



West Adams Matters

"To the Manor Reborn" in Harvard Heights

Tour Grand Historic Homes and Enjoy A Sumptuous Feast at WAHA's 24th Annual Holiday Tour, December 4 & 5

WAHA will celebrate the holiday season with To the Manor Reborn in Harvard Heights, at the 24th Annual Holiday Historic Homes Tour and Progressive Dinner, on Saturday, December 4, and Sunday, December 5. We'll make merry amid bright lights and bedecked homes, toasting the season with champagne and an enticing holiday feast.

The tour will take place in one of Historic West Adams' unique and distinctive neighborhoods – one that is a favorite of film and television location scouts (indeed, a number of the homes on this year's tour were featured in the TV series "Monk").



In 1899, the land bounded by what are now Western and Normandie Avenues, Pico Boulevard and the Santa Monica Freeway was mostly vacant. Indeed, Western was no more than a "narrow dirt crossroad" while the Pico Street electric train line from downtown ended a half-mile east. Charles F. Stuart's farm sat at the corner of Western and Washington, while Henry C. Jensen's brick manufacturing operation occupied "the east side of Western between 16th and Washington," according to the City Directory. Mostly there was dust, sagebrush and barley.

Nonetheless, several local businessmen decided to build a golf course at this country location. The opening of the new Los Angeles Country Club, the "Pico and Western Links" located to the north and west of the intersection, was the social

(continued on page 6)



WAHA Membership Potluck

Saturday, November 13 3 to 6 p.m.

1915 Virginia Road (Wellington Square)

You're invited to a Potluck gathering of friends and good cheer at Georgia Toliver's historic – and artistic – Wellington Square home. First laid out in 1913, Wellington Square grew up in the 1920s, and today its gracious blocks are filled with many Spanish, Tudor, Norman, and other Revival styles of the period, along with some examples of earlier Craftsman homes. Toliver's striking Spanish Colonial Revival home was designed by P.O. Reynolds and built by James B. Hardman in 1932. Both inside and out, the attention to detail is impressive, from stained and leaded glass windows, original wrought iron, beamed and coved ceilings, and decorative tiled bathrooms and kitchen. Please bring a plate of "finger foods" to share – sweet or savory, but bite-sized, please.



Raphael Soriano's Lukens House at A Crossroad

by Laura Meyers

Four years ago this month, WAHA stepped out of its usual comfort zone of preserving Victorian and Craftsman homes, and embarked on a Don Quixote-like quest to save an overgrown wreck of Modernist architecture. Truly, some people scratched their heads in disbelief.



The Glenn Lukens Home and Studio at 3524 West 27th Street, designed in 1939 by the architect Raphael Soriano, is one of the few architect-designed Modernist buildings in all of West Adams. It is also one of the few extant Soriano residences in Los Angeles. And, it is a mess.

In 2006, the nuisance abatement unit of the City's Building & Safety Department sought to have the property completely abated and demolished as a nuisance. Eric Bronson, Stevie Stern and I spent seven hours at a Building & Safety Commission hearing – in effect, holding hands with an unlikely partner, Ron Carroll, the man who brought ruin to the residence – to argue its historical importance. By day's end – after Carroll lost control and told the

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Another Pending Landmark

West Adams is home to Los Angeles's only remaining Greene and Greene-designed residence, located at 2175 Cambridge St.. Now it is about to be designated officially as a landmark (although its historic character is already protected as a Contributor to the Harvard Heights HPOZ, and through an easement with the Los Angeles Conservancy.) At its meeting held on October 26, the Los Angeles City Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee recommended that the entire City Council "approve the inclusion of the Lucy E. Wheeler/Martin E. Weil House in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments." At press time, that action was pending. ●

WEST ADAMS HAS ANOTHER NEW HCM

Los Angeles City Council Votes to Designate Endangered Mansion

On the heels of the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission voting in July to designate the c. 1914 mansion at 3724 West 27th St. as a Historic Cultural Monument (renaming it the "Hauerwaas-Kusayanagi Residence"), the Los Angeles City Council voted on October 27 to accept the Commission's recommendation and add the property to the City's list of historic resources.

The nomination was prepared by Anne Marie Brooks.

