

The Homestead Blog

Creating advocates for history through the stories of greater Los Angeles.

No Place Like Home: The Residence of Edwin T. Earl, Los Angeles, ca. 1910s



by Paul R. Spitzer

Last November, a “No Place Like Home” post here focused on the highly eclectic residence of the very powerful publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, Harrison Gray Otis. Otis’ home, called “The Bivouac,” was located on Wilshire Boulevard and his next door neighbor was friendly rival in the newspaper business, Edwin T. Earl, owner of the *Los Angeles Express* from 1900 until his death nearly two decades later.

Earl was a native Californian, born in 1858 in a small town called Antelope, near Red Bluff in the northern part of the state. His father Josiah, who hailed from Ohio, was one of the hordes of 49ers who came for the Gold Rush, though he soon took up work as a freight hauler, spending a short time in Los Angeles before living in Stockton and Sonoma County before settling in Antelope. Earl's mother Adelia Chaffee came to the state in 1852, also from Ohio, and her brother was briefly a partner of her future husband.

Fruit Dealers.

EDWIN T. EARL,
FRUIT PACKER AND SHIPPER,
Riverside, Los Angeles and Sacramento.

— —

Headquarters for the winter at Los Angeles.

PORTER BROS. & CO.,

Wholesale and Retail Dealers in
GREEN AND DRIED FRUITS,
Los Angeles, California.

A. W. REINHOLZ,

Wholesale and Retail Dealer in
CALIFORNIA FRUITS AND PRODUCE,
205 COMMERCIAL STREET.

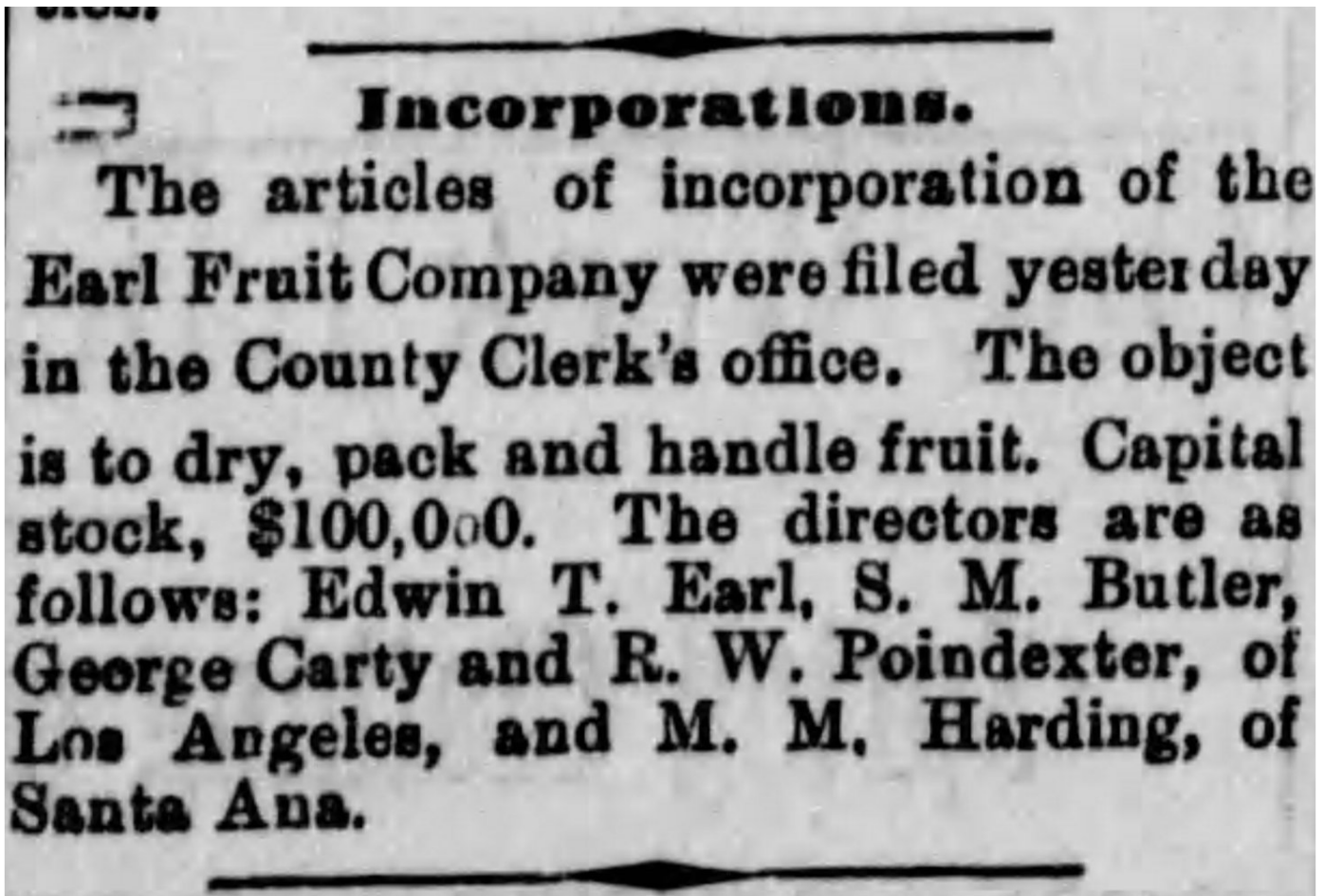
M. TOMICH. J. VICICH.
M. TOMICH & CO.,
 Wholesale Dealers in All Kinds of
GREEN AND DRIED FRUITS, HONEY,
 NUTS, ETC., AND
GENERAL COMMISSION MERCHANTS.
 No. 104, S. W. Corner Spring and Second Sts.,
 Los Angeles, Cal.
 P. O. Box 550. Telephone 257.

