

# ARCHITECT A. L. HALEY

## From Downtown Los Angeles to *El Retiro*

By Julie Yamashita

**ABSTRACT:** This article is a first step in rescuing early twentieth-century architect A. L. Haley from oblivion. Well-known for the reinforced concrete bungalow (1915) he designed for the Roy Lanterman family, now a historic house museum, he was a prolific designer of apartment buildings, office structures, and homes in Los Angeles in brick, steel-frame, and wood-frame media—a body of work that contributed to the rapid transformation of the small city into a major metropolis. The article outlines Haley’s work, its themes and innovations, and their echo in the Lanterman House.

**KEY WORDS:** reinforced concrete construction; A. L. Haley; Lanterman House; apartment house innovations; Los Angeles urban development.

**I**n 1915, a reinforced concrete, Craftsman-style home named *El Retiro*, “The Retreat,” was completed in the heart of an eight-acre ranch in La Cañada, California. The remote country home, surrounded by native brush and live oaks, was built to be fireproof, and it contained a large upstairs ballroom for social gatherings. Numerous French doors and windows helped connect the house and its occupants with the rustic setting. Country doctor Roy Lanterman commissioned architect Arthur L. Haley to build the home, today a historic house museum and archives. Though no longer a familiar name, in the early twentieth century Arthur Haley was one of the most in-demand architects in Los Angeles. His career was full of projects that were instrumental in the development of downtown Los Angeles from a small city to a major metropolis. Apartments, skyscrapers, office buildings, custom homes, and even an enormous theater were just some of the types of structures that Haley designed. He was



Figure 1. The Lanterman residence (1915), a Craftsman-style home of reinforced concrete in then sparsely settled La Cañada-La Crescenta Valley, was designed by architect Arthur L. Haley to be fire resistant and earthquake proof. Many of its features echo those of Haley's extensive practice in Los Angeles office and apartment design. *Courtesy of the Lanterman House Archives.*

widely known for his innovative features, his attention to natural lighting and air circulation, the incorporation of compact inventions, and pioneering work in reinforced concrete. These features in his downtown buildings were a preface to the modern conveniences that would later be seen in the Lanterman House, especially those relating to fire and earthquake protection, as well as air circulation. But despite his prolific career, Haley is little known today. This article draws attention to his work in the hope that it will lead architectural and urban historians to research the full extent of his oeuvre and its impact on Los Angeles.

Arthur Lawrence Haley was born on June 28, 1865, in Malone, New York, to Joseph and Triphena Haley. He came from a family of notable architects in Minneapolis, Minnesota, including his father and Haley's four brothers, among whom he may have apprenticed.<sup>1</sup> Arthur Haley

<sup>1</sup> "Joseph Haley, Pioneer, Dies," *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minn.), August 10, 1904, 7.



Figure 2. A. L. Haley, Architect. From A. L. Haley, "A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building," *Architect and Engineer of California* 20, no. 3 (April 1910): Frontispiece.

showed talent from the start. He won several art and architecture awards in his youth before he moved to California. Most significant of them was the competition he won against twenty-two other architects to design plans for the Blue Earth County courthouse in Mankato, Minnesota.<sup>2</sup>

Following this success, Haley traveled to California in the 1890s, moving frequently between San Francisco and Los Angeles. He finally settled in Los Angeles in 1896. That year, voter registration records described the young Arthur Haley as a six-foot-tall man of fair complexion, with blue eyes and brown hair.<sup>3</sup> He soon met his future wife, Blanche Elizabeth Carter of Azusa, California; they were married on December 19, 1896.<sup>4</sup> Haley briefly volunteered during the Spanish-American War, where he was in charge of the repair work on the United States

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2 "A. L. Haley, Architect (Inc.)," *Los Angeles Herald*, March 17, 1907, 74; "Blue Earth County Courthouse," National Register of Historic Places Digital Archives on NPGallery, accessed April 18, 2023, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/SearchResults?view=list>.

3 California Voter Registration, Precinct Number 28, Ward 4, 1896, 2.

4 Arthur Haley, marriage certificate, December 19, 1896, digital image s.v. "Arthur Haley" (1865–1925), Ancestry.com.



Figure 3. In his early twenties, A. L. Haley won a competition to design the Blue Earth County courthouse in Mankato, Minnesota. It was constructed between 1886 and 1889 at a cost of \$200,000. It still stands today and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. *File:Blue Earth County Courthouse.jpg* Wikimedia Commons, 11 September 2021, 12:10 UTC, <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Blue\\_Earth\\_County\\_Courthouse.jpg&oldid=590468463](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Blue_Earth_County_Courthouse.jpg&oldid=590468463)> [accessed 21 June 2023]. Photo by McGhievers, licensed under CC by 4.0.

transport ships *Meade*, *Hancock*, and *Sheridan* at the Union Ironworks in San Francisco.<sup>5</sup>

In the early 1890s, when Arthur Haley arrived in Los Angeles, the downtown area still had empty, undeveloped pieces of land, and much of the housing consisted of single-family homes. His whirlwind career designing a number of buildings in a fledgling downtown Los Angeles was about to begin. As this 1891 map of Los Angeles (Figure 4 and detail, Figure 5) shows, Bunker Hill, where the Broad, the Music Center, and MOCA are today, was covered by private family homes, with some boarding houses. Even Bunker Hill's grandest Victorians were made of wood. I'll point out now that quite a few of the buildings that are known to have been designed by Haley were going to be located in the area pictured. Haley's most famous building, the Higgins Building, still stands at Second and Main. I will discuss the features of this building later.

While a comprehensive account of all Haley-designed buildings does not exist, there is evidence that A. L. Haley was an architect as much in demand as such better-remembered contemporaries as Myron Hunt, John Parkinson, and R. B. Young. During the first decade of the twentieth century, new Arthur Haley building projects were frequently announced or discussed in L.A. newspapers. Haley simultaneously worked on plans for apartment houses, private residences, mixed-use structures, business buildings, and factories. (See Figure 6.) Haley was also well-known for his versatility, designing his structures in a wide variety of architectural styles, from Craftsman to Beaux-Arts, depending upon the desires of his clients, as Figure 7 demonstrates.<sup>6</sup>

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5 "Los Angeles Architect Gives Details on Cost of Home," *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1905, 10.

6 "For George A. Leighton," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1902, 12; "Plans Prepared for an Attractive Home," *Los Angeles Evening Express*, May 6, 1905, 12; "Apartments Much in Demand," *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1908, 45; "Leighton Hotel," *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1903, 25; "Tivoli Theater, to Cost Quarter of a Million Dollars," *Los Angeles Herald*, April 23, 1905, 11; "Theater Fiasco," *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1905. The theater was to have been located on South Spring Street, between Ninth and Tenth streets.



Figure 4. Downtown Los Angeles in 1891. At that time there were still many empty lots, and businesses were clustered along Main Street. The historic Plaza is the small circle just to the left of the centerfold. The Los Angeles River runs from lower left to upper right. Bunker Hill, with its Victorian homes among empty lots, is in the foreground. *Public domain.* [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elliott's\\_map\\_of\\_Los\\_Angeles\\_\(1891\)](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elliott's_map_of_Los_Angeles_(1891)).