WAHA and residents of Jefferson Park were following this case closely. After it was in the nomination and hearing process, but before the Commission acted, the property had changed hands. The sellers had properly marketed the mansion as historic, and disclosed to the buyers that the Hauerwaas-Kusayanagi Residence was in fact about to be designated as a historic landmark. Community members also told the buyer of the property's potential historic status. The buyer has stated that he plans to build an SB1818 affordable housing project on the site, so the historic preservation community still has work to do to ensure an outcome that is sensitive to the historic character of the residence as well as the neighborhood.

The house was built for Lucy Hauerwaas, the wealthy widow of John A. Hauerwaas, a German immigrant who made his fortune by investing in local real estate and the Wieland Brewery. The second owner, Dr. Masako Kusayanagi, a second generation Japanese-American, purchased the property in 1937. She resided there until she and her family were forcibly

relocated to the Manzanar Relocation camp during WWII. Her family retained ownership of the house until 1954. Logan Westbrooks, a prominent African-American recording executive, purchased the property in 1983 and sold it in 1998 to Father Flanagan's Boys and Girls Home.

Now that it has been officially designated by the City Council, the Hauerwaas-Kusayanagi Residence will be the first Historic Cultural Monument associated with the Japanese-American heritage in Jefferson Park. ●



President's Message by John Patterson

Our WAHA volunteers continue to come through – and with their assistance, bringing great success to our fundraising efforts. A hearty thanks to all who helped make this year's Living History Tour one of the most successful we've seen in a number of years. Combining a unique concept of an all-female cast of important "Trailblazing Women," with timely and organized marketing, we succeeded in actually raising a significant amount of money this year! We hope to extend the impact of the educational value of our efforts, by taking one or two of our "suffragettes" to some of our local schools during the coming year, to underscore the 100th anniversary in California of the "Woman's Right to Vote."

We also just concluded another first: a collaboration with Pasadena Heritage, which brought almost 200 of their annual Craftsman Weekend guests on an exclusive excursion to Historic West Adams. Many had never been to West Adams before, and were thrilled to see the extensive number of Craftsman-era homes that populate our neighborhoods. Several expressed delight in the opportunity to return in December to participate in our Holiday Progressive Dinner, which will explore the manors of Harvard Heights. A great big thank you to all who volunteered as docents, and especially to our wonderful homeowners who so graciously opened their homes to our out-of-town guests!

A delightful "Hoedown" was hosted earlier this month by Suzie and Don Henderson, bringing back WAHA's beloved potlucks. Guests not only enjoyed seeing friends and sharing some great food, but also experienced a good amount of country line dancing and square dancing – with the help of a wonderful caller who kept the allemands and doe-si-does going all afternoon. Be sure to catch a glimpse of the fun on WAHA's facebook page. Another potluck is planned for early November.

It's so fulfilling to see the outpouring of support and camaraderie from our many members and friends. As most of you know, the Holiday Tour is our most important fundraiser of the year, and as such, requires the largest contingent of volunteers. To facilitate organizing those who would like to lend a hand, we've established a new email address: Volunteer@WestAdamsHeritage.org. If you haven't helped out on this event in the past, our Holiday tour is a really exciting way to initiate the season, and it helps us fund our preservation efforts as well as our community activities throughout the year. We'll look forward to welcoming some new faces in the coming weeks!

John Patterson may be reached by e-mail at President@WestAdamsHeritage.org



"Trailblazing Women" at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery A Great Success!

WAHA presented the annual Living History Tour at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery on one of the hottest days of this year, but the show went on without a hitch. For this event, actors portray, at graveside, historic personages who are "permanent residents" buried at the cemetery. This year we portrayed nine pioneering women — a group of women who were social reformers and the first in their fields — to the acclaim of all who attended. And many people did attend -- we sold out! Thank you to all who helped support this event.

(More photos of our wonderful actors on page 12)

Pictured counter-clockwise: Sharlene Choy as Anna May Wong; Maahra Hill as Georgia Hill Robinson; Leah Miller as Minnie Roswell Langstadter; and Marianne Muellerleile performing as Caroline Severance.



Stepping Out

Rancho Los Cerritos Celebrates the Harvest, and the Christmas Holiday

Sunday, November 14 and Sunday, November 28 (garden tours)

Saturday and Sunday, December 11 and 12 (candlelight Navidad holiday tours)

Rancho Los Cerritos, 4600 Virginia Road (Long Beach)

The Rancho Los Cerritos Historic Site is a public museum open for tours, programs and events, including two days of Autumn garden tours in November, and candlelight holiday (Navidad) tours the weekend of December 11-12.

