

Hollywood Heritage – Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley Celebration Tour – September 29, 2021

When the movies began in Hollywood in 1914, for convenience and with limited other choices, early filmmakers often staged scenes near the modest crossroads of Hollywood and Cahuenga, once the small town's economic center. Standing close to where several studios would *later* be built, the 1600 block of Cahuenga became increasingly well-known among filmmakers, and as the town and industry grew, would become perhaps the busiest early filming site in all of Hollywood, appearing in dozens of silent films. As a bonus, and also well-known among the early filmmakers, an adjoining alley running east-west from Cahuenga to Cosmo just south of Hollywood Blvd. provided an urban setting, sparing film crews a trip downtown to shoot.

Remarkably, the great silent film comedians Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd each staged more scenes near this 1600 block of Cahuenga than at any other spot in town; Charlie filmed here four times, Harold filmed five times, and Buster filmed *eight* different movies nearby.

So, when the Kings of Silent Comedy needed a quiet alley location, they each knew where to go, resulting in their comic masterpieces *The Kid* (1921), *Cops* (1922), and *Safety Last!* (1923). With each movie inducted into the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress, cinema's highest honor, the alley represents a six-way constellation of iconic stars and timeless films absolutely unique, both in Hollywood history, and throughout cinema itself. To honor this incredible motion picture heritage, on September 29, 2021, the inaugural National Silent Movie Day, Hollywood Heritage, the local EaCA Alley Property Owners, Hollywood Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, and living descendants of Charlie, Buster, Harold, Jackie Coogan, and Chaplin cameraman Rollie Totheroh all met at the alley to celebrate recognition of the Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley by dedicating a commemorative plaque (see final page). This self-guided tour highlights many of the silent films made along the 1600 block of Cahuenga, and at the Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley nearby.

Cahuenga Boulevard - 1929



Looking east, the 1600 block of Cahuenga runs from Hollywood Blvd. (left) to Selma Avenue (right), with tour numbers highlighted. **The Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley** runs from 4 past 14 to 13. A decade earlier vacant lots comprised the right half of this image.

Cahuenga Boulevard - 1921



Looking NW at Cahuenga running from lower left towards Hollywood Blvd., with numbered tour highlights. Notice the vacant lots at lower left. **The Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley** runs from 4 past 14 to 13.

A century later Cahuenga Blvd. still echoes with silent movie history. This brief tour covers some highlights.

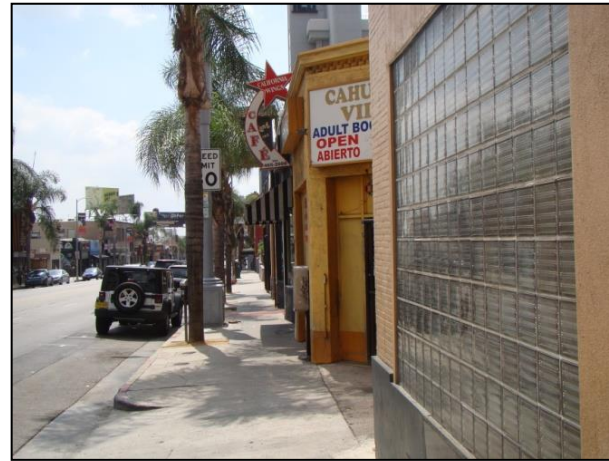
1. Charlie Chaplin and Marie Dressler dodge a street car in *Tillie's Punctured Romance* (1914), Hollywood's first feature length comedy, as Toberman Hall, built in 1907 at 6410-6414 Hollywood Blvd., and still standing near the corner of Cahuenga, appears behind Marie. Then a Broadway star, Dressler reprised her stage role as Tillie, a naïve farm girl who succumbs to an urban con man played by Chaplin, his first year in pictures. This same view appears in such other silent films as Harold Lloyd's feature comedy *Why Worry?* (1923) and the Harry Langdon comedy short *His Marriage Wow* (1925).



2. Pioneering film comedienne Mabel Normand waits to confront Charlie and Marie during *Tillie's Punctured Romance* at the corner of Cahuenga looking west down Hollywood Blvd.. Once a bank, the corner building was remodeled in 1931 with a new tile exterior and two additional floors.



