



# EAGLE ROCK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring, 2012

## Survey LA is Coming – Get Listed or Get Lost

The Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society has been researching the history of Eagle Rock for over 50 years but many important resources remain hidden. If they are not identified in this survey, they will be more vulnerable to demolition and inappropriate development.

Our public meeting at the Center for the Arts Eagle Rock, April 17, at 7 PM will be devoted to beginning our preparation for SurveyLA. We want your help in identifying our hidden treasures.

Please bring your old photos, and stories of our

community lore and legends to share with your neighbors. The meeting is free and open to all. Refreshments will be served.

### What to consider:

Which neighborhoods, commercial areas, buildings, or landscapes have distinctive architectural design or cultural characteristics, or reflect important aspects of social history or community planning and development?

Were they key gathering places or focal points of our community over the years, or associated with individuals, groups or organizations that shaped our community's history?

Were they associated with architects, builders, designers, developers, or engineers whose work helped define the character of our area?

Which places shaped social movements, cultural evolution, or demographic changes unique to our community or reflected larger trends in the development history of Los Angeles? On May 24, 2012 the SurveyLA will be conducting a community outreach meeting at the Arroyo Seco Public Library (6145 N. Figueroa St., Los Angeles, 90042) as part of a comprehensive program to identify and record historic resources throughout the City. The meeting will cover Eagle Rock and other Northeast Los Angeles communities: Atwater Village, El Sereno, Highland Park, Lincoln Heights and Mt. Washington.

These workshops are a way for the public to learn more about the project. We must be ready to suggest places of architectural, social or cultural significance that SurveyLA team shouldn't miss.

## PRESERVE EAGLE ROCK

**SurveyLA is Coming  
Get Listed or Get Lost**



*Security Bank Building Demolished, Eagle Rock & Colorado*

**Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society  
Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock  
2225 Colorado Blvd.**

**Tuesday, April 17 7:00**

**Free and Open to All**

**visit our website: [eaglerockhistory.org](http://eaglerockhistory.org)**

### Members and Friends

**M**any thanks to all of our faithful members who renewed promptly. Your payment saves postage and volunteer labor. Those who haven't yet paid will receive an envelope and application in this newsletter (see the box below).

At our January meeting, one member paid at the front in cash. Unfortunately, their name went unrecorded and unremembered. If you are that person, please contact us. It is important that we receive an application to go with cash payments or other types when the identity of the payer might be ambiguous.

### Take Back the Boulevard

We understand that considerable progress is being made in this effort. The city has been very receptive to the concepts developed by the TERA committee in collaboration with the community. A presentation will be made to our board members to obtain our input before the next public meeting on June 5 at 7:00 PM at the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock.

### Braasch House "Ma Castle" Sold

After many years on the market, this fascinating property has found a buyer. Albert and Constance Braasch constructed it in a Bavarian fantasy style in keeping with their interest in all things German. Albert was a heating contractor while Constance taught piano to many in the community, including our board member, Doris Thielen. We have some indication that the new owner wishes to engage with the community. We would be happy to work with him to appropriately restore the property.

### Women's Twentieth Century Club Restoration

Our Board member, Frank Parrello, is assisting the club in its efforts to remedy damage to the front door and pergola. The club may pursue state and federal designation of the clubhouse to enable funding. Community donations will also be sought. Frank will present a public program at the club on April 12 at 7:00 PM.

### Los Angeles Heritage Day

We will again participate in this delightful program.

This year it will be at the Pico House at El Pueblo Historic Monument from 11 AM to 4 PM, Sunday, April 29. We need members to staff our table. Katie Taylor will coordinate our volunteers. Many hands make short and well-staffed shifts so we all can enjoy Olvera Street and the area's museums. For more information, visit [laheritagealliance.org](http://laheritagealliance.org).

### Pico House Endangered

The home of Pio Pico is in danger of closing due to ill-advised budget cuts. This historic site commemorates one of the major figures in our Spanish-Mexican heritage and the transition to American rule. Our founding members Betty and Henry Welcome and Marie and Joseph Northrup were heavily involved in the original efforts to preserve the house. Please advocate and donate to keep it open. Contact our representatives and visit [piopico.org](http://piopico.org) for further information.

