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## In Print

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The first newspaper in Monrovia began in 1886. It was the *Monrovia Planet*. The newspaper told about the little community. Articles were written about the new buildings and homes, social happenings, births and deaths, and of the town's growth. Old copies of Monrovia's newspapers are a good source of information about Monrovia's past.

Over the years, the newspaper's name has changed. Its purpose still is to inform the people in the community about local events. Monrovia's current newspaper is the *Monrovia News-Post*. It is published twice a week.

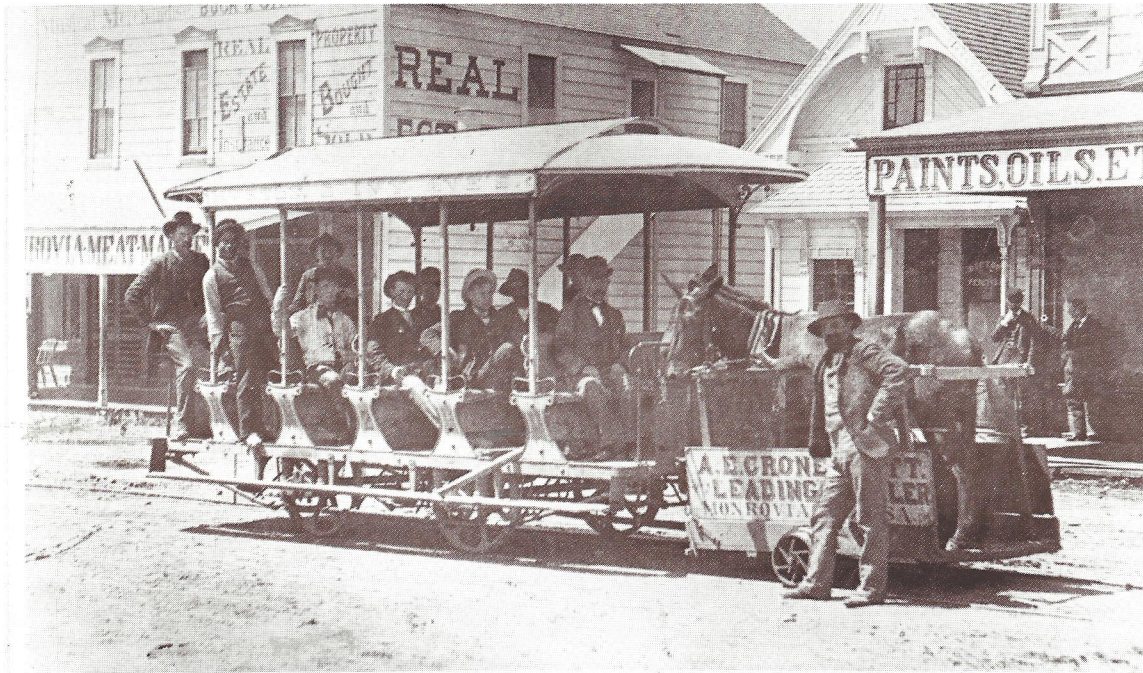


*Monrovia Planet*  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)

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## Four-footed Shuttle

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*Mule-drawn streetcar  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*

Many new people were coming to Monrovia because of the railroad James Crank built between Los Angeles and the San Gabriel River. When people got off the train at the Santa Fe Station in Monrovia in 1887, they were met by a driver and a mule-drawn streetcar. This streetcar was called Myrtle Avenue Railroad. It provided shuttle service to the hotels and the business district until 1917. The mules pulled the streetcar along a track up Myrtle Avenue to Lemon Avenue. There it went east to Heliotrope Avenue and then north to White Oak Avenue. There the streetcar would turn around and make the return trip. On the return trip to Santa Fe Station, the mules climbed up on a platform at the back of the streetcar. They rode downhill all the way to the station.

One day the driver of the streetcar had trouble turning a corner. The mules fell off the platform. They would not climb up on the streetcar's platform anymore. The mules were sold to a farmer, who hitched them to his plow. The mules walked across the field. When they reached the end of a row, they tried to climb up on the plow for a ride back!

The mule-drawn streetcar was not the only way to travel about the town. The first taxi in Monrovia was a surrey with fringe on top. This horse and carriage was owned and driven by Mr. Twitchell. He would take people, who had no carriage, anywhere in town.

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## Incorporation – Official at Last

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A new community had begun. It was now time to become an official city. The members of the townsite committee went to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on November 11, 1887. They asked for their approval to incorporate. The supervisors said yes, the town could incorporate.

