

Los Angeles City HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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STIMSON HOUSE, Once L.A.'s Most Expensive

By Don Sloper

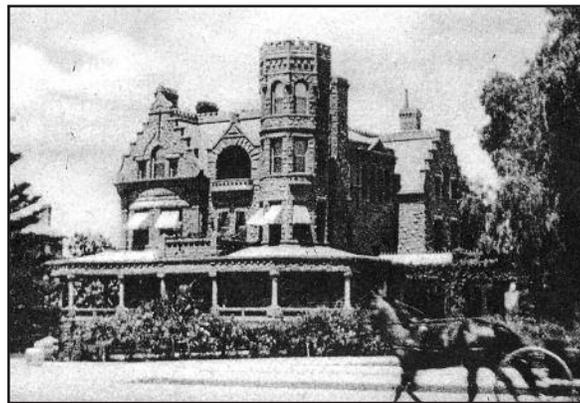
Traveling south on Figueroa Street between 23rd Street and West Adams, the Stimson House appears on the west side of the street as a throwback to a previous era. The Richardsonian Romanesque style, with a crenelated roof that gives it the appearance of a castle, is rare in Los Angeles.

Thomas D. Stimson, a self-made lumber tycoon, retired to Los Angeles in 1890 and purchased a lot among the houses of the new moneyed elite of Los Angeles who resided on Figueroa Street, to build a house reminiscent of his former Chicago neighborhood.

The 12,800-square foot home was completed in 1893 at what is now 2421 South Figueroa Street for the astounding cost of \$130,000, by far the most expensive house ever built up to that time in Los Angeles. Stimson used his extensive contacts in the lumber industry to use a variety of expensive wood in the interior. Because of a lack of craftsmen in Los Angeles, much of the interior wood work and furniture was done in Chicago and shipped to the building site.

Stimson led an active business life in retirement, completing the Stimson Block at the northeast corner of 3rd Street and Spring in 1891, which at a towering six stories became the tallest building in Los Angeles.

After Stimson's death in 1898 the home was purchased by Eddy Maier, President of Maier Brewing Company, who lived in the house from 1918 to 1940, taking advantage of the property's huge wine cellar during Prohibition.



Pi Kappa Alpha, a USC fraternity, bought the house for \$20,000 in 1940.

Annoyed by the college fraternity that owned the property behind her Chester Place mansion, Carrie Estelle Doheny, widow of oil magnet Edward Doheny, would complain about the fraternity's parties to her renter and neighbor, Rufus Von KleinSmid, president of USC (1921 to 1947).

Finally, in June, 1948 Mrs. Doheny solved her problem by buying the house for \$75,000. Seeking quiet neighbors, she had the building remodeled for use as a convent and gave title to the property to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondolet.

The Stimson House remains a convent today. In 1978 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The January, 1994 Northridge Quake caused extensive damage and the house was vacated until November, 1994. The City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Commission named the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondolet in California and the O'Leary Terasawa Partners, architects, 1996 Honorees for Historic Preservation for their work in restoring the Stimson House.

UPCOMING

2011

Tuesday, Dec. 13
ANNUAL GALA
Doheny Library

.....
2012

Saturdays, Feb. 11,
Apr. 21, June 2
Mark Taper Auditorium,
Central Library

**Los Angeles City
Historical Society
Founded 1976**

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MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

Active	\$35
Senior/Student	\$25
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Sustaining	\$85
Life (individuals)	\$500

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings Everyone.

As 2011 draws to a close I would like to thank you all for your ongoing support of LACHS. It has been a pleasure to serve as your president.

But the year isn't over yet, we still have our holiday Gala. This year we have selected the Doheny Memorial Library on the campus of the University of Southern California as our venue. We are looking forward to an exciting evening of cocktails, dinner, awards presentations, and a presentation by our featured speaker, Father Gregory Boyle, founder and director of Homeboy Industries.

At the gala we also plan to demonstrate the society's recently completed database of Los Angeles city officials from 1850 to the present. The project was made possible by funding from the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation and was completed under the project management of former boardmember and past president Hynda L. Rudd. The database was compiled by a team of data entry, research, and IT staff assembled by Hynda Rudd and has been turned over to the City Clerk's Office to be carried forward. The data base is available for use by researchers in the City Clerk's Records Management Division office and selected reports from the database are available on the City Clerk's webpage at:

<http://cityclerk.lacity.org/>

click on City Officials Historical Database New!

And prior to the gala, I hope that you can stop by our table at the Archives Bazaar, also at the USC Doheny Memorial Library on Saturday, October 22nd. LACHS and the Los Angeles City Archives will both have tables there. More information is available at the LA as Subject website at:

<http://www.laassubject.org/index.php>

Thank you all for your ongoing support of LACHS.

Todd Gaydowski,



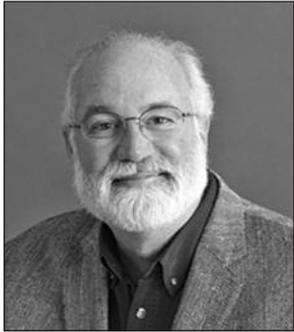
President

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Two new members, Leslie Hakala and Yale Kozinski, are particularly welcome: They expressed the desire to help at events and with the Newsletter. Volunteering is always appreciated!

Editor's Note: Material that does not cite an author is written by the editor.

FATHER GREG BOYLE TO SPEAK AT GALA



This year's December Gala will be held at USC's popular Edward L. Doheny Jr. Memorial Library on Tuesday, December 13.

Speaker following dinner will be Father Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries. The Los Angeles-born cleric has been an advocate for at-risk and gang-

involved youth in his hometown and around the world for more than 25 years. Prior to founding Homeboy Industries, he taught at Loyola High School and spent some time in Bolivia with the Christian Base Communities, and for a while was chaplain of the Islas Marias Penal Colony in Mexico, and at Folsom Prison.

