



25 years
of Preservation

West Adams Matters

The West Adams Village *by Evan Pleger*

As I prepare to leave home and go to college, I wrote this college application essay about how my community – West Adams – helped shape my dreams and aspirations:

The *clink* of glasses being tapped together in celebration rings through the noisy, but well humored crowd. Everyone who worked the Tour is here congratulating each other on another great year. I see around me one of the most diverse groups of people all laughing, drinking, talking, and partying together. This community of people gathered here is like my extended family and everyone in it has contributed to my personal growth. Their views of life have shaped me and given me a rare and unique perspective on the world. They are the West Adams Heritage Association.

The mission of the West Adams Heritage Association, or WAHA, is the preservation of Los Angeles's cultural and architectural heritage. The organization hosts tours and events to display the beautiful historic homes in the area of West Adams and to educate about their preservation. WAHA is also a powerful voice promoting the maintenance and protection of some of the more neglected districts of Los Angeles. Its members are of many different ethnic groups who all contribute to preserve, but also improve their neighborhoods. These people

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Briggs Residence Open House

Saturday, March 20 • 10 a.m. to Noon

3734 West Adams Blvd. (at 9th Avenue)

WAHA is invited to preview one of West Adams' historic treasures before its restoration. MSIA, the owner of the Dr. Granville MacGowan Mansion (Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 479), recently purchased the next-door Briggs Residence (HCM No. 477) at 3734 West Adams Blvd., and is opening the doors for an open house on Saturday, March 20 so WAHA members and the local community can have an opportunity to walk through the property before it undergoes what will be at least a couple of years of rehabilitation work. Drisko Studio Architects will be on hand to answer questions on the project.



Built in 1912 as a two-story alpine Craftsman home from plans by the architectural firm of Hudson & Munsell, the Briggs Residence was designed to stand in harmony with the residence next door, designed by the same architects.

The MacGowan mansion was erected by Los Angeles medical pioneer Dr. Granville MacGowan, the city's first elected health commissioner. He was married to Lillie May Briggs, the granddaughter of Dr. Leonce Hoover and niece of Vincent A. Hoover (of Hoover Boulevard fame). The European-educated

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WAHA Preservation Issues Update *by Jean Frost*

For historic preservation advocates, of late it has seemed that that every day brings another challenge. There are many projects and issues in West Adams that have required discussion, analysis, and comment. WAHA has a very dedicated Historic Preservation Committee (members include Jim Childs, Laura Meyers, Mitzi Mogul, David Raposa, Roland Souza, and myself) who meet regularly to discuss and debate both historic preservation and land use issues in West Adams and citywide.

Recently those items have included:

Second Church of Christ Scientist, 948 West Adams Blvd./Christian Science Reading Room, 2634 S. Hoover Blvd.

WAHA has been concerned about the future of this city and federal landmark complex. Now there is a new owner (see related story on page 3) and we will be invited to a community open house this month).

Red Oak Development Student Housing Project, 2455 South Figueroa Street

The developer is proposing a 145 unit, 5-story project with a 35-foot setback on a sensitive site between St. Vincent's Church and the Stimson House, adjacent to the city's original Zanja, and located within the Chester Place Historic District. There is

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A Note from the Editor:

I am sure most of you have noted the absence of this newsletter in recent months. This is mostly my fault, as I have tried to juggle the many historic preservation challenges West Adams has faced, and is facing, these days. But, it is clear that we also need MORE HELPING HANDS. If you can help fill the pages of this newsletter with your reporting, writing or photos, please do not hesitate to contact me. WAHA survives on the strength of its volunteers. Thank you. — Laura Meyers

Welcome to the New Owners of One of West Adams' Finest Second Church of Christ Scientist, HCM No. 57, will be reborn as the Art of Living Foundation

West Adams has a new neighbor, and it is about to rededicate a century-old spiritual structure and bring it back to life for the 21st century.

The Second Church of Christ, Scientist, located at 948 West Adams Blvd., was designed by Alfred H. Rosenheim with Albert C. Martin and built 1907-1910. Designated Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 57 in 1968, is considered perhaps Los Angeles's most imposing Neo-Classical landmark and one of Southern California's most important cultural resources.

WAHA has been advocating behind the scenes for well over a year to help make sure the landmark Second Church of Christ, Scientist Sanctuary and Reading Room, which had been for sale for some time, would not be demolished or altered beyond recognition. Several potential buyers had indicated they planned to erect crowded student housing on the complex site, with either demolition and/or some fairly odd construction plans in the works.

Both structures have been identified as historic in city records since 1985, when the Community Redevelopment Agency conducted a federally-mandated historic resources survey. The Second Church of Christ, Scientist Sanctuary is also a longtime Los Angeles Cultural Historic Monument. The property is also individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

WAHA along with the Los Angeles Conservancy was concerned that the property be sold to a sensitive owner.

Flash forward to December, 2009: After months of negotiations and many (many) inspections, the Art of Living Foundation closes escrow on the property.

