



EAGLE ROCK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Winter, 2016

Where Did the Water Go?

Where did water flow naturally in the Eagle Rock Valley? Were native people living here? Where? How did Verdugo use the land? How could commercial farming take place with such variable rainfall? Why did Eagle Rock join Los Angeles? Why don't we see any water today, or do we? All these questions were vitally important to those who lived here before the regional plumbing system replaced natural water. Many of them are still important today.

Join us Tuesday, February 23 at 7:00 PM at the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock, 2225 Colorado Boulevard for a visual exploration of these questions through our historic photo collection by our own Eric Warren. Jane Tsong, author of *Myriad Unnamed Streams*, a compilation of anecdotes about water in Northeast LA (<http://myriadsmallthings.org/myriadunnamedstreams.html>) will be here to illuminate how Eagle Rock water history fits into the larger Los Angeles River story, and how our management of land has changed the availability of local water.

All are welcome. Light refreshments will be served.

The native people relied on their knowledge of local conditions to move throughout the year to places where communal life was pos-

sible. When the Spanish came, they introduced a method of living on the land which had never been used here before. The Europeans required large areas of farmed land to support communities that had numbers of people who were not directly involved with farming. They still had to cope with the conditions that they found. Sometimes they were surprised by the variation in rainfall, turning useful streams into destructive torrents. The American settlers continued this process. Farmers became part of regional and national produce distribution systems and used increasingly sophisticated methods to pump and transfer local water.

Throughout the city, towns were forced to confront the problem of how to supply a vastly increasing population of urban dwellers.

Los Angeles finally engineered large projects to import water from less populated areas. The local, naturally-occurring water remained; pumped in some areas and ignored in others, until the rains came. Flooding then became the major focus of civic concern.

Today we are looking again at our local resources. Could this water again contribute to our city's needs?

WHERE DID THE WATER GO?

Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society

Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock
2225 Colorado
Tuesday, February 23, 7:00
Free and Open to All

EAGLE ROCK HISTORY.ORG

President's Message

Members and Friends

Happy New Year

With this the first newsletter of the year, I would like to extend New Year greetings to all the members and friends of the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society. As we observe the passing of time, we note the changes that take place as milestone events. My authorship of the President's message reflects that Eric Warren, who has headed the group for the past 14 years, has passed the gravel to me. However, Eric, who is well known as our leading expert on the history of Eagle Rock Valley, has agreed to stay on as the group's Vice-president and continue with his duties of overseeing the archives and editing this newsletter. I am personally grateful for his continued involvement with our organization while he pursues his many personal and community interests. In addition to Eric, Katie Taylor will continue to serve the Board as Treasurer, and David Dellinger is our new Secretary. Other Board members are Karen Warren, Don Krotser, Severin Martinez, Cory Stargel, Sara Stargel, Karin Heyl, John de la Fontaine, and Doris Thielen. I look forward to working with the Board as we continue the long tradition of the organization while exploring new ways to recognize and share the history of our community.

Our Local Newspaper

Another important transition last year was that the founding owner and publisher of the Boulevard Sentinel since 1997, Tom Topping, sold the paper to another longtime member of our community, Tim Tritch. The newspaper with the motto "To comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" reflects Tom's goal of being an independent and free press. I always look forward to reading the paper, which in keeping with the spirit of the original Eagle Rock Sentinel, reports on the daily events, controversies and people in our community. The new owner and publisher is also a family member of another one of Eagle Rock's institutions, Tritch Hardware. The last of a breed of local corner hardware stores that still take pride in giving personal service to help you find what you need, whether you're a local contractor or have a do-it-yourself home project. Many times I've gone into the store, said I need one of "these", and it is quickly found and told it will cost all of 25 cents. We will miss Jack Tritch, who passed away last year, but the

store is still in good hands with Merritt, Jeff and Glen.

John Miller

Finally, I would be remiss not to mention the passing of John Miller. John served as the Historical Society's President for 14 years, from 1988 until 2001. He had also been President of the Kiwanis Club and vice-president of the Eagle Rock Chamber of Commerce. Born at Queen of Angels Hospital, his family moved to Eagle Rock when he was three years old. He was raised here, attended Eagle Rock schools, and lived to promote the history of Eagle Rock. In the 1950's, John was a cameraman for the Channel 9 News. John served during a tough time in the Society's history when we were uprooted from the old Eagle Rock City Hall and spent a period of time being an organization without a home. But John kept us alive and in the minds of the community. He was a life-long photographer. He worked at Ernie's Camera shop in Glendale for decades. Over the years, he took literally thousands of photographs of life and events in Eagle Rock, which he has donated to the Historical Society. For all he gave to the Historical Society, we will always be grateful.