He began working on his greatest achievement by creating a program at the Dolores Mission parish, "Jobs for a Future," in an effort to solve some of the problems of gang-involved youth. He launched the first step, Homeboy Bakery, in 1992 – since then he has made progress and history.

Father Boyle is the author of "Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion," which received a Southern California Indie Booksellers Association award for 2010. His speech at the Gala is about the book.

Invitations will be mailed shortly to LACHS members for the dinner, cost of which is \$50 per person to members and non-members alike.

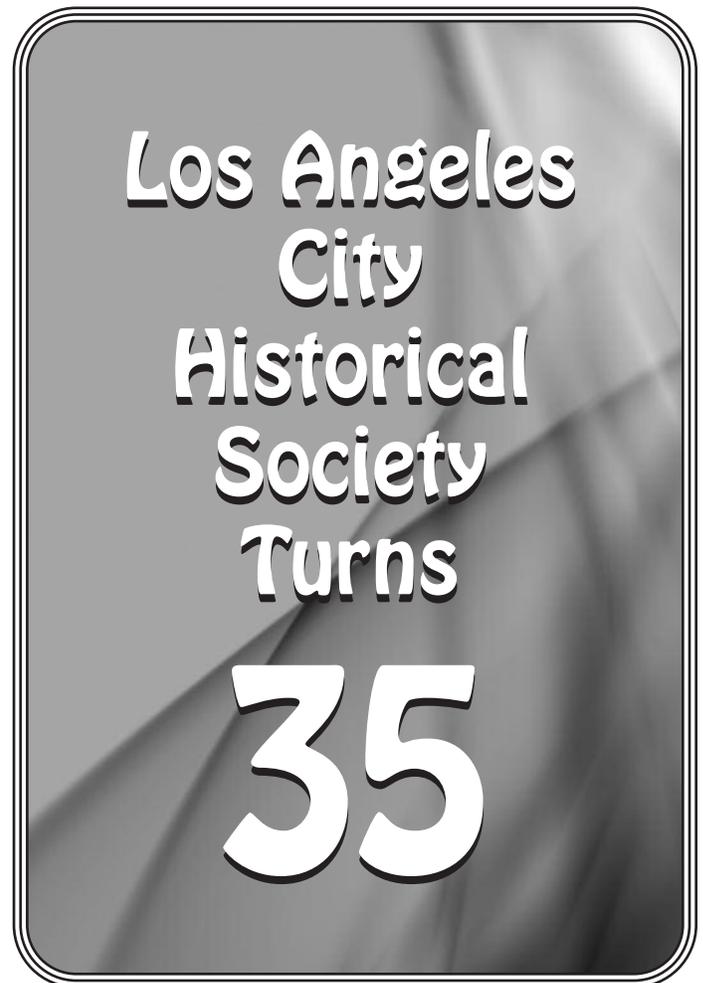
THE DAY OF THE HORSE?

As of 2011, the first Saturday of October is the "Day of the Horse" in L.A. as the L.A. City Council echoed the 2004 State Legislature declaration, in recognition of the horse's unique status in local history. Proponents assert that without the horse, our economy, history and character would be profoundly different. The Congressional Horse Caucus estimates that today's horse industry contributes over \$100 billion annually to the American economy. University of California, Davis, states that between 300,000 and one million horses are involved in the industry in the state.

ANNUAL LOS ANGELES ARCHIVES BAZAAR

LACHS is again participating in the Los Angeles Archives Bazaar, held at the Edward L. Doheny Jr. Memorial Library at USC on Saturday, October 22. Board Member Giao Luong is chair of the event, with board member, Tyson Gaskill, in charge of the total event as director of programming at USC.

Society members will help Giao man the table for the day-long event, organized by the school's L.A. as Subject program that celebrates the diversity of Southern California history. It is aimed at scholarly researchers, journalists, history buffs and anyone else interested in tales of Los Angeles. Participants represent large organizations, such as the Autry National Center of the American West, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, California African American Museum, to smaller historical societies, libraries, archives and similar entities focusing on the city's history, more than 80 in all.



MEET YOUR BOARD

DIANE KANNER

Diane Kanner is a long-time resident of Los Angeles active in the Los Feliz community where she has lived for many years. She majored in journalism at Arizona State University, receiving a Bachelor of Science. After coming to Southern California, she attended USC where she added a Master of Professional Writing.

Diane has worked as a freelance journalist, with credits in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* (for whom she worked as a reporter) and she is a regular contributor to the *Los Angeles Ledger*. She has also developed into a local historian, and has done archival work for such people as Councilmember Tom LaBonge. She is the author of several publications, notably "Wallace Neff and the Grand Houses of the Golden State." Currently, she is working on another book, "The Search for Southern California Culture: Dorothy Chandler and the Creation of the Los Angeles Music Center."

Though busy raising her two sons, Matt and Josh, she became interested in volunteer work. She has been a docent at El Pueblo State Historic Park and Frank Lloyd Wright's city-owned Hollyhock House, and an advisor to the Junior League of Los Angeles. Her main assignment as LACHS board member is as membership chairman, in addition to helping in many other areas.

KAY TORNBORG

Kay Tornborg expresses amazement at having spent her entire working life in non-profits. While an actress in New York (her birth place) she had various non-profit "job jobs." Coming to Los Angeles in the 70s, she continued her theatre work and was acting board chair of the Ensemble Studio Theatre.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Large boulders near the Hollywood sign will honor those who rescued the icon last year, donating the last funds needed to buy the property to save the sign. One of the donors honored by the Trust for Public Land is LACHS Honorary Life Member Hugh Hefner, contributor of \$1 million just before the deadline. Philanthropist Eileen Getty and the Tiffany & Co. Foundation were the others... LACHS past presidents Hynda L. Rudd and Irene Tresun, were speakers at the September 27 Conference of California

Her fund-raising experience there led to her job as western region director of what is now known as Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, in London. Following the closing of the American offices of the Globe she became personal assistant to Los Angeles philanthropist Flora L. Thornton and administrator of her foundation. After Mrs. Thornton's death in 2010, Kay continued with the Flora L. Thornton Foundation; she is currently executive director.