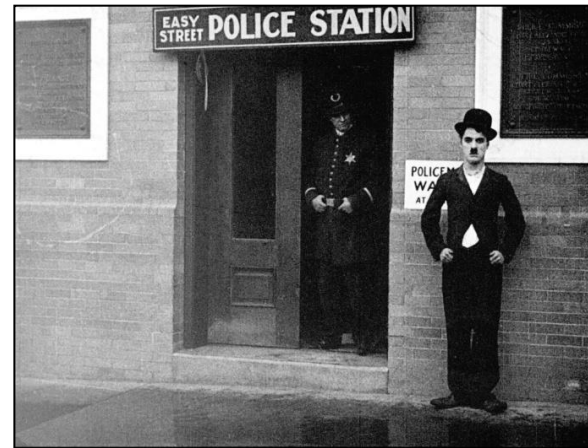
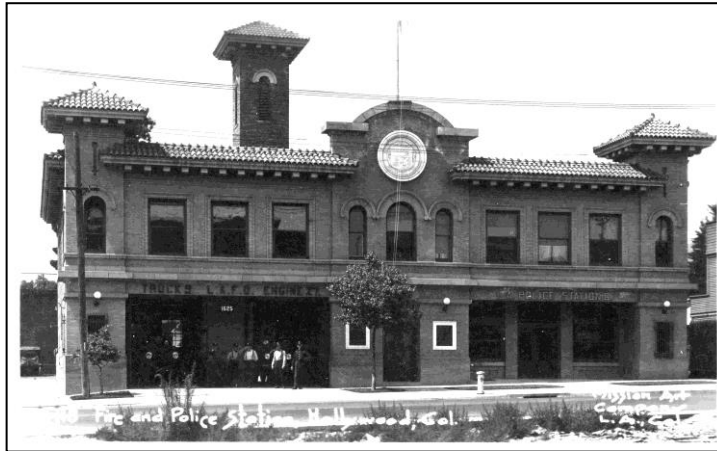
3. Mary Pickford co-founded United Artists in 1919 with Charlie Chaplin, future husband Douglas Fairbanks, and famed director D.W. Griffith, at a time when women were still not allowed to vote. Here Mary peeks from an alley corner looking north up Cahuenga during *100% American*, a 1918 Liberty War Bond promotional film. Roy Brooks and Harold Lloyd’s future wife Mildred Davis stood at this alley too for a scene in Lloyd’s *Never Weaken* (1921).



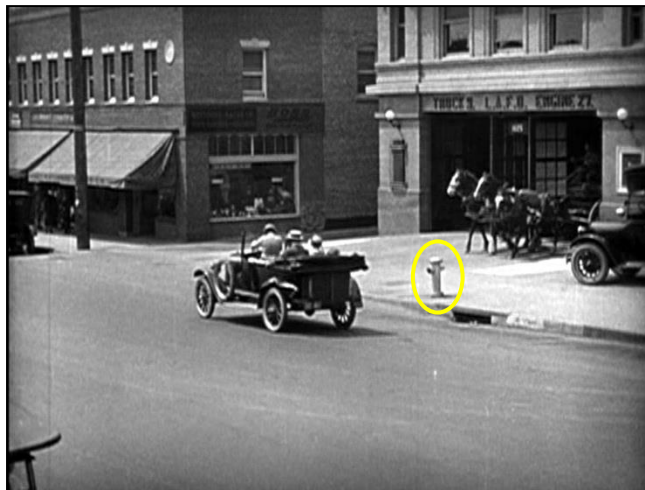
4. Across Cahuenga stands the alley from *Cops* where Buster grabs a passing car one-handed. The alley appears in Harry Houdini’s 1919 feature *The Grim Game*, and in Oliver Hardy, Colleen Moore, and Douglas Fairbanks films too. The Palmer Building at back, once home of the *Hollywood Citizen* newspaper, is still under construction. A back stairway and loading dock built to the left property line made the alley appear wider. Built to the same property line, the 1935 art deco building north of the alley today, designed by noted LA architects Morgan, Walls & Clements, makes the alley appear narrower.



