

The Chronology of Hollywood and the Cahuenga Pass

1769

The Spanish Explorer Gaspar de Portolá crosses the hills into the San Fernando Valley and names it the “Valley de Santa Catalina de Boronia de los Encinos” or the “Valley of the Oaks.” This area is known as “Kawengna,” meaning “little hills” in native Gabrieliño.

January 15, 1975

This area including Hollywood is granted to Señor Moreno (later known as Rancho La Brea) including La Nopalera at the south entrance to El Portozuelo (Cahuenga Pass).

1797

The Mission San Fernando Rey de España is founded by Franciscan priests.

18th Century

The road is part of El Camino Real del Rey linking the missions of Alta California together. It functions as a wagon road, herding trail and mail route.

September 7, 1821

Mexico declares its independence from Spain.

June 6, 1828

Señor Moreno is dispossessed and his land grant is divided.

1831

The first Battle of Cahuenga Pass – and problems with the Mexican governor.

1845

The Second Battle of Cahuenga Pass.

Winter 1846

The Mission San Fernando grant is sold by Governor Pío Pico to Eulogio de Celis.

January 13, 1847

The Treaty of Cahuenga is signed near the site of the old Cahuenga Chapel and is approved by General John C. Fremont, surrendering Alta California to the U.S. and ending the Mexican-American War in California.

1848

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company initiates regular crossings twice a week, transporting mail from St. Louis to San Francisco.

1850

California enters the Union as a free state.

April 4, 1850

The City of Los Angeles is incorporated.

1851

The County of Los Angeles is divided into six townships.

1853

The first dwelling is built in the Cahuenga Valley, the adobe home of Thomas Urquidez – the Outpost.

Mid-19th Century

Banditos and highwaymen constantly raid parties crossing the Pass.

Post Civil War

Greek George Caralambo and the Camel Freight Train experiment uses camels and dromedaries for transporting goods.

1869

The San Fernando Farm Homestead Association, organized by Isaac Lankershim and Isaac Newton Can Nuys, is conveyed to Andrés Pico's portion of the Valley, the former Rancho ex-Mission San Fernando.

1871

The San Fernando Valley is divided with the southern half going to Lankershim and Van Nuys.

1870's

The Pass Hotel/Eight Mile House is established, a toll station and store eight miles from downtown Los Angeles.

1880's

The area is devoted to the cultivation of wheat, fruits, citrus, vegetables and livestock.

1886

H. H. Wilcox and his wife Mrs. D. H. Wilcox come to the Cahuenga Valley area and buy property, some of which they farm and the balance of which they subdivide. They name their ranch "Hollywood" and give the community land for a new church, a post office, a public library, a city hall, etc. They plant pepper trees lining the streets.

1886-1887

It's boom time in the Los Angeles area.

November 1887

The post office is officially established in Hollywood. Other towns south of the hills include Colegrove, South Hollywood, Tropic, and Prospect Park.

1887

The Southern Pacific Railroad comes to Los Angeles.

1893

Hollywood residents start searching for a dependable source of water.

1896

Colonel Griffith J. Griffith donates 4,000 acres to the City of Los Angeles for a park to be called Griffith Park. The Southern Pacific Railway company builds its line across the valley via Toluca, which is renamed Lankershim.

End of the 19th Century

The San Fernando Valley is flourishing, especially the town of Lankershim. San Fernando Valley is devoted largely to cultivation of deciduous fruits including apricots, peaches and walnuts. Los Angeles begins its love affair with the automobile.

1902

The “Hollywood Ocean View Tract” is developed by H.J. Whitley, including the Hollywood Hotel.

1903

Residential-only building restrictions are lifted on Hollywood Boulevard.

November 14, 1903

Sanford Rich is elected the first mayor of Hollywood.

1905

The Owens River water project is started.

September 23, 1909

The Hill Street Tunnel opens, reducing the time of a trip from downtown Los Angeles to Hollywood by twelve minutes.

October 19, 1909

Colegrove, south of Hollywood, is annexed to Los Angeles.

February 1910

Hollywood votes to be annexed to Los Angeles, largely because of Owens Valley Water.

1910

Excavation for the Pacific Electric rail line begins. The motion picture industry in Hollywood begins.

1911

The Bernheimer brothers build a hilltop mansion, “Mountain Palace,” 250 feet above Hollywood Blvd.

December 16, 1911

The Pacific Electric interurban line opens, reducing the trip over the hill from a day to 45 minutes.

1912

Famous Players-Lasky Film Company moves to the SE corner of Selma & Vine in Hollywood. Carl Laemmle & Universal Film Manufacturing Company lease and eventually buy a former chicken ranch along the newly-illuminated Lankershim Boulevard.

1913

The opening of the Owens Valley Aqueduct provides water to the area and increases the need for commercial traffic between the San Fernando Valley and downtown Los Angeles.

March 15, 1915

The opening of Universal Studios by Carl Laemmle – silent films, public tour and a zoo.

