



EAGLE ROCK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring, 2018

Fire in the Hills – Before '64 and After

Santa Ana winds were blowing that day, the chaparral was high as the hills had not burned in years. Eagle Rock's postwar building boom had led to the development of many properties closer to the hills, in demand because of their views and hillside location. As the area above Hill Drive had always been desirable, they joined many elegant period-revival structures built there since the beginning of Eagle Rock's settlement. The last farmland had been built upon in the "Lemon Grove" development in 1949 on Hartwick, Mount Helena, and Wameda Avenues and Arbor Dell Road. Many of these new homes were roofed with wood shingles in the popular Ranch style.

The Eagle Rock Sentinel reported: "The disastrous blaze that hit the local community Monday was one of three major fires that broke out in tinder-dry brush covered mountain areas of the Verdugo Hills-San Rafael Hills area." A shift in the winds in mid-afternoon carried the fire west from the hills in western Pasadena and soon the whole ridge above Hill Drive was burning. "More than 60 fire department units, comprising 300 firemen, battled the blaze as it raced down the Eagle Rock slopes. While many elderly residents near the fire line evacuated their homes, other residents remained with their homes, wetting down the rooftops with garden hoses to prevent flying cinders from igniting shingle and tar paper roofs." On March

16, 1964, nine homes were completely destroyed and seven heavily damaged. Fortunately, no deaths or injuries were reported.

We will show newly-acquired footage of this event and Joe Friezer's prize-winning photos for the Eagle Rock Sentinel. We will explore the recurring advent of wind-driven brush fires in our hills, their causes, and the efforts to prevent them, at the Center for the Arts Eagle Rock, 2225 Colorado Boulevard, April 17 at 7:00. The Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society welcomes the public. Light refreshments will be served.

Fire
in the
Hills

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EAGLE ROCK VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CENTER FOR THE ARTS, EAGLE ROCK 2225 COLORADO
TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 7:00 FREE AND OPEN TO ALL
VISIT OUR WEBSITE EAGLEROCKHISTORY.ORG

President's Message

Hello, Eagle Rock!

Another note from your new(ish) Historical Society president to tell you what we've been up to and what's coming up. Our first Community Scanning Day had several members come to learn more of how they could scan their old photos and slides. In between those inquiries, we put the array of scanners to work and digitized some of the archive, which hasn't been scanned before. A special thanks is due to Anne Mar, Assistant College Archivist/Metadata Specialist at Occidental College Special Collections, for coming over on a Saturday morning to help with the event. We hope to make this a monthly or bi-monthly process, including it in the Open Archives on Saturday mornings from 10am-noon on the lower level of the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock.

California Digital Newspaper Collection

We are continuing our work collaborating with Occidental College Special Collections and Archives, and with Highland Park Heritage Trust on the storage, curation, and digitization of our extensive collection of newspapers and microfilm of local and regional publications. We and other community and regional organizations are contributing to gradually making these resources available through the California Digital Newspaper Collection. Check it out! <https://cdnc.ucr.edu>

The Occidental College Special Collections and College Archive Joe and Henk Friezer Photograph Negative Collection

We alerted Occidental College Special Collections to the existence of this extensive archive of photographs a few years ago. This gift by the Friezer family to Oxy allows unparalleled access to views of the region from 1955 to the present. A few of these photographs grace this newsletter and more will be viewed in our upcoming program.

Calling all archivists!

Are you or someone you know just itching to dig in and help with our archives? Maybe you're looking for a new career and need some experience? Or maybe you have a little bit of valuable time to spare for a worthy cause. No experience needed, just a desire to learn and pass on knowledge to future generations! Stop by our open archives on Saturdays from 10am-noon.

Calling all authors!

Do you have a desire to do light research and then write about local history? Or maybe you're an "old timer" with stories about the olden days. We're always looking for articles (or ideas for articles) for both our website and our newsletter.

David Dellinger, President

president@eaglerockhistory.org

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

Contributors, Katie Taylor, David Dellinger, Eric Warren

Visit our website at:

eaglerockhistory.org

It's time to renew your membership. If you have already paid your 2018 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.

