

# Land boom hits NE <sup>9/4/75</sup> area—90 yrs. ago

By Roger Swanson

(Editor's note: The following is one in a series of feature stories about Northeast Los Angeles that will be published between now and July 4, 1976, the nation's 200th birthday.)

Ninety years ago the United States was well into its second century, already having established itself as a growing power among nations.

The wealth and culture of the country was still largely centered on the east coast where people considered anything west of the Mississippi River as unsettled wasteland and was best left ignored.

Los Angeles was the west coast's boom town.

As more and more people were attracted to the city, they looked to the suburbs where they hoped to find a suitable place to put down roots.

Many of them came to Northeast Los Angeles.

## FEW HOMES

In the August 10, 1933 edition of the Highland Park News-Herald, Charles A. Elder described life in Highland Park in 1885. He wrote:

"In 1885, Highland Park consisted of just a few ranch houses scattered along the Arroyo Seco Valley. A narrow dusty road now known as Pasadena Avenue, North Figueroa Street and Mar-

mion Way from the library east, ran from Los Angeles to the new town of Pasadena.

"The road ran down into the Arroyo Seco lowlands and crossed the stream on a small wooden bridge which washed out every time we had a freshet.

"The Arroyo Seco was then a rushing mountain stream, with lots of real water in it. I have seen many people fishing in it and catching fish, too. This was before Pasadena took the water for its domestic use.

"The first real start of this section was in 1886, when Ralph Rogers laid out the town of Garvanzo (the last letter was later changed to "a") and built a palatial hotel at North Avenue 62 and Pasadena Avenue. This hotel was a popular aristocratic resort for years but was torn down some years ago and a bungalow court and flats built on its site.

## MILLER'S HALL

"Miller's Hall was built in 1887, and still stands on the north side of Pasadena Avenue, near Avenue 64. (Miller's Hall was torn down in 1959 — Editor). It was the social center of the district for years. Several stores were built at North Avenue 64 and Pasadena Avenue which became the business center of the whole district.

"On the east bank of the Arroyo, opposite Garvanzo, was the boom town of Lincoln Park. Only one store building still remains. A palatial home was built at 5019 Pasadena Avenue which still stands. A blacksmith shop was on the corner of North Avenue 61 and Pasadena Avenue and still does business there. There was a general store on Pasadena Avenue near North Avenue 57.

(Figueroa Street was originally named Pasadena Avenue as was the section of what is now York Blvd. from Figueroa to the South Pasadena border — Editor.)

"One of the first houses was built by O.A. Daman, father of Mrs. Charles Elder, in a walnut orchard on the corner of North Avenue 65 and Repton Street. The grove was cut up into lots and built on and only three of the fine old trees are still living.

## SHOW PLACE

"Pasadena Avenue from about Ave. 20 to about 45 was the show place of Los Angeles, having many fine old mansions on it. An elevated bicycle path started at the business center of Pasadena and came as far as Highland Park, headed for Los Angeles, but the collapse of the boom in 1893 put it out of business.

"The first Sunday school was started in August of 1886 on Pasadena Avenue near North Avenue 63 with 12 pupils. Tom Fellows was a teacher and he cap-

tured the young la-  
melodion player and theirs  
was the first wedding.

"Bee raising was common and at Monte Vista Street and North Ave. 54 there was a big field of wormwood which the bees fed on and it gave the honey a peculiar taste which made it unfit to sell. One enterprising bee owner got an idea. He advertised medicated honey and soon was selling his and his neighbors' honey at fancy prices.

## BUSINESS

"In 1889 the finest business building was built of brick at the corner of Avenue 64 and Pasadena Avenue. Its completion was a great event. It is still there.

"The first transportation was horseback; then came the carriage, then a ramshackle stage from Los Angeles to Pasadena. Then Ralph Rogers built a dummy line with a wobbly dummy engine and an open small car.

"It was a failure and the Pasadena and Los Angeles Railroad took it over. It is now the Pacific Electric. That was in 1895 or 1896.

"In 1885 a large piece of acreage west of Monte Vista Street sold for 15 cents an acre. Then the boom struck us and land soared. In 1888 came the collapse, but in each of the eight booms the prices of land always went higher than in the preceding boom. It will do so again."