

Legacy Links



**PRESERVING OLD LA VERNE'S
ENVIRONMENT:
MAKING HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE**

LA VERNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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October 2021

Every Picture Tells a Story



Legacy Links is sharing selections from previous newsletters of the original Historical Society and SOLVE (Save Old La Verne's Environment). Written by former LVHS President Galen Beery, the selections relate details of local history that may not be known to current LVHS members. This article first appeared in 1996 and tells the story of publisher Elsbery W. Reynolds and author Harold Bell Wright. The image above is of "Relay Heights", the Elsbery Reynolds home built in 1912. Built at a time when homes cost \$2,000-\$3,000, Reynold's home cost an estimated \$100,000. The home was demolished in 1974. Can you guess the location of "Relay Heights" and what is currently located on the estate property?

The Author, the Publisher, and Ranch, and the Wall Galen Beery

When a good publisher finds a good writer, it is a marriage made in heaven. This held true for Elsbery W. Reynolds, an Easterner who settled north of Lordsburg, and author Harold Bell Wright. Their names were known to millions in the period before World War I.

Reynolds, the publisher, was born in Carrollton, Missouri, in 1868. He moved to Chicago in 1890, and five years later founded the Book Supply Company to print and sell books. Reynolds was a man of deep religious convictions. During the winter of 1901-1902, he attended a revival service conducted by Harold Bell Wright, a minister, also from Missouri. They struck up an immediate and life-long friendship. Reynolds found that Wright was writing a novel, read the manuscript, and suggested some changes. In 1907 Reynolds published it through the Book Supply Company, with an advertising campaign which resulted in enormous sales and established Chicago as a publishing center.

The novel was *The Shepherd of the Hills*, a sentimental tale of a man who returns to the Ozarks to face his son's hatred. Readers of today may find it mawkish and simplistic, a longdrawn soap opera with moralistic overtones. But it was perfectly suited to the Edwardian era before World War I and became a publishing sensation. Wright was immediately a best-selling author. Reynolds saw to it that lavish praise from literary magazines and newspapers was reprinted in each work he authored. The *Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch* was quoted as saying "The secret of his power is the same God-given secret that inspired Shakespeare and upheld Dickens." A later biographer said "Mr. Wright's style is good, simple, clear, and forceful, and though he is sentimental, he is never maudlin. He takes his incidents from actual life and he works hard on his books. His novels are sermons, but they are readable stories as well."

Wright turned out multiple novels in the next decade, including *The Calling of Dan Matthews* (1909), *The Uncrowned King* (1910), *The Winning of Barbara Worth* (1911), *Their Yesterdays* (1912), *The Eyes of the World* (1912), and *When a Man's a Man* (1916). With Reynolds' promotion, they were eagerly bought by the public. It was reported that "freight trains have literally been required to carry his books to stores all over the country."

Reynolds enjoyed twenty years as a publisher, but they were strenuous years and he had health problems. On the advice of physicians, he came to Southern California. When Wright came to California is unclear, but he may have preceded Reynolds. By 1910, he was living in Redlands.

In 1912, Reynolds found the Enell Ranch, a hillside property north of Lordsburg on what is now Baseline Road, which had been sadly neglected since Enell disposed of it. He bought 125 acres, plus additional property south of the road. Here he built an imposing two-story mansion which he named "Relay Heights."

A local newspaper stated "This magnificent home, with its charming walks and drives, its artistic gardens, its quiet resting booths, its private swimming pool, fitted up with athletic appliances, is a wonderland of comfort and beauty. And with some of Southern California's richest orange groves surrounding the property, he made it the show place of the valley."

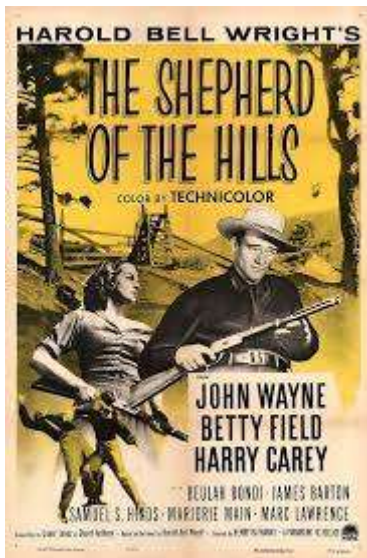
Reynolds directed advertising campaigns from his mansion and published more of Wright's books. He also organized stock shows and formed a film company to produce silent films, interpret Wright's stories.

