



EAGLE ROCK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Summer, 2026

\$Two Dollars\$ Never Tasted So Good!!!

Ice cream and summertime go hand in hand. Need we say more? Oh wait, **we can!** Twenty-five plus years strong, our annual Ice Cream Social is BACK. What a way to wind down the summer than with a final party with friends and neighbors!

JOIN US on **Sunday, August 16th** in the wonderfully air conditioned Center for the Arts Eagle Rock building at 2225 Colorado Blvd. right here in lovely Eagle Rock! This old fashioned event lives on again with **FREE ADMISSION** for all and only **two dollars a scoop** ice cream with endless toppings - woot woot! We will also have **popcorn** and a thorough **bakery** section if ice cream isn't enough for you.

THE MUSIC! We are SO excited this year to welcome back *Fifth Friday* folk dance band, a

subset of the Pasadena folk dance co-op who **WILL** be welcoming dancers of all ages from the audience to join them (be ready!) **AND** new to the Ice Cream Social is *Mighty Good Road*, a collaborative music project started by the one and only Rob Getzschman, playing for us familiar and yet unexpected Americana sounds!

For the history curious minds we will have the Altadena Historical Society in house informing you of their mission and programming, our own tables showcasing photos, merchandise and upcoming events (and recent victories!), **AND** information from our roommates and friends at the Center for the Arts Eagle Rock....and **MORE!**

This is our biggest annual public program and chance to meet you. We want you to get to know us and our services for you. We are a volunteer run organization and are looking to keep our membership active, our archives organized, and our digital preservation goals ever running! Our mission is to keep our shared history preserved and remembered for years to come. We want to engage with you, our local community. Come on by and have some fun!

WHEN: Sunday, August 16th from 1pm - 4pm

WHERE: Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock @ 2225 Colorado Blvd. **Street park only!** ADA entrance with elevator is on the street level, enter through the brown side gate - signs will be posted!

The cherry on top:

FREE ENTRY so the whole clan can come!

SEE YOU ON THE 16TH OF AUGUST!

IT'S COOL!

SUNDAE

AUGUST 16TH

1-4 P.M.

2\$-A-DIP ICE CREAM
"ENDLESS" TOPPINGS
ICY LEMONADE
BAKE SHOP

THE EAGLE ROCK VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

FREE ADMISSION ! BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY !

• **FIFTH FRIDAY FOLK BAND**
AND FOLK DANCERS

• **MUSIC BY MIGHTY GOOD ROAD**

• **GAMES AND POPCORN**

CENTER FOR THE ARTS, EAGLE ROCK 2225 COLORADO BLVD

President's Message

Hello Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society member!

Thank you for your continued support of the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society. We are here due to your generosity, and we thank you.

Speaking of generosity, recently you may have seen us in the news regarding preserving the Sparkletts building. While my name is on the historical cultural application, the outcome was the direct result of a few community members who donated the funds for preservationist Steven Luftman to artfully document and advocate for the preservation of the Sparkletts building. Steven did great work for us a few years ago in preserving the Jay Risk service station. In addition to donations, special thanks go to board member Frank Parrello who worked closely with Steven and was the driving force inside the historical society to keep the process going. Thank you all!

The historical society only has 4 main public events per year, and the main event of the year is our upcoming Ice Cream Social on Sunday (Sundae?) August 16th. It is both the most rewarding event, and also the most resource intensive for our small team. If you have some spare time before or after the event, please write to me, president@eaglerockhistory.org, and we can let you know how you could help. Even if you can only help a little, it really goes a long way, so thanks!

This year we have a bonus milestone that we are sharing with a large swath of the country - the 100-year anniversary of Route 66.

Lastly, if you have read this column over the years, you have seen my promotion of

the California Digital Newspaper Collection (<https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>), which houses an archive of newspapers including some that the historical society has scanned. Last year the CDNC lost their funding and were in real danger of closing down. Luckily, both the state government and many private donors have come to its rescue. Many of our members have utilized this free service to find out more about their Eagle Rock homes, businesses or ancestors.

- David Dellinger

QR CODE
Scan to access
our website with
your phone.



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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Contributors, Katie Taylor, David Dellinger

Visit our website at:
eaglerockhistory.org

If your mailing label dates before 2026, it's time to renew your membership. Please take a moment and mail your check now. A dues form and envelope are included with this newsletter.

