

STAINED GLASS STUDIO — The Judson Studios, stained glass manufacturer which is now a Highland Park historical monument, is celebrating the 75th anniversary of its founding in an alley off the Los Angeles Plaza in 1897.

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Began near Plaza

Judson Studios honored on 75th anniversary

The Judson Studio distinguished part of the Los Angeles cultural scene since 1897 and of Highland Park since 1920, was honored yesterday by the city of Los Angeles on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the stained-glass manufacturing house.

Presenting the City Council commendation at an open house ceremony at the studio 200 S. Ave. 66 was scheduled by Councilman Art Snyder who authored the commendatory resolution along with council president Jot Gibson.

The resolution concluded, "The Los Angeles City Council highly commend the Judson Studios as they begin their second 75-years in Los Angeles, for their unparalleled record of nurturing the beautiful and the creative—a record which has made our city a better place in which to live and to work and which beckons each of us to reach for the highest creative possibilities.

FOUNDER

Walter Judson, who now operates the studio with his father Horace, said his grandfather, Walter H. Judson, founded the studio in Mott Alley off the old Plaza in 1897.

Judson said his great-grandfather, William Lees Judson, was dean of the Los Angeles College of Fine Arts, affiliated with USC, which was operated at the Arroyo Seco site where the studios now do business.

Judson said his family owned the building, and when the USC school was moved to the USC campus in 1920, Walter Judson moved the stained glass studios to Highland Park, the fourth site they had occupied.

Judson listed as some of the major projects the studios have worked on over the years the "prayer room" in the nation's capital the Air Force Academy Chapel in Colorado Springs, and Chapel One at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

FEAR DEMOLITION

The studio existed for nearly 50 years as a non-conforming use at the Ave. 66 site. Judson said as the zoning variance neared termination in 1969, there was fear the studios would be torn down and replaced by apartment houses.

In order to prevent this, the Los Angeles City Cultural Heritage Board on Aug. 13, 1969 declared the studios city historic-cultural monument number 62. The notice, signed

by CHB president Carl S. Dentzel, read in part:

"Judson Studios have been responsible for the creation of outstanding stained glass windows for countless churches, chapels and other structures throughout the United States and foreign countries.

"Judson Studios, one of the largest in the nation and probably the largest on the west coast, have remained in the family since the beginning, contributing greatly to the artistic and cultural development of Los Angeles."

RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS

Walter Judson said the studios now enjoy very amicable relations with the neighbors, and anticipate no further problems about staying in the local community.

He said his family's business is visited by people from all over the world, on the regular tour day, "Wednesday by appointments." Visitors have come from as far away as Japan, France and the Philippines.

Judson said with the current fad for craft work, many stained glass manufacturers can be found "listed in the phone book"; but he said there are only about ten doing the same kind of solid work done at his studios.

He said his family now employs 15 people, down slightly from a few years back, and has worked on such recent projects as the Goldman Estate in Honolulu, Johnny Mathis restaurant in Beverly Hills, and the big dome at the South Coast Shopping Center, which he said is 30 feet across.

He said the company likes to train "all our own craftsmen," but said its difficult to find people today interested in fully learning the craft.

"They just want to play with it and then go off," he said.

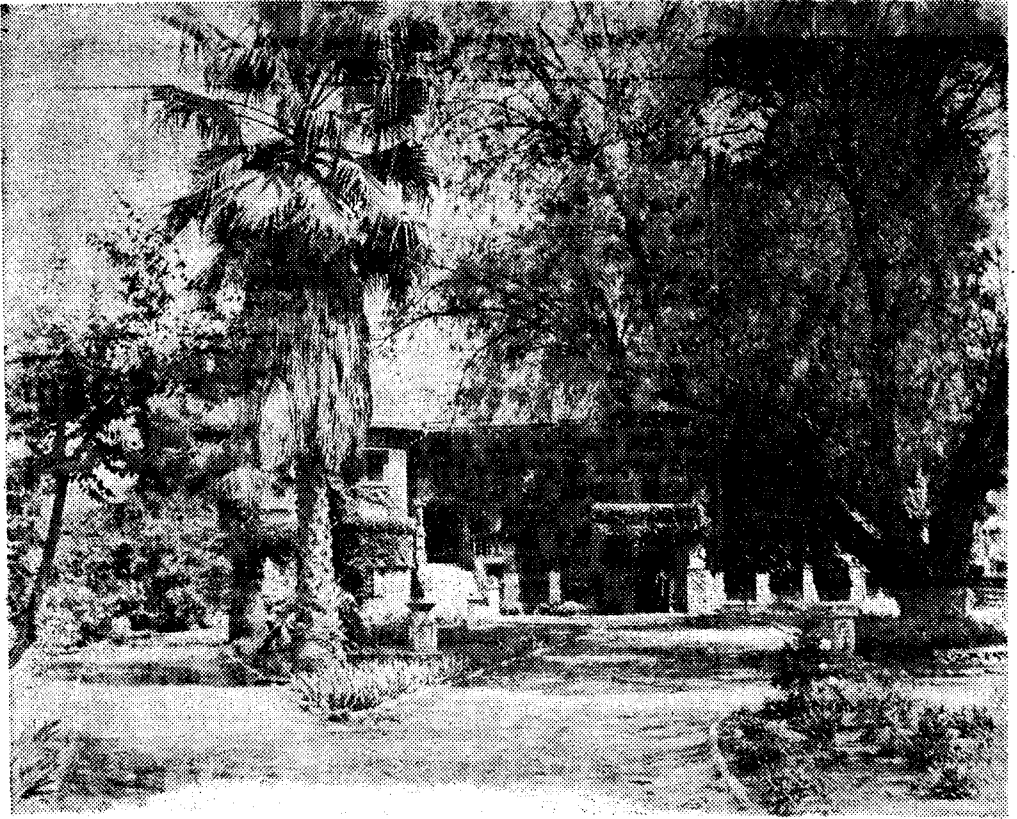
The studio proved its good neighbor status in September of last year, when a fire destroyed five homes on nearby Thorne St. The Judsons provided temporary shelter for the Alfred Martorano family, including the eight Martorano children, until other arrangements could be made.