A life-long historic preservationist, she was president of Hollywood Heritage for three terms and has an Associate Degree in Historic Preservation from USC. Her Craftsman-style home in Hollywood is Cultural Heritage Monument #687.

ABRAHAM HOFFMAN

Though not a board member, Abe Hoffman is an integral part of LACHS as a regular contributor to this newsletter of his book reviews and frequent articles on historic L.A. He was born in L.A. and attended local public schools, graduating from Roosevelt High, then received a B.A. and an M.A. from Los Angeles State College, now California State University, Los Angeles. He earned his doctorate in History at UCLA. Dr. Hoffman taught in Los Angeles schools for more than 30 years, and has also been an adjunct instructor at Los Angeles Valley College since 1974. He serves on the board of editors for *Southern California Quarterly*, and is book editor for *Western States Jewish History*.

Dr. Hoffman has had a lifelong interest in the history of Los Angeles. His books include "Unwanted Mexican American in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939," and "Vision or Villainy: Origins of the Owens Valley-Los Angeles Water Controversy." In addition to being a member of LACHS, he belongs to the Historical Society of Southern California, Organization of American Historians, Western History Associates, Western Writers of America, and the Los Angeles Corral of Westerners.

Historical Societies Workshop at the California African American Museum. Hynda spoke on grant preparation, and your editor on editing a historical society newsletter... Honorary Life Member and councilmember, Tom LaBonge, received the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany at a ceremony in Silverlake from Wolfgang Drautz, German consul general, presented on behalf of Germany's president for "outstanding achievement in political, cultural, economic, intellectual and/or philanthropic fields."

THE STORY BEHIND USC'S CENTERPIECE

By Diane Kanner



USC's Edward L. Doheny Jr. Memorial Library was the creation of architects loyal to MIT. The tale of how they obtained the commission was told to a UCLA historian. In 1989, Samuel E. Lunden revealed the saga of how he won the master work of a six-decade long career.

"In 1931," Lunden recounted, "I became aware that Mr. and Mrs. Edward Doheny had made a \$1 million gift to USC for a library in memory of their son Bovard. As soon as I heard this, I went directly to the president of the university, Rufus B. von KleinSmid. His secretary ushered me into his office. A very kindly, gray-haired gentleman met me and asked if he could be of service. I advised him of my work with Mrs. Doheny on Saint Vincent de Paul Church with Ralph Adams Cram of Boston. I said I would like consideration in the award of the Doheny Library in association with Cram and his partner Ferguson."

Von KleinSmid, always the diplomat, was nonetheless straightforward. "You are late," he told Lunden, "because the USC board is meeting tomorrow at noon for lunch and it will make the award at that time."

Lunden shot back that it was not too late.

"Mr. Lunden," the university president responded, "if you have a written proposal in my hands by 10 tomorrow morning, we will give it consideration."

It was 5 p.m. in Los Angeles, and 8 in Boston, and Lunden rushed to his office to call the business partner of Cram and Ferguson.

"Would you like to have a million dollar project?" Lunden exclaimed. He set out his terms: Cram and Ferguson would undertake preliminary designs for 25% of the fee, and Lunden's LA office would prepare working drawings and inspect construction for the remainder. "You have my authority to submit the proposal," the business partner said.

Lunden was in the von KleinSmid office by 10 the next morning with a proposal. Four hours later, von KleinSmid called to say he and the Boston architects had won the commission.

For the \$1 million, Lunden and the general contractors managed to include all the furnishings built to order. "On completion, we had \$5,374 left," said Lunden, who seems to have remembered the figure decades and decades later. "We asked Mrs. Doheny what she wanted to do with the balance. She was so surprised and pleased. She said this was the first time they hadn't asked for more money."

"I will ask the university to build Alumni Park in front of the Library," Mrs. Doheny told him. "I will give the university another \$50,000 to design it."

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The City's River Bridges

by John E. Fisher

Bridges are sections of roadways that span over canyons, rivers, railroads and other streets. Most of us travel along or under a bridge en route to work and tend to notice just the pavement as we drive by. However, if we look at the bridge structure above us or from afar, we come to recognize that bridges are the most elegant sections of the city's roadways. This becomes apparent when we examine the bridges that span the City's two primary rivers – Arroyo Seco and the Los Angeles River.

Construction of the bridges over the Arroyo Seco and Los Angeles River was perhaps the greatest public works project ever undertaken by the city. In the two-year period, 1910-1911, three bridges were constructed to accommodate the first automobiles. They were York Boulevard over the Arroyo Seco, Buena Vista Street and North Main Street over the Los Angeles River. However, they would soon no longer be sufficient for the tremendous growth that would occur in Southern California. As a result, in the short seven-year time frame from 1925 to 1932, an amazing 15 concrete bridges were built to replace timber and less-substantial bridges. Two of these were constructed to span the Arroyo Seco (Avenue 26 and Avenue 60) and 13 were constructed to span the Los Angeles River – Riverside Drive (near Victory Boulevard), Los Feliz Boulevard, Hyperion Avenue, Fletcher Drive, Riverside Drive (near Figueroa Street), North Spring



4th Street Bridge

was 9th Street which was constructed in 1925, followed by Macy Street, 7th Street, 1st Street, 4th Street and finally 6th Street which was constructed in 1932. The others were built during the same period, but in no special sequence.

