

"UPTOWN"  
Los Angeles  
through the years

A  
History  
of  
Highland Park

by  
Evelyn Byard

## HIGHLAND PARK

When you are asked, "Where do you live?", do you reply Highland Park? Let us recall some of the things that make your reply so interesting.

Highland Park is only six miles from the Civic Center of Los Angeles with nice homes, apartments, stores of all kinds to satisfy our needs. And very nice people.

We are told that the Chumash Indians lived here and in 1784 after the followers of Father Serra had journeyed over California, Jose Marie Verdugo, a sergeant of the guard at San Gabriel Mission with 15 soldiers under him, asked the Mexican Governor for the property now known as San Rafael Rancho, which stretched from the Los Angeles River where it meets the Arroyo Seco to what is now called Devil's Gate Dam and west to Burbank which consisted of 36,403 acres. It was granted on condition that he raise a large amount of stock, build a durable house and provide wheat and maize for the general good. To thresh his grain he used oxen to trample it. He raised grapes, pears, red peppers, figs, pomegranates, peaches, apples, limes and citrus. On this property he hunted grizzly bears, deer, antelope, wild horses and mountain lions.

After the Americans claimed the land, his title was confirmed in 1857. We must remember that the ranchos had to be self-contained, that is, they had to have many people living on them and to be able to make most of the things needed to include candle making, baking, cooking, sewing, tailoring, hide tanning, care of all the animals.

His property was deeded to his son Julio and daughter Catalina, but as they needed money they borrowed on the property and the interest was so high, sometimes as high as 24% a year, that portions of the Rancho were sold to 31 different people to raise money. A Captain Jesse D. Hunter bought part of Mt. Washington. He made the first bricks in a kiln and the first brick building at 3rd and Main and the first jail, later displayed at the Lyons Pony Express Museum in Arcadia, and the inmate there was a large stuffed Grizzly Bear about 7 feet tall.

Then Mrs. Tempe Sarah Rogers of Denton County, Texas in 1890, collected 100 families and started for California. They had 100 oxen and 300 steers which were crazed by the scent of water and stampeded at the Pecos River and were lost in the quick sand. The families killed enough buffalo and game for their needs en-route. At one point in the journey the scouts rounded up the wagons ready for battle with the supposed Indians which proved to be giant cactus. It took them six months to arrive in California.

In 1871 the Highlands were leased by Don and Dona Miquel Goldaracena for pasturage for sheep. Two sons of Mrs. Rogers, Ralph and Edward started the Garvanza Land Company.

In 1885 the railroad came and the bridge across the Arroyo was built. Later to become the Santa Fe. At one time the fare from Missouri to L.A. was \$1.00 and many Easterners took advantage of the fact and remained here. The only building remembered by those who rode the Los Angeles to Pasadena Mail stage was a slaughter house where now stands the Highland Park Ebell Clubhouse. A school was started in Miller's Hall then the people agreed that a public reading room was needed. They voted to deny themselves the enjoyments of amusements for a year and with the savings built a community library. Mrs. Dexter donated the flour for the wall paper, Mrs. Lindsay donated chairs, and Mrs. Stewart pictures and a stereoscope with many views. So the first branch library was built on Highlands property. There was in this community an able editor of the Garvanza Gazette, Mr. Hogaboom.

The Rogers brothers donated 95 acres of land in the York Valley to Occidental College then located off Figueroa and Avenue 50. The first home built in the Highlands was that of Andrew Glassell, Jr. between Avenue 64 and Avenue 65. Botanists counted over 180 different kinds of wildflowers, poppy, paint brush, garbanzo and others.

In 1898 The Highlands was annexed by Los Angeles, because the people of the Highlands needed the support of the Los Angeles police for the bawdy houses located at Sycamore Grove and the day after the papers were signed the police arrived and set fire to the houses taking the situation in hand at once. The Northeast Police Station was built in 1925.

Charles Fletcher Lummis walked from Ohio in 143 days, about 3500 miles at about 30 miles a day. He became City Editor of the Times and later City Librarian. He built his home at 123 E. Ave. 43 out of rocks from the Arroyo, which is now open to the public, and is the office of the Southern California Historical Society. We now have Heritage Square, Lummis Home, Ramona Parlour of the Native Sons of the Golden West, The Casa de Adobe and the Southwest Museum. He coined the phrase "See America First". He wrote some 20 books and was the editor of the Land O Sunshine.

Property was selling for \$350 to \$400 a lot at this time. A very important marker is on the second step of the John C. Holland Auditorium at Franklin High School - it is a Bench mark from which all property in this area is marked.

In 1906 the street now known as Figueroa Street, one of the Big Red Car Routes, was called Pasadena Avenue and before that it was Grasshopper Street.

In 1909 a cable car was built up Avenue 43 on Mt. Washington, this was to take people up to the posh Mt. Washington Hotel. There were two cars, the Florence and the Virginia, the conductor would ride up on one collecting the fares, and when the two cars met he would jump across and collect the fares going down the hill. The property is now owned by the Self-Realization Fellowship. The waiting room is still standing at the intersection of Avenue 43 and Marmion Way but is now a private residence.

