



77 FACTS FOR 77 YEARS

1. Farmers Market (no apostrophe!) was created on July 14, 1934.
2. Farmers Market was “invented” by Roger Dahlhjelm, a businessman, and Fred Beck, an advertising copywriter. They asked the owners of “Gilmore Island,” the former dairy farm at 3rd & Fairfax, if they could invite local farmers to park trucks on vacant Gilmore land to sell fresh produce to local shoppers.
3. 18 farmers responded to the opportunity to sell their fresh produce, some in reply to advertisements aired on KNX radio; each farmer paid 50 cents rent to park their trucks on the property.
4. Originally called the “Farmers Public Market,” the concept was so popular that within months, permanent stalls were erected to provide the farmers with a more convenient way to provide their produce. The “Public” was dropped from the name almost immediately.
5. The concept Roger Dahlhjelm & Fred Beck launched in 1934 was instantly successful. Farmers Market was such a hit that the two quickly realized it needed something more lasting than a dirt lot and pick-up trucks. They secured the services of a handy man who scavenged lumber from the near-by (and never opened) Gilmore Dog Racing Track. It is not clear whether Dahlhjelm and Beck actually had permission to dismantle the track, but before the summer ended, there were many permanent wooden stalls housing Market merchants and by fall, Farmers Market was a permanent fixture at the corner of 3rd & Fairfax.
6. Roger Dahlhjelm and Fred Beck started promoting the Market with events as soon as it was up and running. In October, 1934, they staged the first Farmers Market Fall Festival, a tradition which continues to this day.
7. The land on which Farmers Market sits was originally purchased in the 1880s by Arthur Fremont Gilmore and his partner, Julius Carter. When the two later dissolved their partnership, they drew straws to divide up their properties; A. F. Gilmore “won” the 256 acre dairy farm located at 3rd & Fairfax in Los Angeles.

The Gilmore Gas Legend

8. In order to expand his dairy herd, A. F. Gilmore started drilling for water on the ranch; he found oil.
9. A. F. Gilmore and his son, Earl Bell (E.B.) turned their Gilmore Oil Company into the largest distributor of petroleum products in the Western U.S.

10. E. B. Gilmore appears to have invented the self-serve gas station. He created a “gas-a-teria” not far from Farmers Market where customers saved 5 cents per gallon by filling their own tanks.

11. Those who preferred to have their gas pumped by “professionals” at the gas-a-teria got unusual service for a period of time when young ladies on roller skates would glide to the pumps to gas the cars up.

12. The Gilmore Oil Company built its reputation with a host of promotions, some outlandish, all successful; the “branding” of their products, Blu-Green and Red Lion gas, turned those names into a celebrated and commonplace part of West Coast culture.

13. “Gilmore” The Lion Cub was the official co-pilot, with Roscoe Turner, of a Gilmore airplane which set a number of inter-city cross-country air speed records in the 1920s and '30s. Gilmore wore a leather pilot’s cap when he barnstormed.

14. “Gilmore” The Lion Cub is believed to have been the inspiration for Leo, the MGM lion.

15. “Gilmore” The Lion Cub logged more than 30,000 miles as a co-pilot and won a place in the National Air & Space Museum.

16. The Gilmores sponsored a variety of race cars, from midgets to Indy 500 racers; two Gilmore sponsored cars won the Indianapolis 500.

17. A keen red midget racer, restored by A. F. Gilmore President Hank Hilty, Jr., makes an annual appearance at the Gilmore Heritage Auto Show; some years, another midget car aficionado actually *drives* a racer to the show.

18. Earl Bell Gilmore is honored in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall Of Fame and other racing Halls of Fame.

19. The Gilmore Radio Circus, an extremely popular radio program, featured “Blu-Green, the Longest Song in the World,” a jingle which promoted Gilmore Gas. Each week, listeners submitted new verses for the song; weekly winners received \$5.00 in Gilmore Gas coupons, monthly winners, \$100. The song, adding new verses every week, grew longer and longer and longer. . .