The organization's announced intentions are to restore the buildings and make the complex the new West Coast headquarters of the Art of Living Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational and humanitarian organization. The Art of Living Foundation is headed internationally by spiritual leader and humanitarian Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Shankar was raised a Hindu, though he considers his teachings nondenominational. According to several biographies, at the age of four he could recite a few verses from the Bhagavad Gita, and he received a baccalaureate in science at 17 from St. Joseph's College, Bangalore University. A disciple of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Shankar joined Maharishi's entourage after graduation, before establishing his own organization. Today, Shankar's focus is on a blend of Eastern religion, meditation, yogic stretching, and breathing. Across the country, tens of thousands of Americans have taken Art of Living classes that feature the breathing technique "Sudarshan Kriya." According to the *Yoga Journal*, "The Art of Living may be the fastest growing spiritual practice on the planet."

Accredited as a United Nations Non-Governmental organization in 1996, the Art of Living Foundation is now one of the UN's largest volunteer-based NGOs. It works in special consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council, participating in a variety of committees and activities relating to health, education, sustainable development, conflict resolution, and disaster relief.



(continued on page 10)

President's Message by Jim Robinson

One of the nicest things about being WAHA's president is the compliments I hear from members of other preservation groups. They aren't praising me personally; they're simply blown away by the many things that WAHA accomplishes. And their praise is mixed with a hint of envy.

It's rewarding to hear that message because, operating behind the scenes, I'm often aware of the difficulties we encounter and the ways we come up short. But to outsiders looking in, we're tremendously successful. That, of course, is a great compliment to the WAHA members and friends who make it happen.

The past few months were perfect example of how we fulfill our two main functions – advancing the goal of historic preservation, and raising the funds to support that goal, while having a good time doing it.

First, the preservation side.

WAHA members can be very proud of the role they played in persuading the Planning Commission to continue protecting monument interiors through the city's Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

Many members were among the dozens of preservationists who spoke at the commission's final hearing on September 10 in the City Council Chamber, arguing that historic interiors can be just as important as exteriors – sometimes more so.

Over the previous two months, WAHA members Rory Cunningham, Laura Meyers, Mitzi Mogul and David Rapoza joined me and other preservationists in a Working Group formed by the Planning Department that spent more than 12 hours, in a series of meetings, trying to persuade some of the city's most powerful interests to withdraw their opposition.

Opponents at the commission hearing included the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, a consortium of film studios, and the Central City Association, representing hundreds of major businesses.

Our coalition included representatives of the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles, Highland Park Heritage Trust, Hollywood Heritage, the Los Angeles Conservancy, the Los Angeles Heritage Alliance and North University Park Community Association.

In the end, our reasoned arguments – in dozens of emails and one-minute speeches – won a 7-1 commission vote in our favor. We owe tremendous thanks to all our members – and those of other preservation groups – who lent their support to this vital effort.

We also owe special thanks to the Los Angeles Conservancy, which initially thought it had struck an acceptable compromise with opponents, but which quickly recognized our concern for interiors and joined us in pushing for their protection. Our unity gave us strength, and will continue to do so as we prepare for the final decision, by City Council, which lies ahead.

But that's just one side of WAHA. There's also the fund-raising, fun-raising side.

Even as the ordinance arguments wore on, other WAHA volunteers – and some of the same ones – were busy writing scripts, casting actors, preparing sets and costumes, memorizing lines, and setting the stage for this year's Living History Tour at Angelus-Rosedale Cemetery. It was a terrific tour, with a particularly interesting selection of cemetery residents, including a famous, globe-trotting mother-and-daughter team, and a woman who left a trail of dead bodies that led her to the gas chamber. A hundred and fifty-nine people paid to take the tour, raising more than enough money to pay our modest legal costs in the ordinance struggle.

Then, less than three months later, our volunteer army stormed Country Club Park and staged a spectacular, two-day Holiday Tour in half a dozen gorgeous houses. Hundreds of people attended, despite a sagging economy, and re-filled our coffers for future preservation battles. And all our visitors received a flier urging their help with the ordinance decision.

That, in a nutshell, is how WAHA works. We use our historic resources to raise money, and we use the money to defend our resources. And we've been doing it for 26 years.

See you on the next tour!

WAHA Board Elections Slated; Candidates Sought

WAHA is looking for a few good men and women. Our annual Board of Directors election will be held in April, and we need candidates to step up. WAHA currently has a 15-member board, with a plan in place to increase it to 18 members, and one-third of these positions are up for election each three years, on a rotating basis.

As always, we need board members with fresh, upbeat, enthusiastic ideas. This community was founded by the best volunteers in the nation, and now is the time for members (you!) to come forward. You need not spend an extraordinary amount of time doing tasks, but you must be committed to WAHA's goals of providing both member and community service. Generally speaking, board members are expected to attend all WAHA board meetings (usually held the fourth Thursday of each month), help with WAHA's fundraising efforts, and also will be given specific responsibilities for certain of WAHA's events, committees, and social functions, on a rotating basis.