In the early days, Highland Park had a water shortage. The Garvanza Improvement Association transported water to nourish the trees by horse drawn wagon. The first power pole in the City's municipal electric system was installed amid fanfare, May 30, 1916 at the corner of North Figueroa and Piedmont Sts. and the marker is still there. Also the Water & Power installed the 2nd Distribution Station at the corner of Avenue 60 and Monte Vista. John C. Holland and his wife Alice drove from Stanford to Highland Park in a horse and buggy. He started the Holland Electric and later became our City Councilman.

We have over 50 churches, the Church of the Angels, started in 1887 by Mrs. Alexander Robert Campbell Johnston in honor of her husband. St. Luke's United Methodist Church built in 1907. St. Ignatius Church was built in 1911. Highland Park Presbyterian in 1898, now Faith United Presbyterian.

We have many businesses that have been here a long time. Mrs. Katherine Ivers and her sister Mrs. MacNamara opened in 1913. In 1921 Arthur Curtis, Electrical: Security Bank opened its doors August 8, 1922, Sparkletts Water in 1923, Arroyo State Bank in 1925 now the Highland Federal Savings, Bank of America in 1927, Fosselman's in 1928, Cortland's in 1929, Boy's Market opened in 1939 by the five brothers Joe, Al, Eddie, Max, and Bunny Goldstein at Avenue 56 and Monte Vista - an open air market at that time. The boys had to stand on a crate to reach the register.

In 1914 tremendous floods washed houses down the Arroyo and no trains ran for a week.

Dr. Moore, the first principal of Franklin High had the motto "In the Days of Our Youth" was criticized for not completing the quotation but he said that was all he wanted it to say.

The WPA built the Arroyo Seco Parkway in 1935 at a cost of \$7 million dollars and finished it in 1940. It is now known as the Pasadena Freeway and was the first freeway.

To those interested in the activities of our community, we have two Chamber of Commerces that meet monthly. A Co-ordinating Council was started in 1934. Many Real Estate brokers. We also have a Kiwanis Club, Optimist Club, Breakfast Optimist Club, Rotary Club, Blend (Business for Law Enforcement in Northeast District), Lace (Ladies Assisting Cops Enthusiastically). The Seniors have many clubs, the first one started by Mrs. Irving Angel in 1960, the Wednesday morning Club, the Ebell Club which started in 1903, The Northeast Symphony Association which directs the Highland Park Symphony Orchestra and gives four free concerts a year at the John C. Holland Auditorium at Franklin High School. It was started by Mrs. Helen Cordell Terzo, Dr. Clarence Lamb, Dr. J. Arthur Lewis, Chester Perry, and Earle Voorhies and the many interested people of Highland Park.

We hope that you will join in our Community Activities and be pleased to say "I live in Highland Park."

Respectfully,  
Evelyn E. Byard

## **DO YOU REMEMBER**

- The foot bridge across the Arroyo at Hermon and Avenue 57?
- The Ice House at Ave. 59 and Piedmont?
- The Blacksmith Forge?
- The Rock Crusher where the So. Pasadena Golf Course is now?
- The Soap Box Derby on Avenue 52 in 1952?
- The old swimming Pool where the Adult Center is now?
- The Camp Meetings every Sunday at Avenue 66 & Monterey Road?
- The Community Sing at Sycamore Grove summer nights?
- The Red Cars dropping mail at the Post Office?
- The watering trough for horses at Sycamore Grove?
- The Poppies on Poppy Peak?
- The snow in Highland Park - January 9, 1949 and 1933?
- The Bicycle Highway from the center of Pasadena to the L.A. River along Wheeling Way?
- The Union Pacific Railway of the Salt Lake Line that went over the bridge on York?
- The restaurant known as Chili Ville?
- The Mannings Coffee Shop?

Written at the behest of Arthur K. Snyder, Councilman 14th Councilmanic District.

With due credit to my Councilwoman Mrs. Peggy Stevenson of the 13th Councilmanic District.

Evelyn E. Byard

On August 8, 1904 Evelyn was born in Boston, Massachusetts. She arrived in California in 1923 settling here permanently.

Subsequently raising 6 (six) children and has done well by all of them. She has lived in Highland Park since 1945. She has served her community in many ways i.e. PTA president of two schools, Secretary, Parliamentarian and Historian.

A member of the Ebell Club, Highland Park Symphony, Highland Park Co-Ordinating Council and other organizations. Serving her community whenever asked to do so. She is a doer and organizer of some repute with the local business men and women. She has also been affiliated with LAPD Daps, De Molay and Jobs Daughters.

In short a great gal and a good friend to all who know her.

With love and devotion, her daughters,  
Bertha, Liz, and Jan.

May 1979



# Larry & Wanda Hatler

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