

2017 Governor's Historic Preservation Awards

Preserving and Processing the *Valley Times* Newspaper Photographs



The photos from the *Valley Times* newspaper are a pictorial treasure trove of the San Fernando Valley's most dynamic growth period in the post-War era, when groundbreakings and bake sales were ubiquitous and mid-Century architecture was springing up in every corner of a region that had previously been dominated by agriculture. The *Valley Times* was published as a daily newspaper from 1946-1970, with coverage focused on all the communities in the expansive Valley -- from San Fernando to Van Nuys, from Canoga Park to Toluca Lake.

This collection is the largest known repository of San Fernando Valley images focused on this important time period. Coverage was local, with images particularly focused on the places and people on the front edge of change, growth, and civic engagement, whether it was groundbreakings, grand openings, cutting edge architecture, or pioneering personal achievements. At the center of it all were the residents who were dedicated to their communities and driving this growth.

The entire *Valley Times* newspaper photo morgue was given to the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) Photo Collection Department and archived since 1981 at Central Library. Original folders with acidic newspaper clippings filed adjacent to photographic prints. Given the poor state of preservation and the difficulty

navigating such a large collection, the images had been largely inaccessible to the general public.

The Photo Collection Department, in partnership with Photo Friends of the Los Angeles Library, launched a project to physically preserve and organize the collection. Valley communities enthusiastically supported the project, providing business sponsorships, individual contributions, and organizing gatherings to increase public awareness and support of the project. In just three years, the contract archivist and LAPL staff processed the entire 82,000 images of the collection, selecting 52,000 photographs for digitization. To date, over 28,000 images are now accessible to the public with more images being made available each month. Books have been published as well, focusing on different subject matters represented in the collection.

The people, events, and built environments depicted in the photographs are emblematic of what was taking place in communities throughout California during this time period. With the images being accessible to anyone with internet access, the *Valley Times* collection can serve as a springboard for those wanting to research the development of California communities in the post-War era.

Explore the online [Valley Times Photograph Collection](#).