Built in 1844, the adobe home and grounds echo with the rich history of Spanish, Mexican and American California and with the families who helped transform Southern California from its ranching beginnings to a modern, urban society. The two-story Monterey-style adobe is primarily furnished to reflect occupants and lifestyles from the 1860s-1880s. The site, a National, State and Long Beach Historic Landmark, also includes historic gardens and a research library and archives. It is owned by the City of Long Beach.



Don Juan Temple and his family

In 1784 a Spanish soldier, Manuel Nieto, received a grant of 300,000 acres as a reward for his military service and to encourage settlement in California. Nieto's acreage was reduced in 1790 because of a dispute with the Mission San Gabriel, but he still laid claim to 167,000 acres stretching from the hills north of Whittier to the sea, and from today's Los Angeles River to the Santa Ana River. Nieto constructed a dwelling for his family near the present town of Whittier, stocked the land with cattle and horses, and cultivated corn. Upon his death in 1804, his children inherited his property.

After years of joint ownership, Nieto's lands were formally divided into six parcels in 1834. Daughter Manuela Cota received the area known as Rancho Los Cerritos ("Ranch of the Little Hills"), approximately 27,000 acres bordered on the west by the (now) Los Angeles River and on the south by the Pacific Ocean. She and husband Guillermo built several adobes on the land and raised twelve children, as well as cattle and crops. Following her death, her heirs sold the Rancho to Massachusetts-born John Temple in December, 1843.

Temple constructed the present two-story Monterey-style adobe in 1844 as headquarters for his large-scale cattle operation. To supplement his mercantile business in Los Angeles, he pastured as many as 15,000 head and engaged in the lucrative hide and tallow trade. Although Rancho Los Cerritos was only used by Temple as a summer home and he maintained his main residence in Los Angeles, much care and expense was lavished on an elaborate formal garden at the Rancho. Significant trees from this time still exist.

In 1866 Temple sold his rancho to the firm Flint, Bixby & Co. for \$20,000. Rancho Los Cerritos remained occupied by the Bixby family until the mid-1940s, and was acquired by the City of Long Beach in 1955. Sarah Bixby Smith penned these words about the Rancho's gardens back in the 1920s:

*Don Juan built a garden miles from anywhere;
Fenced in from the mesa, four wide acres there.
To mark off beds and pathways he brought brick around the Horn,
And there behind his ten-foot fence, a garden rare was born.*

First planted by John "Don Juan" Temple in the 1840s, the gardens and grounds reflect over 100 years of change. Some trees date to the 1840s when John Temple, owner of the 27,000-acre Rancho from 1844-1866, planted the first garden. In 1931, renowned landscape architect Ralph Cornell created an estate garden for Llewellyn Sr. and Avis Bixby, preserving Temple's remaining trees, reintroducing flora that was here in the 19th century, and adding fruit trees and native plants.



Explore the landscape with a docent-led tour, on the second and fourth Sundays in November, November 14 and 28. These free tours are offered on the half hour at 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m., and at this time of year, visitors can expect to see late fall fruit (persimmons, pomegranates),

(continued on next page)

Don Juan Temple's 19th century garden

Around the House

Harbor City Molding

By Charlie Jenkins

We have found an affordable source for molding and shiplap in a small locally owned sawmill in Harbor City. I bought a 1913 Craftsman in Arlington Heights and needed to replace some shiplap on the house. I only needed 60 feet. I tried finding it already cut but this was not possible because of the pattern. I therefore started to look into getting it made. Everywhere I called said it was going to cost \$1,300 to \$1,800 due to the saw set up fees. My paint contractor, Patrick Bustad, told me to check with Harbor City to see if they could make it. I called and spoke to Andre and he asked me to bring him a sample of what I wanted. After five minutes he agreed that they could help me. I had two sizes and they could make both for the reasonable price of \$850. My shiplap was made quickly, exactly to pattern and without any hassle.

I highly recommend them.

Located in Harbor City, California, Harbor City Molding offers custom molding for residential and commercial purposes. They specialize in wood molding for custom and historical homes. From crown molding to base and casing, they have everything you need all in one place.