*Early mention of Edwin T. Earl as a fruit dealer in Sacramento, Riverside and Los Angeles, **Los Angeles Herald**, 27 February 1887.*

When the Earls, including Edwin and brother Guy (who went on to be a successful lawyer in San Francisco) went to the Red Bluff area, Josiah operated fruit orchards as well as a lumber business. The family then moved to the silver boom town of Virginia City, Nevada in the 1860s and then to Independence, near another silver mining area in eastern California, where Josiah continued fruit raising and mining (F.P.F. Temple later had interests at nearby Cerro Gordo and was president of the Los Angeles and Independence Railroad, which sought to transport silver from the region to Los Angeles for shipment elsewhere.)

A massive earthquake that struck eastern California in 1872 destroyed the Earl home and most of their possessions, so they relocated to Oakland, where Josiah became a merchant. A few years later, at just 18 years of age, Edwin began shipping fruit to the eastern part of

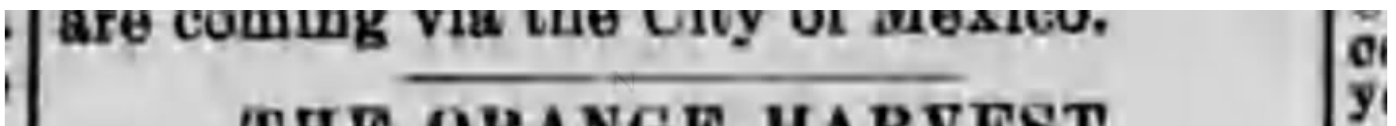
the U.S., quickly making a success of himself. His initial work was with fruit in Lodi where he spent about a decade from 1876 to 1886 building up his business.



Herald, 7 April 1887. Almost all of the stock was held by Earl.

He then relocated to greater Los Angeles, where he became one of the first forwarding merchants to send oranges on the recently finished transcontinental route built by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railway to Los Angeles from the east. Some of his earliest work in the region was in Riverside, where the navel orange became a phenomenon in the prior decade, and in Santa Ana in what soon became the county seat of the aptly named new county of Orange, established in 1889.