### The objectives of the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society

- to preserve, clarify through research and to perpetuate the history of Eagle Rock Valley
- to make this history available to students, researchers, libraries and all interested persons
- to preserve and protect our local landmarks, especially the Eagle Rock

Membership is open to all who would further these objectives

Public Archive Hours 10 to 12 every Saturday  
at the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock  
2225 Colorado Blvd. Eagle Rock CA 90041  
for information call 323-257-1357

This journal is published quarterly by  
The Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society  
Editor, Eric Warren

Layout, David Mc Nutt

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Visit our website at:  
[eaglerockhistory.org](http://eaglerockhistory.org)

Visit us at [eaglerockhistory.org](http://eaglerockhistory.org) or in person  
Saturdays 10 a.m. to noon at the CFAER

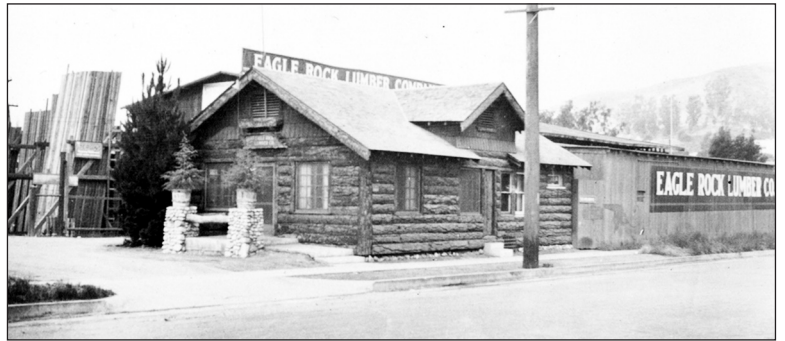
**It's time to renew your membership. If you have already paid your 2012 dues, thank you. If not, please take a moment and mail your check now. If we have not heard from you, a dues form and envelope are included with this newsletter.**

**Thanks, we depend on you.**



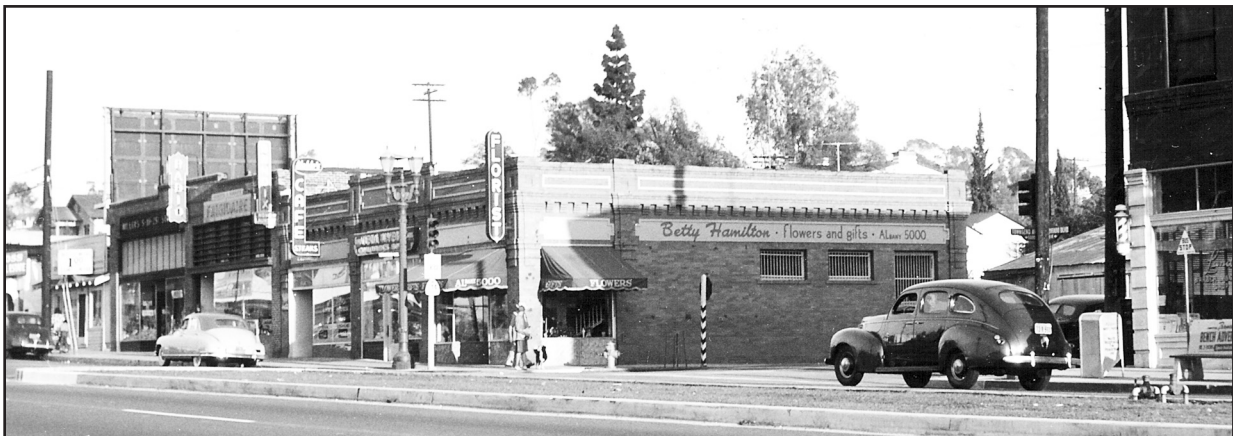
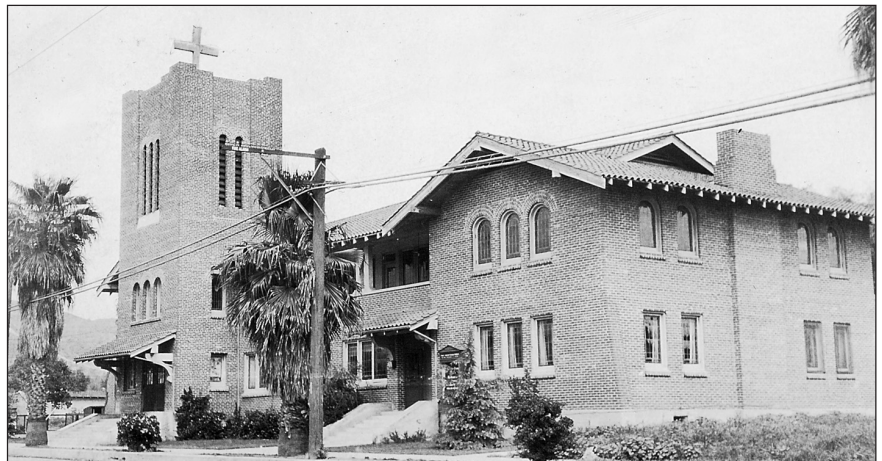
### Things That Aren't Here Anymore