We don't have many requirements: a love of old houses and other historic buildings, an enthusiasm for community activities, membership in WAHA for at least six months, and a desire to preserve and improve our neighborhoods. WAHA always needs expertise in fundraising, zoning issues, and historic preservation. But if you have a program you'd like to initiate, those ideas are welcome, too.

If you'd like to run for the board, please submit a brief (100-word) candidate's statement introducing yourself to the membership, to run in the April *WAHA Matters* newsletter. Submission deadline is Monday, March 15. Please e-mail your statement to president@westadamsheritage.org. If you are still pondering your involvement but decide to run for the Board, that's OK. All Board candidates will be asked to present themselves at the election meeting in a very short (one- to two-minute) speech.

If you'd like to learn more about the requirements (and benefits) of serving on the WAHA board, please contact WAHA President Jim Robinson, at jghrobinson@ca.rr.com. ●

Around the House

A Cornucopia of Farmers Markets

Until recently, West Adams residents had to travel out of the neighborhood to their favorite farmers markets if they wanted both just-picked taste and good value for their money. But now, we have a bounty of fresh produce at farmers markets located in West Adams' environs nearly every day of the week. And the newest certified farmers market debuts on March 21 in Wellington Square.

This new harvest of Farmers Markets has long been on the list of both historic preservation advocates seeking to revitalize West Adams AND health eating advocates concerned about the availability (or lack thereof) of fresh fruits and vegetables in our urban neighborhoods. In Los Angeles County, the number of farmers markets has more than doubled since 2000, but West Adams had not previously participated in this trend.



What is a Certified Farmers' Market?

The certified farmers market (CFM) concept in California is an effort to re-establish the traditional link between farmers and consumers. Put simply, certified farmers' markets are "the real thing," places where genuine farmers sell their crops directly to the public. More specifically, a CFM is a location approved by the county agricultural commissioner where certified farmers offer for sale only those agricultural products they grow themselves. The produce may or may not be organic; the markets in the West Adams area are not certified organic but many of the farmers do practice organic farming.

Farmers' market produce is picked ripe and sold that day. You can taste the difference. Supermarket produce, on the other hand, can typically take up to two weeks to travel from farm to store, even in summer. At farmers' markets, you'll find unusual varieties of fruits and vegetables – those bred for flavor, not uniform in size, or ability to travel.

So, plan to shop and eat healthy in West Adams. Don't forget to bring your own BIG BAGS and SMALL CHANGE for your purchases. ●

West Adams Farmers Markets:

The USC Market

Tuesdays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

University Avenue and Jefferson Boulevard



Adams/Vermont Farmers Market

Wednesdays 2 to 5 p.m.

St. Agnes Catholic Church, 1432 W. Adams Blvd.

Expo Center/CSU Produce Stand

Thursdays 3 to 5 p.m.

3980 Menlo Ave., at Martin Luther King Boulevard, in front of the pool in Exposition Park

Trojan Fresh Market

Thursdays 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Alumni Park, on the USC campus

FAME Church Farmers Market

Saturdays and Sundays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Southwest corner of Western Avenue and Adams Boulevard

Exposition Park Farmers Market

Saturdays 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

South lawn of Natural History Museum

Wellington Square Farmers Market

Beginning March 21

Sundays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Smyrna Church parking lot, 4394 Washington Blvd, two blocks west of Crenshaw



Around the House



West Adams urban farmers, mark your Spring calendar for Tomatomania, the annual tribute to and sellathon of the best tomatoes in town.

Do you really need two dozen tomato plants? Can you really eat hundreds of tomatoes all summer long? If your answer is "yes," then by all means plan to visit Tapia Brothers Farm Stand on March 26 to 28, where Tomatomania will have some 300 different varieties of tomato seedling plants for your garden.

Tomatomania is a traveling tomato seedling sale that specializes in obscure, cherry, grape, and heirloom tomatoes and seeds. Tomatomania was born at the late, lamented Hortus Nursery, whose owner, Gary Jones,

grew and sold seldom-seen tomato varieties just as heirlooms became quite the rage. Within a few years, Tomatomania had become the nursery's biggest draw. When Hortus shut down in 2001, Scott Daigre took over Tomatomania and began producing it as a stand-alone event.

Daigre has also tentatively announced a Tomatomania event nearer to West Adams, at the Larchmont Charter School on April 24.


Contact Daigre at tomatomaniiahq@aol.com, and visit www.tomatomania.com for up-to-date information. Or, if you can't make it to one of the Tomatomania events this year, or couldn't find your favorite variety, you can shop online and choose from the widest selection of tomato seedlings anywhere. White Flower Farm and Tomatomania have worked together to offer 145 varieties online, ranging from the familiar hybrid beefsteaks to rare heirlooms. Visit <http://www.whiteflowerfarm.com/tomato-collections-tomatomania.html> for more information.

Currently scheduled Tomatomania venues:

March 26 – 28, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tapia Brothers' Farm Stand
5251 Hayvenhurst Ave., Encino

April 24
Larchmont Charter School ●



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Preservation Matters

Historic Preservation Update *continued from page 1*

significant opposition from Mt. Mary's College, Esperanza Housing, the Sisters at the Stimson, NUPCA, and WAHA.

