

THE  
MONROVIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION GROUP  
*presents*

THE *Preservation Conversation*

DECEMBER 2019 VOL 27 NO 11

MOHPG.ORG

"PRESERVING MONROVIA'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE"

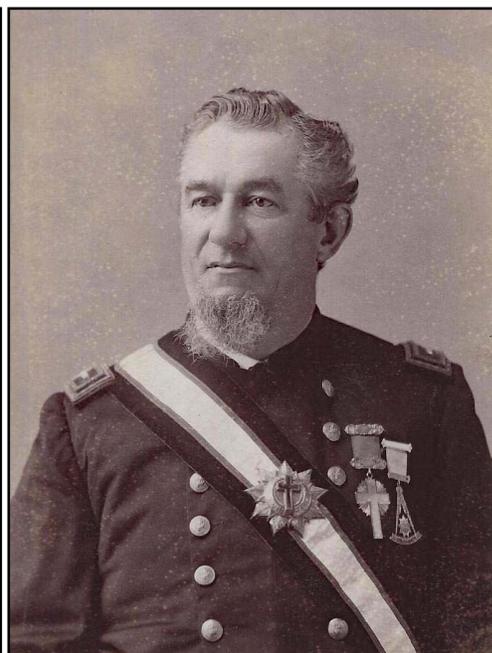
**THE HOMES THE SPENCES BUILT**

Monrovia has seen its share of vintage homes succumb to a wrecker's ball over the past century, but seldom has it seen two homes belonging to members of the same family meet that fate.

Edward Fallis Spence was one of Monrovia's earliest settlers and one of those credited with helping to found the town, along with J.F. Crank, J.D. Bicknell, William Monroe, and Jeremiah Falvey. In fact, Monrovia was almost named "Spenceville" after this former mayor of Los Angeles. He lived here from 1887 until 1892, when he moved back to Los Angeles, dy-

ing there on September 19, 1892. He served as the first president of the Granite Bank which was Monrovia's second bank, built at the southwest corner of Myrtle and Palm Avenues.

While in Monrovia he built a grand Victorian about 1886 on Prospect Avenue, known at the time as "Silver Hill" for the numerous stately Victorians built along this street. The homes along this stretch commanded 180° views of the San Gabriel Valley. It was two and a half stories high and inside had a magnificent mahogany staircase and five fireplaces. The Spences were socially prominent and they entertain-  
*(con't on page 5)*



*(Above right) The E. F. Spence house, built in 1886 on Prospect Avenue (also known as "Silver Hill"), was one of several magnificent Victorian homes that occupied that area. At a time when smog was not a factor in the region,*

*occupants of these homes had a 180° view of the entire San Gabriel Valley. Sadly, the home was demolished in 1920. (Above left) Photo of Edward F. Spence, one of Monrovia's founders and a former mayor of Los Angeles.*

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# MONROVIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION GROUP

Newsletter - December 2019  
Volume 27 Number 11

Published monthly by the  
Monrovia Historic Preservation Group  
P.O. Box 734  
Monrovia, CA 91017

## MISSION

The Monrovia Historic Preservation Group (MOHPG) seeks to preserve Monrovia's architectural heritage through **advocacy and actions that promote historic preservation.**

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■ ■ ■

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Darrell Brooke

### Emails

John Zuk

The MOHPG Board of Directors meets the first Sunday of each month except August at 10 a.m. All members are welcome to attend. Contact Jim Wigton or any board member for meeting location.

MOHPG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit California corporation. Donations and membership dues may be tax deductible; consult your tax adviser.

■ ■ ■

## NEWSLETTER

### Staff

Jim Wigton  
Susie Ling

The MOHPG newsletter staff welcomes article submissions and letters from our members for publication in the newsletter. All submissions are subject to editing.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jim Wigton

## JUDGING FOR UPLAND HERITAGE

On Saturday, November 2, I served as a judge for the Upland Heritage grant program which this year was awarding a total of \$3000 to assist homeowners with restoration projects on their historic properties. If you will recall, MOHPG ran a similar program for 21 years as a way to encourage homeowners to undertake maintenance and restoration projects on their vintage homes.

I believe it is important that organizations such as ours work together whenever possible to further the cause of preservation in our respective communities. I was grateful for the opportunity to assist with this project for Upland Heritage.

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## FACEBOOK NUMBERS

Board member Michael Kaplan, who took over management of the MOHPG Facebook page several months ago, reports that the number of "friends" has increased from 600 in June to 1060 by the November 3 board meeting. But by the time this newsletter went to press, that number had increased to 1500. Congratulations, Michael!

