

History Comes Alive!

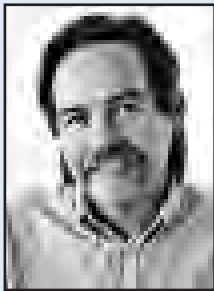
by Hynda Rudd,
City Archivist (Retired),
and Club Member



Tales From the City Archives

Haynes the Progressive

■ Part one of the story of John Randolph Haynes and the powerful Haynes Foundation.



Dr. Tom Sitton, author of this article.

Dr. Tom Sitton, Curator of American History at the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, is one of the most important historians and authors today on Los Angeles history. His latest publication, Los Angeles Transformed, is the history of Judge/Mayor Fletcher Bowron's urban reform revival from 1938-53, the years of Bowron's tenure as mayor of the City of Los Angeles.

But prior to this inspiring publication, Tom produced two separate historical volumes on John Randolph Haynes: the first, titled John Randolph Haynes: California Progressive, and the other on the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation called The Haynes Foundation and Urban Reform Philanthropy in Los Angeles. The Haynes Foundation funded all three books to enhance history and educate the public about Los Angeles.

The following topics will be divided into two parts -- this month and January -- because of the depth and breadth of John Randolph Haynes, who was one of the most dominant men in Los Angeles political history. His influence continues to be felt way into the 21st century.

I thank Tom Sitton for allowing us to publish his two-part article. — Hynda Rudd

The year 2006 marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation. This private general-purpose foundation was the first of its type in Los Angeles, and over the years it has supported a wide variety of social science research and public policy action. From its inception in 1926 to October 2006, with its support for the publication of the League of Women Voters' Los Angeles: Structure of a City Government, the Haynes Foundation has been in the forefront of educational efforts to reform governance at many levels. And in the last month of this year it is fitting to look upon the legacy of John R. Haynes in the history of Los Angeles City government, an arena in which he played such a dominant role.

Haynes was born in the anthracite coal region in Pennsylvania in 1853 and moved to Philadelphia with his family a decade later. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with both medical and doctoral degrees and practiced medicine in the City of Brotherly Love until 1887. In that year he and his extended family, like many other easterners with bronchial maladies, moved to the more salubrious climate of Los Angeles during the "Boom of the Eighties." In the City of Angels, he and his two brothers (all three of them physicians) established a thriving medical practice while John also made a small fortune in real estate investments.

In his adopted home in Los Angeles Haynes became a political and social reformer at the age of 44. During a visit to his parish by national Union Reform League leader William D. P. Bliss in early 1898, Haynes was converted to social and political action for such "radical" reforms (at that time) as women's suffrage; child labor laws; public ownership of natural resources; direct legislation (the initiative, referendum, and recall of public officials); and a graduated tax system. In time he would add other issues including civil service procedures, mandated safety precautions for coal miners, and the legalization of birth control to his agenda.

Haynes supported all of these objectives at the national level with his political influence and his pocketbook during his lifetime, and he asked his foundation trustees to promote many of them after he was gone. He was more active in crusading for them at the state level, where he became known as the "Father

a member of the Union Reform League, when he petitioned the 1898 board of freeholders to add direct legislation to the new charter proposal. Two years later he was elected to a board of freeholders to write an entirely new charter, but the work of this group was halted before it could finish. In

than the amended 1889 charter and was accepted by the voters (although the at-large system of electing council members advocated by most progressives was rejected). From the implementation of the charter in 1925 to his death in 1937, Haynes was active in supporting or opposing possible amendments to the document when necessary.

At the head of his one-man Direct Legislation League, Haynes was primarily responsible for passage of charter amendments legalizing the municipal initiative, referendum, and recall in the 1902 election. They became effective in 1903, and Haynes spent a good deal of his time for the rest of his life protecting them from opponents of these measures. Fortunately, the three were not needed very often. However, the recalls of Mayor Frank Shaw in 1938 and several City Councilmembers before and after that, and the near recall of Mayor Arthur Harper (who resigned just before the election in 1909) were significant events in Los Angeles political history. The possibility of an initiative and threat of a possible recall have always been variables in political behavior.

In the 1902 charter campaign, Dr. Haynes also campaigned for the establishment of a civil service system, both on his own and as a member of the fledgling Los Angeles Municipal League. This charter amendment passed, and the department and board of commissioners to oversee it were created the following year. Haynes was appointed to the original 1903 board, testimony to his activism in this issue. On the board he faced the same type of political pressure to rubberstamp mayoral favorites that the system was designed to eliminate, and Haynes weathered these requests without giving in to the mayor. His tenure on the board for a dozen years helped to get the system started right and ensure a tradition for its future direction.

John Randolph Haynes.

1902 a charter revision commission was appointed, and Haynes lobbied this group incessantly to have the members agree to include direct legislation, civil service and other reforms approved by the voters that year. He was also instrumental in helping to pass charter amendments in 1909 that altered the composition and elections of the City Council.

In 1912, Haynes was again elected a freeholder and then president of this group to compose a new City Charter. The result was a call for a commission form of government opposed by major political interests on the left and right. This charter went down in defeat as the progressive coalition running the City began to crumble. Haynes and the other more progressive reformers joined labor unionists and the Socialist Party in offering a set of charter amendments to the voters the following year, some of which passed. In 1915, Haynes was elected to yet another board of freeholders that devised a new compact, including a controversial proportional representation plan for electing councilmembers. It generated considerable opposition from the right and a deficiency of votes in the ensuing 1916 election.

Dr. Haynes was elected a freeholder for the fourth time in 1923. As he recalled, he spent most of this time trying to protect progressive measures in the existing charter rather than making it more modern. With the board majority opposing most of his ideas, this was no easy task. But he managed to limit what he considered to be antithetical to proper governance. The finished product was slightly more progressive



Dora Haynes

of Direct Legislation." Running the Direct Legislation League almost single-handedly since 1900, his efforts at establishing the statewide initiative, referendum, and recall were rewarded when California voters approved the three in a 1910 election. Haynes was an important member of the progressive movement in the state and a confidant of several California governors and many legislators over the next two decades. He was also a significant political force in county government, where he served as a public welfare commissioner and an adviser to several county supervisors and other officials.

It was in the City of Los Angeles where his reform career began, and where he was most active and effective as a reformer. From the start he became deeply involved in charter-making to alter the ways in which the City was governed and served by its workforce. His first experience in this area was as