Figure 5. Detail of the 1891 Elliott Map, with the future sites of Haley's Higgins Building (1910) and Bisbee Hotel (later renamed St. George Hotel) at Second and Main streets (the intersection marked 56 on the map). Bunker Hill occupies the bottom of the map. *Detail of Figure 4.*



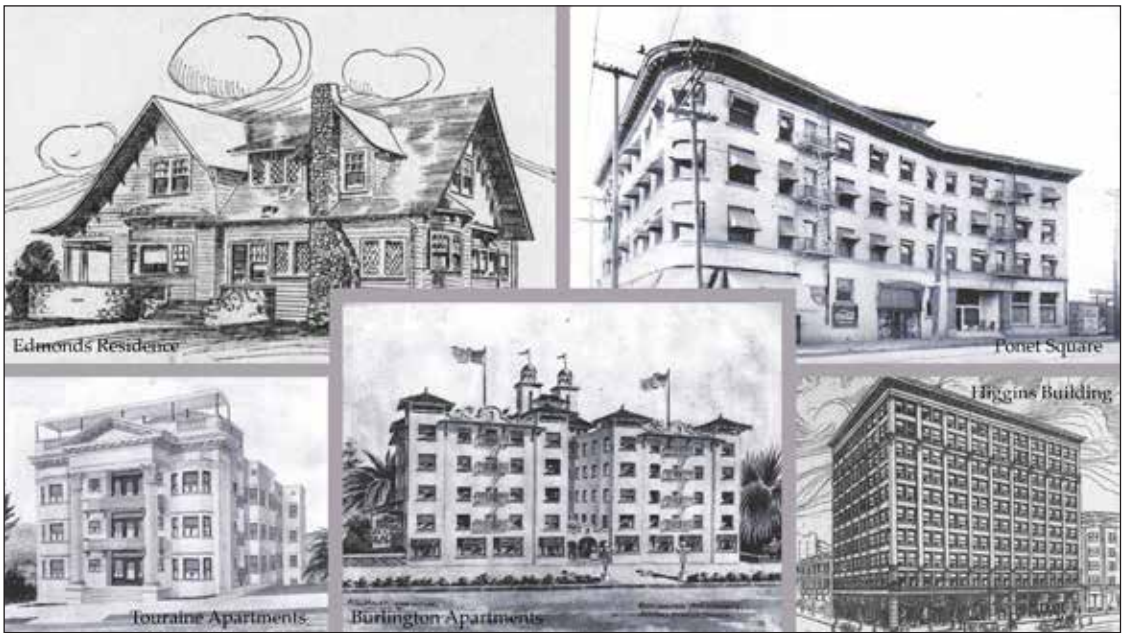


Figure 6. Haley's renderings of some of his completed projects indicate the variety of his practice. Left to right, top: The Edmonds Residence (1903), Ponet Square Apartments (1906); bottom: Touraine Apartments (1904), Burlington Apartments (1907), and the ten-story Higgins office building (1910). Sources: Los Angeles Times, December 27, 1903; A. L. Haley, *Modern Apartments* (Los Angeles: A. L. Haley, ca. 1910), 12, 19, 6; and A. L. Haley, "A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building," *Architect and Engineer of California* 20, no. 3 (April 1910): 36.

#### APARTMENT HOUSES

Haley published a booklet titled *Modern Apartments*, about 1910, promoting his work. In it he announced, "As a specialty, I am devoting my energies and experience to concentrating, in every manner possible, [on] the economy of the apartment house."<sup>7</sup> This focus was timely. With the population of Los Angeles booming from a mere 50,000 in 1890 to over 300,000 by 1910, there was a need for multifamily housing for the influx

<sup>7</sup> A.L. Haley, *Modern Apartments* (Los Angeles: A.L. Haley, ca. 1910), 5.





Figure 7. Haley was fluent in a range of then-current fashionable styles, including Craftsman, Italian Revival, Mission Revival, Mediterranean, and Beaux Arts. Here, from left to right, top: the Leighton Residence, at Park View and Seventh streets, c.1902; the Marley Residence, on Harvard Blvd. between Sixteenth and Washington streets, c. 1905. Bottom row: Key West Apartments, on Grand Avenue north of Sixth Street, 1908; Leighton Hotel, 2127 W. Sixth Street, 1903; and the Tivoli Theatre (announced 1905; not built). Sources: Los Angeles Times, June 8, 1902; Los Angeles Evening Express, May 6, 1905; Haley, *Modern Apartments*, 22; Los Angeles Times, August 9, 1903; Los Angeles Herald, April 23, 1905.

of people from both overseas and the American Midwest arriving daily in the rising metropolis. As Kevin Starr notes in his book *Material Dreams*, “Apartment living was ideally suited to a city filling up with so many people seeking new identities and easily available arrangements for living.”<sup>8</sup> Haley excelled at creating apartment buildings, designing at

8 Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California through the 1920s*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 215.

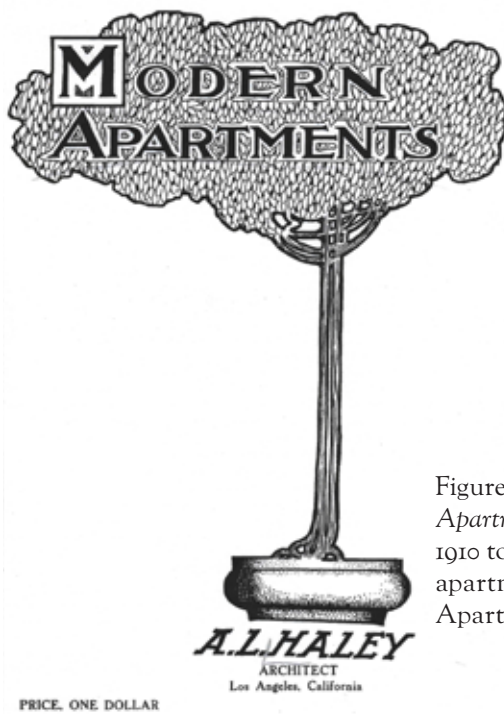


Figure 8. The cover of the booklet, *Modern Apartments*, that Haley published around 1910 to promote his specialty of designing apartment houses. *Haley, Modern Apartments, cover.*

least four dozen of them in the downtown Los Angeles area alone.<sup>9</sup> His clients wanted to fit as many apartments as possible into their property to increase their profits, resulting in limited square footage for each unit. Haley's goal was to make the restricted size of each unit as efficient as possible by equipping them with built-ins while enhancing the apartments' appeal with every modern convenience. Haley wrote his booklet, *Modern Apartments*, to showcase his work and to sell his designs. A closer look at three apartment buildings featured in this booklet follows: the Touraine Apartments, the Burlington Apartments, and Ponet Square.<sup>10</sup>

9 Newspaper announcements in the *Los Angeles Times* and *Los Angeles Herald* between 1901 and 1910 indicate that Haley worked on several apartment buildings simultaneously. I've read over 40 project announcements with different addresses and have over 1000 clippings on Haley within a ten-year period. Many of Haley's apartments are no longer extant, but the Touraine Apartments survived until the redevelopment of Bunker Hill in the 1960s. Others that appear to be his work have not yet been credited to Haley.

10 "Model Apartment House," *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1908, 58; "The Touraine," *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1903, 37.