1915

The area later known as Studio City is annexed to the City of Los Angeles.

1913-1919

Hollywood thrives. Neighboring towns exploit her fame by renaming themselves – Toluca & Lankershim become North Hollywood; Ivanhoe & Prospect Park become East Hollywood; Colegrove becomes South Hollywood; Sherman becomes West Hollywood.

1920

Los Angeles is the 10th largest city in the U.S. Property is purchased for the Pilgrimage Play Theatre.

1922

25 streetcars and 17,000 autos cross the Cahuenga Pass daily – “traffic in the Cahuenga Pass becomes intolerable.” Grauman’s Chinese Theatre opens.

August 1923

Construction starts on the Mulholland Dam & Lower Hollywood Reservoir in spite of concerns expressed by Hollywood residents.

1924

Olmsted Bartholomew & Cheney’s *Major Traffic Street Plan* proposes major improvements to the road over the Pass.

September 29, 1924

The Hollywood Bowl property is deeded to the County of Los Angeles and money is made available for the construction of permanent facilities.

November 4, 1924

Major Traffic Street Plan is adopted.

December 1924

The Mulholland Dam & Lower Hollywood Reservoir, designed by Chief Engineer William Mulholland, is completed and put into service in Weid Canyon. The dam is of a concrete arched gravity type with a radius of 550 feet at the upstream face. It is constructed as a monolith (without construction joints) to a crest elevation of 755.8 feet and a maximum height of 195 feet above bedrock. Its original capacity as constructed is 7,437 acre-feet.

December 27, 1924

Mulholland Highway opened, running from Calabasas east to Mulholland Dam. It was originally intended to extend further east to Griffith Park.

March 17, 1925

The Mulholland Dam is dedicated. “Built with such solidity and massiveness, the Weid Canyon Dam will forever stand as an imperishable monument to the wonderful development and expansion of Los Angeles” – William Mulholland.

1925

The *Report & Recommendations on a Comprehensive Rapid Transit Plan for the City & County of Los Angeles*” by Kelker, De Leuw & Co. is rejected by the voters of Los Angeles.

July 1, 1926

A new 10-inch deep concrete roadway over the Cahuenga Pass is completed according to *Street Plan*.

1926

The Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, El Capitan and Grauman's Chinese Theatres open.

1927

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences is organized in Hollywood.

March 12, 1928

The failure of the St. Francis Dam in San Francisquito Canyon, sister dam to the Mulholland Dam, results in a major loss of life and leaves the Mulholland Dam as the only remaining concrete dam in Los Angeles County.

1938

The old Sennett Studios in nearby Studio City is bought by Republic Studios.

May 1933 – April 1934

A new buttress fill is constructed against the downstream face of the Mulholland Dam, the spillway is lowered, the size of the outlet line is increased, all pipes and drains under the fill are encased in concrete and recommended capacity is reduced to 4,036 acre-feet (54% of original capacity).

1936

A 2½-foot high concrete wall is constructed around the Hollywood Reservoir (Lake Hollywood) to prevent storm water from polluting the reservoir.

1937

The Auto Club's *Traffic Survey, Los Angeles Metropolitan Area* proposes further improvements to the Cahuenga Pass roadway.

1938

Major flooding in the area causes extensive damage and loss of life. The Citizens' Transportation Survey Committee is organized by City Engineer Lloyd Aldrich to study transit/transportation issues in the region.

1939

A Transit Program for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Region, issued by the City of Los Angeles Engineering Transportation Board, calls for the immediate construction of a freeway through the Cahuenga Pass, connecting to downtown Los Angeles as a first priority.

Construction of the Cahuenga Pass Parkway (State Highway #2) is undertaken by a team of engineers under the direction of Merrill Butler, Deputy Engineer in charge of design, and L.A. City Engineer Lloyd Aldrich, jointly financed by PWA (45%), State of California and the City of L.A. (using gas tax and other monies). Butler and Aldrich had been in charge of the Arroyo Seco Parkway and the Cahuenga Pass Freeway represents an improvement on their earlier design.

Prior to the start of construction, the existing road carries between 45,000-50,000 cars per day.

June 15, 1940

Phase I is completed ahead of schedule – from south of the Hollywood Bowl near the intersection of Highland Avenue and Cahuenga Boulevard, north to about Hollycrest, including the Pilgrimage Play Bridge and the Mulholland Highway Bridge.

December 1940

Phase II is completed – specifically from 440 feet south of the Mulholland Highway Bridge to 940 feet north of Barham Boulevard, including the Barham Bridge and all ramps, retaining walls and structures in connection with it. PWA funding is extended to cover construction of this phase of the project.

December 1952

The Pacific Electric (PE) Rail Cars are removed from operation.

1957-1958

PE tracks are removed from the center of the roadway and converted to two additional lanes for vehicular traffic.

1957

The final leg of State Highway #2 is extended to Vineland. The final phase and connections are started – the age of freeway building.

1960

The Ventura Freeway opens to the Valley.