
ALAMITOS HEIGHTS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

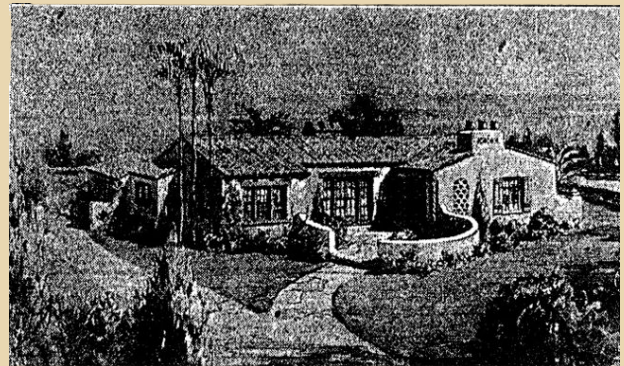
Celebrating 100 Years of Service to the Community

June 2023



The First Home

The first home to be erected in Lakeview Terrace, formerly known as the "Knob of Naples", was a Spanish style single story home with twelve rooms enclosing a patio designed by George Adams Roalfe, for James F. Collins. New, the home sold for \$20,000.



Original concept of 5311 E Vermont St from Long Beach Press-Telegram, July 1924

In January 1924 Frank T. Lannin ran this advertisement for homes in the Long Beach Press-Telegram. Lakeview Terrace would later become Alamitos Heights. The advertisement boldly stated that, "The most wonderfully beautiful home area Long Beach will ever have. There is nothing like this in America."

Orlena Healey

Orlena Avenue, the small street that runs between 4th Street and Colorado, is named after a prominent woman in Long Beach's wonderful history.

Considered "the first woman pioneer resident of Long Beach" Orlena Healey was the wife of the first licensed surveyor in California, Captain Charles Tarraine Healey. Born in Maine in 1847, Orlena made the journey from Maine to San Francisco by ship via Cape Horn with her parents in 1849. Her father built the first wharf in San Francisco.

In 1869 Orlena married the Captain Healey who was later dispatched to Long Beach from San Francisco to lay out the Los Cerritos town site (later named "Long Beach") which was owned by the Bixby's.

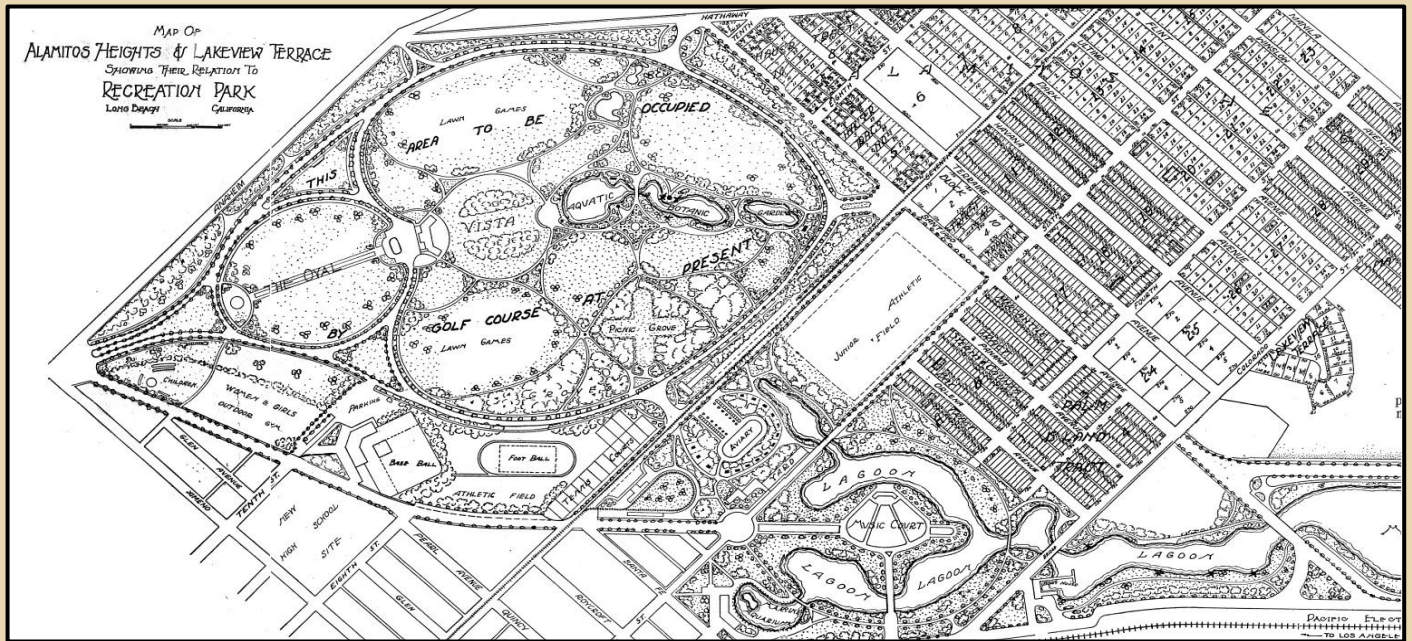
Orlena was fond of a piano she had in her home which she believed to be the first one on the West Coast having come around Cape Horn from England. Her father purchased the piano from a Frenchman in San Francisco in the 1850s.

