



Department of the Month

El Pueblo Historical Monument

El Pueblo: Return to Where City of Los Angeles Began

by Ed Navarro, General Manager, El Pueblo Historic Monument

Welcome to historic El Pueblo Historical Monument! My name is Edward Navarro and I am the General Manager of this relatively new City of Los Angeles department.

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with El Pueblo, I am sure the name Olvera Street, with its collection of shops and restaurants, is more familiar. Olvera Street is a part of El Pueblo Historical Monument and actually began in 1930 when a woman named Christine Sterling took it upon herself to bring the idea of a Mexican Marketplace to El Pueblo and to recreate the flavor, romance, look and excitement of our culture. To this day family members; daughters, granddaughters, sons and grandsons, nieces and nephews of most if not all of those first families back in 1930 still operate their businesses. I encourage you to stop by during lunch, or an evening for dinner, not to mention visiting us during the weekend to shop and visit our historic sites.

Yes, historic sites. Did I fail to mention that El Pueblo actually had its beginnings in 1781 when a group of 44 settlers, Los Pobladores, walked from the present San Gabriel Mission to this site? In fact, every year on the City's birthday, September 4, the walk is reenacted by descendants of those first families along with supporters, so join us next year for a brisk walk and entertainment at El Pueblo.

El Pueblo was the beginning of many of the rich, diverse cultures that now make up Los Angeles, and in fact we are recognizing those groups through the development of a new Chinese American Museum (due to open this month) as well as a soon-to-open Italian Hall Museum. All of this is in addition to the existing collection of historic buildings throughout El Pueblo, which includes the Avila Adobe (oldest adobe in Los Angeles), recently renovated Pico House, Garnier block and Sepulveda House, where we have our Visitor Center.



Ed Navarro, General Manager, El Pueblo Historic Monument

A significant part of El Pueblo is the recently conserved mural by Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros, America Tropical, commissioned in 1932. This mural is one of only three done by the renowned muralist Siqueiros in the United States and will soon be available for viewing by the public.

More often known, in addition to the shops and restaurants, for our events such as Mexican Independence Day and Cinco de Mayo, we are also proud of the rich tradition of events such as Blessing of the Animals (April), Dia de los Muertos (November), Las Posadas (December) and Mardi Gras (February), all of which are coordinated by and with our merchants. Be sure to call El Pueblo to get details on the specific dates and event schedule. 📞



From left: Cynthia Woo, Museum Assistant, 4 months; Sonia Mak, Assistant Curator, 2 years; Geneva Tien-Witzleben, Museum Educator, 1 year; and Betty Liu, Administrative Coordinator, 2 years.



Suellen Cheng, Curator, 14 years.



Linda Duran, Program and Talent Contracts, Business Affairs, 20 years.



Glenn Dykier, Building Repair Supervisor, 23 years.



Fermin Sanchez, Parking Attendant II, 16 years.



Nick Hopper, Parking Service Supervisor, 24 years.



Jessica Herrera, Administrative Worker/Special Events Liaison, 3 years.



Alex Villaseñor, Building Repair, 21 years.



Jose Garcia, Parking Attendant II, 21 years.



Claudia Urzua, Administrative Support, 7 years.



Ernesto Sanchez, Parking Attendant II, 18 years.



From left: Juan Galarza, Parking Attendant, 4 years; and Rigo Sanchez, Parking Attendant II, 18 years.



From left: Rosendo Sanchez, Custodian, 2 years; and Jose Alvarez, Custodian, 8 years.



Miguel Garcia, Custodian Service Attendant, 22 years.



Baltazar Reyes Menjiva, Maintenance, 5 years.



Phil Orozco, Director of Operations, 14 years.



Rene Casillas, Maintenance, 1 year.



Pauline Cazares, Director of External Affairs, 8 years.



Rafael Garcia, Building Repairman, 17 years.

El Pueblo Historical Monument

Department of the Month

El Pueblo: Take Olvera Street Right Back Into L.A. History

Olvera Street is not only the oldest area in the City of Los Angeles, it is the heart and the birthplace of Los Angeles. Strolling musicians wander down the street, enhancing the overall ambiance of the Olvera Street Cultural experience.

But the street that's known the world over for its Mexican food and heritage, is but one part of the El Pueblo Historic Monument, a separate and complete City department. El Pueblo consists of 27 buildings, many of which remain open to the public.

El Pueblo del Los Angeles Historic Monument is near the site of the early Los Angeles pueblo where 44 settlers established a farming community nearby in 1781.