In business for 35 years, Harbor City Molding features 27 different molding designs. You can always count on the family-owned and locally operated company for a great selection, competitive prices, and special orders. They offer prompt turnaround for in-stock items or special orders.

For more information, visit the website at:

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Monday – Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ●

Rancho Los Cerritos

continued from prior page

Toyon berries beginning to take on their red color, and the golden ginkgo. If entertaining guests over Thanksgiving, consider showing off the gardens with a stroll that Sunday—and work off a few calories!

Tickets go on sale for Navidad in Early California after November 1. These popular Candlelight Tours will take place on Saturday and Sunday, December 11 and 12, and tours will begin every 10 minutes between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Experience a December evening in 1850 as you tour the Temples' home by candlelight, meet their guests, and enjoy seasonal decorations including colorful nacimientos and greenery. Listen in as young men and women practice the "Pastorela," a popular morality play, which they will perform in homes around the Los Angeles plaza on Christmas Eve. As you tour the site you will learn about Mexican and early American holiday festivities, while also getting a glimpse of daily life, economic viewpoints and the changing landscape of the Los Angeles region.

Cost is \$10 for the general public. To make a reservation, call (562) 570-1755 or visit www.rancholoscerritos.org, check the calendar section and download a reservation form. ●

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To the Manor Reborn Holiday Tour

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event of the season, with an orchestra playing the latest hits, like “There’ll Be A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight.” Hundreds of guests – most of the prominent members of Los Angeles Society – arrived by surreys, bicycles and trolleys.

Soon began a wild decade of growth in the areas east of the country club and Western Avenue. South of Washington Boulevard were erected mansions, each worth a whopping \$50,000 or more.

To the north, where this year’s annual Holiday Historic Homes Tour and Progressive Dinner, “To the Manor Reborn,” will be held, many impressive two-story residences were built, many in a fashionable Craftsman style displaying Tudor influences.

In this neighborhood, now collectively called “Harvard Heights,” nearly a dozen different subdivisions were laid out soon after the turn of the century, including the Electric Heights tract, and the Westmoreland Heights tract. Streets bore the names of famous colleges, such as Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge and Hobart, which helped to give the neighborhood an upscale reputation. Too, a land covenant stipulated that all houses built within these tracts must cost more than \$2,500, a sum substantial enough to result in homes that were often grand in scale.

Prominent architects worked feverishly in Harvard Heights. Today Harvard Heights boasts the only existing Greene and Greene house in Los Angeles, as well as homes designed by the Heinemann brothers, Hunt and Eager, and A.M. Edelman. Perhaps no architect was more prolific than Frank M. Tyler, who designed dozens of homes in this and nearby neighborhoods, and who lived for a time on Oxford.

In days gone by, a stroll in Harvard Heights might have brought you in contact with Arthur Selberg, a world-class aviator; the builder of the city’s first movie palaces, Henry C. Jensen; Leslie G. Canfield, the lead saxophonist in Paul Whiteman’s orchestra or Edward Trinkkeller, the master ironworker who designed the gates at Hearst Castle.

One of the homes on this year’s Holiday Tour was erected by Jensen, who arrived in Los Angeles in 1887 and began producing bricks (a trade he learned from his father in Germany) used for construction throughout Southern California.

Jensen also began to buy up land in what became Harvard Heights and, across Western Avenue, Angelus Vista. Jensen was the developer for Westmoreland Heights, and he also designed and built several beautiful homes in the area, including his residence at 1728 Westmoreland Blvd. – where he and his family lived until his death in 1944 – and the extravagant home across the street at 1731 Westmoreland Blvd. But the public’s imagination was captured by Jensen’s extravagant movie



palaces, including the Raymond Theater in Pasadena. These movie palaces, managed with his sons Walter and Robert, were fitting settings for the romantic escapist fare produced by the growing film industry, and the Jazz Age society of the 1920s flocked to Jensen theaters in great numbers.

Following the stock market crash and the westward migration of residents to Hancock Park and Beverly Hills, many of the large residences were carved into boarding houses or board-and-care facilities. After decades of urban blight, residents took action in the 1980s and 1990s, forming a strong neighborhood association with active members from the

HARVARD HEIGHTS

148—BEAUTIFUL LOTS—148

LOCATION Between Pico and Washington Streets and east of Western Avenue, adjoining West Adams Heights (Ridge Tract) extending north to Pico Street toward the center of the city from the Nevin and Angelus Vista Tracts.