Now the people in the community of Monrovia had to vote on whether or not they wanted to become a city. On December 8, 1887, one hundred eleven people voted. One hundred ten of the voters agreed that Monrovia should become an official city. They also elected five men as the first city trustees (now called city council). The city trustees would make the ordinances or laws for the city. These new trustees were William Monroe, Leonidas Barnes, F.N. Myers, General William A. Pile and W.A. Baxter. At the first meeting of the new trustees on December 16, 1887, William Monroe was chosen mayor by the other trustees.

Other city officials:

C.A. Reynolds – city clerk

Joseph F. Sartori – city treasurer

J.P. Herbert – marshal

Jacob F. Norman – city recorder and judge of the recorder's court

E.W. Little – city attorney

There was no official place for the city trustees to meet. They held their meetings in E.W. Little's law library and in other buildings in the town. In 1905, the city bought the Granite Bank building on the southwest corner of Palm and Myrtle Avenues. It was the city hall until 1952.



*City officials – circa 1906*

*(L-R) James Quiggle, constable; James Clymans, city engineer; Frank Miller, city marshal; Charles Smith, water department; F.M. Monroe, street superintendent; L.E. Hotchkiss, city clerk  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*

## Riding the Rails

The founders of Monrovia, all railroad men except Mr. Falvey, built a special railroad from Monrovia to Los Angeles. It was called the San Gabriel Valley Rapid Transit Railway. It opened the year after the town was incorporated. On the day of the grand opening, the mayor of Los Angeles and other city officials rode the train to Monrovia. William Monroe and his friends took them on a tour of the new town. First, they went to a reception in William Monroe's home, "The Oaks," then to General Pile's home, "Idlewild," for another party. All the guests rode in carriages to the top of Gold Hill. There they saw a beautiful view of Monrovia.

The railroad was not a success. Eventually it was sold to the Southern Pacific Railroad.

### San Gabriel Valley Rapid Transit Railway Time Table.

MONROVIA to LOS ANGELES. Read from bottom up						LOS ANGELES to MONROVIA. Read from top down.						
In Effect May 1st, 1890.												
P	M	A	M	P	M	A	M	A	M	P	M	
C	C	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	C	C	
5 00	9 00	5 20	2 15	10 05	8 00	Arrive { 9 Arcadia St. } Leave	7 40	11 00	3 00	5 05	8 40	4 40
4 49	8 49	5 04	2 04	9 54	7 49	L. Cor. Anderson & Aliso St.	L 7 36	11 11	3 11	5 11	9 01	5 01
4 45	8 45	5 00	2 00	9 50	7 45	L. ....*Soto Street.....	L 8 00	11 15	3 15	5 15	9 05	5 05
4 44	8 44	5 59	1 59	9 49	7 44	L. ....*DeSoto Heights.....	L 8 01	11 16	3 16	5 16	9 06	5 06
4 41	8 41	4 56	1 56	9 46	7 41	L. ....*Laborde.....	L 8 04	11 19	3 19	5 19	9 09	5 09
4 37	8 37	4 52	1 52	9 42	7 37	L. ....*Batz.....	L 8 08	11 23	3 23	5 23	9 13	5 13
4 31	8 31	4 46	1 46	9 36	7 31	L. ....*Ramona.....	L 8 14	11 29	3 29	5 29	9 19	5 19
4 29	8 29	4 44	1 44	9 34	7 29	L. ....*West Alhambra.....	L 8 16	11 31	3 31	5 31	9 21	5 21
4 28	8 28	4 43	1 43	9 33	7 28	L. ....*Wilson Avenue.....	L 8 17	11 32	3 32	5 32	9 22	5 22
4 27	8 27	4 42	1 42	9 32	7 27	L. ....Alhambra.....	L 8 18	11 33	3 33	5 33	9 23	5 23
4 25	8 25	4 40	1 40	9 30	7 25	L. ....*Almansor Street.....	L 8 20	11 35	3 35	5 35	9 25	5 25
4 24	8 24	4 39	1 39	9 29	7 24	L. ....*East Alhambra.....	L 8 21	11 36	3 36	5 36	9 26	5 26
4 23	8 23	4 38	1 38	9 28	7 23	L. ....*Mayberry.....	L 8 22	11 37	3 37	5 37	9 27	5 27
4 22	8 22	4 37	1 37	9 27	7 22	L. ....*Lake Vineyard.....	L 8 23	11 38	3 38	5 38	9 28	5 28
4 20	8 20	4 35	1 35	9 25	7 20	L. ....*San Marino.....	L 8 25	11 40	3 40	5 40	9 30	5 30
4 18	8 18	4 33	1 32	9 23	7 18	L. ....*East San Gabriel.....	L 8 27	11 42	3 42	5 42	9 32	5 32
4 16	8 16	4 31	1 31	9 21	7 16	L. ....*Sunny Slope.....	L 8 29	11 44	3 44	5 44	9 34	5 34
4 14	8 14	4 29	1 29	9 19	7 14	L. ....*Chapman.....	L 8 31	11 46	3 46	5 46	9 36	5 36
4 10	8 10	4 25	1 25	9 15	7 10	L. ....*Baldwin Avenue.....	L 8 35	11 50	3 50	5 50	9 40	5 40
4 05	8 05	4 20	1 20	9 10	7 05	L. ....*Arcadia.....	L 8 40	11 55	3 55	5 55	9 45	5 45
4 00	8 00	4 15	1 15	9 05	7 00	Leave MONROVIA. Arrive	8 45	12 00	4 00	6 00	9 50	5 50

