



EAGLE Rock VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring, 2020

Eagle Rock Lumber-Building Our Town

The yard opened at a heady time in Eagle Rock history. The City had incorporated a year before and home building boomed. There was no convenient source of building materials. Lumber arrived by wagon from Garvanza where the Montgomery and Mullin yard was located.

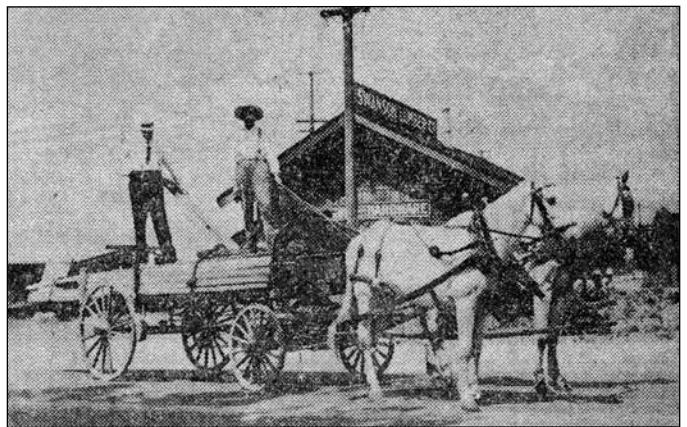
The two-year-old Eagle Rock Sentinel proclaimed in 1912:

"NEEDED BUSINESS COMING"

"Men of Means and Experience Purchase Lumber Yard Site."

"Joseph O. Means and E. D. Blinn have purchased the two acre tract at the corner of Central and Park Avenue for the establishment of a lumber yard. This should be welcome news to our citizens for it is very unusual and certainly most inconvenient for a city of this size not to have a lumber yard of its own. These gentlemen have had years of experience in this business and have large financial means. They are now in the jobbing business in Los Angeles, but reside in Pasadena. We gladly welcome them to our city. There is no line of business that is so badly needed in Eagle Rock. That these men of high standing have decided to come here is another strong evidence that this city looks good to outside capital."

The Park Avenue (Fair Park Avenue) location was adopted after considerable controversy. The early plan was for a location at Central Avenue (Eagle Rock Boulevard) and Eagle Rock



It is unclear where this "Swanson Lumber Yard" was located. It depicts the horse and wagon days of lumber transport. —Courtesy of the Eagle Rock Sentinel.

Road (Colorado Boulevard). The "Industrial" land use itself was questioned. The builders' needs prevailed.

And the Sentinel followed in 1913 with:

"First Class Yard in Point of Arrangement and Stock on Hand."

"A visit to the Eagle Rock Lumber Company's yards revealed some very agreeable conditions and prosperous business outlook. The yard itself is very neatly and conveniently arranged. For the purpose of making the place attractive the company has put a fine wire fence around the yard instead of the usual high board fence. The new office has been set back from the sidewalk to permit of a lawn being put in. The lumber will not be piled



This photograph of the original location on Eagle Rock Boulevard, note the trolley tracks, is on a postcard dated 1915. —Courtesy of the Stargel Family Collection.

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Hello, Eagle Rock!

Thanks for your continued support. I hope that you are doing well during these uncertain times of a global pandemic. This is not the first time that Eagle Rock has endured a pandemic. There's an article titled "Uncle Sam's Advice on Flu" from the October 17, 1918 issue (Volume XVII, Number 8, page 2) of the Eagle Rock Sentinel that gives a glimpse of what was happening then. The article can be found on the cdnc.ucr.edu website (The California Digital Newspaper Collection). Much of the article could have been written this month, but was written 102 years ago. Here's a sampling:

"The disease now occurring in this country and called 'Spanish Influenza' resembles a very contagious kind of 'cold' accompanied by fever, pains in the head, eyes, ears, back or other parts of the body and a feeling of severe sickness. In most of the cases the symptoms disappear after three or four days, the patient then rapidly recovering. Some of the patients, however, develop pneumonia, or inflammation of the ear, or meningitis, and many of these complicated cases die." The article continues with other similarities with the current Covid-19 outbreak such as no tests available and transmission from relatively healthy carriers via coughing and sneezing. There's no mention of the word "virus", as this was only later understood as the cause of the "Spanish flu."

