

BURBANK

**CITY OF
PRIDE AND PROGRESS**



San Fernando Boulevard looking North 1920's

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SANTA ROSA HOTEL 1887
(present site of Olive Ave. Post Office)

The Beginning

Burbank was born during the Southern California land boom of the 1880's when thousands of Americans came West during the railroad rate war between Southern Pacific and Santa Fe.

The newcomers so completely Americanized their little town that Burbank's Indian and Spanish heritage survives today only in street names. The lasting mark made on the area by the Spanish is San Fernando Road. It appears to follow the route of the old road that linked the San Fernando and San Gabriel missions.

The Dons

The history of Burbank goes back to the days of the Dons when a portion of the present-day City was a part of the first California rancho, vast Rancho San Rafael, granted to Don Jose Maria Verdugo by the Spanish government in 1798.

The other ranch which played a part in Burbank's history, Rancho La Providencia, was created by Mexico after independence was won from Spain in 1821. It consisted of 4,600 acres and bordered San Rafael's southwest boundary.

The Verdugos were forced to sell some of their holdings to satisfy debts, and in 1857, Jonathan R. Scott, a Los Angeles attorney, became the first American to own land in the San Rafael portion of Burbank.

The Rancho La Providencia had come into the hands of Alexander Bell and David W. Alexander, members of the first City Council of Los Angeles.

A New Hampshire-born dentist, Dr. David Burbank, active in Los Angeles real estate ventures, purchased the Scott-Tract and the rancho through court actions in 1871.

Dr. Burbank raised sheep on his rancho properties and occasionally sold small plots of land. The

Southern Pacific Railroad purchased the right-of-way for its main lines along San Fernando Road on Feb. 23, 1873, for \$1. Its first train passed through Burbank on April 5, 1874. In 1877, Thomas Story, who became the first mayor of Burbank, bought 80 acres from Dr. Burbank to start a small farm.

Signs of Progress

A grammar school was opened on an acre of Valley property donated by Dr. Burbank on June 3, 1879, and the area's first church was dedicated on Sept. 14, 1884, as the Providencia Methodist Episcopal Church.

But the major turning point in Burbank's history was the 1884 rate war between Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads. Fares from Kansas City to Los Angeles dropped to \$1 for a short time in 1887.

With townsites accessible by rail at a premium, Dr. Burbank was able to sell the Valley properties he purchased for approximately \$9,000 to a group of Los Angeles land speculators for \$250,000 in 1886.

The speculators formed the Providencia Land, Water and Development Company, laid out a business district and divided surrounding properties into small farms and residential lots. They called the town Burbank and opened the tract for sale on May 1, 1887.

The promoters gave the town wide streets, a \$30,000 hotel and started construction on a "brick block" building at the corner of San Fernando Road and Olive Avenue.

Through vigorous and imaginative real estate promotion, the community experienced a temporary boom, but fell victim to the land speculation bubble in April, 1888, and many properties were sold for delinquent taxes. Development was virtually at a standstill for two decades.



FIRST CITY SEAL
Adopted September 11, 1911

Burbank Becomes a City

During the early 1900's the community's chief claim to fame was as the home of undefeated heavyweight champion of the world James J. Jeffries, who had bought a 107-acre ranch in the vicinity where he raised alfalfa and purebred cattle. The ranch was located at what is now Buena Vista Street and Victory Boulevard.

The population of the village had reached 500 when by an 81 to 51 majority the voters approved incorporation in 1911 and chose its first governing body called a Board of Trustees.

San Fernando Road had been paved in 1910 and a campaign was started to bring the Pacific Electric Streetcar from Glendale. Despite the opposition to the public fund raising led by J.W. (Joe) Fawkes, who had built a type of monorail in 1907 which he wanted to put into operation, the first streetcar rolled into town in 1911.

