

# Harvester Farms

## Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument 645

Designated March 5, 1997

Harvester Farms includes the 1923 Barn and surrounding buildings as the cultural monument. The main house is a California Ranch style structure. The rear California basilica-type barn still retains a high degree of remaining historic fabric. *(Virginia Watson 1997)*



- Headquarters of the Palomino Horse Association of America
- Harvester was the father of Mr. Ed – the talking horse, a 1961-66 TV Series
- Located on Devonshire west of Topanga

- The Harvester was foaled in 1938, bred by James Fagan.
- Jim was a trainer for William Randolph Hearst at the Hearst Ranch in Hidden Valley, Camarillo / Thousand Oaks. Jim and Edna married around 1939 and moved to their own ranch in Agoura.
- Harvester was a golden Palomino that sired over 100 registered Palominos. These horses were most successful in Trick, Reined, Western Pleasure and Parade competitions.
- The Fagans moved to Reseda in 1943, and bred and trained Golden Palominos.
- In 1952 Jim died at the age of 70 in a horse accident in San Fernando.



**THE HARVESTER 2359-14 P.H.A.**

"WORLD FAMOUS GOLDEN PALOMINO STALLION"

ROSE PARADE—PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

**JIM FAGAN**, Owner and Trainer of Parade, Stock and Pleasure Horses

SUNSET FARMS, 16301 Foothill Boulevard, San Fernando, California — Empire 1-5373

Photo — John H. Williamson, Pomona, Calif.

- Edna moved to Harvester Farms in Chatsworth around 1953. In 1963 Harvester died in the barn.
- In 1971 Edna rode her horse Highland Harvest in the Rose Parade, her 28<sup>th</sup> year of participation. (LA Times)
- Alex Madonna, a good friend of Edna and owner of the Madonna Inn, told Dan Huffman that Edna rode in 36 consecutive Rose Parades.
- She died in 1988, 93 years old.

Edna Fagan shown with one of their many Harvester sired horses.