Frank Parrello

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

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Visit our website at:

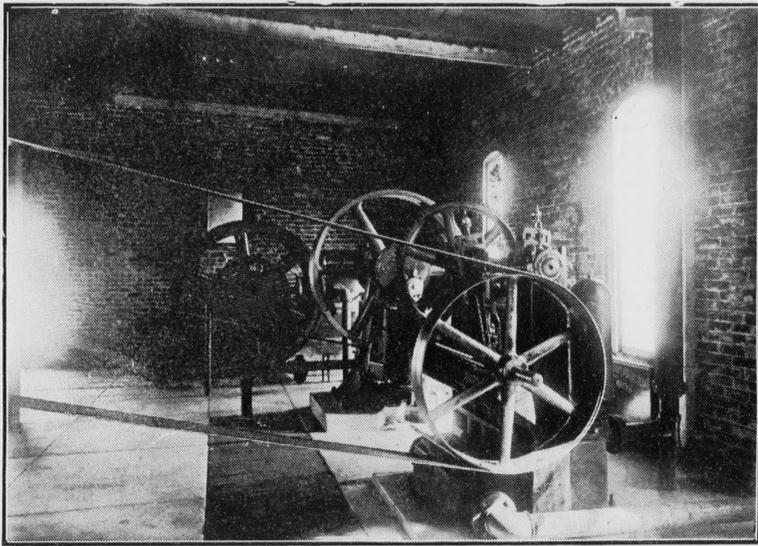
eaglerockhistory.org

It's time to renew your membership. If you have already paid your 2016 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.

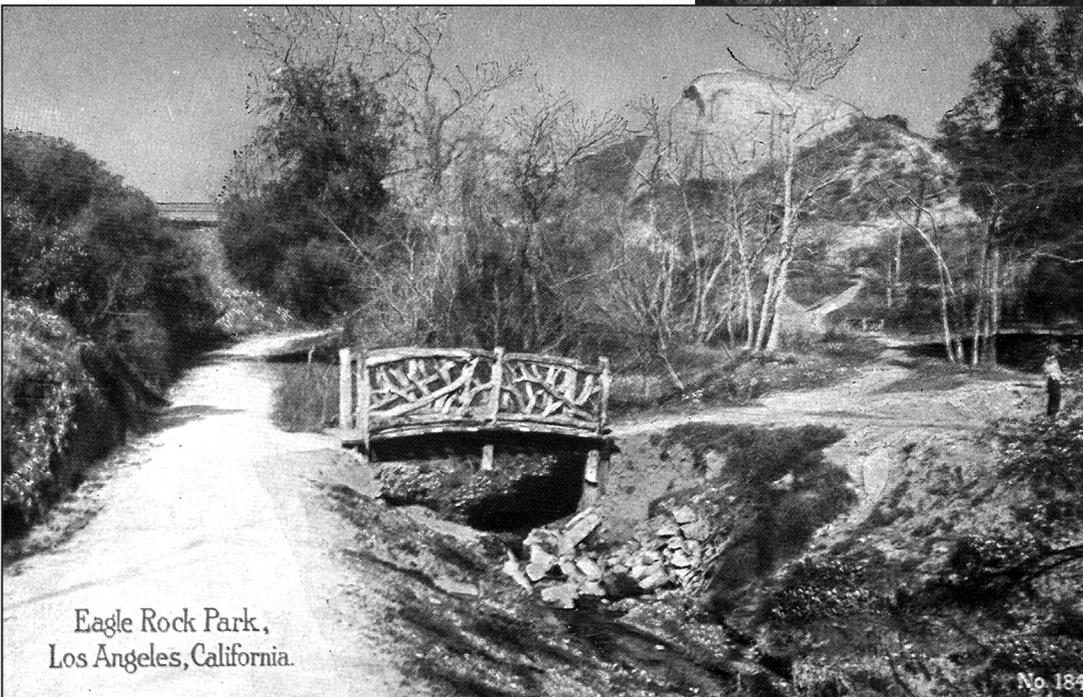
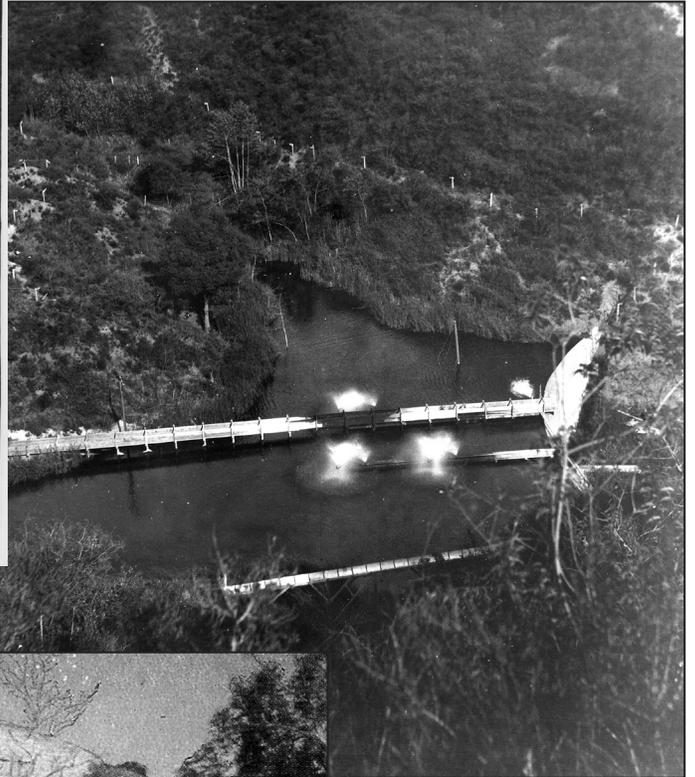
Thanks, we depend on you.