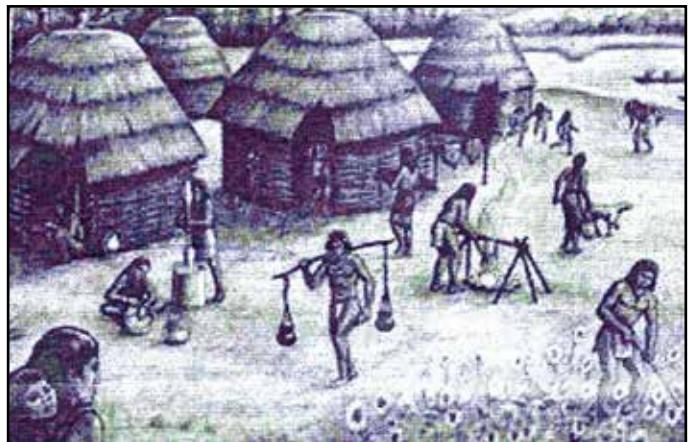
I have often written and said that history includes what just happened, but usually we just do not know the historical significance of what just happened. In this case, we can all agree that the historical significance of a global pandemic is front and center. We still do not know how things will turn out, but certainly we know that this outbreak is historical. Everyone should of course take care of oneself and one's loved ones (either remote or local), but as someone interested in history, it's also a time to observe Eagle Rock, and the world, and what we are all going through. This is truly a global pandemic, and people in most parts of the world are having many of the same issues as we are.

Our normal April "physical" meeting has been cancelled, but we are looking at some way to replace it in the virtual space. While not everyone can attend a "virtual" meeting, not everyone can attend a normal physical one either, so maybe please don't feel left out if you miss the April meeting – think of our members across the country, or those who are not physically able to go to our normal meetings, who can now attend. Apart from that, we are looking at ways to increase

our online presence. Check our Facebook page for updates. Look at our website for more photos (eaglerockhistory.org).

Stay safe and healthy!

David Dellinger, President



"The past postponed. Native Americans tending the wild."

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

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Visit our website at:
eaglerockhistory.org

Our Town, Our History

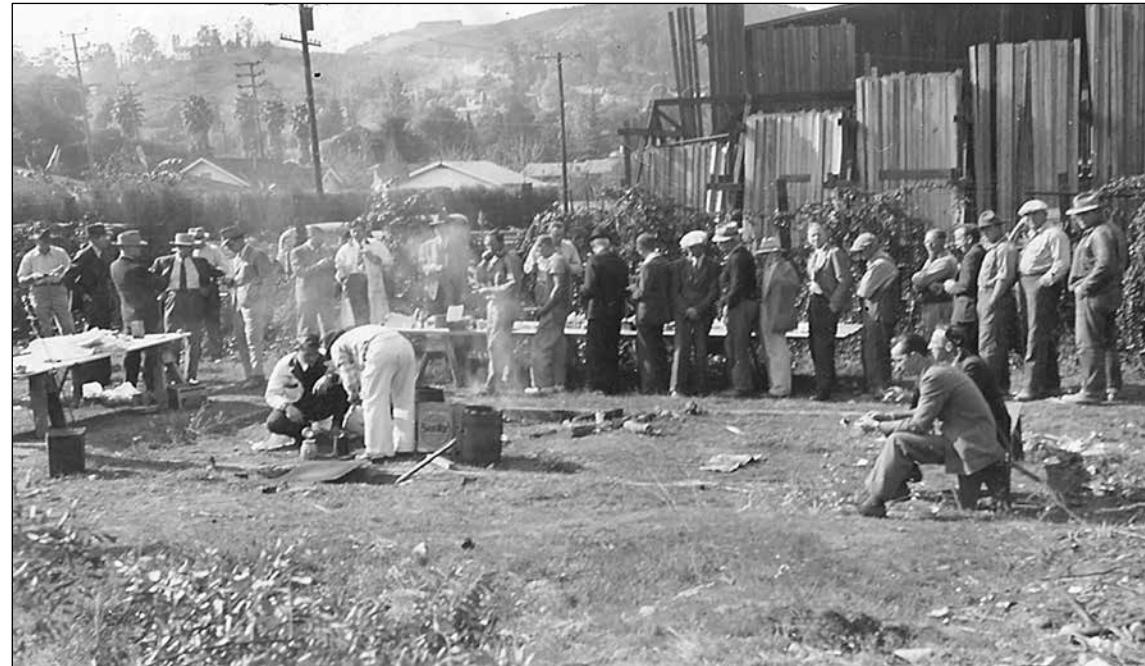
near the Central Avenue side, as the company does not want to obstruct the view of residents. A large force of men, mostly residents of Eagle Rock are busy piling lumber while several teams are hauling lumber from the railroad yards in Glendale. The company is having all of its lumber shipped from their own mills in Washington. Twenty carloads were received the past week. If you wish to get some idea of the great amount of money this new company is bringing to the city's business interests and the taxable valuation, try and figure the \$10,000 invested in the property itself and then estimate as best you can the amount of money represented by all the car loads of lumber it will take to stock

up the yards. It will prove to be one of the best things that has ever come to Eagle Rock. The local manager of the company is Mr.- O. A. Elliott, a man of much ability and experience in the lumber business."