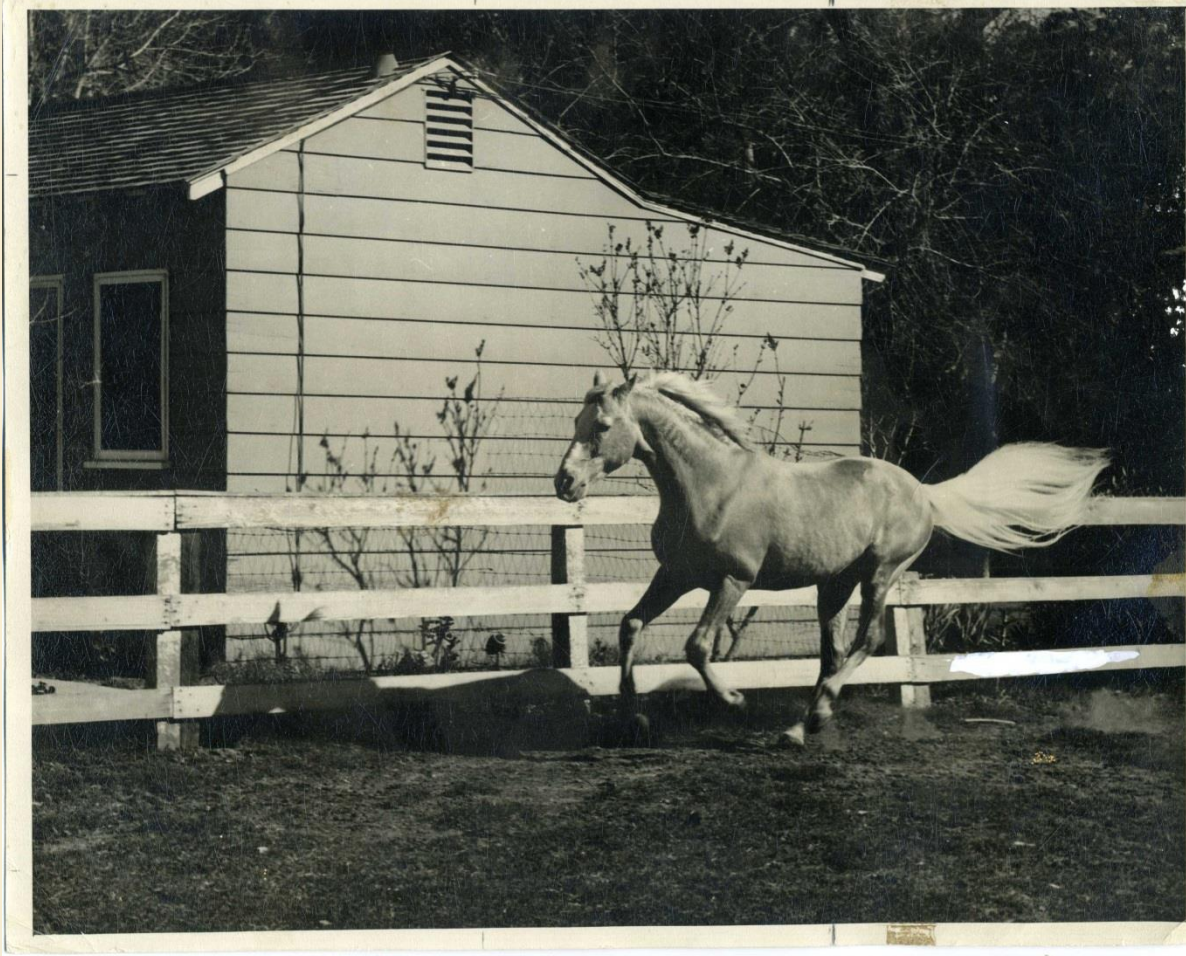




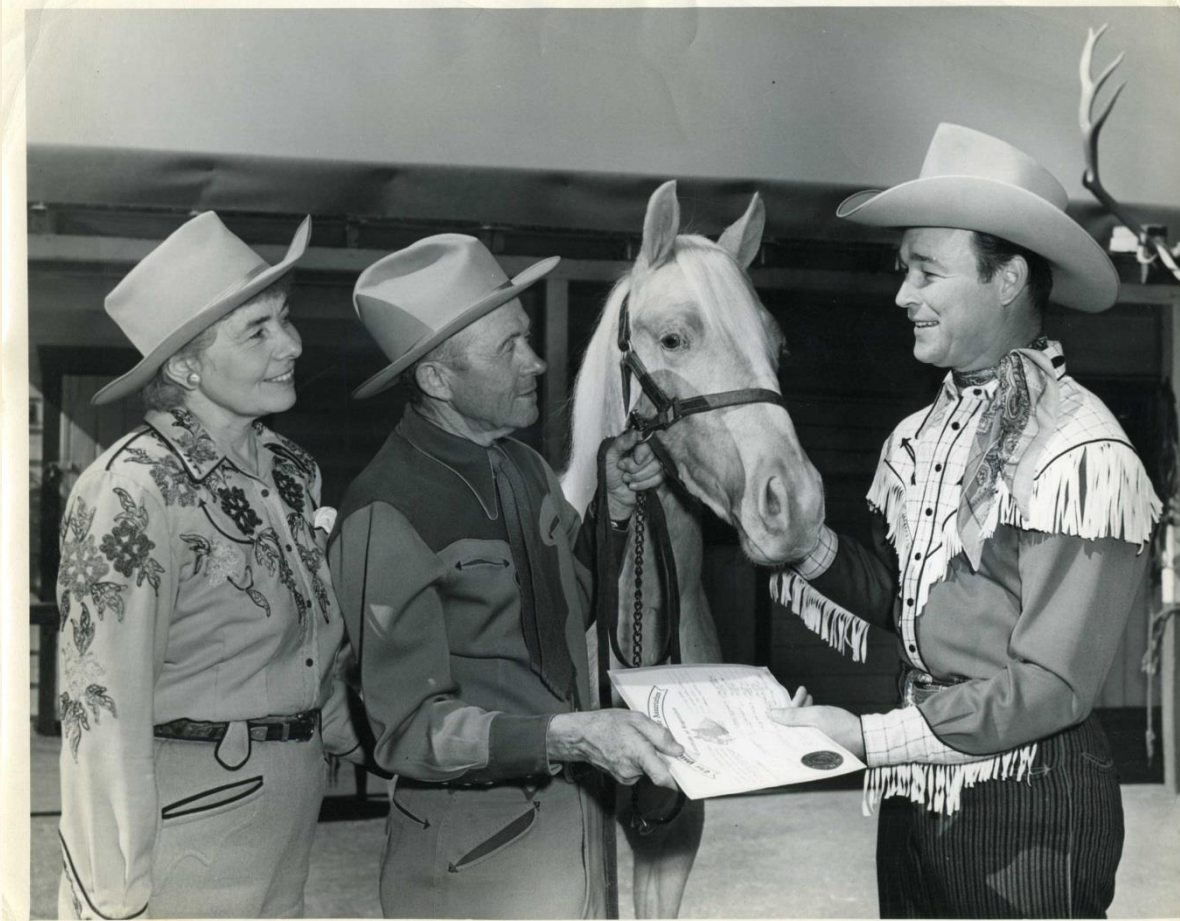
- This picture of Harvester was labeled “Edna’s favorite photo”, and was taken at Harvester Farms.