Harvard Heights is high, level and slightly, commanding a beautiful view of the mountains and foot-hills. Some of the most costly and attractive homes of Los Angeles are building in the immediate vicinity. Unquestionably, Harvard Heights is in the coming residence section of our city.

THE STREET CAR SERVICE is unimpeded, having three streets on them, one on the north, one through the tract and one only one block south.

BUILDING RESTRICTIONS—Two-story houses, not less than \$2000. Full Municipal Water on All Lots.

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community's diverse ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

WAHA's traditional holiday tour features a sumptuous progressive dinner, with each course served in one of the featured properties. We also schedule a Sunday afternoon walking tour, without the food.

The tour will raise funds for WAHA, which since its founding in 1983 has used revenues from a variety of tours to support preservation of the community's architectural and cultural heritage.

WAHA has been dressing up and opening our holiday doors to visitors for 24 years. Since its inception, we have created, cooked up, and dished out not only 23 main courses, but also at least 50 different appetizers, 25-plus desserts, a score of delicious salads, and countless variations (from curried to gingered) of pumpkin and other pureed soups -- served up each year to some 600 visitors and volunteers.

As always, many, many, many volunteers are needed for this year's Holiday Tour. All the houses and kitchens need to be staffed on the nights of the Tour. And we rely on Tour Shepherds to escort our tour guests from house to house. But in addition there are lots of volunteers who assist behind the scenes in other roles, and on other days. Can you help with any of these tasks:

- Prep Cook – cook or bake in your own home the week before the Tour
- Volunteer Dinners - pick up and deliver volunteer dinners on Saturday 12/4 and Sunday 12/5, tentatively from 4 to 6 p.m. both days
- WAHA Holiday Party – decorate, set-up and otherwise assist with this party (for our members and wonderful volunteers) on Sunday afternoon, December 12
- Crafty types – we need your creative skills (and possibly your glue guns) to make tourgoer badges and ornaments

(continued on page 8)



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City Living Realty has been selling architectural treasures in Historic West Adams since 1981.

AVAILABLE

Spacious Jefferson Park Bungalow — Century-old charm combined with modern updates. Hardwood floors, painted trim., two fireplaces, 2 BR, 1 BA. Jefferson Park is pending HPOZ status. Probate -- needs court approval (no loan contingency). \$310,000. *David Raposa*

Rare Offering: L.A.'s only Greene & Greene Residence. The Lucy E. Wheeler Residence, c. 1905., is the former home of noted restoration architect Martin Eli Weil. Protected by a conservancy easement, the Wheeler Residence is located in the Harvard Heights HPOZ historic district in West Adams. Original lighting and built-ins, 2,600 square feet, 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths. \$699,000. *David Raposa*

Jefferson Park Bungalow — Needs restoration. Original woodwork (painted), 2 BR, 1 BA, inglenook, built-ins and great windows. Probate, needs court approval. \$229,000. *David Raposa*

Opportunity to Shape A Streetscape — Four Craftsman/Victorian homes in a row in Harvard Heights HPOZ. Each property has an intact historic exterior but the interiors have been altered. All need TLC to restore to single family use and bring into compliance with city codes. Angel(s) needed! – perfect for a group of friends to purchase adjacent homes. Asking prices range from \$345,000 to \$395,000. *David Raposa*

IN ESCROW

Jefferson Park Bungalow — *Adam Janeiro, Buyer's agent*

Arlington Heights Landmark — *Suzanne Henderson, Buyer's agent*

Kinney Heights Restored Craftsman with lauded eco-sensitive landscaping — *David Raposa, Seller's and Buyer's agent*

SOLD

Valley Classic — *Adam Janeiro, Buyer's agent*

*David Raposa,
Suzanne Henderson, Adam Janeiro,
Darby Bayliss, Conrado Alberto,
Carlton Joseph, Jane Harrington*

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WAHA Matters

To the Manor Reborn Holiday Tour

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- Shopping - Trader Joe's, 99 Cent Store, Smart & Final, Von's, the Flower Mart — they'll all get a WAHA visit or two
- Holiday decorating – some of our tour properties can use a helping hand hanging ornaments, garland and other seasonal "attire" during the week before the Tour
- Street decorating - install signs at Tour houses on Saturday 12/4 by 1 p.m.