Natural Water: Not Enough and Too Much

This gasoline powered pumping plant was the headquarters of the Eagle Rock Water Company, an independent enterprise until 1917, when the City of Eagle Rock purchased it. Located on Yosemite Drive and Maywood, the company sold water from wells located at that location and around town. The variable quantity and quality of the water caused the company to be unable to supply a growing population. As part of the City's incorporation into the City of Los Angeles, the water rights were taken over by the Department of Water and Power. (Los Angeles Herald, California Digital Newspaper Project)



Pumping Plant, Eagle Rock Water Company



Eagle Rock Park,
Los Angeles, California.

This artificial lake located behind the now Edison Substation impounded water from the Eagle Rock Creek to cool machinery in the substation. Eagle Rock old timers recall sneaking in for a refreshing but dangerous swim. It still exists, but it isn't needed for current operations. (Huntington Library, SCE collection)

This romantic view of the Eagle Rock Creek and its canyon shows a rustic pedestrian bridge, part of Henry Huntington's "Eagle Rock Park" in the foreground. At left in the distance is the Colorado Boulevard highway bridge over the stream, built on the high ground to avoid the periodic flooding of the stream.

Our Town, Our History

September 15, 1932 Eagle Rock Advertiser- This intersection (Eagle Rock Boulevard and Yosemite Drive) has long been a menace to traffic, because of the deep dip in the roadway, and has been the cause of numerous accidents, particularly during the rainy season when the depression has filled with storm water. (photo courtesy of L. A. Public Works)



January 4 1934 Eagle Rock Advertiser -Torrential rains of the storm of Saturday and Sunday made a raging torrent of the Eagle Rock Slough, which leads up in to the hills and empties into the meager storm drains provided. The angry waters mounting higher as the storm continued, made families homeless, undermined houses, garages and cut through the Yosemite playgrounds, leaving tons of rock and earth in its path...

F. E. Montee of 4815 Avoca Street, whose house was undermined and the front yard washed away to the front doorstep, said "Tell them for me that we need the Yosemite storm drain system. I hope we get it." (photo ERVHS Archive)

The flood of New Year's, 1934 left this switchyard behind the Edison Substation buried in over 20 feet of mudflow. (Huntington Library, SCE collection)



Eagle Rock's Freeway Revolt (Part 3)

"Eagle Rock Citizens Protective League" Presents a Middle Ground

Neighborhood opinion was split further when Harry Lawson, publisher of the Eagle Rock Sentinel, formed yet another organization which preferred a route just north of Hill Drive estimated to require the removal of about 150 homes. It was considered to be a compromise between the Homeowners' Association and the Skyway League.

"Eagle Rock Freeway Association" Pushes for 'No Freeway' Alternative

There were now three organizations, each advocating different routings for the 134 Freeway, and in 1961 another would form comprised primarily of residents living along Hill Drive. The newest voice in the conversation opposed any freeway through Eagle Rock but would favor a route south of Colorado Boulevard if a freeway was deemed absolutely necessary .

Highway Commission Selects "Hill Drive" Route

Shortly after the Freeway Association entered the discussion, the Highway Commission picked the route preferred by the Citizens Protective League. A rare case in that Commission's decision rejected the official recommendation from the state highway engineers. At this point, the Skyway League dropped its opposition due to fear that further discussion might lead the Highway Commission to go with a more southerly route. The Skyway League urged Assembly member Collier to adopt their view, which he did. The Freeway Association continued their fight, arguing that the mile-long freeway connector in Eagle Rock to the already-built portion of the freeway would be abandoned if a route north of Colorado Boulevard were built. Highway officials countered that the freeway stub would become an on- and off-ramp.

