

HIKING

Hollywood Hills Trail to the Letter

By JOHN MCKINNEY

To make sure that everyone knew about their new real estate development, a group of investors, including Los Angeles Times publisher Harry Chandler, ordered a huge wooden sign built atop Mt. Lee. The sign read: "HOLLYWOODLAND."

The Beachwood Canyon development was advertised as "above the traffic, congestion, smoke, fog and poisonous gas fumes of the lowlands." Looking back now, it's hard to believe Angelenos were worried about pollution in the early 1920s.

The letters—particularly the "H"—frequently blew down and, in 1923, a depressed actress leaped from the sign. During a 1949 gale, the "LAND" part of the sign blew off. Finally, in 1978, celebrities—among them rock star Alice Cooper, Hugh Hefner and Gene Autry—pledged \$27,777.77 per letter to restore the HOLLYWOOD sign, sans LAND, to its former glory.

Besides the sign, 1,640-foot Mt. Lee has another claim to fame: L.A.'s first television signals were broadcast from the peak in the 1940s.

The intrepid walker can also trek a rough trail to nearby Cahuenga Peak, the king of the Hollywood Hills at 1,820 feet.

From the Mt. Lee Trail, your window on the world is similar to the huge picture windows of the residents who make their homes in the hills—a combination of rustic slopes and the city beyond.

Directions to trail head: In Hollywood, from the corner of Franklin Avenue and Beachwood Drive (Beachwood is one short block east of Gower), turn north and proceed up Beachwood into the Hollywood Hills. After 1.7 miles, you'll spot Hollyridge Drive on your right. Park along Beachwood Drive near its intersection with Hollyridge. (You can also park along Hollyridge, but it's rather narrow.) The unsigned trail to Mt. Lee begins 50 yards up Hollyridge Drive from Beachwood Drive. The wide trail is on your left.

The hike: From Hollyridge Drive, the trail follows a ridge just east of the stables. Your views of the Hollywood sign begin almost immediately. Off to the right, looking very "sci-fi" from this angle, is the dome of the Griffith Park Observatory.

Ignore the bridle path on your left coming up from the stables, and continue your ascent to an unsigned junction with Mulholland Trail. A right turn would lead toward the main part of Griffith Park and eventually intersect Mt. Hollywood Drive, but you should turn left on the fire road and wind

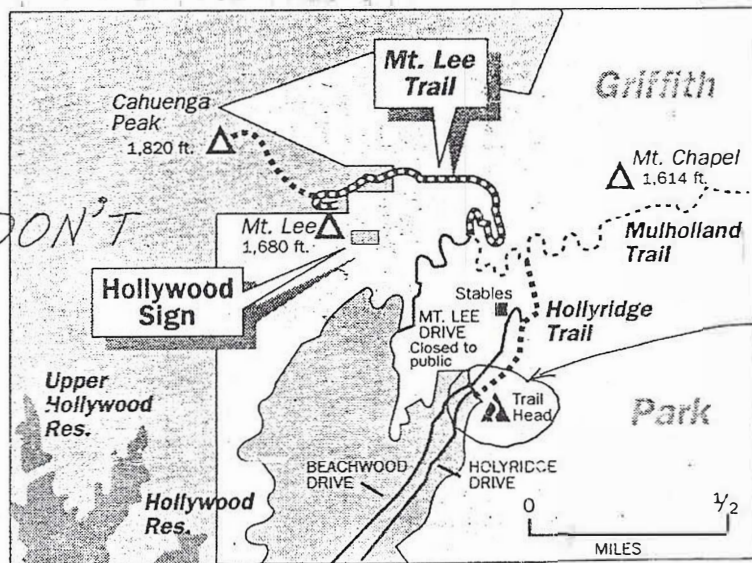
west to an intersection with Mt. Lee Drive.

As you ascend paved Mt. Lee Drive, you'll enjoy excellent clear-day views of the San Fernando Valley beyond.

(Just short of the summit, as the trail makes a sharp left bend, look for a rough, narrow trail leading westward; it climbs steeply a bit more than a quarter-mile to the summit of Cahuenga Peak.)

You can't stand right on top of Mt. Lee because a locked gate keeps visitors out. There's a civil defense communication facility on the summit.

Hollywood Hills Mt. Lee Trail



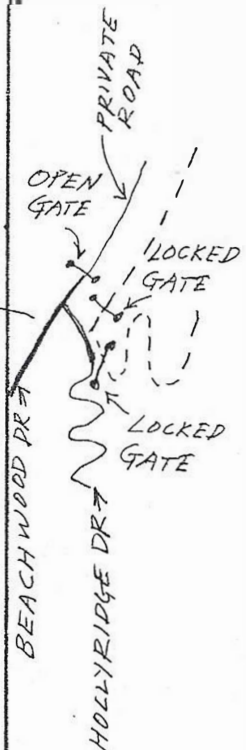
Where: Western edge of Griffith Park.
Distance: From Beachwood Drive to the top of Mt. Lee, 3 miles round trip, with 600-foot elevation gain.
Terrain: The 800-1,600-foot Hollywood Hills form the eastern end of the Santa Monica Mountains and share a similar ecology to the range's taller and wilder peaks to the west.