28 Four-room Suites  
 Public Parlor on each floor  
 Lounging Room on each  
 floor  
 Fire Escapes  
 Sanitary Concealed  
 Metal Beds  
 Sun Room  
 Roof Garden  
 Convertible Gas Stove/  
 Room heater  
 Separate Bath and  
 Kitchen  
 Sliding doors that work as  
 room dividers

Figure 9. The Touraine Apartments on Bunker Hill were completed in 1904. In this 1951 photograph the elaborate façade made it still a showcase. (See also Haley’s original rendering of the Touraine in Figure 6, page 286.) The structure accommodated 28 apartments by including fold-down beds and a movable heater-stove. Social spaces included a shared parlor on each floor, a community sun roof, and a roof garden. The Touraine apartments were in service until the 1960s when Bunker Hill was clear-cut for redevelopment. *Leonard Nadel, photographer. Housing Authority Collection, Los Angeles Public Library, 00017241.*

### *Touraine Apartments*

The Touraine Apartments is unique with its three-story front elevation and eight-story rear portion to accommodate the steep forty degree slope from Hope Street down to Flower Street.<sup>11</sup> Commissioned by Dr. Rupert DeGeorge Treen, a wealthy Los Angeles dentist, the Touraine was completed in 1904 at a cost of \$28,000.<sup>12</sup> Described as a “model of convenience in arrangement,” the building consisted of twenty-eight apartment suites.<sup>13</sup> Each suite contained two rooms that could be combined by opening sets of sliding doors, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a smaller

<sup>11</sup> “The Touraine,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1903, 37.

<sup>12</sup> “The Touraine,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1904, 39; Haley, *Modern Apartments*, 19.

<sup>13</sup> “The Touraine,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1904, 39.



64 Apartments  
 Sanitary Concealed Metal  
 Beds  
 Roof Garden  
 Sun Parlor  
 Café & Grille for the residents  
 Whole Building Vacuum  
 System as often seen on the  
 East Coast  
 Hardwood Floors  
 Steam Heating  
 Elevators  
 Hot & Cold Water  
 Electrical Fixtures

Figure 10. The Burlington apartment house at Ninth and Burlington was completed in 1907 for investor Joseph L. Murphey. Made of brick, it was in the then-popular Mission Revival style. Offices occupied the ground floor, apartments the upper floors. Again, air circulation, social features, built-ins, and conveniences were featured. *Haley, Modern Apartments*, 6.

bedroom, as well as two large closets. The Touraine was of wood-frame construction, but tenant safety was a high priority, with several fire escapes, standpipes, and hose reels at the ready.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Burlington Apartments*

The Burlington Apartments was a five-story Mission Revival-style building located on the northeast corner of Ninth Street and Burlington Avenue. This is just northwest of where L.A. Live is today. The brick building was commissioned by attorney Joseph L. Murphey and completed in 1907 at a cost of \$75,000.<sup>15</sup> Murphey came to Los Angeles from the East Coast to practice law in 1887 and to invest in real estate.<sup>16</sup> The first floor of Murphey's building was occupied with business offices, while

<sup>14</sup> "The Touraine," *Los Angeles Times*, November 22, 1903, 37.

<sup>15</sup> "New Apartment Building for Burlington Avenue," *Los Angeles Herald*, January 6, 1907, 18.

<sup>16</sup> Willoughby Rodman, *History of the Bench and Bar of Southern California* (Los Angeles: W. J. Porter, 1909), 208.



Figure 11. Plan of a typical apartment floor in the Burlington Apartments reveals accommodations of various sizes. *Haley, Modern Apartments, 6.* Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Special Collections.

the other four floors held 36 three-room suites and 28 two-room suites. The U-shaped floor plan of the building ensured that every tenant had access to fresh air and light.<sup>17</sup>

### *Ponet Square*

Ponet Square was located on the corner of Pico and Grand Avenue, a couple of blocks east of what is now the L.A. Convention Center. It was commissioned by Victor Ponet and completed in 1906 at a cost of \$75,000.<sup>18</sup> Ponet engaged in importing and manufacturing, later opening an undertaking establishment. He was a major investor in real estate during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ponet became

<sup>17</sup> Haley, *Modern Apartments*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Haley, *Modern Apartments*, 12.



65 Apartments, 6 Retail Stores  
 Separate Baths and Kitchens  
 Assembly Hall  
 Steam Heating  
 Sun Parlor  
 Roof Garden  
 Hardwood Floors  
 Electrical & Gas Fixtures  
 Built-In Wall Beds  
 Elevators

Figure 12. The Ponet Square Apartments at Pico and Grand Avenue were completed for client Victor Ponet in 1906. Like the Burlington, the ground floor was for commercial space, the upper floors were apartments. Haley designed the building so it could be extended if profitability warranted. Haley, *Modern Apartments*, 12.

vice-consul for Belgium in Southern California and helped form the German-American Savings bank.<sup>19</sup> His four-story apartment building had six stores on the first floor and sixty-five apartment suites on the upper floors. Again, the building had a modified U-shaped floorplan, ensuring that the inner rooms would have access to light and air circulation.<sup>20</sup> Promotional material described it as “one of the most substantial and completely modern apartment buildings that has yet been erected” in Los Angeles. The building’s unusual shape occupies the maximum amount of land on the unusually curved lot, but it was also constructed so that it could be extended “in both directions if the demand for this class of building calls for it.”<sup>21</sup>

19 “Victor Ponet Funeral Takes Place Tuesday,” *Los Angeles Express*, February 19, 1914, 4.

20 Haley, *Modern Apartments*, 12.

21 “Victor Ponet Building,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 1906, 76.



Figure 13. Ponet Square plan of a typical floor, apartment level. *Haley, Modern Apartments, 13. Courtesy Los Angeles Public Library Special Collections.*

#### HALEY'S BUILT-INS

It is significant that one of the shared features of the three apartment buildings discussed here was built-in furniture. Quite a few of Arthur Haley's apartments advertised "Sanitary Concealed Metal Beds," which were of Haley's own invention. The ad in Figure 14 shows the bed installed in a room in a bungalow, much like those in the previously listed features of his apartments. These were a type of murphy bed that was kept hygienic through constant ventilation while folded up.<sup>22</sup> Haley developed and advertised several versions of these folding beds, recommending them for apartments as well as for small houses, to make the most of limited space.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed, "Bungalows, Bungalows!!" advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1908, 23.

<sup>23</sup> Ad, "Before Building See 'The Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed,'" *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1908, 69.

**BUNGALOWS-BUNGALOWS!!**

—THE MODERN HOUSE IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT—

**THE SANITARY CONCEALED METAL BED**

From time immemorial beds have been part of our house furnishings, and up to very recent times we have been using what we are now pleased to call the "old-fashioned brass bedstead." The modern four or five-room cottage was hardly possible with the old-style bed which occupied 25 per cent. of the floor space; but with the advent of the **SANITARY CONCEALED METAL BED** the modern bungalow is not only possible, but owner and builder alike now realize that this great space saver is also a great money saver.

The bed can be installed in living room, dining room, den or bed room, any one of which may be converted into a bedroom at will.

A four-room bungalow fitted with our beds contains all the conveniences of a six-room house, saving 25 per cent. of original cost over old-style methods.



This modern six-room bungalow, built by Mr. G. W. Smith, at 1839 W. 22d St., is equipped with the **SANITARY CONCEALED METAL BED**.



The cut shows the bed installed in the living room. The bed is closed into a ventilated recess, and shows no traces of a bed, but is a serviceable leather upholstered wall seat.

No change in plans or construction necessary for installing our beds.

**"THE BED THAT CAN'T TIP UP"**

Send for handsome circular or call at our display rooms.

**THE SANITARY CONCEALED METAL BED CO.**

—ARTHUR L. HALEY, Inventor—

319-20 Citizens' National Bank Bldg., S. E. Cor. 3rd and Main Sts. LOS ANGELES, CAL. TEL. A2109

Figure 14. To accommodate working-class home buyers in the burgeoning population, developers built tracts of small bungalows in the popular Craftsman style. This 1908 advertisement for Haley's Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed appealed to pressed-for-space bungalow purchasers. *Source:* Los Angeles Times, July 12, 1908, 23.