5. The Edmonds Tower at 1635 Cahuenga is the site of the former Hollywood joint fire/police station. Built in 1913, the station appeared in dozens of films, including Chaplin's *Easy Street* (1917), shown here as Charlie debates whether to join the force. The station also appeared with Douglas Fairbanks (*Flirting With Fate* (1916)), Buster Keaton (*Three Ages* (1923) and *The Cameraman* (1928)), Stan Laurel (*Mixed Nuts* (1924)), Our Gang (*High Society* (1924)), and Harry Langdon (*Plain Clothes* (1925)), among others.



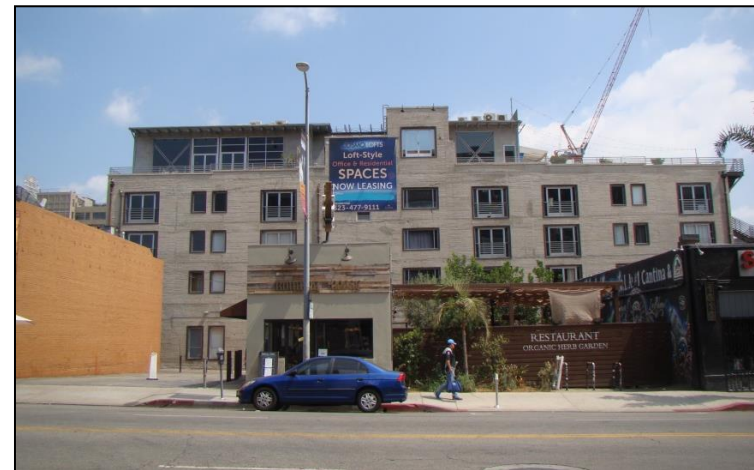
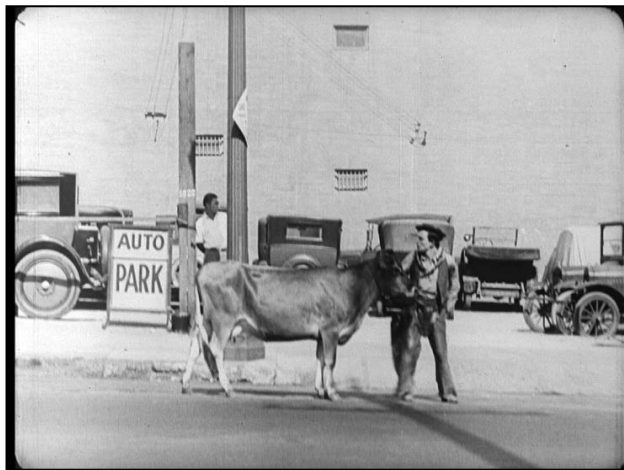
6. The Hotel Cafe building, built in 1922 left of the fire house, appears during Lloyd's 1924 feature comedy *Hot Water*, as Harold's family drive is threatened by a racing fire engine. The station fire plug (oval below) appears in scene 7 on the next page.



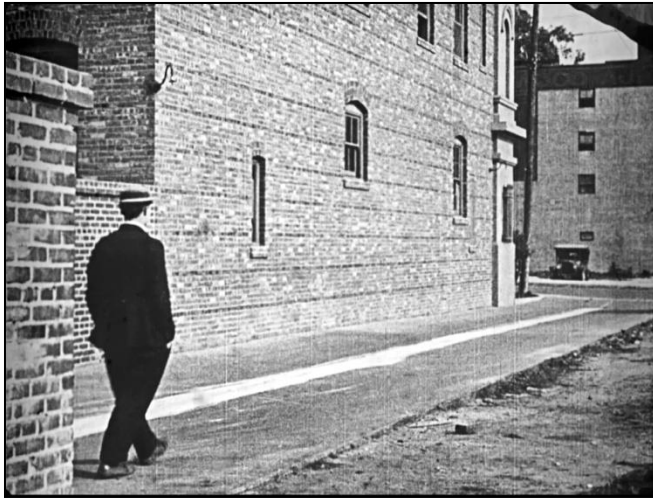
7. While Lloyd's stunt climbing scenes from *Safety Last!* (1923) were filmed on Broadway in downtown Los Angeles, many early scenes were filmed on Cahuenga. Here, a man helping Harold receives a ticket for parking in front of the same station fire plug shown above at scene 6. The Linoleum Shop and Kwik Lunch counter across the street are now a tattoo parlor and nightclub.