The most memorable owner of the yard, Emil Swanson, bought the business in 1920 at the height of the post-World War I boom. He purchased the property behind the Eagle Rock Boulevard location and moved the yard to a larger space behind freeing the frontage for other businesses. He built the new office and his own home on Addison Way using a bark-on-board siding product he was promoting. He engaged from the first with the community becoming a founding member of the Kiwanis Club and serving the community on many committees and boards. His wife Mildred was president of the 20th Century Women's Club from 1943 to 1944 while her son Northrup was serving in World War II.



The "log cabin" office of Eagle Rock Lumber became its icon and trademark after it was built in 1927. —Courtesy of Kevin Strauch



Swanson's "Venison Barbeque" took place in the dirt lot in front of the yard for several years after 1929. -Strauch

BUILD IT NOW

... of ...
LUMBER

REMEMBER—
THE
TOWER
OF
BABEL

Built of rock was the most conspicuous failure in the construction history of the world, while Noah's Ark, built of
WOOD, was the greatest example of a building delivering the goods, that history can show.

MORAL—
Build of
LUMBER

Emil Swanson "Sole Owner's" ad from 1924. —ERS

Our Town, Our History

Swanson was an avid outdoorsman and hunter. His employees surprised him in 1924:

"... their spokesman handed him the present which struck his fancy more than any other one thing could have done, a 30-30 Marlin Special of the very latest model with Lyman peep sights, twenty-eight barrel and with shot gun stock. As Mr. Swanson remarked to the Reporter "It's a Peach"..." -Sentinel

He held his first venison barbecue in 1929 serving 41 people at the yard. This tradition continued in various ways until about 1960.

He was not without rivals in the lumber trade. A yard had existed across Fair Park for years. In 1925 the Bettengen Lumber Company was bought by the Bentley Lumber Company, a much larger firm, which rolled out, to much publicity, an array of services to the builder and property owner.

Swanson adapted to tougher circumstances in the thirties by catering to homeowners and remodelers. The interior of the office was reorganized to display



An all male crowd attended this outdoor builder-oriented event in the early '50s. -Strauch

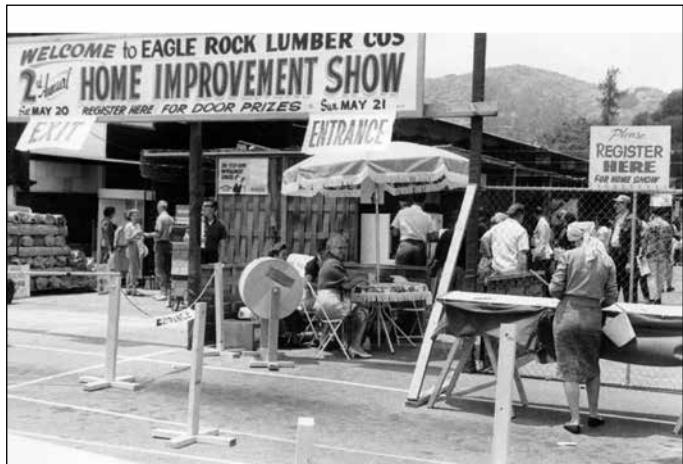


paint and hardware in a more open setting.

After World War II, the yard resumed supplying contractors in the building boom of the '50s. In the 60's they pivoted once again to remodelers, catering more to women with a wider array of household decorating products. The area between the yard and Eagle Rock Boulevard, which had never been developed, was paved as a parking lot and a new large pole sign was erected.

By 1965 the pressures of development again rose. The block partially occupied by the yard was desired for a new Mayfair (now Sprouts) Shopping Plaza. Swanson facilitated a move across Fair Park, downsizing and moving one of the buildings. The new owners built a new store building and reopened in 1963-64.

-Our thanks to Kevin Strauch for the wonderful trove of photographs and ephemera he has given to the Society. Thanks also to the California Digital Newspaper Collection for making our collection of newspapers available online.



Women were targeted in this series of "Home Improvement" shows in the early '60s. -Strauch