All of these bridges were of a concrete arch design. And like those in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Milwaukee and other river cities, they are among the most beautiful in the United States. While many of them have traditional Beaux Arts features, each has its own distinctive design, in terms of balustrade, towers, integrated ornamental lighting and towers, which provide a sense of grandeur. The towers for the 4th Street bridge are Gothic in design, while those for the 6th Street bridge are Art Deco. The Hyperion Avenue towers have a Spanish Revival design. The Avenue 60 bridge has a whimsical fan pattern along its balustrade. The Washington Boulevard bridge shows a “men-at-work” painting, a common theme during the Great Depression, which suggested that modern industry would lead to a more promising future. The Macy Street bridge pays tribute to Junipero Serra and integrates the City seal in its towers.



Macy Street Bridge

Street, Macy Street, 1st Street, 4th Street, 6th Street, 7th Street, 9th Street and Washington Boulevard. All of them were designed and constructed under the supervision of Merrill Butler.

Near the Downtown area the bridges were strategically sequenced for construction starting at the southern and northern extremes and finishing near the middle. The first

Several bridges no longer carry their original street names, such as Buena Vista Street (now North Broadway), Macy Street (now Cesar E. Chavez Avenue), and 9th Street (now Olympic Boulevard). Also, several no longer look historic, due to replacement of the railings and street lighting, such as the Los Feliz Boulevard and North Main Street bridges. Finally, one bridge that was modernized in the 1970's was restored in 2000 to look just as it did when it was constructed in 1911 (North Broadway).

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SISTER CITIES 55 YEARS OLD

The man with major responsibility for fighting World War II in Europe, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, is credited with creating Sister Cities International in 1956 while President of the United States.

The non-profit program was formed as a citizen diplomacy network to strengthen relations between the U.S. and communities across the world to “build global cooperation at the municipal level, promote cultural understanding and stimulate economic development.” There are over 2,000 “partners” in this undertaking today among 136 cities involving more than 2,000 cities, states and counties.

Los Angeles joined in 1959, partnering with Nagoya, Japan, and Eilat, Israel, eventually expanding to 25 Sister cities on six continents. They now include:

Athens, Greece; Auckland, New Zealand; Beirut, Lebanon; Berlin, Germany; Bordeaux, France; Busan, South Korea; Eilat, Israel; Giza, Egypt; Guangzhou, China; Ischia, Italy; Jakarta, Indonesia, Kaunas, Lithuania; Lusaka, Zambia; Maskati, Philippines; Mexico City, Mexico; Mumbai, India; Nagoya, Japan; St. Petersburg, Russia; Salvador, Brazil; San Salvador, El Salvador; Split, Croatia.

Councilmember and LACHS honorary life member, Tom LaBonge, is president of the Sister Cities of Los Angeles. On August 21, he helped celebrate the 55th anniversary of America’s Sister Cities program at The Grove at the Farmers Market, with more than 50 musicians, dancers, drummers and singers from eight of the cities putting on a spectacular show.

BARNES CITY HALL

Editor’s Note: Most of this article is copied from an unpublished book by Irene Tresun on all the city halls Los Angeles has had.

Los Angeles has several types of city halls, with various designations. The main one, the 1928 Los Angeles City Hall, is the one that comes to mind for most people, but there are also City Hall East and City Hall South, across Main Street, to accommodate the departments and employees that cannot be fitted into the 27-story building where the Los Angeles City Council meets. By definition in the City Charter, that is L.A.’s official city hall.

In addition to these three structures clustered together downtown, and offices in many parts of the city, there are buildings away from the municipal center where the public can obtain services. They differ from the former not only in location, but also purpose. Many departments have representative there specifically as a convenience, sparing the public trips downtown to deal with matters requiring face-to-face contact. Depending on the publication one reads, including official ones, they have been called city



halls, branch city halls, administrative buildings or, most commonly and recently, municipal buildings.

Some of these were city halls in communities which had been independent before becoming annexed to Los Angeles; in such cases, they usually remained as regional centers. The dates of these annexations are: San Pedro, August 28, 1909; Van Nuys, May 22, 1915; Eagle Rock, May 17, 1923; Watts, May 29, 1926; and Barnes, April 11, 1927.

Barnes ?? Never heard of it?

L.A. HIGH SCHOOL GRADS

WHAT BECAME OF THEM?

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series on the futures of some Los Angeles high school graduates.

This ISSUE: RALPH JOHNSON BUNCHE.

Los Angeles Unified School District, the second-largest in the country behind New York City, produces a large number of alumni who go on to be remarkable adults, possibly to the amazement of some. Their careers span the gamut of occupational fields. Not surprisingly considering our weather and proximity to Hollywood, the lists of achievers in sports and entertainment are long, but outstanding individuals have led the way in many other endeavors. One such person was:



Ralph J. Bunche (August 8, 1903 [possibly 1904] to December 9, 1971.) Among his achievements and honors: Valedictorian of his class at L.A.'s Jefferson High School and again at UCLA, where he graduated *summa cum laude* and a Phi Beta Kappa key, in 1927, UCLA's first four-

year graduating class; the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize for his role as mediator in the Israeli-Arab conflict; involvement in the formation and administration of the United Nations; the 1963 Presidential Medal of Honor from John F. Kennedy and that year's Medal of Freedom; the Toppan Prize for his 1930 dissertation at Harvard, as the year's best dissertation; the 1951 Silver Buffalo Award from Boy Scouts of America for his positive impact on the world; appearance on the 20¢ Postal Service stamp in the Great American series; erection of his bust at the entrance to Bunche Hall, UCLA, and the naming at the school's NAACP's Spingam Medal; the Theodore Roosevelt Association Medal of Honor, 1954; naming of the oldest federal government library after him, the Ralph J. Bunche Library of the U.S. Department of State, 1997; in 1991, he was inducted into the African American Hall of Fame; naming of sites throughout the U.S. after him, in New York, Florida, Illinois, and Michigan, among others. Scholar Molefi Kete Asante included his name on his 2002 list of 100 Greatest African Americans.