Thanks, We depend on you

James Ferdon: Family Man, Builder and Grifter

Recently we were contacted by Robert J. Blaskiewicz an Associate Professor at Stockton University in New Jersey. He is researching a book on medical fraudsters in early twentieth century America. He had heard that we might have information about James Ferdon, one of the few practitioners who seemed to be long term successes at this dubious profession. As it happens, years ago, we were contacted by Alpha Rhae "Rickie" de Kramer, Ferdon's granddaughter who gave us various items including their family album. We are collaborating with Bob on this portion of his book and look forward to its publication. What follows are photos from the Ferdon family album unless otherwise indicated.

Alpha Ferdon and her two step children Rhea and Monty on the steps of Gates Hall, the large historic farmhouse in the center of Eagle Rock which Ferdon purchased from Gates.



Rhea on the streets of Eagle Rock about 1910. The second Eagle Rock School is in the background.

Monty making a soda in the College Inn which his father had built on Colorado Boulevard.



Alpha in her car in front of one of our largest houses which the family had purchased in 1911. Alpha was noted for her accomplishments as an early female driver. (B.D. Jackson postcard-ERVHS collection)



Alpha Rhea Ferdon (our doner) on the roof of the building at Eagle Rock Boulevard and Merton Avenue.

The Buildings



Ferdon (left) and George Diddock in front of Diddock's real estate office on the northeast corner of Eagle Rock and Colorado Boulevards in 1911. They then appear to have controlled much of the commercial property on this block.



The building housing the College Inn was built in 1909. It still stands, much reconstructed, preserving only the footprint of this early structure.



The old Masons Hall on Eagle Rock Boulevard, which still stands, mostly intact. Ferdon built the building for his brother Masons in 1913.

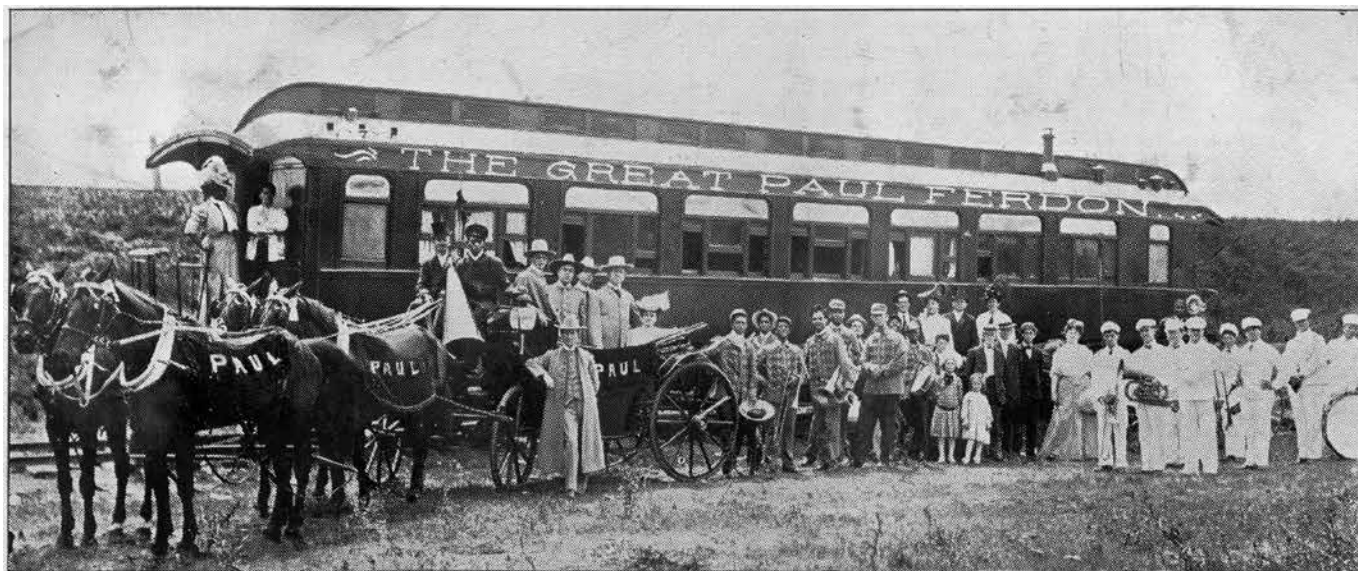


The house at Maywood and Fair Park which Ferdon built for his parents Clay and Mellissa. Gates Hall was then directly across Maywood Avenue.