Considered a leader in Long Beach, Orlena was a charter member of the Long Beach American Red Cross, and also participated in the Women's Relief Corps, Woman's City Club, and the Social Welfare board to name just a few. You can remember Orlena as you drive on the street named after her.



Mrs. Orlena Healey
Long Beach
Press-Telegram, 1933

The Start of Alamitos Heights



1920s Promotional Poster issued by Frank T. Lannin for Alamitos Heights & Lakeview Terrace Development. Original amenities included an Aviary and Music Court. Map Courtesy of Historic Society of Long Beach.

Alamitos Heights “started” in 1904 when Frank Shaw, a Long Beach visionary and developer, began selling land to prospective home builders. Shaw enthusiastically advertised these lots as having remarkable views of Alamitos Bay, Recreation Park, Naples, and the Pacific Ocean!

Shaw first developed Alamitos Heights by buying the 160-acre Rancho Alamitos site from the Bixby’s for \$150 an acre. He subdivided lots into 25 and 50-foot wide lots by approximately 150 feet deep. These early lots were sold between 1904 and 1906 for between \$150 and \$1,750. A Shaw ad in March 1904 indicates that 42 lots were sold in just one week.

In a 1923 article, “Heights Tract is Fulfilling Prophecy,” the Press-Telegram wrote that buyers “came in hordes and literally took his tract away, to the chagrin of other real estate men and advisers, whose eyes could not be made to turn east.” The article reported that as many as 900 lots were established.

By 1923, the remaining lots were selling for \$8,000, which multiplied

by the 900 lots equates to \$7,200,000 in today’s dollars.

Not a bad return over the \$24,000 that Shaw invested 19 years earlier. The article also mentions that the Alamitos Heights Improvement Association was then active with 35 property owners. Apparently, the AHIA’s first actions were to ensure sidewalks were properly laid, gravel placed on the dirt streets, and water lines installed in the area.

Shaw had unique ways to advertise his lots. Besides his creative newspaper ads that beckoned folks to the “sandy shores” of Alamitos Bay and to bathe in the salty water inlets, Shaw may have been one of the first to use balloons to deliver his message. Shaw tied deeds to lots in Alamitos Heights to helium balloons and released them throughout Long Beach in a plan to get buyers to buy in the development.

A 1920’s map advertising Alamitos Heights development with numbered lots, shows the Marine Basin (now Stadium) running under the Colorado Street Bridge into the “Lagoon” surrounding a grassy area and Music Court.

The Music Court was shown between Colorado and Sixth, and Orlena and Santa Fe (now Park Avenue).