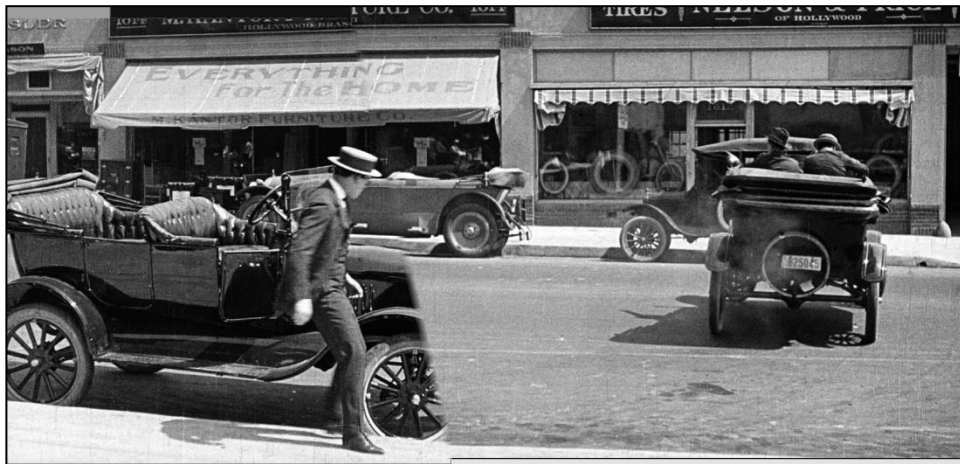
8. The lot across the street at 1622 Cahuenga is where Buster leaves his co-star Brown Eyes the Cow with a parking attendant during *Go West* (1925). The restaurant standing in the lot was originally a shoe repair shop built in 1941. A few matching ventilation windows remain on the back wall after the warehouse was converted to residential lofts.



9. The alley along the south side of the fire station, now an office tower, is where Buster staged scenes for three short films; *Neighbors* (1920), *Hard Luck* (1921) (pictured here) and *The Goat* (1921). You can see the *Go West* parking lot across the street.



10. As Harold attempts to hitch a ride to work during *Safety Last!*, the buildings across the street at 1614 and 1612 Cahuenga, once a furniture store and a tire store, now host a tattoo parlor and bar.



11. During *The Cameraman* Buster leaps aboard a racing fire engine hoping to capture newsreel footage of a conflagration. Instead the engine travels north up Cahuenga from Selma, shown here, and promptly turns left into the fire station, thwarting Buster's plans.



12. A dog bites Buster's hand during *Cops* as he signals a left turn from Cosmo onto Selma. This prompts Buster to attach an extension towel rack/boxing glove turn indicator to his wagon, also filmed on Cosmo. The former warehouse at back (seen below in 1997) is now fitted with large windows to accommodate residential lofts.



13. Before 1920 the unnamed alley running east-west from Cahuenga to Cosmo was one of the few available for filming in Hollywood. Keaton filmed scenes here from *Neighbors* (below) looking west. Two years later he would flee down this alley filming *Cops*. The corner cast iron post (yellow box) still stands today. Harold Lloyd filmed *Safety Last!* here as well (matching red details).



13. cont. When the Palmer Building on Cosmo was completed in 1922, it formed a backdrop to the east end of this sheltered sunlit alley, making it a perfect place to shoot. The building to the left, now completely rebuilt, portrayed the back of the department store where Harold works during *Safety Last!*, and appears frequently in the film. Compare the matching view as Buster is hauled away by the police in this newly rediscovered closing shot from *My Wife's Relations* (1922). Keaton filmed other scenes from *Neighbors* at this alley, as did Lloyd for scenes from *Never Weaken*. The alley appeared in pioneering female directors Lois Weber's drama *Where Are My Children?* (1916), Cleo Madison's *Eleanor's Catch* (1916), and Grace Cunard's *The Purple Mask* (1917), as well as in Gale Henry's comedy short *The Detectress* (1919). Other appearances include Douglas Fairbanks – *Flirting With Fate* (1916), the Al Christie comedy – *Hubby's Night Out* (1917), the Lyons and Moran comedy – *What A Clue Will Do* (1917), Harry Houdini, master illusionist and escape artist – *The Grim Game* (1919), Lyons and Moran – *Taking Things Easy* (1919), the Al Christie comedy – *All Jazzed Up* (1920), Colleen Moore, flapper superstar – *Her Bridal Nightmare* (1920), Billy West – *Don't Be Foolish* (1920), Dorothy Devore, comedienne *Getting Gertie's Goat* (1924), Ben Turpin, cross-eyed comic icon – *Ten Dollars or Ten Days* (1924), Oliver Hardy, prior to his star pairing with Stan Laurel – *Rivals* (1925), extensively in newspaper drama *The Last Edition* (1925), Mack Sennett – *The Lion's Whiskers* (1925), and Lige Conley - *The Tin Ghost* (1926).