20. Earl’s Service, an exact replica of a 1936 Gilmore Gas station, was built at Farmers Market at the turn of *this* century – every detail, from the pumps to the magazines on the desk in the station, is exact and precise (the station is surrounded by a complete history of Gilmore Gas and its place in Western American history).

Farmers Market: History & Facts

21. Blanche Magee was among the first to notice the farmers parked on the lot at 3rd & Fairfax in 1934 – she speculated that they might want to eat lunch. Ms. Magee loaded a picnic hamper and began selling sandwiches – today, Magee’s is still owned and operated by the Magee family and continues to serve Farmers Market patrons fine food.

22. Magic Nut & Candy Company (formerly known as Ultimate Nut & Candy Company) opened a shop soon after the Market opened and they still offer wonderful fare, including candied fruits and exotic nuts.
23. More than 90% of all the shops and stalls at Farmers Market are independently owned and operated.
24. Farmers Market and its shops employ more than 700 people.
25. Farmers Market, the Market Plaza and North Market are home to nearly 100 different shops and restaurants; North Market also has two floors of modern (and very popular) office space and it is home to Gilmore Bank, one of the nation's finest community banks.
26. Du-par's Restaurant, a family enterprise which is among the oldest continuously operating food establishments in Los Angeles, arrived at Farmers Market more than 70 years ago. It was purchased by Biff Naylor, of the "Tiny Naylor's" drive-in family, equally steeped in Los Angeles restaurant history. Du-par's was renovated in 2006, adding a delightful patio for dining. They still serve the finest pot pies on earth and, at Thanksgiving, make thousands of pies-to-go.
27. Magee's Nuts, where roasted mixed nuts were invented, grinds and sells about 100,000 pounds of fresh peanut butter every year. Among the more prominent fans of the fresh-today peanut butter was former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who visited the shop and marveled at the machine, which still pours out its delicious product today.
28. The Senior Doughnut makers at Bob's Doughnuts begin baking at about 4:30 AM; on an average day, they'll bake about 1,000 doughnuts including dinosaur doughnuts, kitty doughnuts, and a cinnamon roll which many believe is the best ever made. There are no "day old" products at Bob's – they make enough to sell today and start afresh the day after that.
29. At least 20 sons and daughters of Farmers Market merchants work at the Market; at least two Market entrepreneurs employ their parents; one Market merchant worked for his dad and later employed his daughter.
30. On an average day, Market visitors purchase more than 1,000 gallons of coffee.
31. On an average day, visitors to the Market toss about \$35.00 into the Wishing Well (near the entrance to Mr. Marcel's Gourmet Grocery) – over the years, the spare change and bills have generated close to \$1,000,000 in donations to charity.
32. On an average day, Tusquellas Fish & Oyster Bar sells about 3,000 shrimp.
33. On an average day, employees in the various Farmers Market shops and restaurants may use at least 20 languages as they serve their customers.
34. In an average year, at least 3 million visitors come to Farmers Market. Each year, Rose Bowl fans come to the Market in such numbers that as many as 85 coach busses have visited the property on a single day.

35. On September 11, 2002, on the first anniversary of the World Trade Tower and Pentagon attacks, every shop and stall at Farmers Market ceased operation for two minutes. It was the one and only time in its history that the Market was absolutely quiet during business hours.

36. Farmers Market's "official" hours (9am to 9pm Monday – Friday, 9am – 8pm Saturday, 10am – 7pm Sunday) are typically expanded every day, when Market regulars arrive early. Among them are teachers, long-time friends and Hollywood writers and directors. The BBC once made a documentary about the latter group. Often, both of the Market's excellent bars (E.B.'s Beer & Wine and 326) are open later in the evening.

37. Charlie Sue Gilbert, of Charlie Sue's Coffee Shop, serves some of the morning regulars so often that she puts their orders on her grill when she sees them walking onto the West Patio.

38. Portions of Farmers Market are designated as an official Los Angeles Cultural & Historical Landmark.

39. Fred Beck (who co-invented the Market) wrote an "infomercial" about the Market which appeared in the Los Angeles Times and was judged by that newspaper to be as popular as their most popular comic strip at the time, Dick Tracy.