Haley patented various versions of his Sanitary Concealed Metal Beds. They lacked the cumbersome counterweights of competitors' folding beds; they opened and closed easily without taking up extra space in the room. The mattress was suspended between the wall and the back of the frame. This supposedly made the bed "sanitary," because there was constant air circulation around the mattress while the bed was folded



**Before Building See**  
**"The Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed"**

The Apartment House in Los Angeles could not possibly be a success without the Concealed Wall Bed. In a space 16x22 ft. one may have kitchen, bathroom, living room and bedroom. If this is true of the Apartment House it is also true of the private home. Three-room, two-room and even one-room Bungalows are now becoming quite common—and very popular—all of which is due to the fact that the house equipped with the Concealed Bed gives twice the conveniences, comforts and accommodations of the house without them, at the same time cutting cost of construction in two.



When closed into the ventilated recess, the Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed provides a comfortable upholstered seat 22 inches deep by 4 feet 6 inches wide and which is in itself an attractive piece of furniture.

The Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed is made in a variety of designs and great range of prices.  
 We make special designs to suit either the furniture or finish of a room.  
 If you want to save 50 per cent. on the cost of your building, call and see.

**"The Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed Company"**  
 —Arthur L. Haley, Inventor—  
 Show Rooms 319-20 Citizens National Bank Building, Los Angeles, Cal. Phone A-2109  
 Send for Handsome Circular

Figure 15. Haley developed and advertised several versions of these folding beds, recommending them for apartments as well as for small houses to make the most of limited space. *Source: Los Angeles Times, July 19, 1908, 69.*

into the wall.<sup>24</sup> Figure 16, from a Haley patent granted in 1910, demonstrates how the bed unfolded down and folded back up.<sup>25</sup>

24 Ad for Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed, "A Revelation and a Revolution in Modern Building: 'The Sanitary Concealed Metal Bed,'" *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 1908, 68.

25 Arthur Haley, 1910. Wall Seat Wall Bed. U.S. Patent 956,340, filed June 29, 1907, and issued April 26, 1910. Another of his patents was for a narrower Wall Seat-Wall Bed. U.S. Patent 982,669, filed October 12, 1908, issued January 24, 1911.

956,340.

A. L. HALEY.  
WALL SEAT WALL BED.  
APPLICATION FILED JUNE 29, 1907.

Patented Apr. 26, 1910.

SHEETS-SHEET 2.

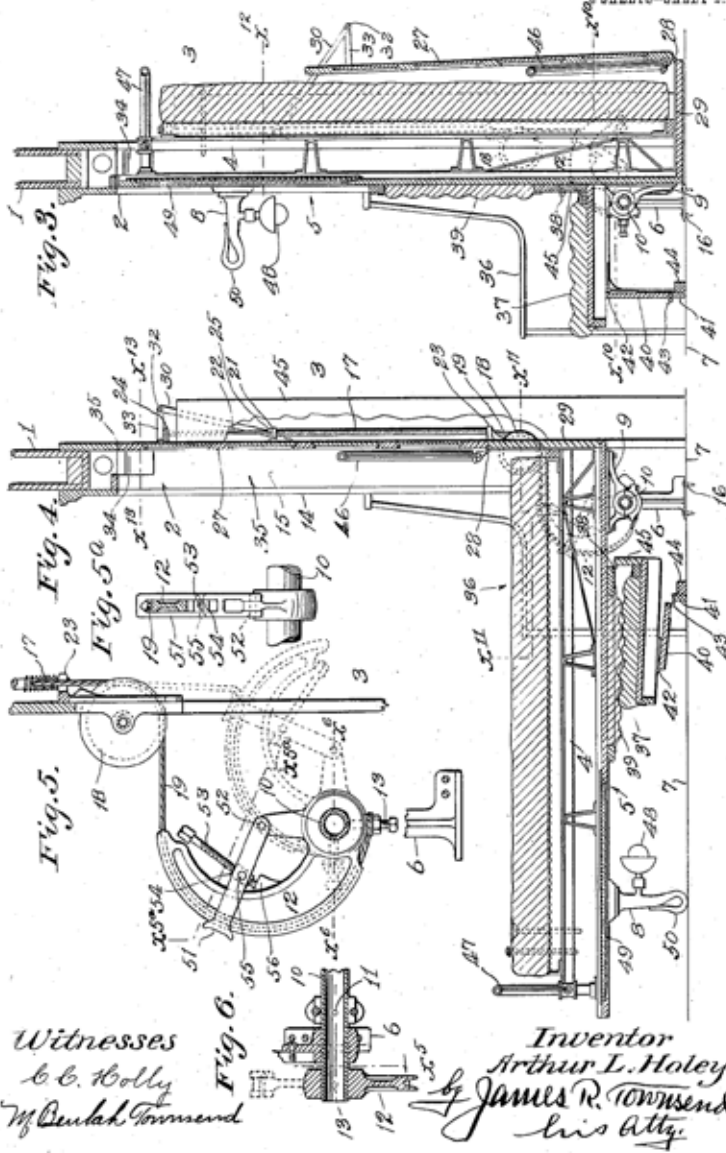


Figure 16. An illustration in one of Haley's patents for Sanitary Concealed Metal Beds identifies the mechanisms that enabled the bed to be unfolded open and folded closed. Arthur Haley, 1910. Wall Seat Wall Bed. U.S. Patent 956,340, filed June 29, 1907, and issued April 26, 1910.

In addition to Haley's folding beds, the apartments he designed often included other compact living devices. One building had wheeled stoves that served as both cooking devices and room heaters that could be rolled from one area of the room to another.<sup>26</sup>

While Haley designed numerous single-family residences that promoted indoor-outdoor living in the Southern California climate, many of his well-appointed apartment houses featured a rooftop sunroom and garden for the residents to take in the healing California sun and air without leaving the building. He also advertised and wrote articles in the *Los Angeles Times* about the benefits of building a home in Los Angeles rather than in the Midwest or on the East Coast. Costs, he claimed, were much reduced because thick insulated walls and deep foundations were not necessary in a land where there was no "zero weather," as Haley described the Southern Californian climate, where it was unheard of for the weather to drop below freezing. California architects had more freedom to design homes with natural wood surfaces that only needed staining, rather than multiple layers of paint to protect them from the elements. They were therefore able to "present a much more beautiful and attractive house for the same amount of money, owing to the fact that 25 percent of the entire cost has gone into the eastern home to protect" against zero weather.<sup>27</sup> Before we examine the features of the house for which Haley is best known, the Lanterman House in La Cañada Flintridge, we must take note of Haley's mastery of the recently introduced building material, reinforced concrete.

#### THE HIGGINS BUILDING (1910)

Haley's crowning achievement during his career was surely the ten-story reinforced concrete Higgins Building, completed in 1910, which still stands on the corner of Second and Main. This is now right across the street from the new LAPD Headquarters near Little Tokyo. The building was commissioned by Thomas Patrick Higgins, an Irish immigrant

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26 Seen as early as the Touraine Apartments in 1904. Other examples are the Burlington and Ponet Square Apartments, above. The Lawry, Wilhelm, Hils, and Horton Apartments by Haley were other examples.