WAHA coordinated a significant effort to comment on the Draft EIR. Apparently as a result of our efforts, the developers requested a meeting where frank discussion occurred. The developer hoped some cosmetic tweaking could help move the project forward. But what is being proposed is so far from what guidelines for development in an historic district would allow, that we attempted to assist the developer "think outside the box." One of those outside-the-box ideas is a possible land swap which we are now investigating.

From both a historic preservation and land use perspective, the proposed project's 131,009 square feet of residential, 26,063 square feet of common space, 56,765 square feet of parking on P1, 56,586 square feet of parking on P2, and 45,650 square feet of ground floor parking, plus on the ground floor, a 4,234 square foot residential lounge, 5,021 square feet of related residential and a leasing space of 787 square feet, cannot possibly be perceived as compatible or meeting any design standard either in the Standards or in the South Community Plan.

728 West 28th Street

Non-permitted work on a surveyed and identified historic building was completed, and the building is occupied. This is in the University-Exposition Park Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Project Area. WAHA has asked the CRA to hold the owner accountable to the requirements of CRA and Building & Safety.

Washington Square Project at Washington Boulevard and 10th Avenue

The owners of this nearly 8-acre site are proposing a circa 600,000-square-foot mixed use development. The site currently is holds a 1960s Googie style building and it is adjacent to St Paul's Catholic Church. The site offers a development opportunity to establish a positive design standard for Washington Boulevard, but as proposed the project is very large (oversized for the character of the Arlington Heights neighborhood), impacts the historic John C. Austin-designed St. Paul's next door, and is not pedestrian friendly on Washington Boulevard. Council District 10 staff did ask neighborhood architects to make suggestions, but the design does not reflect any of their comments nor does it have a high level of architecture. WAHA responded to a 2,000-page Draft EIR and will update you next month on the details.

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HPOZs and the Processing of Their Business

Lastly, the Planning Department has acknowledged they cannot fulfill their duties under staffing contemplated in the city's drastic budget cuts (some currently in place and some proposed). The Department overall will be down to 200 "FTE," full time equivalent employees, reduced from about 400 when Gail Goldberg became Planning Director. Ken Bernstein of the Office of Historic Resources sent out a missive and met with selected parties (including the Alliance and some WAHA members) to promote an agenda that would delegate decision making to planning staff:

The Department of City Planning is seeking public input by February 8 on a new proposed initiative to complete Preservation Plans for the 16 Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs) that do not currently have an adopted Plan.

Having been drastically impacted by the City's current fiscal crisis, the Department of City Planning will be experiencing up to a 45% decrease in staffing and resources. In order to ensure the ongoing growth and sustainability of the citywide HPOZ program, the Department will unquestionably need to make significant changes to the program.

At a December 2009 meeting with the citywide HPOZ Alliance, HPOZ Board members and community stakeholders discussed a range of potential options for confronting the current crisis. Many expressed a strong preference for a specific streamlining option: the adoption of 16 new Preservation Plans as a way to increase efficiency and free up staff resources that will allow the program to remain sustainable.

While WAHA understands and is sympathetic to staffing issues, the proposal that the City has come up with, i.e., creating Preservation Plans that delegate decision making to Planning staff, in essence completely guts the meaning of the HPOZ Ordinance and the neighborhood based understanding of historic communities.

At the heart of the HPOZ Ordinance, is a Board that requires three persons from the area and persons with expertise in historic preservation. The intent was to preserve neighborhoods by placing decision making in the hands of those who know the most about local conditions and the Secretary of the Interior Standards. 80% of the decisions made are "conforming work:" where the HPOZ makes the decision. The other 20% is for more major work and the Board makes a recommendation to planning and the Director (usually his designee) signs off. In most instances staff follows the recommendation of the HPOZ Board.

The proposal by OHR was made without consultation and now we are asked to embrace a process that fails to allow HPOZ Boards to control decision making on conforming work as the Ordinance dictates. Some Boards may choose not to review certain kinds of work but that is done in the context of their neighborhoods, not in some "one size fits all" expedience being proposed. The preservation Community has worked too long and hard to achieve the HPOZs in West Adams to give up their decision making.

In January, the WAHA Board embraced the recommendation of the Preservation Committee that:

Rather than cede authority to the planning department as OHR suggests, the Boards should retain their authority to its fullest.

HPOZ Board members have more competence and judgment in understanding the specifics and character defining features of a neighborhood; we recommend that conforming work should be brought to an HPOZ Board meeting, the HPOZ Board can accept the submission once it finds it complete or explain to the applicant what may be lacking (and this is something that the Director of Planning would delegate just as he/she now delegates to staff). Then schedule the applicant for action at the next meeting.