Above Sixth is a “Junior Athletic Field” (now “Little Rec”) with an Aviary above the Lagoon, and Recreation Park above that with all its planned recreation activities to include many lawn games, the 18-hole golf course (now “Big Rec”), baseball (now Blair Field), and football fields across the street. East of the park, there is a pro- posed new school site as it sits today — Woodrow Wilson High.

Sadly, Shaw never saw his dream of the “Beverly Hills” of Long Beach realized. Shaw took his own life in 1913 following a sanity trial that was allegedly brought against him for his vision to develop the area.

Today, Alamitos Heights is a beautiful place to live. We are all proud of the great neighborhood feeling, and the proximity to the parks and views from our homes. As it turns-out, Mr. Shaw wasn’t crazy after all.

History of Oil Drilling in Alamitos Heights



Children and adults sail miniature sailboats in Colorado Lagoon. Oil wells pictured in background.
L. F. Lynde, Photographer for Long Beach Recreation Department 1930

In the 1920s and 1930s Alamitos Heights was covered with oil wells producing as many as 2,000 barrels per day. The bulk of this production was south of Sixth Street, but a few wells were drilled as far north as Seventh Street.

Oil speculation had a dampening effect on residential development. However, the high production of these wells soon tapered off as the underground strata were badly fractured by the faults extending through the area.

As Claudine Burnett, of the Long Beach Public Library wrote in her article, [*Alamitos Heights History*](#):

“On June 23, 1921 oil was discovered in Signal Hill. A rush for oil and wealth began immediately. In 1926 it appeared that Alamitos Heights was a good prospect for black gold. Lots that had sold for \$5000 two years earlier were snapped up for \$80,000 or more.

Though some locals tried to keep out the oil interests, they were not successful. In 1927, all of Alamitos Heights was open for oil drilling.

Most people avoided settling in the area because it was continually sprayed by oil from successful wells.

By 1931, as the oil boom slowed, homes began to be built in the area once again.”

Oil is still being pulled from beneath Alamitos Heights, primarily from slant-drilled wells south of Colorado Street and from one lone remaining well in the neighborhood.

A community oil lease pays royalties for gas and oil recovered to the owners of mineral rights for each lot in Alamitos Heights. The owner of the mineral rights is not necessarily the same person who owns the property, as many lots have had the mineral rights stripped off as they have changed hands over the years.

Many lots within Alamitos Heights have abandoned oil wells that have been capped. The State of California maintains maps showing the location of these wells, and this data is available if you wish to do the research.

Be aware that having a capped well on your property can be considered a liability and have consequences for your property value.

It is not clear how much longer Alamitos Heights' Black Gold will last, but for now the few remaining wells keep on pumping.

A statewide law, Senate Bill 1137, that was originally slated to go into effect this past January 2023 would have limited where Long Beach can drill for oil. That law has since been put on hold until voters can weigh in, giving Long Beach the opportunity to continue drilling near “sensitive areas.”

SB 1137 requires 3,200-foot buffer zones to be in place between oil operations and sensitive areas like homes, parks, schools and hospitals.

Activists have demanded the city revise the plan given that some of the wells could be within those buffer zones, as they are in Alamitos Heights, and they called on the city to enforce the 3,200-foot buffers despite the law being on hold.

Memories of a Life in Alamitos Heights

Mel Lindsey is 96 years young and has been living on Flint Ave in Alamitos Heights since 1985. He was born in 1927 and moved with his family from Glendale to Long Beach. He remembers Long Beach as being a resort town with a municipal auditorium and municipal band.

In those days, Pine Ave was filled with department stores and the only way to get news about World War II was from the newsreels at the theater. Mel recalls a "Spit and Argue Club", where people would come and talk about controversial topics. He also remembers the huge breakers at the beach and the streetcars running all night, ringing their bells at every intersection.

Back then, says Mel, the Colorado Lagoon was a major attraction as, "the calm waters of the lagoon were perfect for swimming and diving, and it was even used for the Olympic diving events. There used to be a 20-foot diving board, but it was taken down in the last 20 years or so."