27 Arthur Haley, "Lack of Zero Weather Permits Use of Artistic Features," *Los Angeles Herald*, February 5, 1905, 10.



Figure 17. This 1905 cartoon from the *Los Angeles Herald* shows that Haley was already well-known for building tall buildings for his clients. In response to the cartoon, Haley affirmed his belief that skyscrapers would be the future of the growing downtown Los Angeles. *Los Angeles Herald*, May 10, 1905, 22.

who arrived in California in 1877 with a fortune made in the copper mines of Bisbee, Arizona. He had previously commissioned Haley to build the Bisbee Hotel, an early steel-frame building, in downtown Los Angeles in 1904, which is also still standing, but is now known as the St. George Hotel. It was expanded and renovated in 2004 for the Skid Row Housing Trust. (See Figure 30, page 312.) As the Bisbee was about to be completed, Higgins bought a lot nearby for \$200,000 as the site of his next project, the Higgins Building.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> "Owners and Dealers: Fair Share of Sales Noted During Week," *Los Angeles Times*, December 18, 1904; "Higgins Building Was a Shining Showpiece," *Los Angeles Times*, November 19, 2006, B2; Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD), <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/22624/> accessed 5/21/2023.

Thomas Higgins wanted to make a lasting impression on the downtown Los Angeles skyline that would also serve as his legacy. When he hired Arthur Haley and structural engineer A.C. Martin to develop the concrete landmark, the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire were still fresh in mind. The Higgins Building, completed in 1910, would not only tower over its surroundings,<sup>29</sup> it was touted as “absolutely fire and earthquake proof,” as it was constructed entirely of reinforced concrete. At its completion, the *Los Angeles Times* hailed it as “the best example of monolithic concrete construction in the United States.”<sup>30</sup>

The building was originally planned to be only eight stories, but Thomas Higgins found out that another building was being planned for a nearby lot that would also be eight stories, so of course he wanted his building to be higher. A limitation on the height of concrete buildings had earlier been established after protests by the brick, steel, and stone workers, who wanted to outlaw concrete construction altogether. Haley made the case to raise the height limit to 135 feet, convincing the Los Angeles City Council to extend the legal height of concrete buildings, and then getting the go-ahead for the extra two floors.<sup>31</sup> The building would now hold almost 300 offices and contain over 200,000 square feet of floor space.<sup>32</sup> The Higgins Building was embellished with molded concrete in the Italian Revival style, with a finish “similar to that of rubbed sandstone,” possibly like the Lanterman House exterior, which is also unpainted. Each office has large six-foot-tall windows to allow for the greatest amount of light and air availability that the building could structurally allow.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to its enormous size and reinforced concrete construction, the Higgins Building had other innovative features that were hidden from the view of passersby. Down its center, the building had a hollow air shaft, or light court, that allowed for ventilation and windows for all the offices, including the inner ones, and served as an early form

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29 Cartoon, “Los Angeles Sky Scrapers,” *Los Angeles Herald*, May 10, 1905, 22; “Prediction of Marvelous Growth for Angel City in Ten Years,” *Los Angeles Herald*, May 14, 1905, 22.

30 “The Higgins Block,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1910, 78.

31 “To Go Ten Stories,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 13, 1910, 24.

32 “Believes in North End: Builder of Higgins Block Will Extend That Structure to Height of Ten Stories” *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1910, 65.

33 “Higgins Building, on which Work Has Begun,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1909, 82.



Figures 18–19. Above: The Higgins Building (1910), designed by A. L. Haley, with A. C. Martin as structural engineer, was an early monument to reinforced concrete technology. Originally planned as an eight-story building to meet local height restrictions, Haley won approval to extend the structure to ten stories. Notice the string course marking off the added two stories in this 1941 photograph. See also the architect’s rendering in Figure 6. Art Streib, *Herald Examiner Collection*, Los Angeles Public Library. 00058765. Opposite: Reinforced concrete construction: After the forms were removed from the second floor of the Higgins Building. Haley, “A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building,” 39.



of air-conditioning. The shaft also made it possible to have skylights in the ceilings of several of the fifteen stores on the ground floor.<sup>34</sup> The offices also featured hot and cold running filtered water, steam heat, and alternating and direct current electricity, as well as compressed natural gas. The closets were designed to act like fireproof safes for the storage of business records. A garden café was planned for the roof of the building, although it is not certain if this was ever built.

The basement of the building had yet another unique innovation. While many building basements had machine rooms for their elevators, the Higgins Building had an engine room with a power plant. The building was powered by two pumping engines, each using boilers equipped with oil-burning furnaces. The engines supplied steam pressure to power two electric generators that provided electricity for the entire building,

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<sup>34</sup> "A Typical Floor Plan" and "First Floor Plan" in Haley, "A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building," 48, 43.

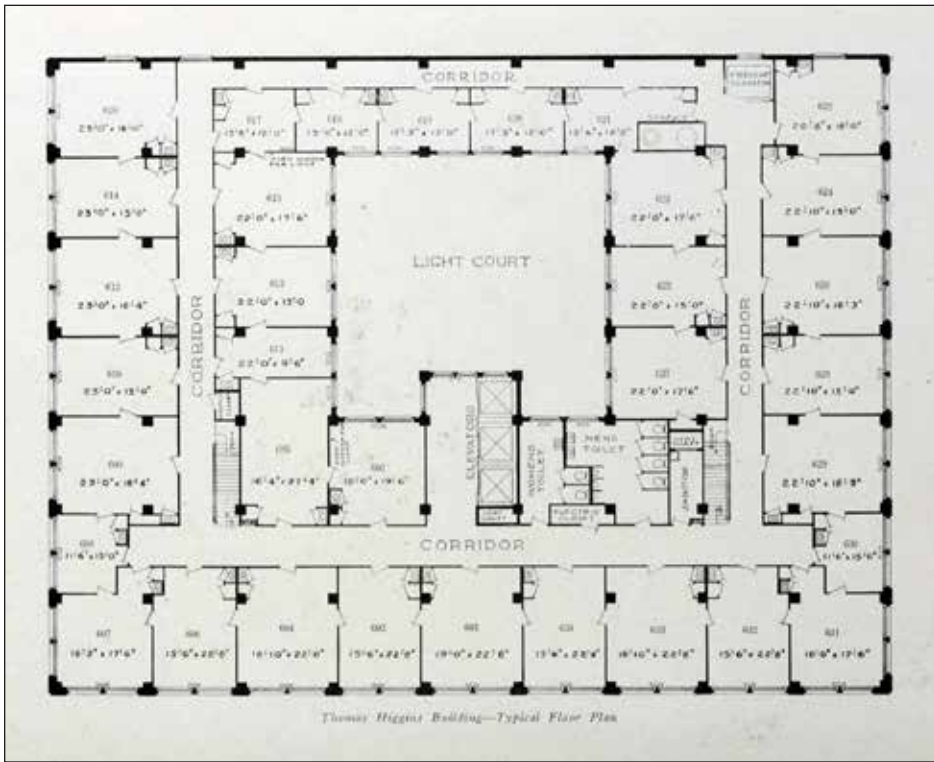


Figure 20. Plan of a typical office floor of the Higgins Building. Notice the light court, which extended upward from the ceiling of the first floor, allowing windows on each of the office floors for light and ventilation. Haley, “A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building,” 48.

ensuring uninterrupted power for the business building.<sup>35</sup> Today, you can see some of the generators in the basement of the Higgins building if you visit the Edison nightclub, which is, appropriately, steampunk-themed.<sup>36</sup>

At an enormous cost of \$675,000, the Higgins Building was still considered an economical project, according to Arthur Haley.<sup>37</sup> He pointed out that this was because reinforced concrete “can be obtained from the local market, while the best structural steel can be manufactured at the

35 Haley, “A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building,” 51.

36 At the time of writing, the Edison is a steampunk-themed nightclub located in the basement of the Higgins Building. The club was opened in 2007 by Andrew Meieran and Marc Smith.

