



SOUTH PASADENA
PRESERVATION
FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

September 2024



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UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Book Talk (see details on p. 8):

Becky Nicolaides, author of *The New Suburbia: How Diversity Remade Suburban Life in Los Angeles After 1945*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Tour event (save the date and see p. 9):

GREENE & GREENE ON BUENA VISTA

Talk and tour, Howard Langley (1897) and Lucretia Garfield (1904) houses

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Members:

As thousands in and around South Pasadena are now aware, SPPF nearly lost its lease on the old Meridian Ironworks building after 40 years of faithful community service: providing a use for the renewed building since 1986; building a collection; fundraising for operations, curation and displays; and providing decades of uncountable volunteer hours to do all of these things plus open the museum and make it available to the public – individuals, community groups, schoolchildren, and amateur and academic researchers.

So many of you stood up for the importance of this community-led institution when you learned that our lease was terminated and we were given a notice to vacate. Our prior lease ended nearly two years ago, and we have been month to month since then.

At the closed session of the City Council on Sept. 4, the City agreed to extend to us the opportunity to continue negotiations so that we can finally resolve this with a new lease. Special thanks go to Claire Hervey Collins, a lifelong South Pasadenan, who provided invaluable pro-bono legal counsel through her firm, Hanson Bridgett, to help us and the City get to the heart of the matter. We will provide an update as soon as we can!

We expect to offer additional open hours on Saturdays from 11 am to 1 pm once the lease is signed. In the meantime, we are still open our usual Thursday hours during the Farmers Market. Come out, say hello, and rediscover your museum!

Jennifer Trotoux
President

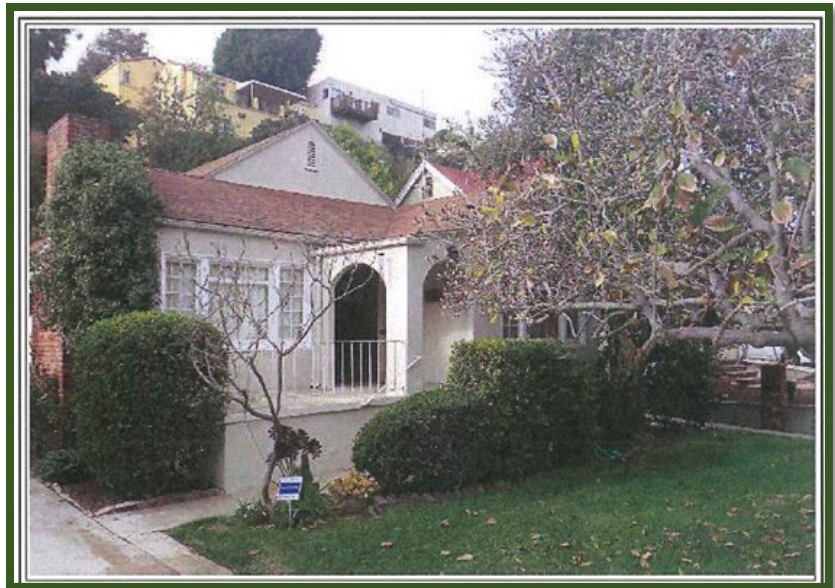
A Story of 20th Century Occupants in a South Pasadena 1925 English Cottage

by Delaine Shane

My family and I are grateful to live in South Pasadena. Part of the charm of South Pasadena's historic residences is the pleasure and opportunity of living in them. Besides appreciating the architecture of the building, one can preserve and enhance it to suit one's priorities. Like us, earlier generations of owners and tenants have done renovations to suit their wishes too.

Ever wonder who lived in your historic residence during the 20th century? I have. With great curiosity, I researched my family's 1925 minimalist English cottage on Meridian Avenue that we purchased in 2015. I used a variety of online sources, which are listed at the end of this story.