If you are available any of these times, please raise your hand and volunteer. Please contact us via e-mail at volunteer@westadamsheritage.org.

The Holiday Tour is WAHA's major annual fundraising event, and helps pay for our award-winning Evening Strolls as well as our many preservation support and advocacy activities. We encourage all of our members to contribute to that effort by taking the Holiday Tour and Progressive Dinner — and bringing their friends — on the day they are not volunteering.

If you purchase your ticket by November 15, prices are \$70 for non-members, \$60 for WAHA members. After November 15, all tickets are \$85 apiece. Each year, some of you wish to purchase large groups of tickets, and we love that you do so – but please contact us ASAP to reserve your block of seats. Please be sure to return the forms and your checks as early as possible, so that you and your guests will not be disappointed. It is not unusual for this event to sell out.

If you have joined WAHA at a membership level that may provide tickets to you and a guest for this tour, please DO contact us immediately (and no later than November 10) with your reservation, so we can be sure to accommodate you.

As always, if you just want to peek inside the homes and you ARE volunteering for the event, you may do so -- free -- during the Sunday afternoon walking tour.

As you can see, WAHA's Holiday Tour is a complex event. If you would like more information about any aspect of the tour, contact Tour Chair Lindsay Wiggins at tours@westadamsheritage.org.

The Fine Print:

- Advance Ticket Sales Only — No Walk-ins!
- Holiday Tour & Progressive Dinner: General admission, \$85 (Early Bird price \$70, postmarked by November 15); WAHA members, \$60 (must be postmarked by November 15; after that the price is \$85)
Saturday, December 4: Docent-led tours depart on the half-hour from 3 p.m. through 6:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 5: Docent-led tours depart on the half-hour from 3:30 p.m. through 5:45 p.m.
- Holiday Walking Tour (Sunday afternoon only): \$30
Check in between Noon and 2 p.m. Houses close by 3 p.m.

To order tickets in advance, please send in your reservation form and a check made payable to "WAHA" to:

WAHA Holiday Tour
2209 Virginia Road
Los Angeles, CA 90016

Please include an e-mail address or phone number for confirmation. Confirmations will primarily be sent out via e-mail, and not until November 20th or thereafter. (As you might imagine, since this tour routinely sells out, we are juggling who is on what tour until nearly the last minute!) If you didn't receive the invitation and form in the mail, you may log onto WAHA's website, www.WestAdamsHeritage.org, and print it out from there.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, or to confirm reservations, please call the WAHA Reservations Hotline at 323-732-4223, e-mail wahaholiday@aol.com, or visit www.WestAdamsHeritage.org.

[Please note that we have provided two distinct e-mail addresses for different purposes in this article, and we repeat them here:

To VOLUNTEER, write volunteer@westadamsheritage.org

For TOUR INFORMATION, and RESERVATIONS, GROUP TOURS, etc., write wahaholiday@aol.com] ●

Preservation Matters

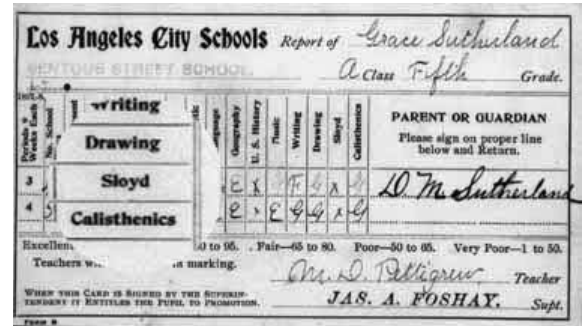
Sneek Peek into LAUSD's Historic Trove Friday, November 12 10 a.m to 1 p.m.

An art collection? At LAUSD?