37 “Believes in North End,” 65.



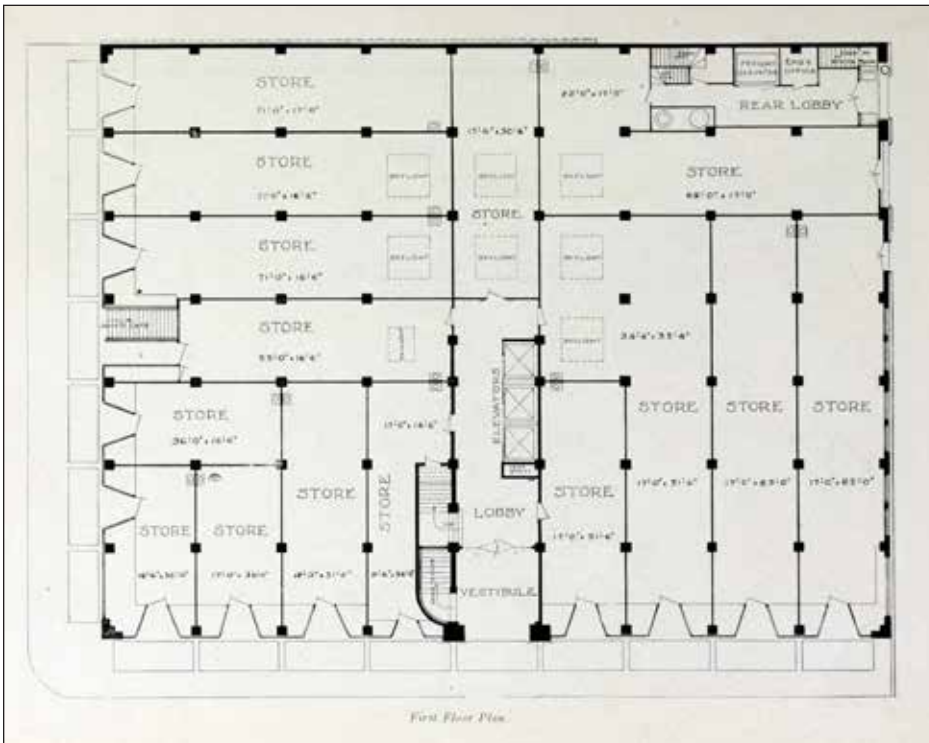


Figure 21. Plan of the Higgins Building's ground floor. Here, eight small squares indicate the skylights that bring in light and air from the light court above into shops in the center of the building. Haley, "A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building," 43.

present time only by the heaving rolling mills in the East."<sup>38</sup> This was probably also a dig at the brick, steel, and stone workers who earlier tried to outlaw concrete construction. In addition, the main structure of the building was completed in just twelve months, faster than any other similarly-sized building on the West Coast.<sup>39</sup> Haley reported that the "fourth and fifth floors of the Higgins Building . . . were built complete within a period of twenty-eight days."<sup>40</sup> The structure was also considered to be "absolutely fireproof," since it was said that the Higgins

38 "The Higgins Block."

39 Haley, "A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building," 35.

40 "The Higgins Block."

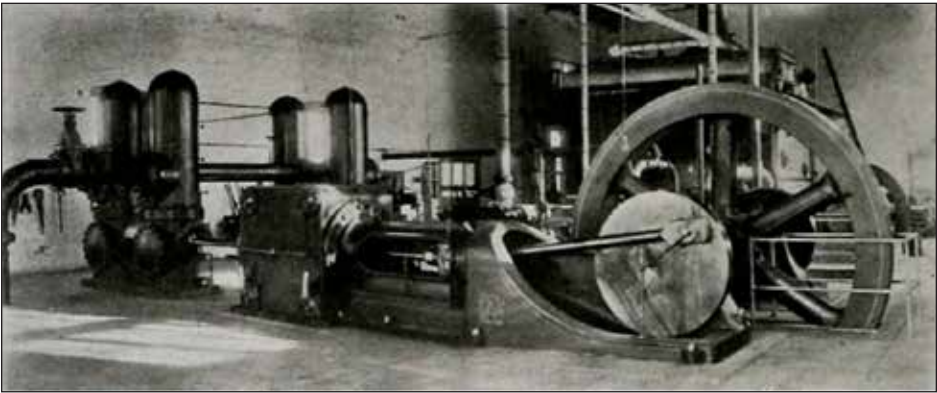


Figure 22. The Higgins basement contained the building's own power plant. Two pumping engines, with boilers heated by oil-burning furnaces, supplied steam pressure to power electric generators that provided electricity for the entire building. *Haley*, "A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building," 50.

Building contained no wood except for thin baseboards, but certainly not enough to make "a respectable bonfire."<sup>41</sup>

#### THE LANTERMAN HOUSE

With the publicity from the reinforced-concrete, "absolutely fire and earthquake proof" Higgins Building, Arthur Haley was exactly the right architect for the Lanterman family's dream house, a grand Craftsman-style house made of reinforced concrete in the wilds of La Cañada. (See Figure 1, page 280). The house would share a number of other similarities with features of Haley's apartment and office buildings.

The Lantermans, one of the founding families of La Cañada and the Crescenta-Cañada Valley, originally traveled west because their patriarch, Dr. Jacob Lanterman, sought out the healing California climate for a respiratory ailment. The health-seeker mentality was continued on by Jacob Lanterman's son, Roy Lanterman, who had lived in increasingly congested downtown Los Angeles. Dr. Roy Lanterman, his wife, Emily

<sup>41</sup> "Believes in North End."