## A NEW ROOF, PLEASE!

The Monrovia Historical Society, owners of the 1886 Anderson House Museum, have begun a fundraising drive to pay for the replacement of the roof on the Anderson House. They have managed to secure a donation of materials but need to raise the funds to pay for the labor needed to install the new roof, a cost estimated to run \$10,000.

The Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization so any contribution would be tax-deductible. No amount is too small, so if this is a cause you would like to support, you can do so by writing a check. Details can be found on the Society's website at:

[www.monroviahistoricalsociety.org/anderson-house](http://www.monroviahistoricalsociety.org/anderson-house) and look under "Donate to a New Roof."

They are also using GoFundMe as a way to secure donations.



# DECEMBER 2019 HOLIDAY PROGRAM



## HOLIDAY GATHERING RETURNS TO AN ENCORE AFTER 8 YEARS

It's been eight years since MOHPG has held a social holiday gathering during the month of December. If you will recall, it was at the end of November, 2011, when unusually strong Santa Ana winds struck the Monrovia area, leaving many parts of the city without power for multiple days. As a result MOHPG cancelled its annual Christmas season celebration for December and instead held a potluck the following February in its place. That event proved so popular with members that we have continued a February gathering in lieu of the holiday get together ever since that time.

This December, however, we are going to step back, if only for one moment, to once again hold a holiday celebration. The owners of the C.O. Monroe house, the oldest home in Monrovia, have invited us to share the season in their 1884 Queen Anne Victorian home. Larry and DeEtte Albinski, who also opened their home for the 2019 Historic Homes Tour, take great pride in outfitting their house in Christmas finery, and they would like to share it with us for one evening. What better way to observe the holiday season than in the surrounds of a Victorian home.

Instead of a potluck, we will have an evening of appetizers and desserts. We ask that you bring an item to share according to the following:

- A-L dessert**
- M-Z appetizer**

As is usual case MOHPG will provide paper service and all drinks. **The evening's festivities will begin at 5:30 pm. The C.O. Monroe house is located at 225 Monroe Place.**

To make the evening even more special, MOHPG has made arrangements with Citrus College to pro-

## ✂ JOIN US ✂

**WHEN:** Saturday, December 21, 2019  
**TIME:** 5:30 pm  
**LOCATION:** 225 Monroe Place, Monrovia

This will be an appetizer/dessert informal get-together with light entertainment to be provided. If you have passed on previous MOHPG programs, this would be an excellent opportunity for all members to share the evening with those who value preservation.



*This is the site of the holiday get-together as it looked on Historic Homes Tour day on May 5, 2019. Of course, for this special event the 1887 Queen Anne Victorian will be outfitted in finery befitting the time of year. Come check it out!*

vide musical entertainment during the course of the evening. This is designed to provide the proper atmosphere for the event.

It has been a long time since we have celebrated the holiday season together, so we hope you will be able to attend and join us for this special time of year. And, of course, if you feel the impulse to come attired in your finest holiday attire, the we would encourage you to do so.

RSVPs are not necessary. Simply show up and be prepared to enjoy a very special evening.

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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!**

## BOARD MEETING - NOV 3, 2019

A regular board meeting was held on Sunday, November 3, with nine of the 12 board members present. Minutes from September and October were approved.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Morse was unable to attend or send out financial statements as his mother-in-law, Louise Robertson, passed away unexpectedly not long before the board meeting. MOHPG has opened two CDs (one paying 1.80%, the other 1.85%) and will be opening a third in the coming weeks. This has been done to achieve a better interest rate.

### MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

The membership total remains at 211. We have begun the renewal process for 2020, and Helen Falco sent out 96 renewal letters to members last month in the hopes that they would renew before the end of the year and the busy holiday season. Helen also announced that she would be resigning her position on the board due to personal reasons, but that she would not be leaving until March 2020 to finish the renewal process for next year and give time to ease someone into the position. Any member wishing to apply for this position should contact Jim Wigton for more information (use the Contact Us feature on the MOHPG website).

### PROGRAM CHAIR

The November 2 program on taps was well attended with 20 people. The owners of the C.O. Monroe house, Monrovia's oldest home, have offered to host a holiday gathering for MOHPG. The date has been set at Saturday, December 21, starting at 5:30 pm. Attendees will bring either an appetizer or a dessert for 10. MOHPG will supply drinks and paper service. We will also attempt to schedule entertainment for the evening. Further details will be provided in the December newsletter (see page 3). This gathering will replace the February potluck for one year. No other monthly programs have been finalized at this time.