Many of these buildings were torn down before their virtues were appreciated. They lent character to our neighborhood. Today we would make a greater effort to preserve them. Which of our still extant buildings deserve preservation? What should we do to further this goal?



**The Eagle Rock Lumber Office.** Emil Swanson built this log-cabin style building in 1924. He sold these bark-on boards as a sideline. His home is also in this rustic manner. It is a Historic Cultural Monument, still standing on Addison Way, but in unfortunate condition due to neglect by the former owners. Swanson was an avid outdoorsman; this may have contributed to his enthusiasm for this style. An early and long time member of the Chamber of Commerce and a founding member of the Eagle Rock Kiwanis Club, he was president of both of these organizations several times. (Contributed by Kevin Strouch and North Swanson.)

**Eagle Rock Presbyterian Church, 1927.** Rev.B.B. Wetherall, who was called in 1918, carried out the plan to erect this sanctuary and west wing. It was dedicated Easter Sunday, April 18, 1920. H. M. Patterson was the architect. The 5 car trolley tracks ran in front on Eagle Rock Boulevard. This beautiful building was of unreinforced masonry. It was heavily damaged in the 1972 earthquake and later torn down. Modern buildings around a corner court have replaced it.



**Colorado and Townsend in 1949-a year after the trolley tracks were removed.** To the left was the Shopping Bag Market (Trader Joe's). The line of small stores on the left dated from very early in our history. Most notable was the beautiful tapestry brick Shumacher building on the corner, which housed Eagle Rock's original City Jail. The corner was demolished for a mini-mall in 1986 precipitating the formation of The Eagle Rock Association. The C. J. Murfield (Tritch Hardware) building is at the right. (Photograph by Alan Weeks)



## Our Town, Our History

**Modernist Masterpiece.** Rudolph M. Schindler built this house for the Lowes family at 5325 Ellenwood Drive in 1923, a remarkable contrast to the other houses on the street. Drawings exist by Frank Lloyd Wright for the project but Schindler designed this house in his own style. The upper end of this street was destroyed in 1969 for the 134 Freeway.

(Courtesy of University of California Santa Barbara Art Museum, Photograph by Viroque Baker)



**Model Market, 1936.** From 1933 to 1944, Norbert Clancy owned this market on Colorado Boulevard, situated between El Rio Avenue and Rockland Avenue. It was constructed on the former site of James W. Eddy's house. The Bank of America bought the building and replaced the delightful Art Deco façade with bland modern architecture in 1951. The current façade is the result of a 1972 remodel. (Courtesy of Bill Clancy.)



**Demolition and Re-use, 1971.** Eagle Rock High School's old Junior High building is on the left side of the photograph. On the right is the auditorium built in 1927, as it was being fitted with a new façade to match the Brutalist architecture of the new school. Most who are familiar with the old school feel that the current architecture is inferior to the old. The spirit of the school survives in its students, staff, and the support of the community. (Photograph by Paul Ohannesian.)



## Occidental is 125

A year-long celebration of Oxy's founding will begin with an all-day event on Friday, April 20. The community is invited to an 1887 style carnival and \$18.87 dinner in the Gresham dining hall. For details, visit [oxy.edu/125](http://oxy.edu/125). The Society has contributed to an exhibit on Occidental's three locations which will be up in the Academic Commons (the Library) for viewing.

