

Lost LA

Food & Discovery

## Photos: Holiday Celebrations of SoCal's Past

By Nathan Masters

December 21, 2011



History & Society

History

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Postcard courtesy of the David Boulé Collection.

Los Angeles can hardly be called a winter wonderland, but Southern Californians have long found their own ways to celebrate the holidays, from candy-cane paint jobs on streetcars to postcards extolling the region's suitability for citriculture. Now, as the holiday season once again returns to Southern California, join us for a look through historical images at holiday celebrations of the region's past.



A streetcar in East Los Angeles. Courtesy of the Metro Transportation Library and Archive.



A Los Angeles streetcar painted in a candy cane pattern. Courtesy of the Metro Transportation Library and Archive. Used under a Creative Commons license.



A vintage bus decorated for Christmas with a snowman and the text "GIANT SNOWMEN on the WILSHIRE "/>

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David Boulé's extensive collection of postcards, souvenirs, orange-themed curios, and other items explores the relationship between the orange and the myth of California. Boulé writes: "California and the orange share a five hundred year history of myth and romanticism. To people in other parts of the country, who dealt with weather and not just climate, it was exotic and magical that someone could experience snow, sunshine, oranges and winter all at the same time."



Postcard courtesy of the David Boulé Collection.



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the culture and history of America's indigenous peoples. The library's photographic archives contains approximately 120,000 images, **many of them accessible online**. The library also maintains a collection of materials related to the life of the "**Crusader in Corduroy**," including the photograph below of an 1899 Christmas celebration inside Lummis' house in the arroyo, El Alisal.



Christmas Eve 1899 inside El Alisal. Courtesy of the Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center, P.33777.

**Santa Monica Public Library**

Santa Monica is one of the oldest independent communities in Los Angeles County. The **Santa Monica Public Library's** image archives document more than 135 years of Santa Monica Bay area history through photographs, slides, and printed materials. The City of Santa Monica is the emphasis of the collection, but the neighboring communities of Venice, Malibu, and Pacific Palisades are also represented. Many of the images have been digitized and are publicly accessible through the library's **Imagine Santa Monica** website.



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Serving some of Los Angeles County's oldest colleges and universities, the **Honnold/Mudd Library's Special Collections** contain a wealth of rare and valuable holdings related to Southern California history. Many of the photographs in the library's image archives document student life at the Claremont Colleges, including the historical holiday photos below.



Student carolers at Scripps College. Courtesy of the Claremont Colleges Photo Archive, Honnold/Mudd Library.

Harvey Mudd College students celebrate Christmas, circa 1966. Courtesy of the Claremont Colleges Photo Archive, Honnold/Mudd Library.

## USC Libraries

The USC Libraries' extensive **regional history holdings** include several important photographic archives, including the California Historical Society Collection, the Automobile Club of Southern California Collection, the "Dick" Whittington Photography Collection, and the photographic morgue of the *Los Angeles Examiner*, a daily newspaper that merged with the Herald-Express in 1962. The USC Libraries are also home to the **USC University Archives**, which document the 131-year history of the University of Southern California. Many of the photographs from these collections, as well as images contributed by partner institutions, are publicly accessible through the **USC Digital Library**.

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A Christmas tree towers over the statue of Tommy Trojan in front of Bovard Hall, 1961.  
Courtesy of the USC University Archives.

*Many of the archives who contributed the above images are members of **L.A. as Subject**, an association of more than 230 libraries, museums, official archives, personal collections, and other institutions. Hosted by the **USC Libraries**, L.A. as Subject is dedicated to preserving and telling the sometimes-hidden stories and histories of the Los Angeles region. Our posts here will provide a view into the archives of individuals and cultural institutions whose collections inform the great narrative—in all its complex facets—of Southern California.*

**Read More**



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## of the Terminal Island We've Lost

The socially and historically complex Terminal Island has become a mono-culture of standardized, containerized commerce. Writer D.J. Waldie recounts a personal history of a once scruffy seaside that is now the nation's top cargo port.

## Highlights at the Archives Bazaar: 10 Fascinating Southern California Collections and Historical Organizations

Every year, Southern California museums, libraries and archives come together at the annual Archives Bazaar to exhibit historic items and artifacts. Here are 8 collections and historical organizations whose archives tell a fascinating story of L.A.

## The Pirate, the Mailman and the Avocado: The Accidental History of Avocados in California

The history of commercial avocados in California comes from a collection of chance discoveries, Indigenous heritages exploited and improbable survivals that were ultimately hitched to the power of California's industrialized agriculture.

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