History is Made of This

Indefatigable press photographer, Joe Friezer, shot the photographs on the following pages during and just after the destructive hillside blaze on March 19, 1964. Several were published in the Eagle Rock Sentinel. All are courtesy of the Occidental College Special Collections and College Archive Joe and Henk Friezer Photograph Negative Collection. The dramatic photograph at right was given a prize for journalistic photography that year.



The Eagle Rock Sentinel caption: "A woman flees from her home on Hartwick Avenue in Eagle Rock Monday afternoon as flames sizzled over the top of mountains from Glendale and raced down the slope. Powerful winds, careening through the area like a drunken, invisible giant knocked down trees, smashed signs and windows and fanned the hot fire that engulfed 16 Eagle Rock homes, completely destroying eight and partially destroying eight others, most of them located in the canyon-like streets north of Hill Drive. Heroic firemen and volunteer residents (on rooftop) saved the homes on this street."



Firemen struggle up steep hillsides to get water on the thick chaparral.



On La Roda Avenue, firemen wet down vegetation and vulnerable houses.

Our Town, Our History

The Sentinel's caption:
"Flames did extensive damage to the \$100,000 Russell Anderson mansion at 2223 Hill Drive at the peak of the fire storm, but precocious winds whipped the fire off in another direction to save the home from being completely destroyed."



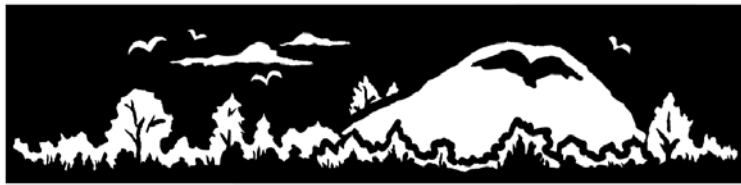
"A heap of ashes and rubble is all that was left of this home at 5351 Hilltop Road owned by Marvin Lyons... Firemen compared it with the disastrous Bel-Air fire of a few years ago." This home was never rebuilt.

Close to Home

The editor lived at 5357 Vincent during the fire. Mr. Heineman's home was a block south of ours. As I walked up Townsend Avenue toward my house, I saw the palm trees on Hill Drive burning. Our home was saved by the efforts of my father and friends putting out cinders on our roof while firemen doused the nearby hillside.

The Sentinel caption reads: "L. M. Heineman home at 5320 Vincent Avenue was engulfed in flames that struck the community Monday. Second story of the fashionable home was extensively damaged." In the photos below, Mr. Heineman views his destroyed bedroom and damaged stairwell. Mr. Heineman sold the home in its burned out condition. The new owner restored it.





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

**FIRE IN THE HILLS
1964; BEFORE AND AFTER
TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018 7:00**

**ICE CREAM SOCIAL
MEMORIE, MUSIC, PRIZES
SUNDAY, AUGUST 5, 2018, 1:00**

**TO BE ANNOUNCED
LIFE ON THE LA RIVER?
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2018 7:00**

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 _____

The Member's Corner



Elizabeth Pieslor

A big welcome to our newest member of the Historical Society! Elizabeth and partner Jacob Lang moved here several months ago after a 5-year stint in Los Feliz. They found themselves hanging out in Eagle Rock more and more often, so when friends of theirs started a new business in town, she took a chance and looked on Craigslist. Voila, the "little house of our dreams" was available to rent and they haven't looked back.

Born and raised in San Diego, Elizabeth came north for college at UC LA, majoring in English Literature. She has been working for Noton Publishing ever since. Her interest in community history started in Los Feliz when she enjoyed looking up historical photos of her neighborhood via the LA Public Library website. She has brought that same curiosity to Eagle Rock. She's also having "fun getting to know the neighbors and finding the favorite spots." She has read up (already!) on Eagle Rock's history and had an immediate fondness for Eagle Rock Lumber and the Italian Bakery (those cookies!). In her free time, Elizabeth enjoys reading, learning, baking, and being outdoors as much as she can; she loves her new proximity to the mountains. She told me she is "looking forward to getting to know the neighbors even better" and the feeling is mutual. Welcome to the neighborhood!

-Katie Taylor