### TOUR REPORT

Janie Gallendat provided a breakdown of tour ticket prices for several other organizations. After much

discussion the board voted to increase tickets prices for adults and seniors \$5 in each category (pre-sale and day-of) but ticket prices for teens will remain the same as in the past. The Monrovia Garden Club has requested a donation of two tour tickets for their December silent auction, and the board voted to make that donation.

### OLD BUSINESS

Board member Michael Kaplan, who is now handling our Facebook page, reports that we have increased the number of "friends" from about 600 last June to a current total of 1060. We will continue to post regular articles on MOHPG activities in the hope of increasing that number even further. Several minutes were spent reviewing the contents of the corporate binder given to each board member, including by-laws, papers of incorporation, non-profit letter from the IRS, etc. The board will be reviewing the by-laws in the near future, hoping to gain information from the Monrovia Historical Museum which is currently doing so under the auspices of Jericho Road in Pasadena, an organization designed to help non-profits. Jim Wigton served as a judge of the grant program for Upland Heritage on Saturday, November 2.

### NEW BUSINESS

The board will be exploring ways in which it can celebrate the 40th anniversary of MOHPG next year. Members are encouraged to offer their suggestions to any board member. No further word has been received as to whether or not the TV show *Restored* will be filming in Monrovia. Lee Schamadan is coordinating with the library to have a special display during May 2020 which is national, state, and local preservation month.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Inquiries received this past month through the website included: request for information on the location of the Airdrome at Monrovia Airport in 1937 (handled by Steve Baker); someone wanted to sell two Craftsman bookcases, request for info about the house located at 303 E. Lemon Avenue (also handled by Steve).

### ADJOURNMENT

Future board meetings are scheduled for December 1 and January 5. Members are always welcome.



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(con't from page 1)

ed almost constantly in the home. Sadly, the house survived for only 34 years as it was demolished in 1920.

In 1898 Spence's nephew, also named Edward F. Spence, arrived in Monrovia directly from Enniskillen, Ireland. He became a Monrovia City Council member in 1918 and was a wealthy orange grower and fruit packer, with his orange brand known as "The Golden Harp." In 1922 he took out a building permit to construct a 5,175 square foot home at the southwest corner of Foothill Boulevard and Mayflower Avenue. He lived there with his wife until 1935 when he moved to Pasadena, having lost the home to his creditors. The home served as a medical building housing rest home patients until it could no longer meet Medicare standards for convalescent care. It was sold to the Monrovia Redevelopment Agency in 1977 and was torn down to make way for approximately fifty condo units.



*This mansion of a home belonged to the nephew of E. F. Spence, who was also named E. F. Spence. He built the home in 1922 at the southwest corner of Foothill Boulevard and Mayflower Avenue. It was demolished in 1977 by the Monrovia Redevelopment Agency to make room for more housing.*

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## BOARD OPENING

At the November 3 board meeting, Helen Falco announced that she will be stepping down from her position as membership chair due to personal reasons, effective as of March 2020.

Helen has served in this position since November 2016, not only carrying out the duties of her position with diligence and accuracy, but also leading the board to modify the MOHPG logo, adopt a tag line, and revise the mission statement. She has been committed to find better ways of executing the duties of her position and will leave it in a better place than when she took over.

She will remain in the job during the current membership renewal period so as not to leave the board in the lurch. It is hoped that someone wishing to serve on the board will express an interest early so Helen can ease them into the responsibilities of the membership chair and help make the transition seamless.

If you would like to know more about the duties and responsibilities of membership chair, contact MOHPG President Jim Wigton for more information.



*E. F. Spence the nephew was in the business of growing oranges and shipping them from Monrovia. His oranges were known under the Golden Harp brand.*

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS NOW UNDERWAY

Membership renewal letters were sent out in October to those whose membership expires at the end of 2019. If you received a letter, we hope you will take a few moments to renew your commitment to protecting the architectural heritage of Monrovia.

Full info can be found on the MOHPG website under "Membership."

## NOVEMBER PROGRAM RECAP

by Lee Schamadan

Michael and Janene Khanchalian and their 1925 Chicago Bungalow (Historic Landmark #5) were the hosts for the MOHPG November 2 program on the history of taps. Dr. Gary Scott went into great detail about the history of this bugle call, and he was accompanied by Sheldon Gordon on his B-flat Bugle.

"Taps" is a bugle call that is played at dusk, during flag ceremonies, and at military funerals. The official

As to the origin of the tune, numerous reputable witnesses have said that Daniel Butterfield composed the music. Scholars debate whether or not the tune was original or based on an earlier melody, but few of them doubt that Butterfield is responsible for the current tune.