In 1887, he incorporated the Earl Fruit Company to handle his rapidly growing enterprise of shipping oranges to the east and, though he had a few partners, almost all of the firm's stock was firmly in his control. A problem that plagued long-distance shipping, however, was that fruit either froze in ventilated box cars or spoiled from a lack of ventilation in all-refrigerated cars.



THE ORANGE HARVEST.

A Big Crop All Around—The Prices.

Now that special orange trains to the East have started running from this locality, it may be said that the golden harvest has commenced in real earnest. A HERALD man on Thursday called on Mr. Edwin, T. Earl, president of the Earl Fruit Company of Chicago, which is largely engaged in shipping fruit from this section, to get some pointers regarding the present prices being paid to growers. "Well, the rates vary according to the locality," said Mr. Earl. "For Los Angeles fruit we are paying 75 cents a box for seedlings and \$1.50 for navels, but at Riverside we are giving \$1.50 for seedlings and \$2.50 for navels. The reason for such a difference is that the Riverside fruit is much brighter and cleaner and is, therefore, much more marketable. Now, I want to tell you something about prices. They are lower this year in this district than usual, and are liable to remain so throughout the season. There are several reasons for

season. In the first place, the railroad freights are higher, and we have to pay ten cents more a box to get the fruit to the East than we did last year, and this, of course, we are deducting from our prices to growers. The most important factor regarding the reduced prices, however, is that there is an enormous number of oranges on the market this year. The Florida crop was unprecedented, and the rumor that you stated in the HERALD the other day, to the effect that the fruit was being shipped from that section like potatoes three feet deep in box-cars without any packing is perfectly correct. Even with this arrangement there will be a great deal of fruit that will never be shipped out of the groves there, but will be left to waste on the ground. Our advices are that they will be shipping fruit from Florida until April, but I do not think it probable, as that would be very late for the crop from that part of the country."

THE SICILIAN CROP.

"It seems to have been a good season for oranges all over the world," con-

tinued Mr. Earl, "for the Sicily crop is also an immense one. The oranges have been coming from there since December and will be received here until July. The fruit is about the same as that produced in California, but it can be placed on the American markets cheaper than ours. I will tell you something now that will astonish you. In spite of the long distance that the fruit has to come, it can be hauled from Sicily to Chicago for ten cents less per box than the fruit is carried from Los Angeles to Chicago. Again, although the duty imposed by the United States on Mediterranean oranges is 25 cents a box. This amount does not cover the difference in the cost of growing, labor, packing, etc., all of the advantages of which are on the European side. Come in again in a day or two," concluded Mr. Earl, "and I will give you some figures that will show you how we are handicapped, but how, in spite of all, we can hold our own, for Eastern people will take California fruit first every time when they can get it."

Herald, 16 February 1889.

Earl, who was barely in his thirties, came up with an answer in the early 1890s: the C.F.X., named for the Continental Fruit Express Company which Earl set up, ventilator-refrigerator car which was so successful that there were some 2,000 cars manufactured representing an investment of about \$2 million. After about a decade, he was bought out by Armour and Company, the Chicago-based food production giant, for the princely sum of some \$2,500,000.

With his fabulous wealth from the deal with Armour, Earl bought the *Express*, which was launched in Los Angeles in 1871 and became one of the powerful media titans of the city, along with Otis and his son-in-law Harry Chandler of the *Times* and William Randolph Hearst of the *Examiner*, later the *Herald-Examiner* after a merger with another 1870s sheet.