The following years brought marked progress in Burbank's development as a City. In 1913 bonds were voted for municipal water and electric facilities, and in 1914, an additional 9.4 square miles were annexed. In 1916, bonds were approved for building a City Hall and electric light works and acquisition of fire apparatus. In 1917, \$25,000 were raised to buy a 25-acre farm site at the corner of Alameda Avenue and San Fernando Road for the Moreland Truck Company, so Burbank might have a major industry.

Depression and Growth

A period of industrial growth and real estate development followed, with the population increasing from 2,913 in 1920 to 16,622 in 1930.

City marshals provided protection to area residents in 1920 until three years later when the city's marshal office was made into a police department. Traffic fines exceeded the department's operating costs.

In 1926, a 15-member Board of Freeholders were elected and commissioned to draw up the City Charter; the Charter was adopted at a special election, approved by the State Legislature, and become effective January 13, 1927.

The stock market crash of 1929 brought the City's boom to an abrupt halt, and the depression extended to the middle 1930's when increased employment at Lockheed Aircraft and construction work created by the Metropolitan Water District brought improvement to the economic situation.

First brick block building in Burbank 1887 - still in use
(Olive Avenue and Golden Mall)



San Fernando Boulevard looking south 1927

The Mature City

No events in Burbank's history created greater changes in the community than America's entry into World War II.

The decade of the forties opened on an upswing. Burbank's 34,537 citizens were being served by a new City Hall on Olive Avenue, a force of 380 city workers and the community's first steam generating plant to produce electric power locally for industry and homeowners.

The completion of Walt Disney Studios on a 51-acre site on Buena Vista Street late in 1939 had reinforced the City's position as the world's motion picture producing center, and production of aircraft at Lockheed continued to increase as United States military orders were added to those already placed in Great Britain. Some 94,000 Lockheed employees produced more than 19,000 planes for the nation's war efforts.

Further Progress

A new era began for Burbank at mid-century.

For the first time in the town's history a period of prosperity did not come to a halt with the end of a cycle of sudden growth. The wartime industrial boom had been followed by a postwar real estate boom, leaving few undeveloped areas in the community. Burbank had just passed through a period of growing pains for a City.

During the 1950's municipal services were modernized and upgraded. A ten-year capital improvement program made possible construction of many new municipal facilities; most of which were completed when the City celebrated its 50th anniversary on July 8, 1961.

Despite these capital improvements, the City faced problems of deterioration in the Central Business District and in the industrial areas of the community. A major step to rejuvenate the Central Business District was taken when the Golden Mall was dedicated in November of 1967.

A new capital improvement program for upgrading park and library facilities, street beautification and residential street lighting was approved by the electorate in 1968.

Emphasis on rejuvenation and redevelopment continued in the 1970's. A Redevelopment Agency was formed in 1970. The Golden State Redevelopment Project was adopted for revitalization and upgrading of the industrial area of the City. The City Centre Project was adopted to attract business to the Central Business District. A West Olive Project was adopted to encourage a media-entertainment center in the areas adjacent to Warner Bros. and NBC.



Burbank - Glendale - Pasadena Airport 1981

New Emphasis

There was a decrease in population of approximately 6,000 between 1960 and 1970, and the average age of citizens increased, requiring a change of priorities for municipal services.

The needs of senior citizens were recognized and partially met by the completion of the Joslyn Adult Center in 1973 and a satellite facility at Northwest Park, and the institution of such programs as Project Outreach, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Nutrition Program and the Transportation and Escort Service Program. An ordinance was adopted by City Council providing for a Senior Citizen Board.

The needs of the young citizens were not forgotten, however, as the City continued its recreation programs and later made provisions to create a Youth Board to advise the Council.

The interest of ecology and preservation of the City's mountain backdrop was reflected in the formulation of the Eco Verdugos Plan which provided for maintaining the open space. Although voters in 1973 rejected a proposed bond issue for purchase of mountain property, interest in acquisition using other revenue sources continued, with purchases completed in 1975.