Oxy opened its doors in Boyle Heights in 1887. At that time, it offered a co-educational program for both secondary and college students. The boom of the eighties led the trustees to believe that the sale of land surrounding the then-remote location would finance the college's growth. This was not to be. The school survived the ensuing bust, only to have its only building consumed by fire in 1896.



Maud E. Bell, class of 1893, was one of the two first graduates of Occidental College in its Boyle Heights location. She was the daughter of James G. Bell one of the founders of the college (Courtesy of Douglas Waldron and the College Archives—Occidental College Library)

Occidental President John Willis Baer (in tail coat) celebrates with other revelers at the annual college picnic, on the Eagle Rock Campus, in 1915. (Courtesy of College Archives—Occidental College Library)



The next two years the (then Presbyterian) institution rented space from the Catholic St. Vincent's in downtown Los Angeles. It moved north to Highland Park in 1898 into a single building located north of Marmion Way near Avenue 50. In 1906, the (still extant) Hall of Letters was constructed, facing what is now Figueroa Street. The library at the corner of Avenue 50 and Figueroa was constructed soon after. The college faced a shortage of land for expansion, which was exacerbated by the presence of the Santa Fe main line running many trains daily down Marmion Way.

The trustees were once again offered the opportunity of being a part of new land development in the York Valley area, adjacent to a growing Eagle Rock. Oxy constructed its first three buildings there and opened in 1914. The college continues to grow and prosper in our neighborhood.

This year's festivities will give the community an opportunity to visit the campus for many events and view the School's newest building and a remodel of one of its oldest, Swan Hall, with a substantial addition.

**Preserve Eagle Rock**  
**Survey LA-List It or Lose It**  
**Tuesday, April 17, 2012, 7:00**  
**for CHAM Social**  
**THURSDAY, MUSIC, BIZ**  
**SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2012, 1:00**  
**Eagle Rock Modern**  
**Aren't We Old Fashioned?**  
**Tuesday, October 16, 2012, 7:00**  
**at the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock**  
**2225 Colorado Blvd.**



Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Category:

☐ Individual \$20   ☐ Business \$35   ☐ **New**

☐ Family \$25   ☐ Life \$300   ☐ **Renewal**

Will you help with the ongoing activities of the ERVHS ?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

☐ Archives   ☐ Newsletter   ☐ Oral history

☐ Meetings   ☐ Fundraising   ☐ E-mail me

☐ Publicity   ☐ Displays   ☐ to help

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and mail to : **ERVHS**  
**c/o Center for the Arts**  
**2225 Colorado Blvd.**  
**Eagle Rock, CA 90041**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### The Member's Corner



**Joseph Bellissimo, Jr.**

Born in Pittsburg, PA in 1955, Joe Bellissimo, Jr. was on the road to his new neighborhood, Eagle Rock, by 1957. His grandfather, Frank, was the first to move here (on Hermosa Ave.) and began his dental practice after working for the Marine Corps at Camp Pendleton. Joe's father, Joe Sr., followed and brought his family to Eagle Rock. In 1961 Joe Sr. built the dental office on Eagle Rock Blvd. in which Joe Jr. currently practices. Joe grew up in Eagle Rock, attending ER Elementary for kindergarten and then St. Dominic's for 8 years. He went on to St. Francis High School and played baseball. He graduated from Oxy in 1977 with a degree in chemistry and went on to graduate from USC Dental School, all the while living and commuting from Eagle Rock! He and his father went on to work together from 1981 until 2001 when Joe, Sr. retired.

Aside from his career, Jo has been very active in the community. In 1987, he served as president of Kiwanis. For years he has volunteered his time speaking to local students during February about dental health. He met his wife, Kathy, during his days at Oxy. They have two sons, Joey and Tom. Why have you stayed in Eagle Rock? Joe told me all his friends and family live within 5 miles. "I just love it here. Very family oriented." How does he feel about the changes he's seen living over his lifetime? Although he feels it is getting a bit crowded, it is good for the city and it seems the bottom line for Joe is that "I know all my neighbors." Here's to you and thanks for keeping the teeth of Eagle Rock healthy and happy!

-Katie Taylor