What's in the Art and Artifact Collection at the Los Angeles Unified School District? The answer may surprise you — more than 30,000 historical artifacts and visual resources, dating back to the opening of the District's first school in 1855:

- Paintings, murals, sculptures, prints and decorative arts
- Photographs, negatives, slides and proof sheets that capture school activities, architecture and Los Angeles history from the 1910s to 1980s
- Films made by LAUSD branches to document programs as well as instructional films
- The Carnegie, Dawson and Californiana rare book collections
- Ancient Greek, Roman, Etruscan and Mesopotamian antiquities including vases, coins, tools, cuneiform tablets and jewelry
- Antique schoolhouse furniture, memorabilia & instructional equipment
- LAUSD administrative and instructional publications and records

Join the Los Angeles City Historical Society for a rare tour of this fascinating archive and collection on Friday, November 12, from 10am to 1pm at 1330 West Pico Blvd, LA 90015 (next to the 110 Harbor Fwy, on its west side). Cost is \$10, and an RSVP is necessary to lacityhistory@gmail.com. ●



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Preservation Matters

Glenn Lukens Home & Studio *continued from page 1*

Commission that he was planning to move back into the house, the Commission ruled both FOR and AGAINST us. The decision was to abate the property, giving the department the legal ability to clean it up, but to not permit its demolition, since we had provided enough evidence that the property was historic.

Score one for the historic preservation community. Now the real work of designating the property as a landmark began.

We had quickly nominated the Glen Lukens Home and Studio as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument despite its truly miserable (aesthetic) condition. The property grounds and house itself were filled with trash, and although WAHA knew this was an important Modern structure, we were uncertain how it would be received by the Cultural Heritage Commission and/or other City officials.

Nonetheless, it was clear that the Lukens property was very important. The Lukens Home and Studio is an example of International Style architecture as it transitioned in response to the Southern California environment. It displays characteristic Modernist elements, including ribbon windows and extensive use of glass, smooth stucco skin, flat roof, low horizon line and horizontal volumes cantilevered over the landscape, walls and glass surfaces kept on the same plane, and lively seamless indoor-outdoor flow.

Soriano's importance was also clear to us. Soriano was an advocate of the new construction techniques and building materials developed just before and after World War II. His body of work is characterized by transparent exterior walls, indoor-outdoor relationships, open floor plans, and floating roofs. Soriano was one of the most crucial architects in the generation that followed Rudolph Schindler in Los Angeles, a generation centered around the Case Study House program and which included such luminaries as Craig Ellwood, Pierre Koenig, and Richard Neutra, all of whom Soriano worked with. Although he designed more than 150 homes and other buildings during his career, only about 50 were actually erected, and of those, only about a dozen remain, including this house.

The Glen Lukens Home and Studio is also specifically significant because it marks Soriano's transition from International Style to California Modern. The significance of the house is in its configuration, which began to establish the strong indoor-outdoor relationship of Soriano's best work. The Lukens Home and Studio's U-shaped plan is organized around a raised terrace linking living spaces, working spaces and the outdoors. Its interior was extremely efficient, utilizing built-in furniture and a corner fireplace.



Lukens' living room as photographed by Julius Shulman in 1940; today, before restoration (new owner Mike Chapman pictured above)

Excerpted from the book, *My Hero: Extraordinary People on the Heroes Who Inspire Them*, edited by The My Hero Project. Architect Frank O. Gehry remembers:

"I've had many heroes in my life. I was very poor in my early years, and everything seemed beyond my reach.

I didn't know what I wanted to be, so I went to work as a truck driver and took night classes in art at the University of Southern California. I loved ceramics – although I didn't do very well in those courses – because I loved the glazes; I was fascinated with the science of how they're made. Glen Lukens was my ceramics teacher there. He'd cracked the formula for a Chinese blue glaze, and was helping to create a ceramics industry for poor people in Haiti.

Glen changed the course of my life. He was building a house with the architect Raphael Soriano, and he had the feeling that I might like to see the process, so he dragged me over there one day. Soriano was there, wearing an all-black outfit with a black beret, giving directions in his accented English (he was from the Isle of Rhodes), and telling men how to put up steel. I really got into it.

The next day, Glen called me into his office. He said, "You know, I have this hunch. Will you go along with me?" I said, "Whatever you say, boss." He signed me up (and paid for) a night school architecture class. That class was the first time I did something that got people saying, "Hey, there's something going on here." They liked what I did and I enjoyed it.

And the rest is history.

Preservation Matters



Glen Lukens, the original owner-occupant, is worthy of note as a pioneering artist, an arts educator who taught a generation of artists, and a progressive thinker who advocated for integration and equal rights. Lukens fought poverty, here and in Haiti, and helped develop new industry in that country after WWII. In addition, when the U.S. entered the war and required that all metals be devoted to the war effort, the government called upon Lukens' skills in ceramics technology to develop a non-metallic cookware (stoneware pottery) for use on the "homefront."