Walter Judson said if many local residents had still not visited his facility, it was a safe bet most of their children had. "We're on the route for most school tours," he said.

Judson added that groups can make arrangements for tours by calling the studio.

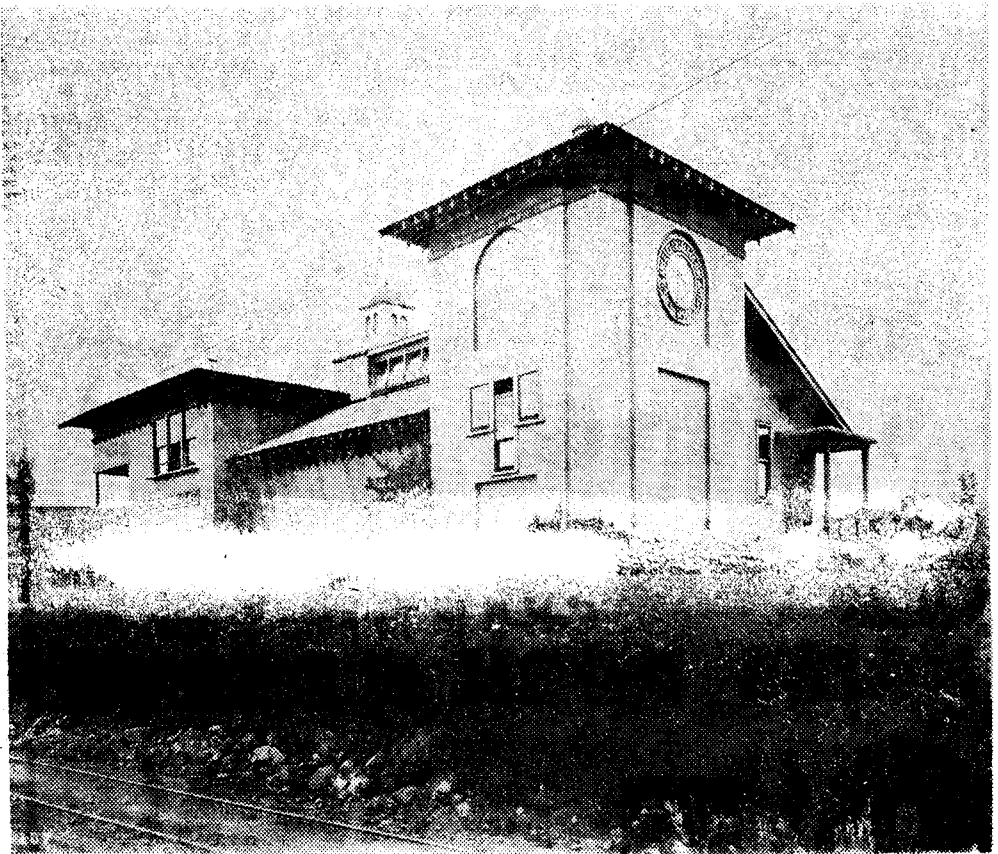
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JUDSON STUDIOS in Highland Park, whose stained glass windows and mosaic art work have been built since 1897, is now up for reclassification as a cultural and historic monument if the City Cultural Heritage Board agrees. The owners, Horace and Walter Judson asked for the move because of possible threats to their studios because of zoning regulations.

Photo courtesy of Security-Pacific Bank



USC COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, founded by Horace Judson's grandfather at the same time he founded his studios, was located in Highland Park from 1897 until 1920, when the school was moved to the USC campus. At that time, Judson took over property.

Photo courtesy L.A. Title Insurance and Trust Co.