Ralph Bunche was born in Detroit, Michigan. The family moved first to Toledo, Ohio, then Albuquerque, New Mexico for his parents' health reasons. After his mother died in 1916 and his father left, Bunche and his sister, Grace, went to live with their maternal grandmother, Lucy Johnson, in the Watts area of Los Angeles. While attending Jefferson High School, Bunche worked as a paper boy for the *Los Angeles Times*, to help his grandmother financially.

Following graduation from Jefferson High School, he intended to earn his living as a carpet layer, a job he had the summer following graduation from high school. His grandmother, however, insisted he go to college, so he enrolled at the new school, to become known as UCLA.

The experience there changed his life completely. He enjoyed the world of academia, wrote for the campus paper, *The Daily Bruin*, became president of the debating society, a star basketball player, and was on the football team until he injured his leg – which a few years later kept him out of World War II.

Bunche graduated *summa cum laude* from UCLA in 1927, the first four-year graduating class, still called "Pioneer Bruins," with a degree in political science, a Phi Beta Kappa key, as class valedictorian, and he delivered a commencement address.

Following UCLA, he attended Harvard on a scholarship, receiving a master's degree in political science and a doctorate in 1934, while teaching political science at Howard University. He then spent two years of postdoctoral work at the London School of Economics and the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

His connection with the world of academia remained strong throughout his life. He chaired the Department of Political Science at Howard University, 1928 to 1950, taught at Harvard for two years, was a member of the New York City Board of Education for six, member of Harvard's Board of Overseers for five, and a trustee of Oberlin College, Lincoln University and New Lincoln School.

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NEW LOOK FOR LACHS WEBSITE

by John Jackson

The LACHS launched a new website in May. If you haven't been to our page in a while, stop what you are doing right now, go to a computer, and take a look: <http://lacityhistory.org>

This new site brings together the collaborative efforts of members Giao Baker, Tyson Gaskill, Todd Gish, John Jackson, and Kathy Kolnick. On it, you will find information about the history of LACHS, a list of upcoming events, photos from previous events, a collection of resources for exploring L.A. history, a list of our publications, and details about membership. In the coming year, we also hope to add LACHS merchandise and a digital archive of past publications.

Each month, we will bring you new content, including a "Member Highlight" section, which interviews a new LACHS member each month, and a "Monthly Highlight" section, which focuses on a special resource, archive, publication, or local event. LACHS also has a blog (<http://lacityhistory.org/blog/>) to keep you informed about upcoming society events and happenings around town.

If you have any recommendations for L.A. history resources or want to be featured in our "Member Highlight" column (or suggest someone else), contact John Jackson at web.admin@lacityhistory.org.

The City's River Bridges

Continued from page 6

There are many other smaller bridges throughout the city that look nearly as attractive as the ones mentioned here. But none exemplify the vision, aspiration, pride and beauty of an emerging major city more than the bridges spanning the Arroyo Seco and the Los Angeles River.

L.A. HIGH SCHOOL GRADS WHAT BECAME OF THEM?

Continued from page 8

Not being able to enter the armed forces during WW II due to his college leg injury, he served with the OSS, precursor of the CIA, joined the State Department in 1943, and played a role at the San Francisco Conference of 1945 in preliminary planning for the formation of the United Nations, following a similar assignment in Washington, D.C. at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, 1944. He helped draft the United Nations Charter, and with Eleanor Roosevelt, was instrumental in creating and adopting the UN Declaration of Human Rights.



Bunche with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

Bunche spent 25 years with the United Nations in various capacities. He succeeded his boss, Sweden's Count Folke Bernadotte (principal secretary of the UN Palestine Commission)

following the latter's assassination in 1948, as chief mediator. It was for this work that he received the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1968, he achieved the high honor of becoming the Undersecretary-General of the UN, a position he held with distinction until his death in 1971.

Among his many other activities was his participation in the civil rights movement of the day. He attended the 1963 March on Washington where Martin Luther King gave his famous "I have a dream" speech, and took part in the Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, march that eventually resulted in the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

He married one of his students at Howard, Ruth Ethel Harris, in 1934, a marriage that produced three children and lasted until his death.

Ralph Bunche was the author of several books, many articles and special publications, mostly centering around his views of the African American in the U.S. In 2003, in honor of one of its most distinguished alumni, UCLA dedicated the whole year to the Ralph Bunche Centenary celebration in honor of the year of his birth.

Friends of the Los Angeles City Archives

LOS ANGELES'S FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD AN 1847 COUNCIL DECISION

by Hynda L. Rudd



El Pueblo, the “Plaza,” was the first neighborhood in the city of Los Angeles. This neighborhood had three sites in its history dating back to 1781, when Felipe de Neve, New Spain’s governor of California, selected a site and named it *El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles sobre el Rio de la Porciuncula*. That year 44 settlers came on September 4th to the site that became home, not far from the Native American settlement of Yangna. Around 1815, when the population was between 300 to 400 people, the Plaza suffered from an earthquake and flooding and moved northwest to a site closer to the present location. Between 1825-1830, when the population grew to 770, the Plaza moved to its present site.

Los Angeles had officially become a city in 1835. Between 1781-1850, the governing body for Los Angeles was Spanish, then Mexican. During 1847, the Mexican Council, known as the *Ayuntamiento*, made decisions based on government needs to change the design of the first official neighborhood in the city of Los Angeles. The historical records of the governing body come from a translation of the original Mexican records. Both are found in the Los Angeles City Archives. It should be noted that many of the names in these records, and their descendents, have become influential, many times over, in the history of Los Angeles.

“A Special Meeting of August 25, 1847... Council-man Gallardo stated that he had asked for a special meeting of Council in order to lay before it the following facts: “Gentlemen: The Committee of which I am Chairman is unable to arrive at a final decision because of the opinion of the experts, Messrs. Esteban Munoz and Nicolas Feliz, it is necessary to square the ‘Plaza,’

wherefore I beg the Honorable Council to duly weigh this necessity and authorize the Committee accordingly to make that square more true, the Committees on Police and Streets co-operating for the protection of their respective dispositions..”