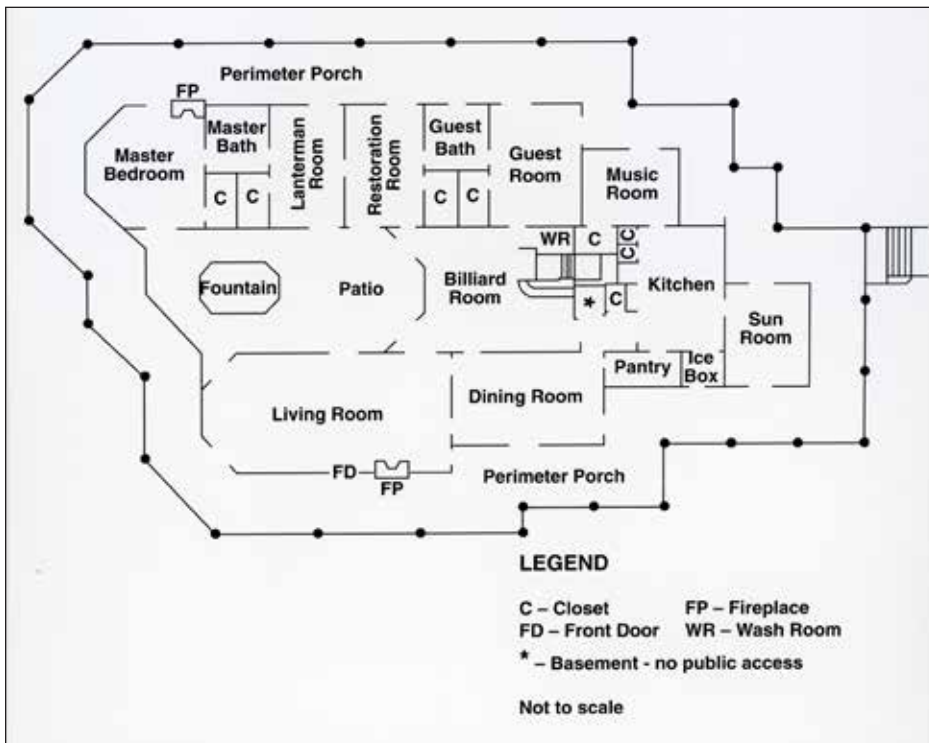


Figure 23. Lanterman Residence, ground floor plan (not to scale). The front courtyard (See Figure 24a), like those in many of Haley’s apartment houses, brought light and air circulation to interior rooms. The wrap-around perimeter porch, with overhanging eaves on the sunny sides of the house and a pergola over the north-facing back of the house, moderated the sunlight and temperature in the house. Every room has a direct exit via French doors, a fire and earthquake safety measure as well as an encouragement to indoor-outdoor living in a country house and the means of cross-ventilation for every room. Upstairs, a commodious sleeping porch (Figure 24b) reinforced this open lifestyle. At the back of the house (on the right in the plan), the kitchen was not only well lit, but served meals in a screened porch or in the sun room (Figure 24c). Also like the apartment houses, the Lanterman house has a ballroom upstairs for community social gatherings (Figure 26), while the medical office and laundry area are placed in the basement with their own entrances (Figure 27) to separate them from the residential and social quarters. (In this plan, the bedrooms for the parents, the two sons, and guest room, with bathrooms between them, are labeled as to their current use in the historic house museum.) *Lanterman Historical Museum Foundation*, “Lanterman House: Gem of the Foothills,” (La Cañada Flintridge, CA: n.d.), 21. *Courtesy of the Lanterman Archives.*



Figure 24. Light and Air. From top to bottom: Front courtyard, with its French doors to bedrooms, billiard room, and living room. *Photo: Julie Yamashita*; the sleeping porch, as it was in ca. 1915, *Lanterman House Archives*; the sun room. *Photo: William Weber*. All are courtesy of the *Lanterman House Archives*.

(the daughter of a physician), and their two boys, Lloyd and Frank, left the city for La Cañada near his father's ranch in the early 1900s. Roy Lanterman had run an emergency clinic in San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and had seen the devastation that the combination of the earthquake and the fire had done to that city.<sup>42</sup>

Dr. Roy Lanterman commissioned Haley to build the family's country home in 1911, just after the completion of the Higgins Building; its fireproof and earthquake-proof guarantees would have been important considerations.<sup>43</sup> In addition to its fireproof material, he also must have been impressed by Haley's dedication to having air circulation and light available to all rooms in his buildings, something that would be a major feature in the Lanterman House.

While the Lanterman House does not have Sanitary Concealed Metal Beds, as it did not have the space restrictions of its urban counterparts, it does have windows in the closets to provide air circulation to keep their contents fresh and hygienic. The sunroom by the kitchen, as well as the upstairs sleeping porch also take advantage of the healthful La Cañada Valley sun and breezes. The house was designed to maximize cross-ventilation with its fifty sets of French doors and windows and a U-shaped front patio area, speaking to Haley's interest in air circulation for health, as well as affording rapid exits from each room in case of fire. As the examples of Haley's work have shown, light and ventilation were constant themes in his work.

Several of the "modern conveniences" that were selling points of Haley's apartments were also built into the Lanterman House. Like the apartments, the house had hot and cold running water throughout. The Lanterman House is fitted with both gas and electrical fixtures, which helped in rural La Cañada, where electricity was not particularly reliable in the early twentieth century. The fully-tiled kitchen was designed for efficiency and cleanliness, including a built-in ice box, a garden sink and separate pastry-making area, as well as a butler's pantry with its own sink and California cooler cabinet. The laundry area was located at the bottom of the stairway leading to the basement to take advantage of the concentration of bright sunlight there to dry wet clothes.

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42 "Dr. Lanterman Praises Those Who Assisted Him in Labor of Mercy," *Los Angeles Examiner*, May 6, 1906, 1.

43 "Substantial County Mansion to Be Fireproof," *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1911, 89.

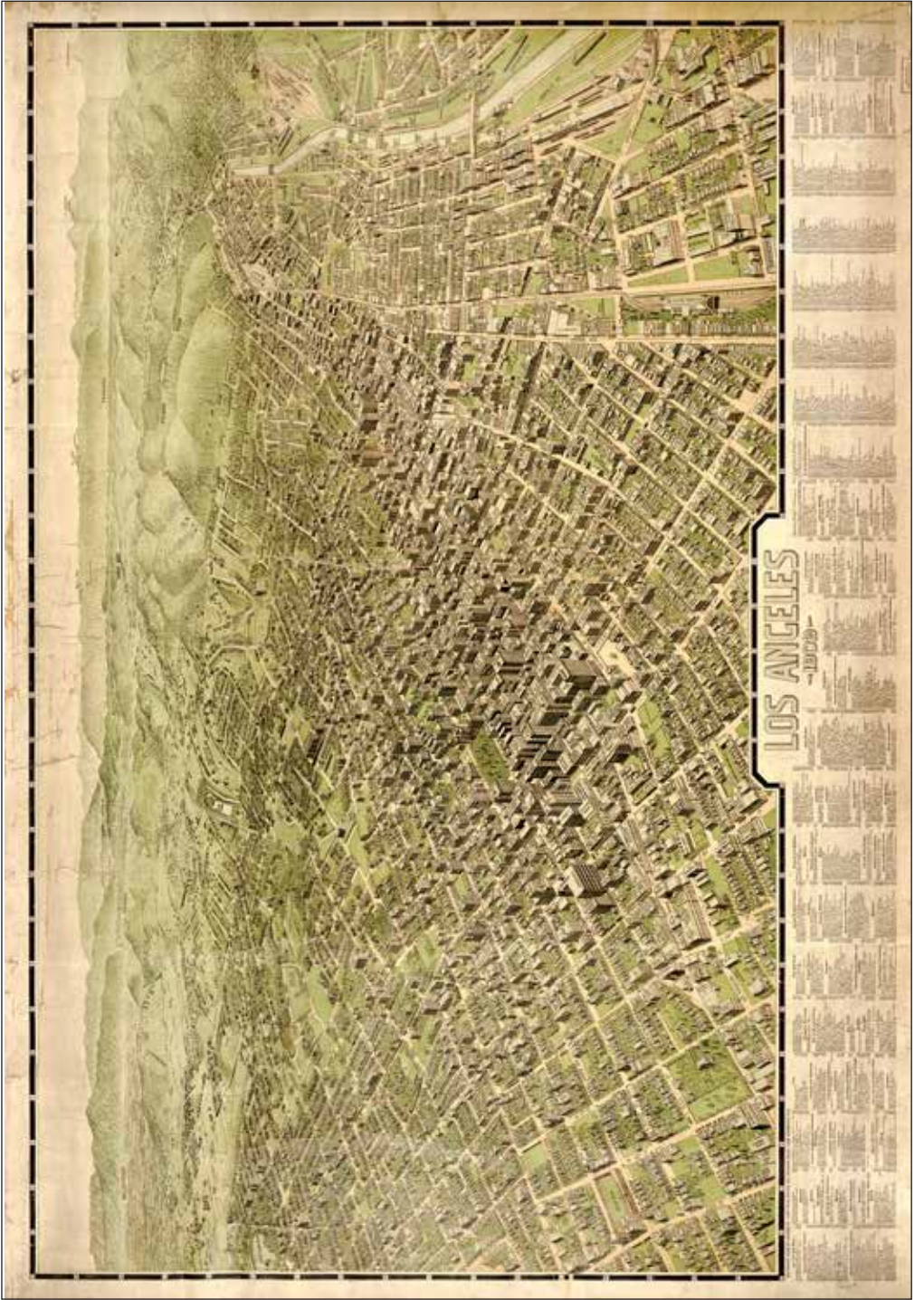


Figure 25. Modern Conveniences. From top to bottom: The kitchen includes a pastry center. *Photo: William Weber.* Airing windows freshen a closet. *Photo: Julie Yamashita.* Ceiling vent and shower-tub were functional elements of a bathroom. *Photo: William Weber.* All Courtesy of the Lanterman House Archives.