I found an entry in the 1926 *South Pasadena and San Marino City Directory* about how the first couple to live in our home was James and Ruth Merriwell. He was a clerk in Los Angeles. Then, Charles and Dagmar Andrews lived at the house with their young son from 1927 to 1930. Charles worked in Los Angeles as a chemical plant sales manager.



The author's 1925 home in South Pasadena.

During the early years of the Great Depression, the occupants rarely stayed for long: Alexander and Virginia West were there in 1931, while he was employed as a fire insurance adjuster; followed by Harold Sorlien who lived there in 1932. Mr. Sorlien identified his recovered property from a burglary by the "Pants Thief" known locally by that moniker but in multiple states was called the "Barefoot Thief." That home invasion probably explains why our bedroom windows have old metal security bars in place. Between 1932 and 1933, Charles and Mabel Boardman resided there with their two sons, while Charles worked as a deputy coroner. Fortunately, Charles was a property custodian, and presumably he didn't bring his work home. In 1934, railroad conductor Arthur Garner and his wife Maude lived there.

From 1935 through 1946, the house was occupied by the Rose family (Melvin, Edna Mae, and daughter). He was an Adohr milkman, who later became a welder. Before her marriage to Melvin, Edna Mae (née Butler) lived with her parents on Gillette Crescent. Her home was so close to Meridian! Was it also a coincidence that the Rose family eventually sold the house to a South Pasadena High School (SPHS) teacher during the time that Edna Mae was a student there?

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Miss Rebecca Hayslip bought the house in 1946 and sold it around 1966. As an Occidental College graduate, Miss Hayslip taught English and history at SPHS from the mid-1920s to 1948. For many years, she was the faculty advisor for the *Copa de Oro Yearbook* (where her portrait, right, appeared). Throughout her life she traveled the world, telling her stories to South Pasadena clubs and local newspapers. It's a wonder she bothered to buy the house since she spent months at a time abroad.

In the latter part of the 20th century (1967-2001), the house became a refuge to the Yamamoto family (Charles, Haruko, and son), whose lives had been shattered previously during World War II. With no recourse but to comply, this American-born family was sent to the Assembly Center at Santa Anita Racetrack in Arcadia in the early 1940s, then to the Granada Relocation Center ("Amache") in Colorado, and ultimately released in 1943 in Chicago, Illinois.

Two themes personally resonated with me as a retiree during this research. First was Miss Hayslip's lifelong zeal for travel, adventure, and storytelling, especially after she retired. Second was the Yamamoto family who, despite their physical, psychological, and financial losses, chose to live in South Pasadena not far from Arcadia and its racetrack. Mr. Yamamoto lived into his mid-90s, and my neighbors remember him fondly to this day as enjoying his outdoor walks and tending to his plants around the house.

This determination was clearly a reflection of the resilience and inner strength of the Yamamoto family. I admire both owners and think of them living out their lives in a place I now call home.

Is your home an historic building (i.e., over 50 years old)? Are you curious about who lived in your home years ago and their stories? If yes, then go for it and find out.

See next page for research resources



Miss Rebecca Hayslip, who resided in the house for twenty years.

MEMBERSHIP: SUPPORT US AND BE HEARD!

We welcome your annual membership at the following rates:

SENIOR/STUDENT:	\$25
INDIVIDUAL:	\$35
HOUSEHOLD:	\$50
BUSINESS:	\$100
SUSTAINING:	\$125

Start or renew your membership today: <https://sppreservation.org/shop/>

Thank you to our Business Members!

