neighborhood Photo/Essay Challenge.

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Open Wednesday - Sunday
noon - 8:00 pm

