

## **Edwin T. Earl (5/30/1858 – 1/2/1919)**

Politically active owner of two Los Angeles daily news publications "The Express an evening news publication purchased in 1900 and the Tribune its short-lived morning counterpart which was launched July 4, 1911 and ceased publication during World War I." Earl and Los Angeles Times owner Harry Chandler were close friends and frequent business partners in real-estate purchases. Earl's personal real-estate portfolio was vast and consisted of some of Los Angeles's most impressive structures. The most notable of which was the Standard Oil building that he owned outright. The nations premier oil company counted E.T. Earl as a major shareholder as was the case of many of its subsidiary organizations. Earl "a tireless worker," made his fortune marketing California fruits in the East. The Earl Fruit Company for years was the dominant fruit packing and shipping concern in California. The sale of the company to the Armour family in 1900 increased Earl's personal fortune by \$2.5 million. The Armour family struck a deal which allowed Earl to end a bitter fight with large packing companies around the country. Earl continued on as the Earl Fruit Company manager and minority company owner until the company was sold to Joseph Di Giorgio in 1910. Right up until he breathed his last, E.T. Earl remained one of the most important figures in Los Angeles business and political circles. The mighty political machine Earl assembled would continue to be a factor in California politics long after his death on January 2, 1919 at the age of 62.

Edwin T. Earl was a member of the San Fernando Mission Land Company, a syndicate that included railroad and real estate tycoon, Henry Huntington; Union Pacific's president, E.H. Harriman; the Times' owner, Harrison Gray Otis; and the Los Angeles Express newspaper's owner, Edwin Earl. This syndicate obtained an option to buy Valley land in 1904, less than two months after Mulholland told the Board of Water Commissioners of his support for taking the Owens Valley water. They exercised their option in 1905 on the day that former mayor Fred Eaton got word to the Board that he had secured an option on a key piece of real estate in the Owens Valley. With such inside information, they were able to buy 16,000 acres of San Fernando Valley land for \$35 an acre, later making millions from this and other purchases once the Owens Valley water arrived in the San Fernando Valley. With their control of local media, too, they were able to bombard Angelenos with fear of drought so that they would vote for funding the aqueduct.

In 1905, the Good Government League was formed in Los Angeles, consisting of Hayes and other prominent Los Angeles progressives, such as Edwin T. Earl, the owner of the Los Angeles Examiner along with his like-minded editor Edward Dickson. The moderate "Goo Goos," as they were derisively called by their opponents on both the right and left, quickly filled the city council with men of their persuasion. In 1909 they elected a mayor, the elderly George Alexander, a former Iowan farm boy and Civil War veteran. The progressive Goo Goos did indeed provide good government for Los Angeles, instituting reforms that included a professional municipal civil service, and a revised city charter, which instituted non-partisan elections, thus freeing the city from the stranglehold of machine politics.

Kent Kane Parrot joined the social reform minded progressive political organization headed by E.T. Earl. Earl's boys as they came to be known included Vincent Morgan "Parrot's law partner and Earl's hand picked candidate for county district attorney in 1914. George E. Cryer who ran unsuccessfully for city attorney in 1914 later to be elected mayor (1921) thanks in large part to Kent's efforts. Following the death of E.T. Earl (1918) Kent aligned himself with Judge Gavin W. Craig's political apparatus.

The Earl Lectures were created through a gift from Edwin T. Earl, a long-time friend of The Pacific School of Religion, who established an endowment in 1901 to bring eminent scholars to Berkeley to speak on themes important to Christian thought and life. Past Earl Lecturers include Theodore Roosevelt, Paul Tillich, Elie Wiesel, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, and Gustavo Gutierrez.

General Harrison Gray Otis, founder of the Los Angeles Times, built a home next to Westlake Park, as did Isaac Van Nuys. Other prominent residents of Wilshire Boulevard were Edwin Tobias Earl (2425 Wilshire Blvd). The great Allenoke Manor owes a debt to the house of business tycoon and art collector Edwin Tobias Earl. Designed by Coxhead, the Earl house was built at 2425 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, in 1895–98 and demolished in 1957. Both designs feature steep roofs set with oversized dormer gables (albeit in different styles); a projecting front porch fenestrated with arched openings on three sides and crowned with a neo-classical balustrade; a large, rectangular windowed bay projecting from the living room; and clinker brick exteriors. As in many other Coxhead residences, the rustic exterior belies the formal, rich interior.

Edwin T. Earl bought the old Hall ranch near Los Angeles and called his subdivision "Alta Canyonada." Streets were cut through the old ranches; grain fields, vineyards and citrus groves became small chicken ranches and home sites for commuters to Los Angeles. Edwin T. Earl named the streets after family members, Jarvis Avenue and Earl Drive. Today the city is La Canada and incorporated into Los Angeles.