After much discussion and further *Ayuntamiento* meetings it was decided that the four walls of the Plaza should be uniform and square. Finally, the matter was adopted by the Council, The Syndic (City Attorney) made a motion that the plan by the Special Committee be made part of the proceedings and that the following proposition be carried out. The *Alcalde* (Mayor) and the Syndic were included in the Special Committee.

“The Syndic next called attention to the filthy condition of the zanja and submitted the following proposition. “The undersigned member of your Honorable Body respectfully submits that the principal canal of the City needs cleaning out in certain portions where there is an accumulation of dirt and rotten stuff, wherefore he prays that tomorrow you address an official communication to the Water Overseer directing him to take such prisoners as are under arrest for light offenses and make them remove all the filth which is doing so much injury to the Town. And they can also make use of my yoke of oxen, which I hereby make known.”

Whereupon Council adjourned and signed by the above Councilmen from the previous meeting.”

The plan for the reconstructed “Plaza” can be found in the City Archives, Box B-1367, Vol. 4 (1835-1852), folder 2, page 548, written in red ink.

BRINGING MODERN ART TO LOS ANGELES: GALKA SCHEYER AND THE BLUE FOUR

by Eddy S. Feldman

One of the wonderful cultural assets of the Los Angeles area is the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena (not Los Angeles City - but close). It is justly famous for the breathtaking collection of pre-20th century art assembled by that collector extraordinaire, Norton Simon.



Galka Schyer and the Blue Four.

When Simon's foundation took over the building, grounds and artworks owned by The Pasadena Museum of Modern Art at the corner of Colorado Boulevard and Orange Grove in 1974, it also acquired another breathtaking collection, "The Blue Four Galka E. Scheyer Collection," said to be the world's largest collection of artworks by Lyonel Feininger (New York, 1871-1956), Alexei Jawlensky (Koslovso, Russia, 1864-1941), Wasilly Kandinsky (Moscow, 1866-1944) and Paul Klee (Bern, 1879-1940).

This group of four 20th-century artists of the *avant garde* led, among other artists, to public acceptance of the notion that not all great art had to be representational art.

Emilie Ester Scheyer was born in Braunschweig, Germany in 1897. Her parents, who owned a successful canning factory, were able to support Emilie's studies of painting, music and languages in Switzerland, France and England. (She became proficient in English at Oxford University.)

While in Switzerland in 1916 she saw Jawlensky's paintings, "The Hunchback" and "Variations;" she was overwhelmed and asked the artist when they met, "Why should I go on painting when I know I can't produce such good art as you? It's better that I dedicate myself to your art and explain it to others."

Scheyer became Jawlensky's private secretary and promoter of his work. She also received commissions on whatever she sold. Jawlensky called her "Galka," Russian for blackbird, after she appeared to him in a dream. The nickname stuck.

Through Jawlensky she met Klee in Munich, and Kandinsky and Feininger at the Bauhaus in Weimar, Germany.

Post World War I Europe was not much of a market for the abstract art which these gentlemen produced. With prodding by Scheyer, they pulled themselves together in 1924 as "The Blue Four," with Galka as their emissary, to sell their products to the wealthy but unsophisticated "art lovers" in the United States.

However, New York sales were disappointing, so the irrepressible Galka took off the next year for the San Francisco Bay area. There she met everybody who was anybody in the art world and inserted herself in the middle of the heated conflict between traditionalists and modernists. As the Blue Four's "Minister of the Exterior" she arranged exhibitions of their work at Stanford University, Mills College and the Oakland Art Gallery, and lectured to those who would listen on the "spiritual significance" of modern art. During the next several years she traveled the West Coast from Seattle to Los Angeles (with a stop in Mexico City where she spent time with Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo and David Siqueros) and arranged two exhibitions at the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art in Exposition Park in 1926 and 1932.

In 1930, she permanently settled in Los Angeles and wrote to her clients, "Farewell San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley. Hello Hollywood (Will I end up a movie star after all?)." Not being an art dealer herself, Scheyer teamed up with local dealers in modern art, Harry Braxton and Earl Stendahl, and began introducing film celebrities to her "Four Kings."

Scheyer moved into architect Rudolph Schindler's home at 835 Kings Road and became a United States citizen, "Galka E. Scheyer," that same year. Wanting her own place to serve both as residence and showplace for art, she bought with such savings as she was able to set aside a lot

Continued on page 12

BRINGING MODERN ART TO LOS ANGELES *Continued from page 11*



Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena

on top of a hill in an undeveloped area in Hollywood at 1880 Blue Heights Drive. Richard Neutra was the architect. Those who made the difficult drive could listen to Scheyer talk about the philosophy of modern art while viewing the works of the Blue Four which decorated her walls, most of which she purchased for herself.

“The haute volé all come. I have become the rage! And there they all sit, crooning – the millionaires and the film celebrities. How interesting! But, what matter to me? Kindling a small flicker of light in one soul or another. So I do my best, which is most sacred to me, each and every time, nonetheless to see the unique and unusual ‘me,’ and my house, and to be able to say ‘they were there.’ ”

Scheyer endured her share of illnesses and in 1944 she was diagnosed with cancer. The prospect of impending death intensified her exertions to hold the collection together. She joined with her friends, the prominent collectors of modern art, Walter and Louise E. Arensberg, in a proposal to leave their collections with UCLA. When UCLA opted not to participate, the Arensbergs donated their collection to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Taking a different course, Scheyer, in her will, named a committee, including Milton Wichner, her attorney, executor and also a collector of modern art, to decide where the collection should go. The “charismatic ambassador of modernism” died on December 13, 1945. The committee in 1951 decided that the collection should go to the Pasadena Institute which was eventually renamed the Pasadena Art Museum and in 1973 renamed the Pasadena Museum of Modern Art.