The Committee asks that, responding to Ken Bernstein's request for suggestions:

- 1. that WAHA Board supports the continuing empowerment of the HPOZ Boards as are currently existing under the Ordinance*
- 2. the Community interests are preserved by not delegating conforming work decisions to staff.*
- 3. Concurrence with the Committee recommendation that the Boards retain their control over conforming work; and*
- 4. That the Director of Planning delegates the ability to deem a Conforming work application complete to the Board Chair or members present.*

This insures transparency and community involvement and conforms to the intent of the Ordinance. We also support Preservation Plans that are carefully developed appropriate to each HPOZ community. ●

Preservation Matters

Mills Act: Property Tax Reduction for Your Historic Home, Apartments or Business *by Anne Marie Brooks*

The Mills Act is a State of California program for historic properties, providing reduced property taxes to participating owners in return for their agreement to restore and maintain their historical structures according to the high standards of the Secretary of the Interior. Many of your West Adams neighbors take part in this program, which is considered one of the key incentives supporting historic preservation.

Each municipality administers the Mills Act program differently—and some do not participate at all. The program grants a tax discount of generally 30 - 50% of your base tax rate for your historic property for a minimum of ten years.

Here's how it works in the City of Los Angeles. If you were vaguely familiar with the program in the past, forget what you thought you knew. The rules have greatly changed for 2010.

The Mills Act program is designed to address two types of Historic Properties:

- Historic-Cultural Monuments as designated by the City of Los Angeles.
- A CONTRIBUTING structure to an EXISTING Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

In addition, for the first time, "The 2010 Mills Act Application Guide will identify all of the new program requirements and highlight to prospective applicants the program goals of accepting applications from properties that NEED SIGNIFICANT WORK and WHERE THE WORK IS MOSTLY PENDING or NOT COMPLETED." (Historical Property Contract Ordinance Revision, pg. 3)

There is a once a year deadline: This year it is May 28, 2010.

The fee schedule has changed:

- Mills Act Application Fee: \$250 (non-refundable) for a single family residence.
- Mills Act Contract Execution Fee: \$1.00 per every \$1,000 of property valuation (per ZIMAS) for a single family residence.
- Mills Act Application Fee for Multi-family, Commercial or Industrial Property: \$1,142
- Mills Act Contract Execution Fee: \$1,866

Also, if your single family home has a tax value in excess of \$1,500,000 (according to ZIMAS) or your commercial property has a tax value greater than \$3,000,000 (according to ZIMAS) there are additional rules about which you will need to call me.

So, how does this Mills Act Application work? It will soon be posted on the Internet under the Office of Historic Resources at <http://preservation.lacity.org/> Look for Mills Act Application. It has many sections, which need to be filled out very precisely and you must take BLACK & WHITE photographs of your property showing the exterior, every room (all four walls), and any historic details on the interior and exterior. The photos must be carefully labeled following the instructions on the website and you must include either negatives or a CD of all the photos, in addition. It is not like doing your income taxes! You should leave two or three weeks to deal with all aspects of the application if you are doing it on and off. Sloppy or incomplete applications will be returned to you to complete in another year...

You may also hire a Mills Act consultant to prepare the application for you. That person is an architectural historian who also specializes in preparing applications. The fees vary depending on the size and complexity of your property.

And now the commercial: I am one of those consultants. My name is Anna Marie Brooks. My phone number is 310-650-2143 and my e-mail address is historichomesla@aol.com.

I do not take on any applications after May 3rd for 2010—fair warning! ●

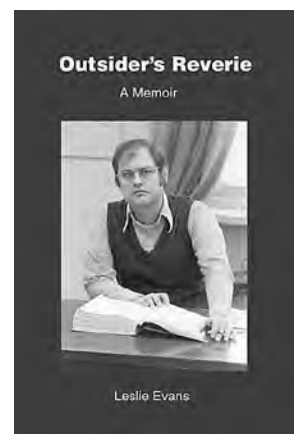
New book by long-time WAHA member Leslie Evans

Outsider's Reverie: A Memoir by Leslie Evans

His parents met at a séance conducted by a dead thirteenth century crusader. At LACC he led a student political party with black nationalist ideologue Ron Karenga. In 1961 he was recruited to the Socialist Workers Party, followers of Leon Trotsky, the ultimate political outsiders, where he was managing editor of the Trotskyist Fourth International's English news service under Joseph Hansen, Trotsky's secretary, who captured Trotsky's assassin. He was editor and friend of Peng Shu-tse, an early leader of the Chinese Communist Party who once outranked Mao Zedong.

Evans spent three years on the Mesabi Iron Range in northern Minnesota, working in the iron mines. Later he was web journalist for UCLA's International Institute. Along the way he: Organized an anti-nuclear rally from the home of the Pentagon's top nuclear war strategist • Was put on the FBI's list for immediate arrest and detention in a national emergency • Knew Lyndon LaRouche and watched fascinated as his organization careened into madness • Spent two years as editor for the World Health Organization documenting the shameful failure to invest in research on the diseases that ravage the third world • Restored a 1910 house in West Adams that became a city Historic Cultural Monument, in the process probing deeply into the lives of its former residents, founders of the privately owned industrial city of Vernon.