*Children enjoy the Colorado Lagoon diving platform,
Photo circa 1950*



Aerial photo shows Marine Stadium. Photo by Harry Merrick Photography December 1968

Mel also remembers the famous Getty kidnapping in 1973 and how that event was linked in a small way to Alamitos Heights. In those days, J. Paul Getty Sr. owned many lots in the area and when his grandson John Paul Getty III was kidnapped in Italy, Mel recalls Getty started selling lots in Alamitos Heights to gather the money to pay his grandson's ransom. Happily, Paul was eventually found alive.

Looking back over a life lived in Alamitos Heights Mel reflects that this is a place of longevity. At 96, Mel is still living on his own. One of his friends, Harold Coons, a surfboard manufacturer from Seal Beach, lived to be over 100 years old. Dorothy Jacoby, a neighbor of Mel's, is now 99 years old.

Sadly, we have lost a number of long-term residents recently including Helen Rose, Mel's former boss, who lived on 4th Street and was 100 years old when she passed. Mel remembers that Helen was very upset when she had to take the driving test every two years instead of four. She passed away on her 100th birthday recently.

Many families have lived in Alamitos Heights for a long time, like Dorothy next door. Mel says, "It's just a wonderful area that's for certain."

2023 AHIA Annual Summer Picnic

WHEN: Sunday, JUNE 11th, 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

WHERE: Alamitos Heights Park, Corner of Vermont Street & Orlena Avenue

Its is that time of year again! Another school year is wrapping up and it is time to kick off summer!

This year we are excited to share that Naples Rib Company will be catering our annual neighborhood picnic! Naples Rib Company, founded in 1984, is family-owned and operated by the Ursini family.



In addition to some great BBQ, there will be music, an arts and craft fair, shaved ice, a bounce house, cake, coffee, games, prizes, our AHIA Cornhole Championship, and of course our friends from Station #14 with their Hook & Ladder to say hello!

The Marina Vista Pickleball Club

The Marina Vista Pickleball Club is a volunteer-led group that provides opportunities for players of all skill levels to play pickleball in our neighborhood six days a week.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-10:30 a.m., new players are provided instructions. Each session begins with an overview of equipment, terminology and how to effectively serve and return the ball.

Players then learn the rules and how to keep score through short game simulations.

Competitive recreation play is on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday weekly from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. No advance notice or registration is required to play.



The order is first-come first-served based on placing your racket in the holder at the court entrance.

MVPB is an open, welcoming group led by volunteers who love the game of pickleball. Participation is free, though donations are accepted.

The group plays at the tennis court at Marina Vista Park. Just show up with a desire to have fun!

For potential changes to scheduling and more information consult the club website at:

www.marinavistapickleball.com

The more things change....

While exacerbated in recent months, traffic issues are not a new concern for Alamitos Heights residents. In 1978, a CSULB geography class conducted a survey to answer the question “Why are two non complementary types of land use (attractive housing and oil extraction) found in proximity to each other in Alamitos Heights?” Many positive attributes were cited, but what residents disliked most: traffic.

In response to complaints about truck volume and increased traffic on Park Street, a traffic calming meeting was held on November 8, 2007, with then Councilmember DeLong. Several mitigating measures were implemented with the cooperation of the Starbucks at the 7th Street intersection.

AHIA conducted a survey among residents in the spring of 2008 with 10 questions related to traffic issues. The top concerns reflected in that survey were speeding cut through traffic, stop sign violations, and an increase in traffic volume.

Respondents considered enforcement and street redesign to be the most effective control measures. The average tenure of respondents was 21 years in the neighborhood. Mitigation included crosswalk markings and a left turn lane from PCH to Santiago.

When the detour to accommodate the Colorado Lagoon Open Channel project began last November, neighborhood concern about traffic volume and speed increased. In March 2023, Councilmember Duggan helped push through a new traffic study along 6th Street.