572	329	329	William Milligan	Head	M	Feb	1849	57	M	23			Illinois	New Jersey	Maryland			27	Illinois	025
			Maria	Wife	F	Feb	1859	41	M	22	4	4	Illinois	Virginia	Illinois					
			Marian	Daughter	F	Nov	1872	22	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois				19	
			Lawrence	Son	M	Nov	1874	20	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Hugh	Son	M	Oct	1877	17	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					At School
			Arthur	Son	M	Oct	1878	10	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					At School
			Antoine	Wife	F	Dec	1821	79	W	5	2		Maryland	Ireland	Illinois					Habitual
			William	Son	M	Feb	1872	28	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Anna	Wife	F	Nov	1844	56	M	28	1	1	Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Secretary
			Louis	Son	M	Feb	1879	23	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Louis	Son	M	Nov	1877	18	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Pauline	Wife	F	Dec	1866	40	M	3			Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Ellie	Wife	F	Feb	1851	49	M	3	0		Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Richard	Son	M	Dec	1870	19	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Earl	Son	M	Nov	1874	22	M	16			Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Emily	Wife	F	Nov	1844	38	M	16	0		Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			William	Son	M	Dec	1870	29	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Arthur	Son	M	Dec	1871	28	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Nathan	Son	M	Nov	1854	46	M	15			Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			William	Son	M	Dec	1851	48	M	18			Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Elizabeth	Wife	F	Dec	1851	49	M	17	1	1	Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Walter	Son	M	Aug	1871	18	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			August	Son	M	Feb	1875	24	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Edan	Son	M	Nov	1874	23	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			William	Son	M	Nov	1874	23	S				Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student
			Emily	Wife	F	Nov	1843	39	M	5	6		Illinois	Illinois	Illinois					Student

Earl and his first wife Emily Runyon enumerated in the 1900 census at the newly finished residence at 2425 Wilshire Boulevard just before he was granted a divorce on the grounds of extreme cruelty and desertion.

Earl also moved into other large-scale investments in real estate and oil. He was a stockholder and director of the Union Oil Company, a big player in California's oil industry. In 1905, he joined Texas oil magnate Edwin J. Marshall and local business leaders like Jared S. Torrance and John S. Cravens in acquiring the large Rancho Santa Ana del Chino in modern Chino and Chino Hills, managed by the Chino Land and Water Company.

About the same time, he joined Otis, Leslie Brand of Title Guaranty and Trust Company, developer Moses Sherman, and railroad and real estate tycoon Henry E. Huntington in forming the San Fernando Mission Land Company, buying a large swath of the largely dry San Fernando Valley cheaply. Sherman happened to sit on the Los Angeles Board of Water Commissioners, so was well-positioned to be in the know sooner than most about plans to import (some claimed, steal) water from the same eastern California area, specifically the Owens Valley where Earl lived over thirty years prior, to Los Angeles. With the seemingly unlimited imported water through the massive Los Angeles Aqueduct available for growth, the syndicate profited mightily from their investment to the tune of \$5 million.

STATE *California* COUNTY *Los Angeles* TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY *Los Angeles Township* NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE *Los Angeles City* DAY OF *April* 1910.

THIRTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1910 1-3 SECTION

LOCATION	NAME	RELATION	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION	NATIVITY			ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE	DAY OF	1910.	OCCUPATION	
				Place of birth of each person and parents of each person enumerated. If born in the United States, give the state or territory; if of foreign birth, give the country.	Place of birth of this person.	Place of birth of Father of this person.					Place of birth of Mother of this person.
623 24 27	<i>Behymer</i> <i>Menettie A.</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>W 44 M 24 3 3</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>New York</i>		<i>April</i>		<i>None</i>	
	<i>Conk</i> <i>L.</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>W 22 8</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Ohio</i>	<i>New York</i>				<i>None</i>	
	<i>Ellis</i> <i>O.</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>W 20 8</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Ohio</i>	<i>New York</i>				<i>None</i>	
	<i>Sullivan</i> <i>O.</i>	<i>Sister</i>	<i>W 39 8</i>	<i>Illinois</i>	<i>Ohio</i>	<i>Ohio</i>				<i>Salvage man</i>	
	<i>Jones</i> <i>Ellis S.</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 7 8</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Nebraska</i>	<i>Missouri</i>				<i>Millinery</i>	
	240 24 25	<i>Grayson</i> <i>Henderson</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M W 44 M 12 1 1</i>	<i>Pennsylvania</i>	<i>Pennsylvania</i>	<i>Pennsylvania</i>				<i>None</i>
		<i>Julia</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>W 45 M 12 1 1</i>	<i>Michigan</i>	<i>Michigan</i>	<i>Michigan</i>				<i>None</i>
		<i>Julia B.</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>W 11 8</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Pennsylvania</i>	<i>Michigan</i>				<i>None</i>
		<i>Atus</i> <i>Rosalie</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 15 8</i>	<i>Fr - French</i>	<i>Fr - French</i>	<i>Fr - French</i>	1890			<i>Maid</i>
		<i>Johnson</i> <i>Freida</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 22 8</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	1895			<i>Servant</i>
<i>Vickberg</i> <i>Ela</i>		<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 28 8</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	1898			<i>Servant</i>	
<i>Peterson</i> <i>John</i>		<i>Servant</i>	<i>M W 45 8</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	<i>Swed - Swedish</i>	1887			<i>Gardner</i>	
<i>Brederrick</i> <i>Garrett</i>		<i>Servant</i>	<i>M W 29 8</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>New York</i>				<i>Chauffeur</i>	
323 25 26		<i>Coakley</i> <i>Timothy W.</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M W 45 M 16 0 0</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>				<i>Lawyer</i>
		<i>Elizabeth</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>W 36 M 16 0 0</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>				<i>None</i>
	<i>Whalen</i> <i>Margaret</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 40 8</i>	<i>Can - English</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	1894			<i>Servant</i>	
	425 26 27	<i>Earl</i> <i>Edwin T.</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M W 31 M 2 8 2 2</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>Ohio</i>				<i>Publisher</i>
		<i>Emily J.</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>W 36 M 1 8 2 2</i>	<i>Kentucky</i>	<i>Kentucky</i>	<i>Kentucky</i>				<i>None</i>
		<i>Jarvis</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M W 6 8</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Kentucky</i>				<i>None</i>
		<i>Adrian</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M W 5 8</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Kentucky</i>				<i>None</i>
		<i>Emily</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>W 5 8</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Kentucky</i>				<i>None</i>
		<i>Chaffee</i> <i>John</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M W 2 8</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>California</i>	<i>Kentucky</i>				<i>None</i>
		<i>Shannon</i> <i>Allen</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 37 8</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	1892			<i>Servant</i>
<i>Muldon</i> <i>Kertha</i>		<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 28 8</i>	<i>Eng - English</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	<i>Fr - English</i>	1901			<i>Servant</i>	
<i>Pomies</i> <i>Anna</i>		<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 35 8</i>	<i>Fr - French</i>	<i>Fr - French</i>	<i>Fr - French</i>	1900			<i>Servant</i>	
<i>Christie</i> <i>Jennie</i>		<i>Servant</i>	<i>W 45 8</i>	<i>Can - English</i>	<i>Can - English</i>	<i>Can - English</i>	1894			<i>Nurse</i>	
2425 27 28	<i>Paylor</i> <i>William H.</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M W 31 M 1 7 0 0</i>	<i>Eng - English</i>	<i>Eng - English</i>	<i>Eng - English</i>	1908			<i>Gardner</i>	
	<i>Mary A.</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>W 31 M 1 7 0 0</i>	<i>Eng - English</i>	<i>Eng - English</i>	<i>Eng - English</i>	1908			<i>Teacher</i>	

Earl, his second wife Emily Jarvis, their four children, and several servants at the residence in the 1910 census.

Earl, a staunch Republican, also aligned with the Progressive wing of the party and was said to have been a trusted adviser to Governor William D. Stephens in the late 1910s. He also incurred the wrath of Otis and the Times for his political positions under the broad "Good Government" umbrella and, in 1917, Earl successfully sued the Times for libel over some cartoons that portrayed the Express publisher as a supporter of degeneracy over Earl's views that a widely publicized Long Beach prosecution of purported homosexuals should be mindful of the privacy of the defendants, while the Times sensationalized the incident and trial with clear contempt for the defendants as perverted criminals.