14. The north end of East Cahuenga (EaCa) Alley running parallel between Cahuenga and Cosmo is where Charlie discovers an abandoned newborn that he informally adopts (portrayed as a child by Jackie Coogan) during *The Kid* (1921). The view looks south, where a patio dining area blocks some of the view today. Other scenes in the film show Charlie running north up EaCa Alley. Olvera Street, still standing downtown, is where Charlie and Jackie Coogan reunite later in the film. <https://bit.ly/3IJebTV>



Movies inspire, inform, and entertain. More vividly than any other art form, they're also time machines, a window into the past. The great comedians once roamed Cahuenga Blvd. looking for places to shoot, and today, amid the din and rush, we can still sense their silent echoes. Hollywood Heritage honors the Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley September 29, 2021.

Visit Hollywood Heritage's GoFundMe campaign <https://gofund.me/e712eed1> to honor the Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley.

Read more about the dedication ceremony at [Silent Movie Day celebrates the Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley](#).

For tours, maps, and other silent movie location discoveries, visit <https://silentlocations.com/>

Read more about the Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley at <https://silentlocations.com/chaplin-keaton-lloyd-alley/>

This YouTube video shows step by silent footstep, how clues from a dozen silent films collectively revealed the century-old secret that is the Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley <https://youtu.be/i9dMjyyWfr4>



September 29, 2021. Left to right, Jackie Coogan's grandson Keith Coogan, film historian John Bengtson, Hollywood Heritage President Brian Curran, Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, Harold Lloyd's grand-daughter Suzanne Lloyd, Cinecon President Stan Taffel, Charlie Chaplin's grand-daughter Kiera Chaplin, Buster Keaton's great-grand-daughter Keaton Talmadge, and Chaplin's life-long cameraman Rollie Totheroh's grand-son David Totheroh. Read about the dedication ceremony at [Silent Movie Day celebrates the Chaplin-Keaton-Lloyd Alley](#).

Credits

Hollywood map detail © 1938 Thomas Bros. *Tillie's Punctured Romance* © 2010 by Lobster Films for the *Chaplin at Keystone Project*, from Flicker Alley. *Easy Street* © 2014 Film Preservation Associates, Inc. for Charlie Chaplin – The Mutual Comedies, from Flicker Alley. *The Kid*, CHARLES CHAPLIN, CHAPLIN, and the LITTLE TRAMP, photographs from and the names of Mr. Chaplin's films are trademarks and/or service marks of Bubbles Incorporated SA and/or Roy Export Company Establishment. Used with permission. *Cops*, *Hard Luck*, *My Wife's Relations* licensed by Lobster Films, *Buster Keaton: The Shorts Collection (1917-1923)* from Kino Lorber. *Safety Last!* and *Hot Water* © 1923 and 1924, Pathé Exchange, Inc. Renewed The Harold Lloyd Trust. HAROLD LLOYD images and the names of Mr. Lloyd's films are all trademarks and/or service marks of Harold Lloyd Entertainment Inc. Images and movie frame images reproduced courtesy of The Harold Lloyd Trust and Harold Lloyd Entertainment Inc. *Go West* © 1925 Buster Keaton Productions, Inc. © renewed 1953 Loew's, Inc., from Kino Lorber. *The Cameraman* images © 1928 Turner Entertainment Co. Photos courtesy Marc Wanamaker – Bison Archives, Hollywood Photographs.com, USC Digital Archives, Tommy Dangcil, Association Chaplin, Harrison Engle, and John Bengtson. Tour © 2021 John Bengtson.