Wright often stayed in the Reynolds mansion. He dedicated one book to Mrs. Reynolds, and another to Reynolds, "my publisher and friend, whose belief in my work has made my work possible." Several of the introductions he wrote for his books were inscribed "Relay Heights." By 1916 Wright had relocated from Redlands to the desert to recover from a bout of tuberculosis. After the early successes of his books, he wrote very little. He had divorced his first wife, by whom he had three sons, and remarried in 1920. He died in Escondido in 1944.

As Elsbery Reynolds had productive citrus groves, he became involved in the citrus business. He served as a director of the La Verne Growers Fruit Exchange and was a director of the First National Bank of Pomona. Curiously, an unrelated Reynolds (B. L. Reynolds of Covina), was in 1912 improving a 140-acre tract "just north of the La Verne schoolhouse."

In the 1940's, Reynolds suffered a final illness. After two years, he passed away at Pomona Valley Community Hospital, and was interred in Pomona Cemetery. *The Progress Bulletin* observed his passing with a page one obituary giving the highlights of his career.

The Shepherd of the Hills, Wright's most famous book, was filmed in 1941 with John Wayne in his first Technicolor film. Shot in Big Bear Lake and described as a "good cast bogged down by sentimentality", the film was markedly different from the book, which depicted actual persons residing in the Missouri Ozarks. In the film version, Wayne's character is portrayed as an "aged gunfighter with a guarded past." In the book he was a cultured and sympathetic visitor from Chicago who contributes positively to the community he visits.



The Reynolds property was a boon for Mr. Leroy Haynes, a chaplain with the California Youth Authority. In 1946 he and his wife used their life savings to buy Reynold's estate to provide intervention and treatment for troubled boys in a homelike environment, as an alternative to reform schools. In October 1946, they opened "LeRoy Boy's Home" with ten residents. Reynold's mansion was razed in 1974. The long stone wall, still standing along Baseline Road, is all that remains of the estate.

President's Message

Mark your calendars for the **Monday, October 11th** LVHS Member/Community meeting, which will be held at **7:00pm at the La Verne Veteran's Hall**. The doors will open at 6:30pm and we'll have t-shirts and books available for sale before and after the

presentation. All items are \$20 each. The program will showcase highlights of "*The Story of La Verne Video '21*", a collaboration among members of the Hillcrest community, ULV staff, BUSD staff, and the LVHS. All La Verne third graders in the BUSD can learn about La Verne's history through the stories told by culture-bearers and a narration accompanied by images of our city, past and present. Attendees will need to sign in and wear masks. We will also re-appoint LVHS officers for 2022.



The Old Timer's Potluck picnic has been re-scheduled for **October 23rd at 5:00pm in Las Flores Park**. We can sit, safely socially-distanced, in an outdoor setting, and enjoy the park ambience under trees in a grove that we helped to save. If you are uncomfortable with sharing food, bring your dinner. Sherry and John Best will provide tables, settings, and bottled water. We'll discuss future LVHS activities.

On September 19th I read an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* about the recent enactment of Senate Bills 8, 9, and 10, all of which address housing needs in California. This was followed by another article on September 20th that was the headliner in the California section of the *Times*. The articles characterized the bills as "transforming the state" by getting rid of most single-family zoning. About 2/3 of all residences in California are single-family homes, but that might be changing with the passage of these Senate bills. Senate Bill 8 extends a temporary law to 2030 that speeds housing development approvals and requires developers to replace rent-controlled or affordable units that are demolished for new construction. Senate Bill 9 allows owners of single-family residences to allow up to four units of housing on a single-family lot. It gives property owners the

option to split the lot and sell the new units. Although local governments can regulate the appearance of the units and impose safety standards, they cannot require more than one off-street parking spot per unit, or any off-street parking if the units are within half a mile of public transit (*Los Angeles Times*, 9/20/21, page B2). Senate Bill 10 makes it easier for cities to change zoning in transit-adjacent single-family parcels to allow a building of up to 10 units. (*Los Angeles Times*, 9/19/21, page A15). In addition, these changes would not trigger a California Environmental Quality Act (known as CEQA), although multiunit projects would still be subject to environmental law. While SB10 creates a voluntary program for cities to change zoning, SB9 allows for duplex, triplex, and fourplex apartment buildings with no requirement for city permission.

California residents are united in their concern with the state's related housing and homelessness crises. However, there is lack of consensus as to whether these senate bills provide good solutions to housing needs. Proponents of the senate bills suggest that racism and NIMBYism are drivers for maintaining single-family zoning, and that the bills will address the reality that single-family homes are out of the financial reach of many California residents. Opening up neighborhoods to more development would allow less expensive housing to be built. Opponents of the senate bills are concerned that their neighborhoods will be forever changed with increased density and bring about increased strain on the electrical grid. They fear that the market would be "dominated by developers looking to make a cash grab by building flashy new homes as cheaply as possible" resulting in accelerated gentrification while not truly addressing housing shortages. The fact that most homeowners lack the capital to finance apartment construction has been cited as a reason why multiple dwellings allowed by SB9 will be rare. However, it is also the case that financing such construction could easily become the purview of profit-hungry developers.