- Three Hollywood Movie Horses were registered with the Palomino Horse Association:

- Trigger
- Trigger Jr.
- Mr. Ed



- Right: Edna and Jim Fagan presenting Roy Rogers and Trigger Jr. a certificate of registration in the Palomino Horse Association.
- Below: Trigger and Trigger Jr. with Roy and Jim





**Roy Rogers** had three horses named Trigger:  
**Trigger, Little Trigger and Trigger Jr.**

- Golden Cloud, born 1932, was purchased from Hollywood Studios in 1938 and renamed “Trigger”. Trigger retired in 1957 and died in 1964.
- “Little Trigger” was purchased a few years after Golden Cloud, was smaller than Trigger, and was the “personal appearance” horse. He knew more than a hundred cues for tricks and dances, and was housebroken, a quality that allowed him to accompany Roy on his many appearances in hospitals to visit sick children.
- “Trigger Jr.”, born 1941 as Allen’s Gold Zephyr, took over for Little Trigger in the 1950’s.



Trigger and Trigger Jr. were registered with the Palomino Horse Association

## Harvester Farms Property History

- In April 1937 a permit was issued to Ronald J. Houlihan for construction of a new \$3,700 residence. Source Van Nuys News, 1937 April 29.
- The Houlihans resided there in the 1940 census.
- Around 1948/49 Monroe B. Luthacker lived there.
- In 1950, the Erlandson Family (Mrs. Flora Erlandson) lived there. Source LA Times, 1950 Feb. 2.
- Alex Madonna, of Madonna Inn in San Luis Obispo, told Dan Huffman that he loaned Edna the money to purchase Harvester Farms.
- Edna Fagan moved to Chatsworth around 1953. In 1963 Harvester died in the barn at Harvester Farms.
- In 1964 as a co-developer, Edna Fagan subdivided the property to its rear.

# Mr. Ed - The talking Horse, a 1961-1966 Television Series

- Bamboo Harvester was foaled in 1949, sired by The Harvester. He was a parade and show horse.
- His trainer was Les Hilton, who had apprenticed under Will Rogers and worked with the mules in the Francis the Talking Mule movies.
- The show ran for 143 episodes
- Allan Lane was the talking voice of Mr. Ed



Allan "Rocky"  
Lane  
1904-1973



Connie Hines, Bamboo Harvester,  
Alan Young



# Mr. Ed - The talking Horse, a 1961-1966 Television Series

- Guest Stars included Clint Eastwood, George Burns, Leo Durocher and Mae West
- To create the impression that Ed was talking, it was initially done by putting a piece of nylon thread in his mouth attached to the halter. Ed was trained to stop talking when the trainer touched his hoof with a crop. In fact, according to Alan Young, Ed eventually learned to start talking whenever he (Alan Young) stopped talking during a scene!

Ed was very smart....



A Scene from 1963,  
Leo Durocher meets Mr. Ed

# Mr. Ed - The talking Horse, a 1961-1966 Television Series

- In 1976, Mr. Ed was 27 years old and retired, living on Sparks St. in Burbank, CA with his trainer Lester Hilton.
- Mr. Ed was in distress and died of a tranquilizer for unknown reasons while a temporary caregiver was caring for him.
- Lester Hilton, his trainer, died a few months later on Oct 27, 1976
- Source: [Mr. Ed Wikipedia](#), and 1994 "Mr Ed & Me" by Alan Young, pgs 181-3)

At right, in 1962 Connie Hines on Mr. Ed in Chatsworth, Episode "Old Rocking Chair"



# Sources/Acknowledgements

- Scrapbook and Photographs from Edna Parsons Fagan, donated by great-niece Cecilia Parsons
- Notes and documents supporting the Los Angeles Historical Cultural Monument designation, provided by Dan Huffman and Virginia Watson, Chatsworth Historical Society.
- “Hollywood Hoofbeats: Trails Blazed across the Silver Screen”, 2005, Bowtie Press
- Alan Young on how "Mister Ed" really talked – [emmytvlegends.org](https://www.emmytvlegends.org) YouTube video
- Facebook site “West San Fernando Valley Then and Now”, and associated researchers and contributors
- Many thanks to many Chatsworth residents, past and present, for their contributions to this presentation.
- A special thanks to Bea Berman for donating the Mr. Ed episodes that inspired this program.
- Prepared by Ann and Ray Vincent, Chatsworth Historical Society, January 2015, revised Oct 2023



# Mr. Ed - The talking Horse, a 1961-1966 Television Series

- **Showing Next:**

- the now famous Dodger baseball episode with Leo Durocher was filmed in 1963.
- “Leo Durocher Meets Mister Ed”, 25 minutes
- In all, there were a total of 143 episodes over 6 seasons, from 1961-1966

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