488 pages, 30 pages of photos **Available now at Amazon.com**



IN MEMORIAM: AVERY CLAYTON (1947-2009)

An Archivist's Dream Must Not Be Deferred

by Nancy Mattoon, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*

Avery Clayton lived long enough to find a home for the largest collection of African American artifacts on the West Coast. But not long enough to see the treasure trove of rare books, manuscripts, photographs, feature films and ephemera, his mother's life's work, made available to the public. Clayton died suddenly on Thursday, November 26, while hosting a Thanksgiving dinner. He was 62 years old.

Clayton's mother, Mayme, spent 40 years amassing materials on African American history from every source imaginable: garage sales, flea markets, attics, used-book stores, and even dumps. She rescued thousands of rare books, movies, sound recordings, photographs and letters documenting the Black experience in America, which otherwise might have been lost to scholars forever. Until Mayme Clayton's death in 2006 this priceless archive was stored haphazardly in her garage in the West Adams District, in Jefferson Park.

Avery Clayton, the eldest of Mayme's three sons, began to see the value of his mother's "hobby" when he became a teenager. "Her part was to assemble the collection," he said. "I really believe my part is to bring it to the world." Just days before his mother's death, Clayton signed a \$1-a-year lease on a former courthouse in Culver City, to house what is now the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum. Since 2006 he had tirelessly raised funds to catalog, preserve, conserve, and display the collection and make it accessible to the public. He also personally helped to archive many of the items. He had hoped to see the Library open in 2010 or 2011.

The Mayme A. Clayton Library includes an outstanding collection of signed first editions by authors of the Harlem Renaissance movement. One of those writers, poet Langston Hughes, wrote of the dire consequences of unfulfilled dreams in his most famous work:



A Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

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Second Church of Christ, Scientist *continued from page 3*

A New Program

The organization describes its “Vision for the Art of Living Los Angeles Center” on its website in part as follows:

The Art of Living Foundation recently purchased a beautiful classical style church located in the historic West Adams District of South LA, just two blocks from USC. While the Foundation is an educational and humanitarian NGO rather than a religious organization, its plans for the building are remarkably close to its original intention: creating a landmark for prayer, peace, service, and community upliftment.

Over the past two years, the church has suffered from neglect, and like the neighborhood itself, it is now on its way to experiencing a restoration to its former beauty and prominence. With the support of the local community, philanthropists and institutions, the Art of Living Foundation plans to restore it to its former pristine condition. The new center is located at the perfect juncture of history and new development, inner city and higher education representing Art of Living’s commitment to uniting people of different cultures and communities as a “One World Family.”

- Public programs – The center will hold ongoing yoga, meditation, and knowledge programs open to the public, and several Art of Living courses which utilize breath and other ancient techniques to manage negative emotions and improve general well being.
- Inner city youth - One of the most significant benefits the Foundation brings to the community is its long-standing history of success with youth empowerment. Students in schools across America are facing the highest levels of stress in recent times. The mental and emotional health of our young people is a pressing concern, as evidenced by increasing rates of depression, substance abuse, and gang violence. The foundation offers programs that are geared towards students of all ages. These programs provide tools to reduce stress, increase focus, and improve health, while placing an emphasis on leadership, service and human values.
- Forum - Centered on topics such as health, social justice, holistic education, and social responsibility, this space will provide a platform for individuals and organizations to come together, dialogue and make a difference in the community.
- Cultural Events - The building seats 1,100 people in an auditorium that will be utilized for concerts, public talks, and exhibitions. In addition, it is equipped with a world class 100 year old organ made by Murray Harris that the Foundation intends to restore.

History of the church

It is no surprise that the Second Church of Christ, Scientist was erected in a prominent location in the University Park District in 1908-1910. When it was constructed, Adams Boulevard was already “The Street of Dreams,” the tree-lined boulevard that had cemented the reputation of the area as the City’s “blue-blood” mansion section. The board of Second Church chose this location for their visually imposing edifice to help secure their own reputation as an organization deserving of respect and acceptance. The church commanded a view from all locations and directions, and at the time was the ONLY such colossal building in the area. (Today it still impresses, but one must remember at the time there was no Shrine Auditorium, no St. Vincent’s Church, no St.

John’s Church, no Auto Club, and no Patriotic Hall to interfere with this singular building that dominated the skyline.)

At 900 West Adams Street rose the three-story Victorian mansion of the Hon. Russell Judson Waters (1843 - 1911), a founder of the City of Redlands, an elected U.S. Congressman (1899-1901), President of Citizens Bank, and officer of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce who had many business interests in land, water, natural gas and the like.

It was next door to the Waters mansion that the Second Church of Christ, Scientist found its new home in 1907. It was erected with much fanfare and accolades – a dramatic contrast to the newspaper headlines of just a few years previous, when those who practiced the Christian Science faith were often depicted as crackpots. With its opening in 1910, the members of Second Church of Christ, Scientist had achieved their goal of respectability, and more: Their church sanctuary with its magnificent dome completely and utterly dominated the University Park and West Adams landscape.