The issue of adequate and affordable housing is much more complicated than I have just described, and I urge residents to educate themselves about these bills. Interestingly, SB9 will not apply to any residential sites "designated or listed as a city or county landmark or historic property or district". This exemption is the reason why citizens of La Verne might want to consider creating a formal historic district to preserve the residential neighborhood that was once part of Lordsburg. The organization called S.O.L.V.E. (Save Old La Verne's Environment) came together in the 1970's under just such a zoning change that threatened old residential neighborhoods. Perhaps that time has come again.

Sherry Best, LVHS President

Just Ask Bill



New La Verne residents soon realize that there is no Fourth Street in the city. We "old timers" delight in telling them that there was such a street at one time, but in the interest of conformity throughout the Valley, many cities

changed the names of certain streets to "Bonita Avenue," effective February 1, 1961. But that wasn't the first time that Bonita Avenue caused confusion in our town.

In the 1940s and before, the most direct way to reach the heart of La Verne from the heart of our nearest neighbor to the west, San Dimas, was to drive east on Bonita Avenue. But things got confusing as motorists passed Bonita Union High School.

To explain the situation, I will refer to the minutes of the La Verne City Council from April 7, 1947. During the meeting, a recommendation from the Planning Commission, dated February 27, 1947, was read. The

essence of the portion of the Planning Commission recommendation pertaining to street name confusion is as follows:

That the name of Bonita Avenue (from Firey Avenue, west to the City Limit) be changed to "Third Street" to avoid confusion that now exists.

Many out-of-town people looking for addresses on "Bonita Avenue" in La Verne have a hard time finding them, not knowing that "Bonita Ave." turns the corner at the High School. A change of name to "Third Street" would eliminate this confusion. The Planning Commission urges immediate action on the above recommendation.



Map showing the La Verne City Limits at the time of the proposed street name change

This seemed to be a simple solution to a problem that would no doubt have gotten worse as more people moved into the city and more homes were built on Fourth Street, the street that folks would find themselves travelling if they continued east from Bonita High School if they did not follow the curve onto Third Street. I don't know how soon the motion took effect, but I suspect it was quite soon.

If you have any questions about this piece of La Verne history or any other item, please submit them through our contact page on our website or through Facebook. Thank you for your interest in La Verne's history.

Bill Does It Again

Aided by the filming genius of LVTV, Bill Lemon has created a wonderful "Time Capsule" about Kuns Park. This video was created to accompany the virtual garden tour of the Calkins-Perrin house located on Fifth Street, facing the park. Check out Bill's video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F0bid5de5w>

Rolling with the International

Restoration has kicked into high gear with the Inman Conety 1938 International truck. On September 16th it was delivered to Bonita High School's auto shop program, where students in teacher Rob Zamboni's classes will bring it back to life.



Rob Zamboni (left) and LVHS member Erik Chaputa (right) examine the 1938 International prior to its move to Bonita High School

This project represents the best example of collaboration among stakeholders that results in lasting benefit to members of the community. Throughout the year, progress on the truck will be filmed by LVTV and eventually become a video to add to our history. The students will gain valuable automotive knowledge and the LVHS will emerge with a drivable truck that can be part of La Verne's

“Hands on History” program and make an appearance in parades and city events. It is a project in which we can all take great pride.



The 1938 International draws an admiring crown of students when it arrives at Bonita High School



A BUSD student works under the 1938 International next to a photographer from the San Gabriel Valley News Group

Tribute to a Fallen Hero

On September 21st, 2021, a procession honoring Marine Lance Corporal Dylan Ryan Merola of Rancho Cucamonga, passed under the I-210 freeway bridges at Fruit, Emerald, and Wheeler in La Verne on its way to Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Covina. Corporal Merola, age 20, was among 13 service members killed in the August 26th suicide bombing at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Afghanistan. His awards included a Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. Residents of La Verne lined

the overpasses in a show of solidarity and respect for this fallen hero.



Events at La Verne Heritage

The La Verne Heritage Foundation is now taking reservations for school/group tours, that can be scheduled for Monday through Friday, from **October 11th–October 29th**. Tours include the following:

- A tractor ride, a tour of the ranch and Weber House, a visit to pet the farm animals, and a pumpkin for each child.