Steve and Lisa Haussler,
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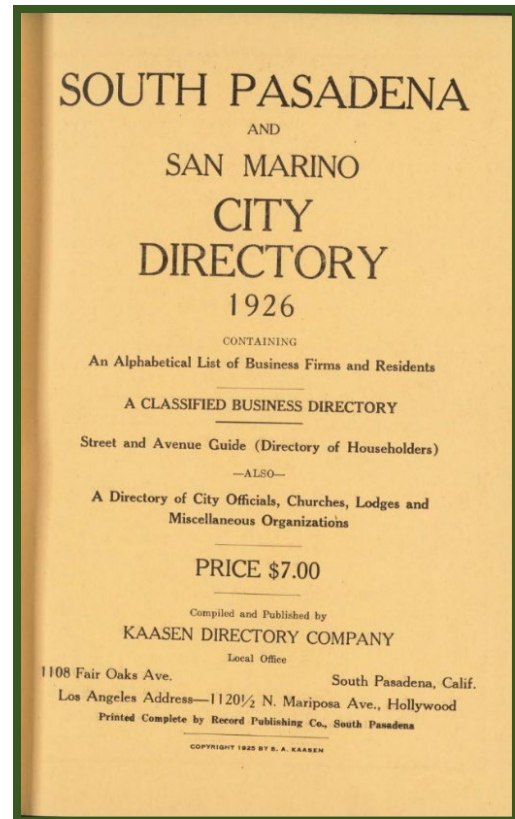
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Researching the Former Occupants of Your Own House

Gathering this information cost me nothing, except an investment of my time. I relied on several genealogical and newspaper databases, directories, and archived documents. All were accessible online with a couple of instances requiring trips to the libraries to use their computers:

- To start out, check the available resources at the South Pasadena Library:
<https://www.southpasadenaca.gov/Your-Government/Department-Service-Areas/Library/Local-History>.
- Access city directories and telephone books at: <https://californiarevealed.org/partner/south-pasadena-public-library>. Don't be hesitant about checking adjacent city directories. I found telephone listings for my home in the 1960s in the Los Angeles city directories.
- Free online databases, such as Family Search (<https://www.familysearch.org/en/united-states/>) and National Archives (<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/>), were very helpful. Family Search is great for researching U.S. Federal Census records and other records once you have the name of the occupants and the years they lived in your home.
- Genealogical databases, such as Ancestry Library edition and historic newspapers databases, can be used when you go to either a Los Angeles or a Pasadena library branch. The library cards are free and so is the one- or two-hour time limit for in-library computer use. Ancestry has voter registration lists from California, along with records on what happened to the Japanese Americans who were sent to internment camps. The South Pasadena Library does not have the Ancestry Library edition, but it does have online local historic papers such as past issues of the *South Pasadena Review*.
- Newspapers, like the historic *Los Angeles Times* (1881-2010), are found at the libraries usually under databases known as *ProQuest*, *Access*, or *Newsbank*. Some libraries allow you to search on these sites at home with a library card number entered online.
- The *Densho Encyclopedia* details the Japanese American experience during WWII:
<https://encyclopedia.densho.org/>.



Many other forms of documents and permits can be accessed, depending on where one lives, the timeframe, and the occupations and life events of those past occupants.

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AT THE MUSEUM

The **South Pasadena Historical Museum** was developed by the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation beginning in 1986, when the City of South Pasadena completed a thorough rehabilitation of the old Meridian Iron Works building (originally a general store built in 1886).

The Museum is a volunteer-led, community-based institution with a collection of archives and objects assembled from the donations of many donors.

Visit us during the Farmers Market on Thursday evenings, during community festivals, and – coming soon – during Saturday open hours!

ARTS CRAWL CROWDS

The South Pasadena Historical Museum was open to participants in the Arts Crawl on Saturday, July 13. We diligently counted 283 visitors throughout the late afternoon and evening! Several of us from the board staffed the Museum that day and thoroughly enjoyed everyone's questions and curiosity.

Some of the most engaged visitors were our youngest patrons, including a group of teenaged girls who had many questions and observations about the vintage kitchen display. At the end of the evening, a group of 9 or 10 year old boys had to be dragged out by their parents as they marveled over the operating crank-powered phonograph and the contents of the general store, which interprets the first use of the building back in the 1880s and 1890s. It was so rewarding to see children jumping up and down with excitement as they asked questions, pondered the answers, and asked some more!