A—Trains Daily except Sunday. C—Sundays only. \*Trains stop on Signal only.

*San Gabriel Valley Rapid Transit Railway time schedule  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*

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## Great Boom Ends

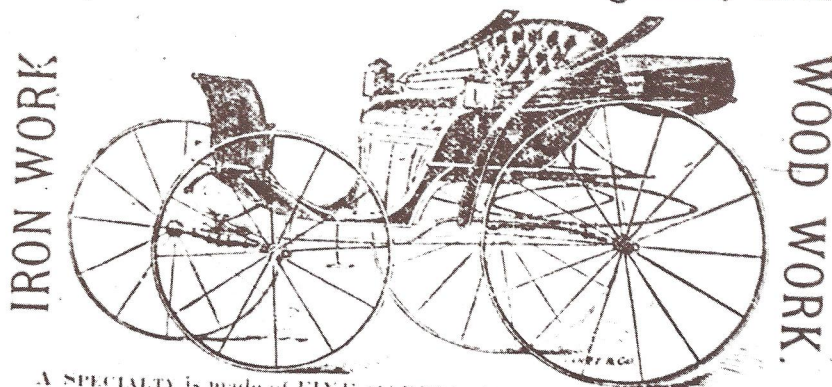
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By 1887, Monrovia had one hundred sixty-four residences. A large number of public and private business buildings had been built. The population was close to two thousand people. Newspapers were filled with stories of all the money being made in land and crops. The railroad fare competition made it easy for thousands of people to come to Southern California. Properties were bought, sold, and resold, always at higher prices.

During the year 1888, the growth of the town started to slow down. By 1889, many people soon found that they could not make payments and pay the taxes on what they owned. People began to lose their land and property. Land sales dropped off. Business was poor. One Monrovia pioneer said of the times: "Every man who had the price of a railway ticket left the country. We stayed because we were too poor to get out."

Hundreds of people did leave, of course. The population fell. The Monrovia who stayed struggled and worked hard to make a living and to keep the town going. Even through the worst of the depression, the little town of Monrovia survived and began to grow again.

**NOW IS THE TIME!**  
**AND THE Monrovia Carriage Shop THE PLACE**  
To Get **REPAIRS** of ANY KIND on Your  
**Carriages, Buggies, Wagons, Etc.**



A SPECIALTY is made of FINE CARRIAGE PAINTING. The BEST Materials only are used and FIRST-CLASS work is guaranteed in every case. All Work—Wood, Iron, Painting and Upholstering Done at Lowest Living Rates. Soliciting your patronage and guaranteeing complete satisfaction, I am  
Very Respectfully,

THOMAS D. BRAY,

(Monrovia Historical Society collection)



*Old telephone switchboard in the El Monte Historical Museum  
(Photograph by Richard Izbicki)*

# UNIT IV

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## Community Life

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Imagine you lived in Monrovia when Myrtle Monroe was young. Pretend a fire broke out in your home. There were no telephones. There was no fire department. There were no cars or buses. How would you get help? This was just one of the problems the people in the new town of Monrovia had to solve.

In this unit you will find out how Monrovia's citizens worked together to solve community problems. You will read about people who were concerned for the health and safety of Monrovia's citizens. You will learn how many groups were started to provide recreation and entertainment for the community.