The cost for children is \$7.00 each, or \$8.00 each with a pumpkin decorating kit. The cost for adults to attend is \$2.00 each. To reserve your tour, please call the office for reservations at 909-593-2862.

Other October events at Heritage Park include a Vendor Faire on **Saturday, October 16th**, from 10am-3pm. The Faire will include food items, some merchandise, craft items, and a live band for entertainment. Finally, the La Verne Heritage Foundation is sponsoring a car show on **Saturday, October 23rd**, from 10am-3pm. If you are interested

in showing a car, please contact Jim Clark at calrodskid@gmail.com.

Tree Removal and Replacement Along the Foothill Gold Line

We were recently contacted by a community stakeholder to say that it would be helpful for the community to understand the Construction Authority's plan for tree replacement, following the clearing of the corridor by the Kiewit-Parsons Joint Venture (KPJV) team crews that removed all trees that were deemed to be a hazard to the future rail operations. Thank you to that interested person for the suggestion! Below is an overview of the agency's policy and program. We welcome other suggestions. If you have something you want to know more about, please let us know.

Here is an overview of the agency's tree removal and replacement program:

As part of the Construction Authority's commitment to environmental sustainability, the agency has an adopted Tree Replacement Policy. The goal of the policy is to save as many trees as possible, but where that is not possible: **for every tree that is required to be removed as part of the project's construction, a minimum of two trees will replace it. And for California Live Oaks, which are protected species, each will be replaced with a replacement ratio equal to or greater than local city ordinances.**

It all starts with a survey of the corridor:

Surveying Trees for Removal and Replacement

As part of their initial work tasks, KPJV was required to take a survey of all trees along the 9.1-mile project corridor from Glendora to Pomona and identify any trees that would likely need to be removed (and those at risk of potentially needing removal), because

they would be hazardous to the future rail operations by meeting one of the following criteria:

- Interferes with the construction of the alignment/tracks/other project element
- Interferes with the overhead catenary power system
- Interferes with stations and bridge structures
- Conflicts with Local, State and Federal safety codes
- Trees/shrubs are within 20 feet of the track

The survey included the tree's location, caliper (diameter of the tree trunk, measured 6" above the ground line) and type. Once the survey was completed, the team looked to save as many of the trees as possible. For those that needed to be removed, a replacement plan will be developed later in the project based on the Construction Authority's Tree Replacement Policy, as follows:

Canopy Trees

- 4" to 8" caliper - replaced with 24" box tree at 2 to 1 replacement ratio
- 8" to 18" caliper - replaced with 48" box tree at 2 to 1 replacement ratio
- 18"+ caliper - replaced with 48" box tree at 4 to 1 replacement ratio

Trees/Shrubs That Provided Visual Screen

- 3" to 18" caliper - replaced with 15 gallon shrub at 6 to 1 replacement ratio
- 18"+ caliper - replaced with 15 gallon shrub at 10 to 1 replacement ratio

The replacement trees will be planted at various sites still to be determined throughout the project corridor, and may include station areas, station parking facilities, perimeter of traction power substations and city streetscapes within project area limits. The Construction Authority will also provide

trees (per the replacement criteria above) or financial assistance to each city to replace trees that were removed from the corridor within city limits.

Along Arrow Highway, the need to remove the Deodar Cedars was identified as part of the 2013 Final Environmental Impact Report. Each was surveyed and will be part of the replacement program. In addition, the Construction Authority has identified a portion of the corridor through La Verne that can be used for revegetation once the mainline construction is complete and will be working with the city of La Verne on the revegetation plan for Arrow Highway in the future.



The Damien mural was added to the inventory of public work in La Verne and given the protection given to other works of public art.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Foothill Gold Line. We appreciate your patience as we build this important regional project.

Lisa Levy Buch, Chief Communications and Strategic Development Officer and the Public Affairs Team

Another Tidbit of La Verne History...

The mural on the right is inside the campus of Damien High School and deserves another look. Located at the entrance to what was once the Fine Arts Building, the mural was “re-discovered” in the mid-1990’s by restoration architect Martin Eli Weil. It was constructed of flat blocks of cast concrete in muted colors by 25-year-old Grace Clements, an important Los Angeles artist known primarily for paintings and lithographs. The mural, funded under the Works Project Administration (WPA), was dedicated to the Bonita High School class of 1939. Clements was best known for her extensive mosaics and murals for the 1941 Long Beach Municipal Airport. Mosaics at the Long Beach Municipal Airport covered the 4,300 square foot concourse of the first floor, and the stair and corridor on the second floor.



An article about the Damien High School mural first appeared in a 1996 edition of the LVHS newsletter. The mural is 82 years old.