Saturday, July 13 during the Arts Crawl was a well-attended evening at the Museum.

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AROUND TOWN: HONORING GLEN DUNCAN

On August 19, the South Pasadena Senior Center held its annual event to recognize “Senior Champions of South Pasadena.” One of this year’s honorees was SPPF’s own long-time board member and a champion for the cause of historic preservation and history, Glen Duncan. Well-wishers and supporters filled the room for the occasion.

Former SPPF board member Joan Hilliard introduced Glen, describing how, after moving here from Detroit, he took up a passion for local history and the built environment.

Glen was one of several people who recorded oral history films with the South Pasadena Library in 2015, and his, screened at the event, told the story of the community’s realization that the proposed 710 Freeway route would carve a broad path of destruction and cleave the town from top to bottom. How to get this message across? With an illustration of a map of South Pasadena with the proposed demolition zone for the freeway – filling the whole front page of the local paper in 1964. This story highlighted the importance of activism and organizing when something important and potentially threatening is at a community’s doorstep. Glen’s role in this critical struggle will have a lasting impact. (Illustration at right shows that front page with the path highlighted in red, as it was shown in the oral history film.)

Glen is also known – in South Pasadena and beyond – for his involvement and leadership in what is now known as the California Route 66 Association and many initiatives to recognize, celebrate, and protect “The Mother Road.” He is the author of *Route 66 in California* (Images of America, Arcadia Publishing, 2005) and served as the Grand Marshall of the Festival of Balloons parade on July 4, 2017, when the parade theme was “Freedom on the Road: Celebrating Route 66.”

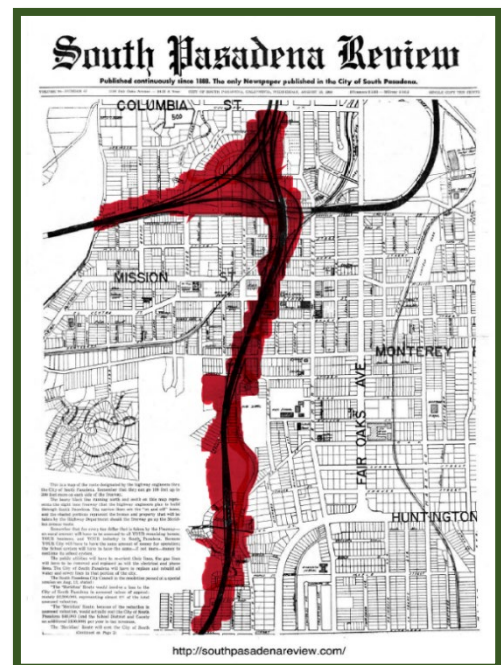
In addition to his service with the SPPF and California



Honored at the South Pasadena Senior Center in August were Anita Scott, left (for her work with the South Pasadena Tournament of Roses), and Glen Duncan, second from right.

Route 66 Foundation boards, Glen also served on the South Pasadena Cultural Heritage Commission, the governmental body that reviews changes proposed to historic properties in the city.

Glen deserves the whole community’s thanks for this life of dedication to history and preservation, and he certainly has our deepest appreciation and gratitude at SPPF.