Highlights: A visit to the famous Hollywood sign, plus views of the San Fernando Valley to the north, Hollywood to the south.
Precautions: Resist the urge to climb the fence and scramble down the steep slopes to stand right next to the sign.
Degree of difficulty: Easy to moderate.
For more information: Call Griffith Park at (213) 665-5188.

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DON'T

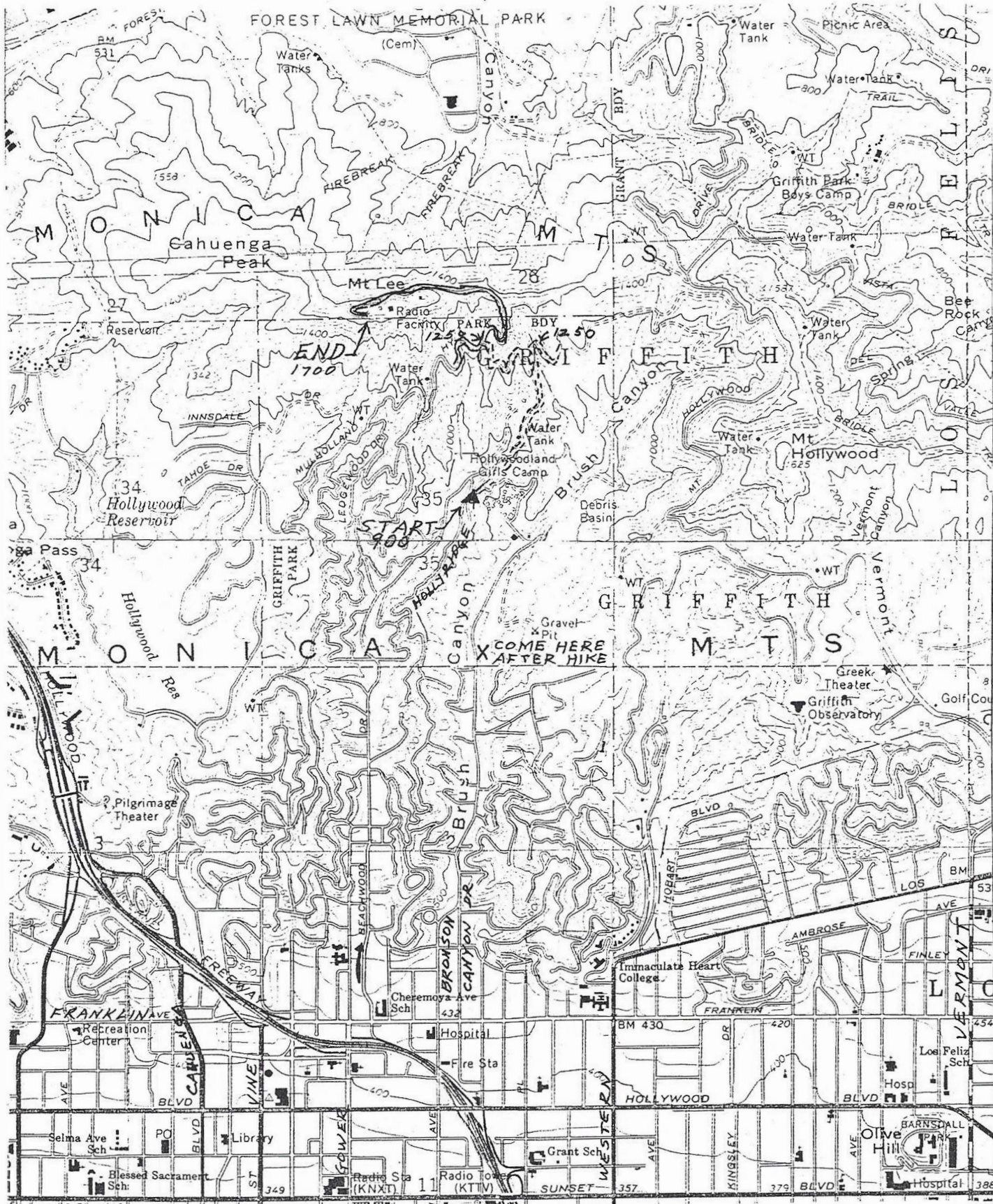
S/B 800 FT.



FROM THE VALLEY: EXIT US 101 AT VINE

ST. DO NOT TURN INTO VINE ST. GO DIRECT TO BEACHWOOD DR. VIA FRANKLIN AVE. FROM SOUTH BAY: EXIT US 101 AT GOWER ST. DO NOT GO TO GOWER ST. MAKE RIGHT TURN INTO BEACHWOOD DR.

HENRY'S HIKE 6/10/92 SH. 2



AFTER HIKE GO DOWN BEACHWOOD TO FRANKLIN AND TURN LEFT. TURN LEFT AGAIN AT BRONSON OR CANYON AND GO UP CANYON TO PICNIC AREA INDICATED.