The church sanctuary is visible from great distances, with a colossal Corinthian portico and imposing copper-clad dome. “Closely resembling portions of the Mother Church in Boston, the building exemplifies the continuity and quality of craftsmanship present during the primary period of development of Christian Science,” according to its National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form.



Inside the main sanctuary; the Reading Room in 1941



The adjacent Second Church of Christ, Reading Room and Library was designed by architect Leon Joseph Corbey and built 1941-1942. It has a symbiotic relationship with its church sanctuary building. The two parcels have been held in single ownership since approximately 1926, now through a series of owners. The two buildings are indelibly linked by their history, design relationship and religious practice.

The Sanctuary boasts what was at the time the world's largest poured concrete dome. The attention to detail is prevalent throughout the interior and exterior with its large Grecian columns, vaulted ceilings, woodwork and tile floors. The main auditorium seats 1,100, while the Sunday School, which lies below the auditorium, seats over 700.

A June 28, 1908, *Los Angeles Times* article categorized the architecture as "pure Roman Corinthian... built with white glazed brick and terra cotta trimmings." At the time, it was "the largest and most elaborate church west of Chicago." A 1910 article in the same newspaper reported that "the wainscoting, doors, pews and all other interior woodwork is in selected mahogany, stained a soft brown tone, and the floor is covered with interlocking rubber tile of harmoniously contrasting colors." That same article heralded the church as the "Most Beautiful and Costly in the West."

WAHA and other neighbors will be invited to an open house in late March (visit www.WestAdamsHeritage.org to learn the details). ●

West Adams Village

continued from page 1

have shown me through their work in the organization many qualities a good person should have, for instance: good manners, community service, public speaking, and social adeptness. Their dedication to the cause and the example they have been for me, makes me feel truly fortunate to have grown up within this community.

This group has given me advice about nearly everything. They live healthily and happily in some of the most beautiful Craftsman and Victorian homes, with solid jobs and wonderful families. This makes me wonder how my future will be, since I will soon have to leave this family and go out on my own. How do I want to lead my life? I want to go to a good college. Lots of members have recounted to me their experiences in college and they have interesting and productive careers because of their higher education. Hopefully, while in college, I can experience all the possibilities open to me and find a career that I'm happy with and will provide me with a lifestyle similar to those in WAHA. I want a house. Especially having lived in this neighborhood and in a historic home myself, I have seen the good effect it has on people and their families to have a nice place to live.

Finally, I want a family; not only a wife and child, but a caring neighborhood community, like WAHA, to help me raise the child and to be there as a supportive group of friends.

It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child. My village has been the West Adams Heritage Association. I have had the absolute luxury of being part of a large, diverse family. Many of them are my guardians and friends. I owe much of my happiness to WAHA and it will be hard to leave, but their lessons and influence will be with me always. ●



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Vintage Fashion Show and Tea

Saturday, March 20

Beginning at 11 a.m.

Heritage Square Museum, 3800 Homer Street (Highland Park)

Step back in time and enjoy historic costumes as Heritage Square Museum presents its annual Vintage Fashion Show and Tea. With the museum's historic Longfellow-Hastings Octagon House as the backdrop, visitors enjoy observing men's and women's vintage and handmade, one-of-a-kind clothing from the 16th century through the 1960s. Many of the reproduction garments took hundreds of hours of finish work to complete. Guests may also sample items commonly enjoyed at an afternoon tea, view a vintage clothing display inside the Perry Mansion, shopping in the Museum Store and much more.



(No museum tours during or after this special event.)

Space and tea limited. Reservations strongly recommended. Tickets purchased at the door may not include admission to the tea. Cost: \$20, general admission (\$15, museum members); \$5, children 6-12 years old. For reservations, contact 323-225-2700 ext. 223, Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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Briggs Residence Preview *continued from page 1*

MacGowan hired architects Frank Dale Hudson and William A. Munsell, who had designed the Museum of Natural History in Exposition Park, to create what today is the largest extant mansion on Adams Boulevard. Lillie's widowed mother, Mary Ann Hoover Briggs, seldom traveled far from their sides. The MacGowans erected a similarly-styled stucco-brick-and-timbered 5,600-square-foot "alpine" Craftsman residence for Mary on what was then part of the same estate. The "mini" manse also features a steep cross-gabled roof and a massive interior brick chimney.

Mary Ann Hoover Briggs

The Hoovers were among the earliest American pioneer families of Los Angeles, coming to the City of Angels in 1849, when it was a small pueblo with a few adobe buildings clustered around the plaza. Mary Ann Hoover was barely five years old when she traveled with her parents, Leonce Hoover and Eva Hoover, a sister, and older brother Vincent, on a prairie schooner pulled by ox teams across the Plains via the Salt Lake route headed to California and Los Angeles.

Born in Switzerland in 1792, Dr. Leonce Huber was a former surgeon in Napoleon's army. By the time he arrived in Los Angeles Dr. Huber had changed his name to Leon Hoover. Like many others, he soon adopted the local culture by adding a Hispanic component, now calling himself "Juan Leon Hoover." Along with his son, Vincent, Leonce was one of Los Angeles's pioneer wine vintners, growing grapes near what is now Cudahy.