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## Water . . . for a Price

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Free water! Electric street lights! These were promised to all home builders in the new town of Monrovia. The water came from Sawpit Canyon. William Monroe's brother, Campbell Monroe, built a reservoir at the mouth of the canyon to hold the water. Big tile pipes took the water down to the homes.

But in 1889, the rains did not come. For ten years the weather was dry. Water in the canyon dried up. It had to be rationed to save the citrus groves. The water to the homes was turned off at night. During the day the water pipes were turned on for a short time, once in the morning and once in the evening. Hurriedly, everyone brought jars, pitchers, bowls, and pans to fill with water while it was flowing. Monrovia needed to find more water.

Mr. A. B. Chapman found water on his property in Pasadena. He said Monrovia could buy some of his land. So Monrovia bought five and a half acres. The city dug two wells that gave Monrovia four million gallons of water daily. But the city knew it could no longer give its people free water. It cost too much. Water meters were put on the pipes and each family or business paid for the water they used.

The city dug two more wells in the San Gabriel Valley and built more reservoirs to hold the water. This water supply took care of Monrovia for twenty years. The city kept growing, but people would not approve money to get more water. Conditions grew more dangerous. If there was a drought, the city would not have enough water for everyone.

A water bond election was set for September, 1955. The city wanted \$1,640,000 for water expansion. That September was the hottest and driest on record, and Monrovia did run out of water. On the day people went to vote, there was no water running out of the faucets. The water bond was approved.

Today, water for the city comes from Monrovia's wells and the Metropolitan Water District.

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## **“Power” to the People**

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When Monrovia wanted electric lights, the town had to make its own electricity. Waterfalls in Monrovia Canyon powered the generator that was built by the Monrovia Electric Company in 1895. This company was taken over by the United Electric and Gas Power Company which did not bring gas to Monrovians. In 1908, Edison Electric Company took over and provided electricity for the city. Later, it bought the Peoples Gas Company. Edison wanted to encourage the use of gas fuel. The company gave cooking classes to the women of Monrovia to show them that gas was the best fuel to use at home.

Piedmont Gas Company bought the gas business from Edison in 1911. Then two years later, it sold the business to Southern Counties Gas Company.

Today, Monrovians get their electric service from Southern California Edison and their gas from Southern California Gas Company.

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## **The Bells Are Ringing!**

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In 1903, David Edward Juvinal began a new telephone company to replace the old one started in 1887. He applied to the board of trustees and received permission. He paid \$75.00 for the franchise to begin the Monrovia Telephone and Telegraph Company.

The first telephone switchboard was located in a livery stable on the northwest corner of Myrtle and Lemon Avenues. It could handle the calls from two hundred phones. Now Monrovians could telephone their neighbors.

Later, Monrovia extended its telephone lines to the cities of Duarte, El Monte, Arcadia, and Sierra Madre. The telephone company in Monrovia was one of the first to install automatic ticketing equipment. People could dial without the help of an operator.

The telephone company is now owned and operated by General Telephone Company of California. The number of telephones in Monrovia has grown from just a couple of hundred in 1903 to thousands today.

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## **Chugging Right Along**

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About 1900, the first motor car chugged down Myrtle Avenue. Many people did not like cars. Many car owners thought they were too much trouble. The only men who could fix cars were blacksmiths. Blacksmiths usually made horseshoes and fixed bicycles. This was a new job for them.

Cars and horses used the same streets and sometimes there was trouble. Cars would frighten the horses. Horses and carts made deep ruts in the dirt roads. It was not comfortable riding in a car on these dusty, bumpy roads. The eighteen mile ride to Los Angeles took half a day to complete. The speed limit was six miles an hour.

C. F. Moore, who lived on East Lime Avenue, asked the Monrovia Board of Trustees to pave some of the town's streets. They would not. So Mr. Moore and his neighbors paved their street for one block. Motorists came from all over Monrovia to drive on East Lime Avenue between Myrtle Avenue and Ivy Avenue. What a pleasure it was to drive on a smooth road!

One day in 1914, David Juvinal's touring car bumped into a horse and buggy. W. A. Walker, who owned the buggy, and Mr. Juvinal were not hurt, but the vehicles needed to be repaired.

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## **Electric Excursions**

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In 1903, the Pacific Electric Red Cars came to Monrovia. This was a train run by electricity. The train gave Monrovians a fast way to travel to Los Angeles and the towns in between. Travelers from Los Angeles also had a fast way to get to Monrovia.