The building on the corner of Eagle Rock and Merton shown here in 2000. Built in 1923. Alpha Ferdon held title to this building and sold it in 1934. (Eric Warren-ERVHS)

The Scams



By the time of his prominence in Eagle Rock, Ferdon's operations were quite large, as can be seen in this photograph. The combination of a large-scale free show, heavy publicity, and a blizzard of testimonials lead to financial success for Fer Don and his associates, who toured throughout the western states.

THE GREAT FER-DON

Presents Facts Concerning the Work of the European Medical Experts in Los Angeles.
Gives Names of People Who Can Be Interviewed Concerning Their Cases.
Thousands of Testimonials at the Offices at 745 So. Main Street

(Los Angeles Herald 1908-03-01-California Digital Newspaper Collection)

FAKE CURE DOCTOR FORFEITS HIS BAIL

Fer Don Becomes a Fugitive From Justice

[Special Dispatch to The Call]

SACRAMENTO, Dec. 3.—Rather than plead guilty to the indictment of conspiracy to commit a felony through fake cures, Fer Don, a former traveling practitioner, today permitted his bond of \$1,000 to be forfeited. Yesterday his wife was fined, and had he pleaded guilty to the charge today the record would have been cleared. Judge Hughes declared the bond forfeited, however, and Fer Don will continue to be a fugitive from justice.

Occasional legal difficulties were avoided by a quick departure. Note that Alpha also played a role in the operation. (San Francisco Call 1910-12-04-California Digital Newspaper Collection)

Three Proprietors of \$1,000,000 Oil Swindle Sent To Prison

LOS ANGELES, April 8.—Three oil promoters of the Santa Fe Springs field, south of here, today were sentenced to penitentiary and jail terms following their conviction of having used the mails to defraud in connection with their operations in the Cooperative Oil Syndicate. The prisoners and their sentences were: James M. Ferdon, and \$2000 fine; W. P. Verhulst two years in Leavenworth and \$2000 fine; Dr. S. M. Wells, one year in the county jail and \$2000 fine; C. H. and W. O. Kirkpatrick, brothers, were acquitted. Evidence in the case tended to show that the syndicate took in approximately \$1,000,000 of which \$125,000 was spent in sinking a wildcat well, the remainder disappearing.

Ferdon and friends finally ran afoul of the Feds and served time in Leavenworth. (Santa Barbara Morning Press 1925-04-09-Newspapers.com)



Ferdon's mug shot from Leavenworth. He was vouched for by Godfrey Edwards, Eagle Rock's most prominent developer and released after serving only six months of his sentence. While he appears to have "retired" after this, his wife Alpha went on to open a hotel in Palm Springs and became a prominent socialite there.



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

ICE CREAM SOCIAL
FRIENDSHIP, MUSIC, PRIZES
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 1:00

ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL
FROM EAGLE ROCK TO CHICAGO
MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 7:00

TO BE ANNOUNCED
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22
2027, 7:00



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

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 _____

Member's Corner



Brett Robinson

Born and raised in Houston, Brett feels pretty far from his former Texas life and yet for a person who doesn't want to drive he has found his true home here in the hills of Eagle Rock. It has been 12 years since Brett moved to L.A. and he is here to stay.

Brett's childhood backdrop in Houston was one of constant wandering and roaming, through wooded areas, hidden spaces, and secret passages. After leaving Houston for the University of Drexel in Pennsylvania, he realized that although he was looking for a less "painfully suburban" experience, that city life there wasn't a match.

Studying film, he came to Los Angeles through a school internship program and over time he vowed to move. Graduating early, he landed in the Pico-Robertson neighborhood for a decade. He eventually met his current partner Will and when they decided to look for a house, Brett's old habits still lingered. He wanted hills, shortcuts, and places to walk so he could do his "best thinking" he told me. After many visits to Vidiots, they found that Eagle Rock fit the bill. Their modest 1952 single story home with a treehouse in the back is checking all his boxes. You can find him heading uphill or down and getting lost in-between. There are "a million histories and stories on every street" he told me, and we are so grateful he has landed here and become a repeat fixture at our monthly archive hours.

Katie Taylor