In terms of adequate housing, the needs of the community had been identified and the Burbank Housing Authority was established in 1975. Programs in the area of housing preservation and revitalization and rental assistance were initiated in 1975, utilizing federal funding available through the Housing and Community Development Act.

Due to declining enrollment, the Burbank Unified School District was forced to close five elementary schools between 1978-80.

On June 28, 1978, the Hollywood-Burbank Airport was purchased from Lockheed through a tri-city authority representing the cities of Burbank, Glendale and Pasadena. On January 1, 1979, the name was officially changed for the fifth time in its history to the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport to represent this new ownership. This is the largest privately owned municipal airport in the United States.

Looking to the Future

Recently the City's skyline downtown has dramatically evolved with a 19-story hotel which has become a landmark for the entire foothill region.

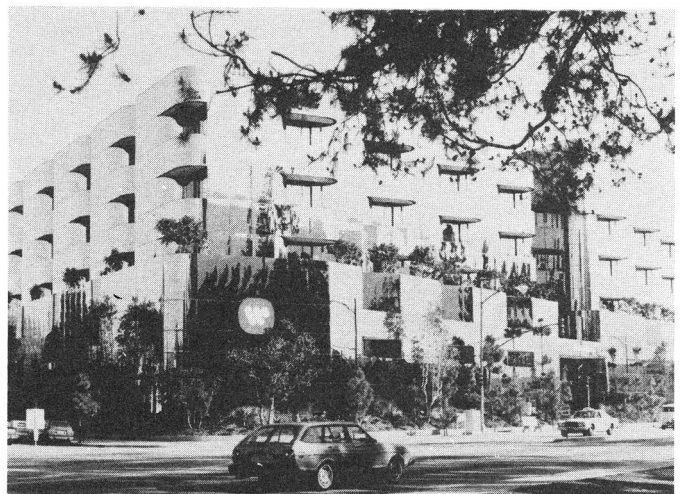
In the West Olive Redevelopment Project, the change is even more dramatic. Two large office buildings occupied by Warner Bros. and Warner-Electra-Atlantic Records now provide a striking entrance to Burbank from the West.

Located on the northwest side of the Burbank Airport is the largest single development undertaken in the history of the Golden State Redevelopment Project. Dunn properties has purchased an 13.5-acre parcel, which was formerly a gravel pit, to construct a 221,000 square foot, 20-building industrial complex.

During 1981 residents will see major street improvement projects on Burbank Boulevard and Riverside Drive, in addition to work on Magnolia Boulevard, Olive Avenue and Alameda Boulevard.

The current population of Burbank is 85,647.

Warner Brothers Building 1981
(Olive Avenue and Maple Street)



Important Dates

- 1871 *A dentist named Dr. David Burbank purchased the property which later became the City of Burbank.*
- 1874 *Southern Pacific Railroad's first train passed through Burbank in April.*
- 1884 *The rate war between Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroads brought thousands of Americans West.*
- 1886 *Dr. Burbank sold the Valley property to Los Angeles land speculators who formed the Providencia Land, Water and Development Company.*
- 1887 *The new company established a business district and divided surrounding properties into small farms and residential lots. They called the town Burbank and opened the tract for sale on May 1.*
- 1911 *The City was incorporated and chose its first governing board called a Board of Trustees.*
- 1913 *The City sold bonds for municipal water and electric facilities.*
- 1916 *Bonds were approved for building a City Hall.*
- 1926 *A Board of Freeholders drafted a City Charter which was adopted the following year.*
- 1929 *The stock market crash brought the City's boom to an abrupt halt.*
- 1939 *The completion of Walt Disney Studios reinforced the city's position as the world's motion picture producing center.*
- 1950 *Municipal services were modernized and upgraded.*
- 1967 *The Golden Mall was dedicated.*
- 1970 *The Redevelopment Agency was formed.*
- 1978 *Through a tri-city authority the cities of Burbank, Glendale and Pasadena purchased the airport from Lockheed after 50 years of private ownership.*