In spite of Scheyer’s energetic, unceasing and sometimes irritating efforts to build a substantial audience for modern art while she was still alive, and in spite of critical support for the works of her charges, not much of a market developed here, nor in the rest of the country, for that matter. However, attitudes began to change when, in 1954, the Alien Property Custodian, who was authorized

by law to go after all property belonging to our enemies in World War II, seized all of Jawlensky’s and Klee’s works which Scheyer had held on consignment and which were stashed away at the Pasadena Art Museum. The custodian arranged an appraisal (apparently by the well-known art dealer Dalzell Hatfield), gave notice in the press of place and date of his intended auction and requested bids. At the auction held on September 26, at the Museum, Landau Gallery, for example, recognized the trend to the modernists and purchased 46 Jawlensky paintings for a mere \$1,190! They sold readily even after a hefty markup. In his memoir written in 1982, Landau recalled that “over the lean years it was [sales of the Jawlenskys] which pulled me out each time disaster seemed imminent.” Today acceptance is complete and prices are astronomical.

It was not Galka Scheyer’s objective in her life to acquire financial wealth. So we need not be disturbed that hers was not a life of surpassing luxury. Rather, the residents of this “Art Capital of the World” should enjoy her generous gifts unstintingly. This is what she wanted. In the fourth paragraph of her will she wrote, “I have dedicated my life and think it is my duty to dedicate the result to the public.”

NOTE: In the preparation of this article, I am much indebted to assistance from the staffs of the Norton Simon Museum, the Getty Research Institute, archivists Brett Arena of the Farmers Market and Cathy McNassor of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, from Robert Landau, and from consummate scholar of this period, Gregory Hahn.

ADDITIONS TO LIST OF MUSEUMS

Carolyn Schoff, president of Friends of Pio Pico, support group for Pio Pico State Historic Park, asked your editor to add the park to our list of museums. Both attended the Conference of California Historical Societies Workshop last month. . . The newest member of the LACHS Board of Directors, Kay Tornborg, notes that “The Barn” on Highland Avenue and the Hollywood Heritage Museum, are one and the same. . . And finally, the *Park La Brea News/Beverly Press* had an item in its October 21 issue about the Zimmer Children’s Museum on Wilshire Boulevard and the Sports Museum of Los Angeles, at 1900 S. Main Street, neither one of which was in our article.

We thank all for the input.

WILSHIRE, CORRIDOR OF RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

Wilshire Boulevard, one of the main streets of commerce in Los Angeles, is also home to a large number of houses of worship, small and large, representing many of the major religions of the world – but also some of the least known.

When Wilshire Christian Church was built in 1911 at Wilshire Boulevard and Normandie Avenue, on land donated by the Chapman Brothers, it was the first church on the boulevard, from downtown Los Angeles to the ocean. The Chapman name, incidentally, became well established in the area, with the beautiful nearby-Chapman Park Hotel on Wilshire Boulevard and the Chapman Building and Chapman Market at 6th Street. The hotel is long gone, but the office building and the first drive-through market are still there, and listed as Los Angeles Historic/Cultural Monuments.

Today, buildings dedicated to religious worship are strung along the length of the boulevard and within a couple of blocks north and south, all the way to the city of Santa Monica:

- Korean Philadelphia Presbyterian Church (originally Temple Sinai East), on New Hampshire near 4th St.
- The Los Angeles Korean Methodist Church (originally a Christian Science congregation), 4th St. and Normandie.
- Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Wilshire & Berendo.
- First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, 6th and Commonwealth.
- St. James Episcopal Church, Wilshire and St. Andrews.
- First Baptist Church of Los Angeles, 8th and Westmoreland.

- St. Basil's Catholic Church, Wilshire and Kingsley.
- Founder's Church of Religious Science, 3281 W. 6th St.
- Wilshire Boulevard Temple, 3663 Wilshire.
- The Islamic Center of Southern California, 434 S. Vermont.
- Christian Science Church, 3435 Wilshire.
- University Bible Church, 10801 Wilshire.
- Sephardic Temple Tifereth, 10500 Wilshire.
- Wilshire Grace Church, 5220 Wilshire.
- Los Angeles Open Door Presbyterian Church, 3300 Wilshire.
- Pilgrim Lutheran Church, 1730 Wilshire.
- Oasis Christian Church, 5100 Wilshire.
- Wilshire United Methodist Church, 4350 Wilshire.
- Westwood Presbyterian Church, 10822 Wilshire.
- Wilshire Christian Church, Wilshire and Normandie.
- St. Brendan's Church, 310 S. Van Ness Blvd.
- Servant Church. 2975 Wilshire.
- Westwood United Methodist Church, 10497 Wilshire.

(All of the above in Los Angeles)

- Loving Torah Center, 1130 Wilshire, Santa Monica
- Church of Scientology, 2716 Wilshire, Santa Monica.
- St. Monica's Catholic Church, 1032 Wilshire, Santa Monica.

USC'S CENTERPIECE

Continued from page 5

Lunden selected A. E. Hanson to design the park. Hanson had designed landscaping for Palos Verdes, where Lunden resided. On September 12, 1932, the library was dedicated. In 1967, Lunden oversaw an addition which doubled its capacity. In the 1980's, he oversaw the installation of a new heating and air conditioning system. In 1985, Lunden sold

his practice but he continued working as a consultant. His obituary appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on June 16, 1995. He was 97. Additional projects included the Pacific Stock Exchange on Spring Street, the 1928 wing of the Biltmore Hotel, and the correctional institution in East Los Angeles, the Dorothy Kirby Center.