About 20 people were present for the program. In addition to the presentation, attendees learned how the current owners were able to replicate the original living room light which had been obtained by a neighbor prior to the Khanchalians acquiring the house. Of such stories are house history restorations made.

To top off the program, visitors were treated to some of Janene Khanchalian's homemade desserts. A fitting exclamation mark to the presentation!



Sheldon Gordon (left) entertained the audience by playing his E-flat Coronet while Dr. Gary Scott provided background information of the history of this well-known tune.



Various books and pamphlets were on display for those in attendance to peruse for further information.

military version is played on a single bugle or trumpet and the tune is known as "Butterfield's Lullaby" or by the first line of the lyric, "Day is Done."

Taps possibly originated from the Dutch *taptoe* meaning "close the (beer) taps and send the troops back to camp." One other explanation is that it was carried over from a term already in use before the American Civil War.

One widely circulated legend about the tune states that a Union Army officer, whose name is often given as Captain Robert Ellicombe, first ordered "Taps" performed at the funeral of his son, a Confederate soldier killed during the civil war.

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# THE GEORGE H. ANDERSON HOUSE SIGN

by Sandy Burud

In 1979 (exactly 40 years ago!), the George H. Anderson House was restored from the rough shape it was in, and a newly-formed Monrovia Historical Society began to turn it into a museum. Many volunteers were part of that process; the exterior alone needed its own team of volunteers. When it was all done, the frosting on the cake was the new sign on the lawn in front of the house. Over the years, that sign has needed a face life from time to time, and twice MOHPG has come to the rescue. Most recently that was done this past September, for which all of us at the Monrovia Historical Society say "thank you."

*(Right) The sign in front of the Anderson House as it looks after its installation in 1979. Note the size of the Crape Myrtle tree which is significantly larger now.)*



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## HPC MEETING OCTOBER 23, 2019

The Historic Preservation Commission met for a regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, October 23. Two of the seven commission members were absent. There were two items on the agenda.

**Determination of Historic Significance** for the residence located at 1104 Briarcliff Road. The owner of this 1964 home plans an alteration of the building involving more than 50% of the exterior walls and more than 50% of the roof of this two-story structure, hence the reason for it requiring HPC approval. The staff reported that there has been extensive alteration of the original home over the years including several additions. Staff recommended giving a status code of 6Z. **Approved 5-0.**

**Nomination to Board of Appeals.** Last month the City Council created a 5-member Board of Appeals, to be made up of three Planning Commissioners and two Historic Preservation Commissioners. The purpose of the board is to consider appeals of administrative decisions contained in Title 15 of the Monrovia Municipal Code (Buildings and Construction). Dan Ryan and Mark Houston were selected to be the two HPC representatives to serve on the board. Since there have been very few appeals in the past, it is expected that this board would likely meet only two or three times a year.

In addition, members of the commission were given an overview of the city sales tax measure (Measure K) that goes before the residents of the city in a special election on Tuesday, November 5. The commissioners were also informed that they will undergo ethics training in the near future.

## SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS



### HERITAGE CIRCLE



**Darrell Brooke**  
**Frank & Tammy Guarino**  
**Cleve & Gloria Crudgington**  
**Hal Leavens**  
**John & Megan Ferrell**  
**Nancy McGrain**

### SUPPORTER

**Vicky Hansen**  
**Volunteer Center—San Gabriel Valley**  
**Wendy Gruber**  
**Susanne Hayek**  
**Rich & Joyce Rickenbrode**

For information on how YOU can become a member at the Heritage Circle or Supporter levels, go to the MOHPG website [www.mohpg.org](http://www.mohpg.org) and look under Membership.



*Preserving  
Monrovia's Architectural Heritage*

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[www.mohpg.org](http://www.mohpg.org)

Address Correction Requested

## CALENDAR OF MOHPG AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

### December

1	<b>Sun</b>	<b>MOHPG Board meeting, 10 am. Members welcome to attend.</b>
21	Sat	First day of winter
<b>21</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>MOHPG Holiday gathering. See page 3 for details.</b>
25	Wed	Christmas
31	Tues	New Year's Eve

### January

1	Wed	New Year's Day - Welcome to 2020!
4	Sat	Walking Tour of Downtown Monrovia, 10 am. Cost is \$5 per person. Meet at the SE corner of Palm and Myrtle Avenues.
<b>5</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>MOHPG Board meeting, 10 am. Members welcome to attend.</b>
20	Mon	Martin Luther King Day Holiday
25	Sat	MOHPG program at home of Ed & Debra Pinson, 442 W. Palm Ave, 11 am.

### February

14	Fri	Valentine's Day
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