Since that time, Los Angeles has been under the flags of three nations (Spain, Mexico and the United States) and has grown into one of the world's largest metropolitan areas. In 1953, the oldest and most historic section of the City was designated a state historic park, reflecting the heritage of many ethnic groups: Hispanic, black, Chinese, French, Italian and Anglo, who all contributed to the history of the City.

Some of those 27 buildings are:

Avila Adobe, ca. 1818

Open daily

- Built by the Avila family, the adobe later became a boarding house and restaurant. Restored after the 1971 Sylmar earthquake, it now reflects the Hispanic lifestyle of California in the 1840s.

Our Lady Queen of Angels (Old Plaza)

Catholic Church, 1818-1822

Open daily

- The oldest church in the City, Our Lady Queen of Angels remains an active church in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles and is a dynamic force for community and culture in the area.

Masonic Hall, 1858

Closed for renovation

- The City's first Masonic Hall serves as a meeting place for lodge members and as a museum on the Order of Free Masons and Lodge 42.

La Placita (Plaza), ca. 1825

Open daily

- Formerly the town square, the Plaza was landscaped and given its circular form in the 1870s.

Old Plaza Firehouse, 1884

Open daily (except Monday)

- The City's first firehouse later served as a saloon, lodging house and store. It now displays firefighting memorabilia from the 19th century.

Sepulveda House, 1887

Open daily (except Sunday)

- In 1887, Senora Eloisa Martinez del Sepulveda built a two-story Eastlake-style Victorian business and residential block on her property between Main and Olvera Streets. The Sepulveda House represents, both architecturally and socially, the transformation of Los Angeles from purely Mexican traditions to a combination of Mexican and Anglo culture.

- The El Pueblo Visitor's Center is on the first floor of the historic Sepulveda House. A free 18-minute film, Pueblo of Promise, on the early history of Los Angeles, is shown there by request.

- The Visitor's Center also offers gifts, books, post cards, mementos and many other for-sale items that reflect the Pueblo's rich history. It features exhibits that highlight the Monument's collections and little-explored segments of Los Angeles history.

Olvera Street, 1930

Open daily, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (later hours in summer)

- This world-famous street was closed to vehicular traffic and made into a Mexican marketplace through the efforts of Christine Sterling and others in 1930.

These are just some of the many attractions at El Pueblo Historic Monument. To tour the monument: free docent-guided tours of El Pueblo are conducted Wednesdays through Saturdays at 10 and 11 a.m., and noon. These tours start at the information booth in the Plaza. Guided bus tours of the central city are given the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 10 a.m. The duration of the bus tour is two hours; meet in front of the Firehouse at 9:45. Reservations are required. Call (213) 628-1274.

To join these organizations, call these numbers:

- Friends of the Chinese American Museum(213) 626-5240
- Las Angelitas del Pueblo (docents)(213) 680-2381
- El Pueblo Association(213) 680-2525
- Historic Italian Hall Foundation(213) 957-0272



Last year, after an absence of more than 20 years, the Rose Queen court once again attended a breakfast at El Pueblo. Pictured above is from last year's visit. The court will return to El Pueblo this month.



Last year's Dia de Los Muertos.



El Pueblo celebrates the holidays each year with Las Posadas, a Mexican tradition that retells the journey of Mary and Joseph leading up to the nativity. Here, a previous Las Posadas celebration.



Last year's Dia de Los Muertos.



Mardi Gras has proven a popular event at El Pueblo.



Caroline Asencio, Property Management, 26 years.



Gloria Gianguili, Park Services Attendant, 12 years.



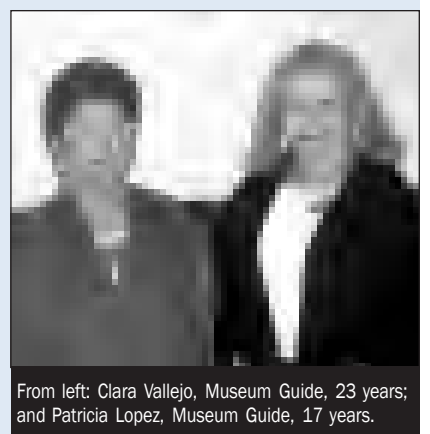
Jose Sillas, Landscaper, 15 years.



Julie Sandoval, Sr. Clerk Typist, 12 years.



Socorro Perez, Senior Custodian, 25 years.



From left: Clara Vallejo, Museum Guide, 23 years; and Patricia Lopez, Museum Guide, 17 years.