Not surprisingly, volume and speed have risen along 6th street although at different rates on either side of Santiago. In the comparison to 2021, average daily traffic doubled east of Santiago with an average speed of 32 mph, and tripled west of Santiago at an average speed of 38 mph.

As many as 1,000 vehicles per day appear to be diverting from the

closure on Colorado through to 6th Street.

As a result, our City Traffic Engineer approved a recommendation to install temporary traffic calming devices – vertical delineator or speed humps - for the segment of 6th Street between Santiago and Park Streets. Residents’ concerns were validated and help is on the way.

Most major cities have established Traffic Calming Programs which have been effective in lowering speeds and accident rates. All make use of three traffic engineering principles: education, engineering and enforcement.

While the City is working on those, there is something we can do to help improve traffic safety and the quality of life in our neighborhood. A traffic engineering professional noted, “You don’t have to stop all the vehicles to calm traffic, just the first one.”

What each of us can do is lead by example. Drive twenty-five.

ALAMITOS HEIGHTS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

This year, our Alamitos Heights Improvement Association (AHIA) is celebrating 100 years of service to the community! In 1923, the focus of AHIA was to beautify our neighborhood. In those days oil wells dominated the landscape. Our neighborhood logo of an oil well turning into a Royal Palm symbolizes this focus on cleaning up the land and beautifying our community.

Over the years, the focus of AHIA has expanded. Our current mission statement is, "Creating Community Together." To achieve this mission AHIA hosts an annual Easter Egg Hunt, Neighborhood Picnic, Toss-Shred-Recycle Event, and our Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Colorado Lagoon with Santa! We also host two Community Meetings at the Greek Orthodox Church every year so neighbors can hear about issues that impact our community. Additionally, we host dozens of Wine Down Friday gatherings during the year which provide an easy and casual way to stay connected to your neighbors.

All of these activities are made possible by your annual AHIA memberships and the donations and contributions of our local business partners and sponsors. Thank you for being part of AHIA!

With Special Thanks to These Supporters:

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Alamitos Heights Improvement Association 2023 Membership Drive Starts Now Please Renew or Join Today!

100 years strong, Alamitos Heights Improvement Association has been working to build and support our community. By joining AHIA today, you play an important part in continuing the tradition and supporting important community events and activities. Most AHIA events are free, so your \$35/home dues are incredibly important. It enables us to put on the many events that bring us together. For questions about joining, contact: membership@ahia.info

Please join today and make a difference. Thank you,
Alamitos Heights Improvement Association Board

Celebrating 100 Years Upcoming AHIA 2023 Events

- Feb./Mar.—Community Meeting
- April — AHIA Easter Egg Hunt
- May — AHIA Community Yard Sale
- June — AHIA Neighborhood Picnic & more
- Sept./Oct.— Community Meeting
- Nov.— Lagoon Tree Lighting Ceremony
- Dec.— Holiday Home Decorating Contest

- Throughout the year — Wine Down Fridays
- TBD — Centennial celebration events
- TBD — Shred-it/Toss-it
- TBD — Tree Planting

AHIA 2023 Annual Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

My contact information is the same as last year My contact information has changed

Please select your Membership options:

- Basic** Family —\$35 (\$37 if using PayPal)
- Friend** of Alamitos Heights—\$50 (\$53 if using PayPal)
- Patron** of Alamitos Heights—\$100 (\$104 if using PayPal)

Please accept my additional donation of \$ _____

Centennial Event Sponsor — As an event sponsor, you can select the event(s) you would like to sponsor. You will be acknowledged as an event sponsor; includes annual membership.

- Silver Event Sponsor** - \$250 (\$260 if using PayPal)—Event:
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Check Payment Options

- Mail:** AHIA: 5318 East 2nd Street #263, Long Beach CA 90803
- Dropoff:** mail slot at 371 Winslow Ave

PayPal Options: Send in the membership form. Use payment link at www.ahia.info/membership.

Send payment via president@ahia.info (Please see payment details above to cover PayPal fees)



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