In the 1930s, at a time when an emphasis on design and decoration dominated American pottery production, Lukens helped elevate contemporary ceramics to a fine art form. He cast aside tradition to explore the expressive potential of ceramic materials and pioneered a bold approach to pottery, creating simple, massive, Modernist forms that married bright colors and glazes to raw surfaces. Lukens helped create what is now known as the California School of fine art ceramics, and was known for his landmark innovations in glazing, which gave rise to what became known as vibrant California Colors.

As a professor at USC, among the artists Lukens taught and mentored are Beatrice Wood, Harrison McIntosh, Barbara Willis, Vivika Heino, Eugene White (who became head of Pepperdine's Art Department), Carlton Ball, and Laura Andreson, among others. Lukens was also an early teacher of the famed architect Frank Gehry. Lukens also taught and mentored many Haitian artists, most famously Marcus Douyon and Myrton Purkiss.

We had also learned that this one house actually marked a seminal moment in architecture history: the day that Frank Gehry decided to become an architect (see sidebar).

Indeed, Gehry himself ended up writing a letter to the Mayor and to the Commission, urging that the Lukens property be designated as a landmark – and it was. On April 11, 2007, the Glen Lukens Home and Studio was added to the City's list of Historic Cultural Monuments as HCM No. 866.

WAHA's battle to save the house had just begun.

Building and Safety officials were still smarting from their "loss" at their Commission, when they were not permitted to demolish the structure. Even though the abatement granted the department the power to clean up the property and to keep it in good repair, they did not do so. By early 2010, the situation had gone from bad to worse. Carroll was arrested – he was living illegally in the house, with small children. Some time after the arrest, the City went to court and had a Receiver appointed to oversee the property, and return it to "compliance" with all ordinances and orders (including those related to its being a historic landmark.)

Unfortunately, the Receiver almost immediately listed the house for sale — for all cash, at what at first was marketed as "land value." Then, it was advertised as its "façade is intact" — as if the landmark designation did not include the interior and/or the grounds, both of which include character-defining features. Behind the scenes, WAHA and the Los Angeles Conservancy raised a ruckus, each organization writing stern disclosure letters and lodging them with the real estate agent, the Receiver and the Superior Court where the matter was lodged. We were worried that a buyer would misunderstand the requirements.

And here is the happy ending to this chapter of the story:

Just over a month ago, a great new owner closed escrow on the property. Mike Chapman, a realtor and former costumer, has restored seven prior historic properties, ranging from a Victorian home within a historic district and a historic church (both in Ashland, Oregon); a Craftsman bungalow in a historic district (in Los Angeles); and four mid-century homes (in Palm Springs). He has won a Preservation Award from the Palm Springs Modern Committee, and he actively supported PS ModCom's preservation advocacy.

His stated goals: Chapman says he plans "to restore this house to a museum quality" landmark and that "I intend to live in the house as my home." ●



The Lukens House garden side in the 1940s; today, with Chapman

WAHA Matters

Trailblazing Women at Angelus Rosedale

A photo gallery



A BEVVY OF PIONEERING BEAUTIES

TOP ROW, from left: Leah Miller (Minnie Roswell Langstadter, 1863-1936); Wendy Calhoun (Nellie Lutchter, 1912-2007); Marianne Muellerleile (Caroline Maria Seymour Severance, 1820-1914), top right; Arabella Benson (Clara Bradley Burdette, 1855-1954) and Georgia Toliver (Dora Fellows Haynes, 1859-1934), pictured together

MIDDLE ROW, from left: Sharlene Choy (Anna May Wong, 1905-1961); Jean Cade (Hattie McDaniel, 1895-1952); Maahra Hill (Georgia A. Hill Robinson, 1879-1961)

BOTTOM ROW: Mitzi March Mogul (Clara Baldwin Stocker, 1847-1929)

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We support preservation of the West Adams community's architectural heritage and beautification activities, and seek to educate Los Angeles' citizens and others about cultural heritage and restoration techniques.



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Look for more details on these events on WAHA's website, www.WestAdamsHeritage.org

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Saturday, November 13, 3-6 p.m.:



WAHA membership potluck -- we are gathering at Georgia Toliver's wonderful Wellington Square home (see page 1)



DECEMBER

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See page 1 for complete information

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