Final Attempts to Block Freeway Construction

Phone surveys conducted in Eagle Rock showed most residents did not want any freeway of any kind going through the neighborhood. One resident remarked:

"There are no serious traffic problems in the community, which is completely developed, and we see no way problems could arise in the future."

A petition circulated asking the two Assembly Members for the area to create legislation that would

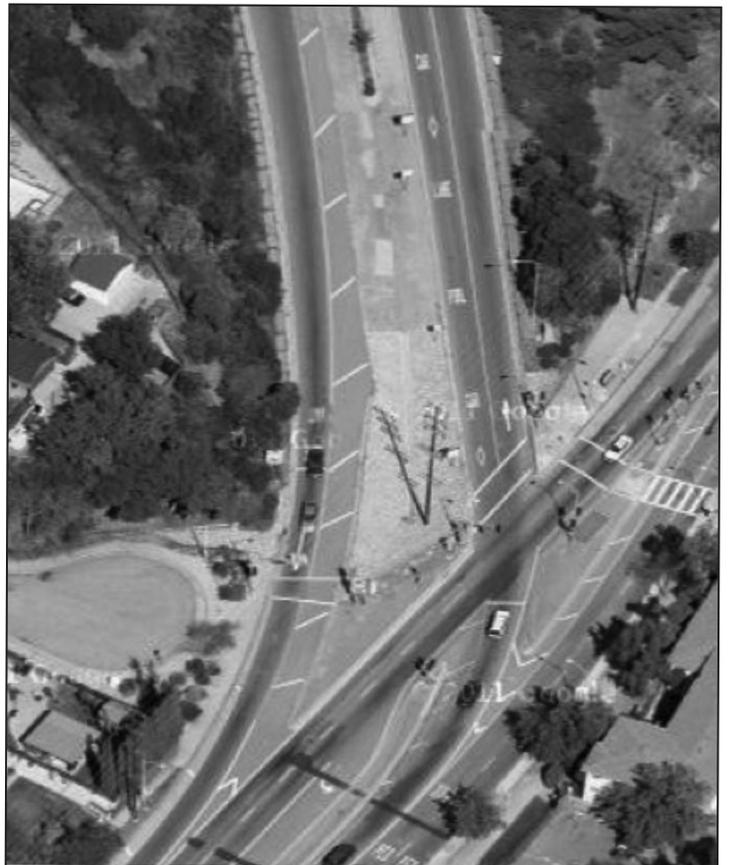
remove any freeway routing through Eagle Rock. This was ultimately unsuccessful.

Neighborhood Engagement and Advocacy Yields Results

Although the freeway would eventually be built, the neighborhood's resistance yielded results. Not only did the Highway Commission reject the engineers' recommendation and choose a considerably less invasive freeway route, but in 1964 plans for an on- and off-ramp at Eagle Rock Boulevard were discarded. The freeway was also built to go around Eagle Rock Park, rather than through it.

The complete article by Severin Martinez can be viewed below. Further excerpts will appear here.

<https://walkeaglerock.wordpress.com/2015/03/23/eagle-rocks-freeway-revolt/>



Before the 134 was built through Eagle Rock, this is where the freeway ended and traffic was funneled onto Colorado Boulevard. This freeway stub would be converted into an on- and off-ramp. Image credit: Google Maps

The Member's Corner



Mark DeAngelis

Born and raised in Lexington, Massachusetts, Mark attended the University of Massachusetts and obtained his MBA from USC. Eventually he moved to Santa Monica at 22 years old, staying for 8 months, before moving to Venice Beach for 8 years. By the

time Mark was ready to buy a house, the market was incredibly competitive. He looked in NELA for options and managed, although without ever stepping foot inside the house, to buy a 1910 duplex just north of Colorado on Caspar. Lucky for him this unique house was built by a pastor of a church, later became a funeral parlor, and finally was a Sunday school. This would explain its interesting layout and wonderful use of natural light.

As the 10th owner, Mark became interested immediately in the unique history of his house, combing through public records, curious about it all. That led him to our archives where we had an early photograph of his house and he became a member. No surprise when I asked why he has stayed in Eagle Rock he answered: "I love my house," and laughed. "I love the small town aspect of Eagle Rock and my long term neighbors." Mark is currently a marketing and research consultant and upon retirement, you can bet you'll find him at home.

Katie Taylor



at the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock
2225 Colorado Blvd. Eagle Rock CA, 90041

**WHERE DID THE WATER GO?
AN UNDERGROUND HISTORY
TUESDAY, FEB. 23, 2016, 7:00**

**DOCUMENTING YOUR HOUSE
Tim Gregory-Building Biographer
Tuesday, April 19, 2016, 7:00**

**HOW CAN I GET
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION?
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2015, 1:00**

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 _____