40. Fred Beck frequently dressed up as Chef Baloni and wandered the aisles of the Market passing out free recipes to shoppers. Mr. Beck also used his Chef Baloni persona to lead a parade of merchants every year during Fall Festival.

41. Each year, the Market stages a popular classic car show, The Gilmore Heritage Auto Show, on the first Saturday in June, a Fall Festival, a Mardi Gras celebration and special celebrations of St. Patrick's Day and Cinco de Mayo.

42. Farmers Market's Fall Festival has been on the Market's calendar since the Market's inaugural year. It began in 1934 as a celebration of the success of the Market's first few months. Over the years, it has featured parades, elephants, marching bands and, a really sloppy pie eating contest, a present day favorite activity. Fall Festival was suspended during World War II, but only for a year or two, and it is still the most durable -- and perhaps the most popular -- special event at the Market.

43. Every two-wheeled wooden shopping cart at Farmers Market is hand-made on the property; the carts are painted in "Farmers Market Green," the official name of the color. A large display near China Depot tells the story of the carts; a second display, between Huntington Meats & Sausage and Mr. Marcel's Gourmet Grocery, shows how the carts are made.

44. Scott Bennett, of Bennett's Ice Cream is one of a handful of experts in the nation who makes his own ice cream from scratch – he can be seen plying his trade through the window of his shop's kitchen.

45. Michael Graves, of Littlejohn's House Of English Toffee, is one of a handful of experts in the nation who makes candy by hand – he can be seen plying his trade (usually up to his elbows in chocolate) in the window of his shop.

46. Bennett's Ice Cream once filled an order for 500 busts of the USC Trojan, made of vanilla ice cream. They were served at a wedding reception.

47. Bill Thee, of Thee's Continental Pastries, decorates cakes by hand in the window of his shop – in addition to his extremely popular "Pink Elephant" cake (which features a bottle of champagne), Mr. Thee also decorates cakes with individual portraits.

48. During one holiday season, Lee Liberace parked his convertible in front of a Market store and then purchased every single set of cufflinks and most of the robes in the shop. He loaded the gift-wrapped packages into his car and drove off; observers reported that he never bothered to turn off the convertible's engine.

49. CBS Television City, just north of North Market, was once part of the Gilmore dairy farm; it was also the site of Gilmore Stadium.

50. The Grove at Farmers Market, due east of the Original Market, is on land which was part of the Gilmore dairy farm (The Grove is on the site of the Gilmore Drive-In Theater and the original home of Gilmore Bank).

The Sporting Life

51. Long before the Dodgers broke Brooklyn's heart by moving to Los Angeles, the Hollywood Stars played professional baseball at Gilmore Field, just a short stroll from the Market on Gilmore land.

52. Gilmore Field was charmingly intimate -- 1st base and 3rd base were 24 feet from the first row of seats, home plate just 34 feet away. The fans were so close that some in the bleachers conducted running conversations with the outfielders and others reportedly kept containers of beer readily available for thirsty players.

53. The Hollywood Stars were owned by such true Hollywood stars as Bing Crosby, Barbara Stanwyk and C. B. DeMille.

54. Jayne Mansfield was Miss Hollywood Stars of 1955.

55. Sparky Anderson – later one of baseball's most successful managers and television's most popular baseball commentators – was the Stars' bat boy.

56. Gilmore Stadium, a separate venue west of Gilmore Field which was officially opened just months before Farmers Market was created, was primarily known as the place where midget car racing was invented and flourished, but the Stadium also hosted donkey baseball, rodeos, pro and college football, boxing, dog shows and at least one cricket match.

57. Esther Williams performed a diving and water ballet exhibition at Gilmore Stadium. She had a pool built and staged her performances. The next day, the pool was removed.

58. The Los Angeles Bulldogs, the first professional football team in Los Angeles, played at Gilmore Stadium.

59. Gilmore Stadium was the home to a long annual season of midget car racing, a sport of enormous popularity in its heyday. In classic Gilmore Oil language, the racing season was promoted as lasting from "May to Tanksgiving."