Figures 26–27. Social Spaces. From top to bottom: The elegant ballroom occupies the second floor, with large windows and a balcony. *Photo: William Weber*; Dr. Lanterman's medical office, with a separate entrance, was located in the basement of the split-level Lanterman House, along with the laundry room. All had French doors and numerous windows to provide light and ventilation. *Photo: Julie Yamashita. Both courtesy of the Lanterman House Archives.*

Like Haley's office buildings and apartment houses, commercial and work areas were separated from the social and living areas. In addition to the laundry, Dr. Lanterman's medical office was efficiently tucked into the partial basement, with a separate entrance for patients. And on the second floor the Lanterman House had a spacious ballroom for social gatherings, echoing the assembly rooms in Haley's apartment buildings, both being meant to draw together the local community.







(*opposite*) Figure 28. This 1909 birds-eye map looks from the southeast to the northwest, across central downtown toward Bunker Hill, with the Los Angeles River on the right edge. Compared to the 1891 map (Figures 4–5, pages 284–85), the city’s downtown has spread laterally and vertically into a dense urban center. Map of Los Angeles, 1909. (*Los Angeles: Birdseye View Pub. Co., [1909]*). Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005632465>.

(*above*) Figure 29. In this detail of the map above, Haley’s Bisbee Hotel (then labeled Gray Hotel and now the St. George Hotel) is visible at 3rd and Main (115 E. Third Street) and the Higgins Building, bearing the name of its anchor tenant in 1909, is located at 108 W. Second). Other landmarks are Central Park (now known as Pershing Square) on Fifth Street, between Olive and Hill; Angel’s Flight, a couple blocks farther to the right on Hill Street; and in the foreground, the tall Pacific Electric Building and Jonathan Club at 6th and Los Angeles Street. *Detail of Figure 28.*



Figure 30. Extant works of Arthur L. Haley include the St. George Hotel (originally, Bisbee Hotel), 1904 (altered in 2004) (*Permission pending, Skid Row Housing Trust*); the Pomeroy Powers House, 1908, on Alvarado Terrace (*File:Powers\_House,\_Alvarado\_Terrace*, Wikimedia Commons, 14 June 2008, <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Powers\\_House,\\_Alvarado\\_Terrace.JPG&oldid=643279238](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Powers_House,_Alvarado_Terrace.JPG&oldid=643279238). GNU Free Documentation License. [accessed 21 June 2023]); and the Thomas Higgins Mausoleum, 1905, at Calvary Cemetery. (Photo: M. Ovnick).

#### A. L. HALEY'S LEGACY

The Lanterman House has so far fared fairly well through earthquakes and fires over the past century, in part due to its thick concrete walls.<sup>44</sup> The home was acquired by the city of La Cañada Flintridge in 1987 upon the death of the last member of the family, Lloyd Lanterman. The Lanterman Historical Museum Foundation did extensive restoration inside and outside the home, rededicating El Retiro as a historic house museum and archives in 1993. Arthur Haley's name has been kept alive in La Cañada Flintridge ever since, though his large body of work in downtown Los Angeles still lacks the recognition that it once had and still deserves.

Arthur Haley's prolific architectural career in Los Angeles was fairly short-lived. In less than two decades, he left a significant mark on the downtown skyline. On the 1909 map of the downtown area (Figure 28–29), you will see how much it had changed over twenty years compared to the 1891 map in Figures 4 and 5. By 1909 there were many apartment houses and business buildings and far less greenspace in the expanded core of the city.

<sup>44</sup> A core sample of one of the walls of the house measures 12 inches.

Figure 31. Architect A. L. Haley as he appeared in *Architect and Engineer of California* to illustrate his 1910 article on the design and construction of the Higgins Building. Haley, “A Ten Story Monolithic Reinforced Concrete Building,” 34.



While the majority of A. L. Haley’s buildings no longer exist due to redevelopment, those that still stand are a testament to his talent. Some of those still extant are designated as historic landmarks, including the Lanterman House, the Powers House on Alvarado Terrace, and the Blue Earth County Courthouse in Minnesota. There are other buildings that survive as well, some of them still to be discovered, but here are three that were not discussed in this article: the Powers House on Alvarado Terrace (1908), the Bisbee Hotel (now the St. George Hotel) (1904, altered in 2004), and the Higgins Mausoleum at Calvary Cemetery (1905).<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Editor’s Note: The Los Angeles Public Library’s Photo Collection contains images of three other hotel buildings that researchers may find (from building permit files or newspaper mentions) were designed by Haley: the Haley Hotel in Venice, file #00057182, whose described features and appearance match Haley’s work; the Leighton Hotel and Lakeside Inn (the latter credited to John C. Austin) the other not identified but it was located in the Westlake area where Haley was active, was named for a repeat client of his, and bears the Haley features (#00026710); and the Hotel Schuyler, Long Beach, with Haley features and containing a “Leighton Coffee Shop (#00077353).

In conclusion, Arthur Haley is a man of mystery. We do know that he went bankrupt at least once, in 1906, during the height of his popularity, and that he divorced his wife in 1909.<sup>46</sup> We know less about his life and work after about 1910. In 1912, he proposed an elevated walkway with bridges over the street crossings, intended to relieve the heavy street congestion in downtown Los Angeles.<sup>47</sup> He did a few more commissioned buildings and completed the Lanterman House in 1915, but that too is a mystery, as we have no correspondence between Haley and the Lantermans in our archives. As the United State entered World War I in 1917, Haley, echoing his work on ships during the Spanish American War, became Architect for the United States Shipping Board in Vancouver, Washington.<sup>48</sup> After the war, even less can be found about him. He patented an invention for a process for sawing tapered logs to increase log production in the United States in 1921.<sup>49</sup> Arthur Haley quietly died at the age of sixty-one in the Ocean Park neighborhood of Santa Monica on October 16, 1925.<sup>50</sup> He played a significant role in the shaping of the Los Angeles metropolis. The identity and extent of his completed projects remain a promising subject for researchers. He certainly left a lasting legacy in the Lanterman House in La Cañada-Flintridge.

**Julie Yamashita** is Archivist at the Lanterman House in La Cañada Flintridge as well as an archives consultant. Her work at the Lanterman House focuses on the history of La Cañada Flintridge and the greater Crescenta-Cañada Valley. Julie is a passionate advocate for solo archivists, working to share practical and affordable high-tech and low-tech methods to make archives more accessible. She holds an MLIS in Archival Studies from San José State University and an MA in Art History/Museum Studies from the University of Southern California. Her other interests include ceramics, learning new languages, and typewriters.

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46 "Bankrupt Architect: A. L. Haley Is Penniless," *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1906, 18.

47 "Elevated Walk Plan Wins Approval" *Los Angeles Herald*, September 12, 1912.

48 "Japan Buying Much Lumber," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1923, 29.

49 "Inventor Back in City," *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1923, 7.

50 "Arthur L. Haley Obituary," *Seattle Star*, October 19, 1925, 6.