

Echo Park Oral History Topics

One of the purposes of oral histories is to collect details that can help flesh out and bring to life broader historical themes and topics. Depending the person you are interviewing, here are some important themes in Echo Park that you might want to cover

Film & Entertainment Industry.

Did the subject, family member or neighbor work in the movie/music industry? What did they do?

Did they ever see any films shot in the neighborhood? Ever visit the studios along Glendale Boulevard (most were closed by the 1920s)

Racial, Ethnic and Religious Groups

What kind of ethnic groups attended your school or lived on your block?

Did you or your family shop at any stores specializing in Mexican, Italian, Asian, Jewish Food? What would you buy?

What was your primary language at home

Did you hear a foreign language spoken often by any of your neighbors, classmates, friends, family? What were they?

Did you often play or spend much time with a neighbor or classmate of a different racial/ethnic/religious group? Did these groups mix at school or stay apart?

If you were a member of a minority, did you ever experience any discrimination or were you treated differently at school, at a neighborhood store or a work (if you worked in the neighborhood).

Angelus Temple and Aimee Semple McPherson

Did you ever attend services at Angelus Temple? What were the like

Did you ever see Aimee Semple McPherson in the neighborhood or hear her on the radio?

Transportation

Did you use the rail cars on Echo Park Avenue, Sunset Boulevard or Glendale Boulevard? How often? Where did they go on them. What did it sound like? Was it crowded? If you lived by the tracks, how noisy was it?

Did you ever use any of the public stairways on a regular basis? Were there many other people using them? Did they have lights? Were they wood or concrete? Were they in good shape

Did your parents use a car to shop at the market or did they take a bus, train or walk?

Do the remember the construction of the Hollywood Freeway? Did they or a family member have to move to make way for the freeway

Parks

How often did they go to Echo Park Lake and Elysian Park? Did they go alone or with family and friends? Did they participate in any games or recreation programs? Did they ever use the Echo Park Playground.

Business and Services

What neighborhood shops did the subject or family patronize on a regular basis. Did they do most of their regular shopping in Echo Park or did they travel outside the neighborhood .What was their favorite restaurant meal or snack? How much did it cost? Did they use a car to shop?
What business is gone that they miss the most?

Crime-Gangs

Were you or your family victims of a crime? What was it? Was it common to hear of a burglary or theft? Did you always lock your doors? Did you walk at night?
As a child, did your parents let you roam in the neighborhood or warn you about a particular block or area? Were you aware of gangs? Who was in gangs? What did they do
As a parent, what kind of warnings did you give your children about crime? Were they free to roam or had to avoid certain areas or people?

***Communists and Socialists:**

Did you know any friends or neighbors who were involved in socialist or communist politics? What did they do? Did people talk freely about it.
How did your life or that of your friends and family change during the McCarthy era during the 1950s. How did it change?