The Hoover family was part of an important industry here, as was noted in this long ago description:

In a town with a population still fewer than 2,000, the grape growing and winemaking activity of Los Angeles must have been visible and dominating to a degree that few, if any, American towns have since known. When Harris Newmark arrived in Los Angeles from his native Germany in 1853, he found more than one hundred vineyards in the area, seventy-five or eighty within the precincts of the town itself; and, best evidence of all of the degree to which wine had established itself, he found that the Angelenos generally patronized the local product, which was so cheap that it sold for fifteen cents a gallon and was usually served free with meals. Hoover senior patronized the local product to a remarkable degree: a committee of the State Agricultural Society, visiting Los Angeles in 1858, reported that Leonce drank nothing but wine the whole day through, excepting one cup of coffee on rising: "At his meals, when at work, around the social board, on retiring at night—at any and all times, he drinks his pure juice of the grape with perfect freedom, and, as he assures us, without the least intoxicating effect."

Dr. Hoover died October 8, 1862, at age 70.

For his part, Vincent Hoover had traveled with his father in 1850 to the placer mines in northern California, where they found very rich placers of gold, but were driven out by the hostile Indians. Still, by 1851 he had accumulated sufficient funds to purchase twelve acres of land on Mesa Street, which he at once began to improve. He was one of the first to engage in horticulture in Los Angeles and he set out and developed orchards, which he sold in 1870. Thereafter he engaged in dealing in real estate throughout the city, building up and developing his property, in time becoming one of the leading businessmen and capitalists in Los Angeles. In 1875 Vincent

Hoover laid out the Hoover Tract and the "Union Square" on some 23 acres near today's intersection of Hoover and 24th Street.

Meanwhile, young Mary Hoover at age 20 in 1865 became the wife of Samuel Edgar Briggs, a New Hampshire Yankee. Briggs was for years the Wells Fargo agent in Los Angeles. They had two children, Mary Louisa, who died very young, and Lillie May. Samuel Briggs returned to New England in 1886, and died there two years later; Mary went back and forth between the name "Briggs" and her maiden name, "Hoover."

Vincent never married, and when he died, in 1883, Mary Hoover Briggs administered the estate (valued at \$32,000) and then invested and reinvested in Los Angeles city property. Briggs was considered an exceptionally successful businesswoman. In 1896, she sold her property (a house and business block) on Broadway to Homer Laughlin, who built the city's first fireproof building on the site. Briggs went on to erect another estate home on South Garland Avenue, before moving to the West Adams Boulevard "mother-in-law" manor.

Briggs lived in the residence until the 1920s; by 1930 it had become the "son-in-law" residence – the occupants were Eleanor MacGowan, one of the founders of the Junior League, and her husband, Guy Chaffee Earl, Jr., the publisher of the *Los Angeles Evening Express*, at that time the oldest daily newspaper in the city. ●



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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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Los Angeles California 90018
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If you frequent a local business — retail store, restaurant, service provider, etc. — ask them if they would offer a discount to WAHA members. Explain that they'd benefit from the increased exposure to local consumers, and be listed in the WAHA monthly newsletter. Or, call me at 323-733-6869 and I'll contact them — Steve Wallis

WAHA....Creating Our Future by Preserving Our Past

Calendar ✓

Upcoming Events

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

MARCH

Saturday, March 20:

Briggs Residence Open House, 10 a.m. to Noon (see page 1)

Monday, March 15:

WAHA Board Candidate Statements Due (see page 3)

APRIL

Sunday, April 11:

L.A. Heritage Day

JUNE

Saturday, June 5:

Art in Historic Places -- WAHA's Annual Spring Historic Homes and Architecture Tour



ART IN HISTORIC PLACES: WAHA's Annual Historic Homes and Architecture Tour

Saturday, June 5

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

It's time for WAHA's annual June event with a new twist: Art! Our drive-yourself (or bike-yourself) brochure will guide you to a series of historic venues, all showcasing the work of talented West Adams artists. It's art in architecture – in any order and at your own pace. Tickets will be \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. The last ticket will be sold at 1 p.m., and most tour properties will close promptly at 4 p.m.

(Visitors tour at their own pace, but are encouraged to set aside several hours to enjoy the Tour.)

Visit www.WestAdamsHeritage.org later this month for more information.

The WAHA Newsletter is a publication of the West Adams Heritage Association. Members and supporters of WAHA are invited to submit articles to the Newsletter. Letters will be published subject to space constraints and will be cut for length if necessary. Articles will be published subject to acceptance by the editors of the WAHA Board. Advertising is subject to the approval of the publishers. Although the Association appreciates its many fine advertisers, the Association does not accept responsibility for claims made by advertisers. Services and products are not tested and appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute, endorsement by the West Adams Heritage Association. Copyright 2010. All rights for graphic and written material appearing in the newsletter are reserved. Contact Director of Publications for permission.

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