Earl married Emily Runyon in 1884 and the couple, who were childless, remained married for sixteen years until Earl secured a divorce on the grounds of cruelty and desertion from and by his wife. A couple of years later, in 1902, he married Emily Jarvis and the two had four children, three sons and a daughter.



*This ca. 1910s photo from the Homestead's collection shows the very eclectic English-manor style Earl residence, completed in 1899 at 2425 Wilshire Boulevard. To the right is the driveway to the home of neighbor Harrison Gray Otis, of the **Los Angeles Times**, featured in this blog last November.*

The Earl residence, located at 2425 Wilshire Boulevard and an early home built in a tract developed by Gaylord Wilshire, depicted in the highlighted photograph was designed by Ernest and Almeric Coxhead, brothers whose work was more prolific in the Bay Area, but who designed a home for the Bixby family in Long Beach. The 1897-98 residence designed by the Coxheads was in their noted Shingle style, but a fire at the end of the project gutted the structure. The replacement was a brick English manor-style home, finished in 1899, but it was very eclectic and included dark interiors with massive fireplaces, massive plaster beamed ceilings and enormous amounts of carved wood decoration, much of the elements suggestive of Mayan influence!

The house had only been completed for a short time when Earl and Emily Runyon divorced, but the structure was where the wealthy, powerful publisher and real estate speculator and his second wife raised their children. On 2 January 1919, however, Earl,

who'd suffered from heart trouble, died at age 60, leaving his widow and four children, aged 11 to 15. In addition to the pallbearers who carried Earl's casket to and from the funeral service, there was an exhaustive list of honorary pallbearers including Governor Stephens, Boyle Workman (great-nephew of William and Nicolasa Workman), Harry Chandler and many prominent men of wealth, power and influence in greater Los Angeles.

Emily Jarvis Earl remarried in 1921, but died just a few years later. The *Express* was run by a nephew, Guy Earl, Jr. (who also owned the KNX radio station,) for a period and then sold to Hearst.





Los Angeles Times, 3 January 1919.

By 1930, the home was a restaurant, called Casa Verdugo, that relocated from Glendale, where the Verdugo family were early ranchers. Later in the decade it was used as a medical facility with an x-ray lab, doctors and dentists working in the house. After the county purchased the house in 1938, the Los Angeles Art Association held meetings in the building. It was then used as an annex to the Otis Art Institute, which operated next door in "The Bivouac," an ironic circumstance given the enmity that sometimes existed between the two publishers despite their mutual investment in the San Fernando Valley.

In August 1957, the home, not quite sixty years old, was razed and today the site is a playground for Charles White Elementary School, which also embraces the location of the Otis home and art institute.

For some great history on the house and Earl, check out this blog post.

□ **March 27, 2019**

Collections, Historic site, Local history

Almeric Coxhead architect, Armour and Company, Casa Verdugo restaurant, CFX ventilator refrigerator car, Charles White Elementary School, Chino Land and Water Company, Continental Fruit Express Company, Earl Fruit Company Los Angeles, Edwin J. Marshall, Edwin T. Earl, Edwin T. Earl residence, Emily Jarvis Earl, Emily Runyon Earl, English Manor architecture Los Angeles, Ernest Coxhead architect, Guy Earl, Harrison Gray Otis, Harry Chandler, Henry E. Huntington, Jared S. Torrance, John S. Cravens, Leslie Brand, Los Angeles Aqueduct, Los Angeles Art Association, Los Angeles Express, Los Angeles Times, Moses Sherman, No Place Like Home, Otis Art Institute, Paul R. Spitzer, Progressive politics California, Rancho Santa Ana del Chino, San Fernando Mission Land Company, Union Oil Company, William D. Stephens California governor

BLOG AT WORDPRESS.COM.

UP ↑