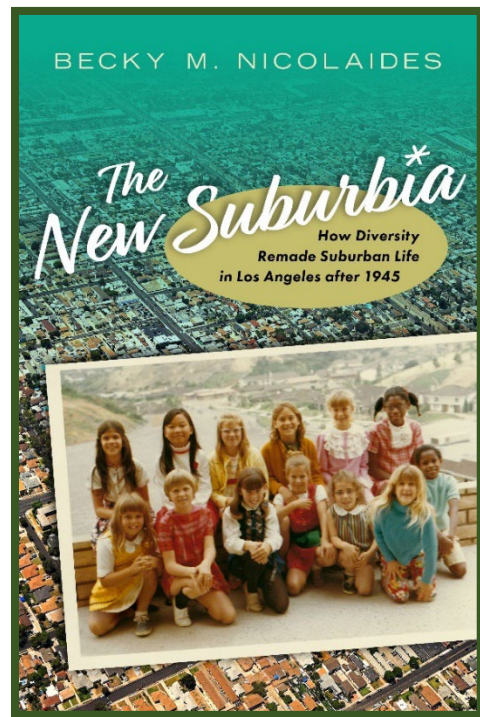


UPCOMING EVENTS

BOOK TALK WITH BECKY NICOLAIDES

SPPF is proud to present a talk from historian Becky Nicolaides based on her book, *The New Suburbia: How Diversity Remade Suburban Life in Los Angeles After 1945*. Becky is well known for her work in urban history, and her work in this book touches all of us who grew up locally in the second half of the 20th century, as well as those who, today, are trying to understand the particular suburban demographics of older, close-in communities such as South Pasadena.

Raised in South Pasadena, Becky Nicolaides is a historian and consultant specializing in the history of suburbs, metro areas, and Los Angeles. She is the author of three books, including *The New Suburbia: How Diversity Remade Suburban Life in Los Angeles After 1945* (Oxford, 2024), and her writing has appeared in *Time Magazine*, the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and other outlets. Becky served on the LA Mayor's Office Civic Memory Working Group. She is a Research Affiliate at the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West and is co-founder of the consulting firm History Studio. She received her BA from USC, and her PhD from Columbia University. She grew up in South Pasadena, graduated from South Pasadena High School, and is a lifelong Angeleno.



About the book: America's suburbs have been transforming. The conventional story of suburbs as bastions of white, middle-class homeowners no longer describes the suburbs of America's cities. Today they house a more typical cross-section of the nation—rich, poor, Black American, Latino, Asian, immigrant, the unhoused, the lavishly housed, and everyone in between. Stories of everyday suburban life, in the process, have taken on new inflections. In the suburban metropolis and global powerhouse of Los Angeles, lily white suburbs have virtually disappeared, and over two-thirds of the County's suburbs have become majority minority.

Examining this vanguard of change from the postwar to the present, *The New Suburbia* follows the Asian Americans, Black Americans, and Latinos who moved into white neighborhoods that once barred them and began navigating suburban life. They faced a choice: would they remake the suburbs, or would the suburbs remake them? (Continued on next page) →

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(The New Suburbia, *continued*)

In places like Pasadena, San Marino, South Gate, and Lakewood, suburbanites faced the challenges of living together in difference. Historian Becky Nicolaidis explores a range of community experiences, from internal resegregation to suburban poverty, an embrace of law-and-order culture to police brutality, friendly neighbors to social withdrawal. In some communities, diverse residents continued longstanding habits of exclusion and perpetuated metropolitan inequality. In others, they embraced more inclusive, multicultural suburban ideals.

Through it all, the common denominators of suburbia remained—low-slung landscapes of single-family homes and families seeking the good life.

An authoritative work based on quantitative data spanning 70 years and over 60 unpublished oral histories and interviews, *The New Suburbia* explores vital landscapes where the American dream has endured, even as the dreamers have changed.

JOIN US for the Book Talk:

Saturday, October 5, 2024

11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

1301 Chelton Way, South Pasadena

Tickets: \$7 for members, \$10 for nonmembers

Please see the [Events page on our website for ticketing: https://sppreservation.org/news-information/](https://sppreservation.org/news-information/)

GREENE & GREENE ON BUENA VISTA HOUSE TOUR AND TALK

November will bring a special opportunity to see TWO houses by Greene & Greene that have been neighbors for 120 years: the Longley house (1897) and the Garfield house (1904).

The speaker will be SPPF president Jennifer Trotoux, who has been writing about and studying Greene & Greene for many years, and now serves as the Director of Collections and Interpretation for the Gamble House Conservancy in Pasadena.

More details to follow!

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, November 2, 2024