More Farmers Market History & Facts

60. James Dean is believed to have eaten breakfast at Farmers Market on the day he drove north and died in his fateful, fatal auto crash (9/30/55).

61. Irwin "Kip" Kipper, of Kip's Toyland, has been in the toy business for 60 years; his toy shop at Farmers Market is among the oldest and most popular in the Market.

62. The Farmers Market Lottery Booth, located at Sheltam's Newsstand, is consistently one of the highest selling lottery outlets in California.

63. Jay Leno drove a wooden-body Rolls Royce to the first Gilmore Heritage Auto Show. The car overheated as it arrived for the show and the Market staff happily provided water, topping off the radiator so The Tonight Show host could drive home when the show ended.

64. The Bugle is a monthly publication filled with Farmers Market information, news, gossip, and event listings – the publication is available only at the Market and at the Market's website, www.farmersmarketla.com. The current publication takes its name from a previous newsletter, popular at the Market in the 1940s and '50s and it features a Q & A column, "Ask Mr. Kidson," which takes its name from one of the original farmers in the Market.

65. The Farmers Market Clock Tower, which overlooks Farmers Market Plaza and the main entrances to the Market, has welcomed visitors to the Market for more than half a century (it was first erected in 1952). When The Grove at Farmers Market was constructed and the Market added the Plaza and North Market, the clock tower was carefully taken down, fully restored and erected in its new home with a brand new clock works. A smaller Clock Tower first appeared at the Market in the 1940s, replacing the Market's previous icon, a windmill.

66. The trolley which shuttles between the Market and The Grove at Farmers Market is a replica of the original Red Car system which served L.A. for decades. The double-decked trolley makes three stops on its route; the ride is free and so is the fun of riding it between the two destinations.

67. When the stars of the 1950s movie "T-Men" took a break from chasing counterfeiters to grab some lunch, they dined at Farmers Market.

68. When the stars of "Stigmata" stroll down a foggy shopping area in Pittsburgh, they're really in the aisles of Farmers Market.

69. When Dick Van Dyke and his son visit a Chinese Herb Shop during an episode of "Diagnosis Murder," they're in a Farmers Market fruit stand.

70. Every Summer, Farmers Market hosts two highly popular – and absolutely free – music series, Thursday Evening Jazz and Friday Night Concerts. Both series feature some of the most

talented musicians in Los Angeles (and from as far as Texas, Chicago, New Orleans and South America).

71. In 1938, before the Market was open for evening enjoyment, it was once taken over by The Hollywood Women's Press Club to raise funds for the Red Cross. Among the many celebrities who worked behind the counters at the Market that evening were Shirley Temple, whose presence drew such a crowd that, out of concern for her safety, the fire department had to cut a hole in the roof of the shop to rescue the moppet from the crush of the crowd.

72. The Market's Dining Deck, an ideal place to eat and enjoy an expansive view of the Hollywood Hills, features *Portraits Of The Market*, a magnificent photo gallery of Market people created by screenwriter Leon Capetanos.

73. AMA, the robot who sits by the entrance to Kip's Toyland and Ama's dog, Togo, are both constructed entirely of spare parts found lying around the Market's carpentry shop.

74. Among the Market's remarkable array of restaurants, at least 16 different ethnic or cultural cuisines are readily available, ranging from Asian and Argentinean to French, Mediterranean, Greek and Mexican.

75. When Walt Disney was preparing his early designs for a place called Disneyland, he did some of his work while dining on Farmers Market patios. Elements of the Market's unique design are incorporated into his original drawings.

76. Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert and "It Happened One Night" won Oscars, St. Louis shut out Detroit to win the World Series, and "Blue Moon" topped the pop music charts. In 1934, these achievements were, in retrospect, eclipsed by another notable event: "Meet Me at 3rd & Fairfax" became the most delightful invitation ever offered – it has remained so for three-quarters of a century.

77. Farmers Market has been described by the Los Angeles Times as "the number one place in L.A. to spot stars."