RENEW MEMBERSHIP, GET SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY!

by Diane Kanner

On January 22 and 29, 2012, former LACHS president Danny Muñoz will welcome renewing members to his Angeleno Heights Victorian residence where they will visit his Los Angeles history-themed library. The Muñoz Library was described by the Getty Research Institute in a reference book, "Los Angeles as Subject." If you renew, and decide to attend, look forward to seeing—

Books on the history of Los Angeles County, newspaper articles from Echo Park and other neighborhoods and cities in the county regarding hospitals, transportation, and many other subjects. City of Los Angeles Directories from 1887-1940, photographs, architecture books, children's books by Leo Politi, quarterlies from historical societies, social club booklets, maps, obituaries, 1886 Register of Voters of Los Angeles County, real estate atlas surveys of Los Angeles 1903-1923, panorama photos, many rare books.

Muñoz lives in the Angeleno Heights Historical Preservation Overlay Zone where he serves on the design review board. The home he shares with his partner, David Hiovich, is known as the Koster-Miller residence of 1895. The two collect art by such Los Angeles-based artists as Carlos Almarez, Frank Ramero, Leo Politi and Paul Landacre.

The visit will be by reservation only. In addition to the membership application in this newsletter, a letter seeking renewal will be sent in the U.S. mails this month. Once LACHS has received confirmation of your 2012 dues, you may choose to attend in the afternoon of Jan. 22 or 29.



*Danny Munoz holding one of his many city directories.
Photo by Michael Locke*

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W E A R E K O O B

BOYLE HEIGHTS: *Recollections and Remembrances of the Boyle Heights Jewish Community in Los Angeles, 1920s-1960s*, edited by Abraham Hoffman. Los Angeles:

Western States Jewish History, 2011. 323 pp. Map, illustrations, Index. Paper, \$25 + \$3/50 p/h. Order from Western States Jewish History, 22711 Cass Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91364.

by Hynda L. Rudd

This retrospective anthology of Jewish Boyle Heights from the 1920s through the 1960s is only one of many ethnic histories of this eastern Los Angeles community dating back to the early years of the Pueblo de Los Angeles on the east side of the Los Angeles River where there was a mesa known as Paredon Blanco or White Bluff. The first Anglo to have lived there was Andrew A. Boyle from 1858. Boyle operated a vineyard and winery there. Boyle Heights was eventually named after him by his son-in-law, William H. Workman, in 1876, who became mayor of the City of Los Angeles twice, from 1886-1888, two one-year terms.

Possibly the largest ethnic migration to Boyle Heights was the Jews. According to some historians, the Jewish population in that area in the 1940s was 35,000, compared to the Mexican population of 15,000. Other ethnic groups, including the Japanese, made up the remaining population of Boyle Heights. Why did this broad ethnic occurrence happen? Other areas in Los Angeles suffered from what was known as "restrictive covenants," clauses found in deeds that stated only whites could purchase certain property. Many builders were known to include these covenants in new subdivisions. Existing areas would protect their neighborhoods by property owners working together to create the restrictions against non-Caucasians. For reasons unknown to this reviewer, Boyle Heights was free from these restrictions.

The Jews began arriving in Boyle Heights in the early 1920s. This is during the time period of this volume, *Boyle Heights: Recollections and Remembrances of the Boyle Heights Jewish Community in Los Angeles, 1920s-1960s*. The Jews of the area participated in all forms of community activity. They saw Boyle Heights as an area where all ethnic, religious, and political groups could become energized and participate. The Jews of Boyle Heights were working-class Jews, as opposed to their prestigious elite Westside Jewish brethren. The "Eastern Jews"

opened many businesses, i.e., Canter Brothers Delicatessen, Zellman's Men's Wear, Phillips Music Company, Leader's Barbershop, Gold's Gym, and Karz Plumbing. Many, if not most of those establishments, were found on Brooklyn Avenue, now Cesar Chavez Avenue.

The religion of the East European Jewry has been the mainstay of Jewish life. Supposedly, there were about 25 synagogues in the Boyle Heights area. The most famous is the Breed Street Shul (synagogue), also known as Congregation Talmud Torah at 247 Breed Street, that remains to this day. There are actually two separate synagogues, one behind the other. The first was built in 1915, the second in 1923. In 1927, the first talkie, Al Jolson's movie *The Jazz Singer*, included scenes filmed there.

By the late 1940s many Jews left Boyle Heights. One reason was because of a 1948 Supreme Court Decision, *Shelley vs. Kramer*, a case that ended racial and religious restrictions in home sales. Prior to the 1948 court decision, Jews were often considered non-white Caucasians. By the 1960s only elderly Jews remained in Boyle Heights.

Within the confines of the above history is found humanity, humility, and a characterization of real people who lived, loved, worked, played and lovingly described their experiences with friends, family, religious institutions, school, and above all life in Boyle Heights. This anthology, with index, touches on all aspects of Jewish life in Boyle Heights during a 40-year period. The collection is divided into three areas: the first section, "Documents and Articles," covers the years 1924 through 1957. Topics included are: school issues; a music settlement; a 1935 study of ghettos; Jewish religious institutions; and even a 1911 President's Report from the Boyle Height's Kaspare Cohn Hospital, the precursor to Cedar Sinai Hospital. The second section, "Recollections of Boyle Heights," has seventeen in-depth chapters of life experiences in this marvelous, colorful Jewish community. And the third section, "Remembrances of Boyle Heights," offers 67 witty, charmingly written stories by people who remember their individual experiences in Boyle Heights. Many photographs, mainly previously unpublished, are included. The volume is a near-modern cultural/religious step back in time in a community within the city of Los Angeles. It is a worthwhile read for all Angelenos. It is history at its best, edited by Abraham Hoffman, a native-born member of the Boyle Heights Jewish family.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Los Angeles City

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The speaker and date for the December Gala are:

Father Gregory Boyle of Homeboy Industries

December 13, 2011.

His subject:

“Tattoos on the Heart”

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!