



An American Tour: 114



Los Angeles's *Farmers Market*

Fred Beck & Roger Dahlhjelm wanted to build a "Village" at the corner of 3rd & Fairfax where local farmers could sell their fresh fare. E.B. Gilmore agreed to give it a go. In July 1934, a dozen farmers and a few other merchants parked their trucks at the corner of 3rd & Fairfax and sold their fresh produce from the back of the trucks. By October 1934, mere months after it opened, farmers and merchants, including restaurants, grocers and service providers, were moving into permanent stalls and the new Farmers Market was so popular that its founders staged a celebration, the first Fall Festival at Farmers Market. While it grew to be a must-see destination for travelers from around the world, Farmers Market was always the favorite place for L.A. families to shop for groceries.

As the family car became preferred transportation in L.A., Farmers Market's open spaces became parking lots. The Clock Tower became an icon of the Farmers Market in 1948. Over the decades, it has become a worldwide symbol of food and fun.

Hollywood and Farmers Market have been best friends for 80 years. During a fundraiser for the Red Cross in 1936, many stars worked behind the counters at Farmers Market shops. Shirley Temple, the nation's top box office draw, drew a large and adoring crowd at Brock's Candies. Before the North Market was built, a collection of shops called The Dell stood just to the south. The beautiful Ava Gardner stopped by The Dell to try on summer hats. Marilyn Monroe, appearing as Miss Cheesecake of 1953, showed her affection for Farmers Market at the grand opening of Michael's Cheesecake. President Dwight Eisenhower admired the peanut butter machine at Magee's Nuts. A few years later, the Beatles visited the same shop (Ringo wrote their Thank You note). The incomparable singer Frank Sinatra palled around with Patsy D'Amore of Patsy's Pizza.

For its 75th Anniversary, Farmers Market's 75th Anniversary celebration was hosted by Jeff Garlin; FM CEO Hank Hilty and Phyllis Magee, proprietor of the Market's oldest restaurant, enjoyed the show.

In the early 20th century, drilling yielded vast oil reserves on the Gilmore dairy farm where Farmers Market now stands. The Gilmore Oil Company became a major force in the genesis of the automobile culture in L.A. and the West. Soon, the property was a field of derricks pumping oil. Most of the petroleum extracted from the land in the early days was used to pave dirt roads across the region.

In the mid-1980s, a few local bands began performing on Friday evenings. The idea was so popular that the Market extended it through the summer; several years later, Thursday Night Jazz was added. Both series are free and last all summer.