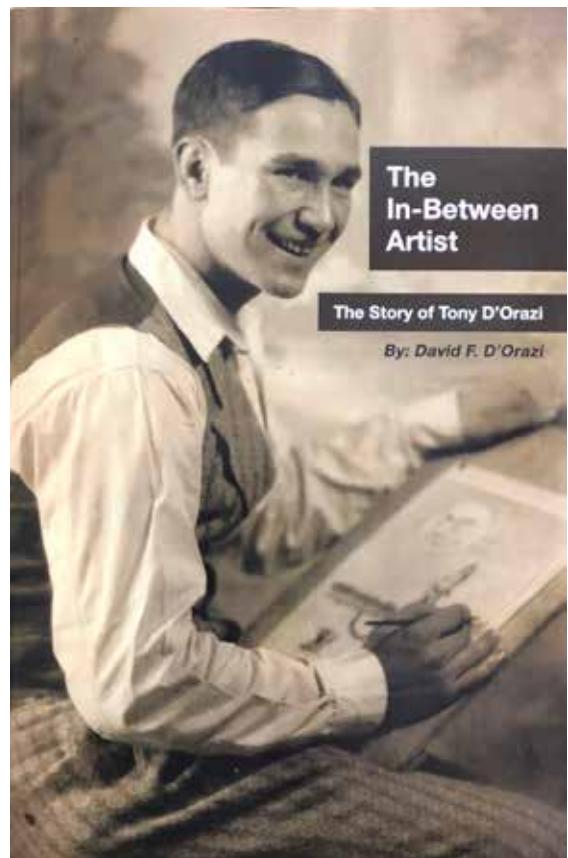


The current owner of the business, Kevin Strauch, wrote: 'Emil Swanson is in the middle. The man next to him (camera right) is my dad ...Jacob G. (Dep) Strauch. On Emil's other side (camera left) is Julie Shormann, the wife of Lewis Shormann. They all were working there at the time this was taken. Lewis and my dad would go on to become the co-owners of the "New" Eagle Rock Lumber Co.'

This is the first biography ever written about Tony D'Orazi a.k.a. Uncle Tony O'dare, “First cartoonist of the Air” of TV and radio.

A famous local Eagle Rock Artist, Tony D'Orazi (1909-1974) entered his paintings in the World's fair in Chicago in 1935, and won 1st place in painting. At that time, his artwork was compared to that of Michelangelo. He had a radio show for a short time in Chicago, then he worked for Walt Disney. He worked on a new cartoon, called *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and became an In-Betweener cartoonist for Walt Disney. Tony then left, and was able to have a show on KHJ Radio and KTLA TV. “Uncle Tony O'dare, The First Cartoonist of the Air”, teaching cartoons to young children. He then moved his radio show to San Diego. Then he met, Miltretta, my mom, and got married in 1938. They traveled the USA and did a vaudeville act in 38 states. Then the war came, and he moved back to Missoula, and then Spokane, where he got back on radio. In 1948, Tony moved his family to Eagle Rock. Tony actually won his first Emmy that year for his radio show, “Uncle Tony O'dare, The First Cartoonist of the Air”. Tony had four children, all who graduated from Eagle Rock High School: Mike (1958), John (1963), David (1967), and Kathy (1975). Kathy D'Orazi, a.k.a. Kathy O'dare, who became an actress, was a costar in the first show of “Happy Days” with Ronnie Howard and the Fonz in March of 1974.

Tony D'Orazi, after his radio and TV shows ended, became a part time actor, and was on the “Dean Martin Show”, “All in the Family”, “Sanford and Son” and “General Hospital”. Tony was able to continue his art throughout his entire life and overcame many challenges on his journey, and it is all covered in, “The In-Between Artist”, the biography of Tony D'Orazi.



Reading this book, you will get to know about Tony D'Orazi , one of Eagle Rock's Great Artists of the 20th century.

You can purchase the book “The In-Between Artist” on Amazon and Barnes and Noble. I am donating a portion of the profits for Mental Health Research, in honor of my father.



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

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Other _____

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The Member's Corner

Keith Rogers



Keith's family history is undeniably intertwined with Eagle Rock's. His grandfather, Ralph Rogers, came to Los Angeles in 1868, became a prolific land developer in Highland Park and Eagle Rock, and most notably donated 75 acres of land to Occidental College to be built in its current location. Keith's father, Ralph B. Rogers, was born in Highland Park and went on to build 105 houses in the NELA area, working until he was 82 years old. When he passed away it was less than a mile from where he was born.

Keith was born in 1931 and raised in Eagle Rock. He attended Eagle Rock schools graduating from ERHS in 1949, the class of "the Olympians." He joined the Coast Guard and eventually graduated with a Masters from Cal State LA in Education, teaching high school students for 21 years. He married at 29 years old, had 3 children, and moved to Burbank for work related reasons. In his lifetime of 89 years, Keith has attended a record 68 Rose Parades! He and his wife fancied the Fallbrook marching band, investigated the area, and moved there in 2000.

Not having lived in Eagle Rock for decades at this point, why still be in touch? It was a "good place to live" he told me. I "knew everybody" and his family to this day owns a home on Alumni Ave. that his grandfather built.

After being an ERVHS member for years, Keith finally had had enough with the bother of annual dues and became our most recent Life Member. Thank you! How lucky are we he got tired of our reminders?! Eagle Rock roots run deep with Keith and we are honored to have him on our roster!

-Katie Taylor