



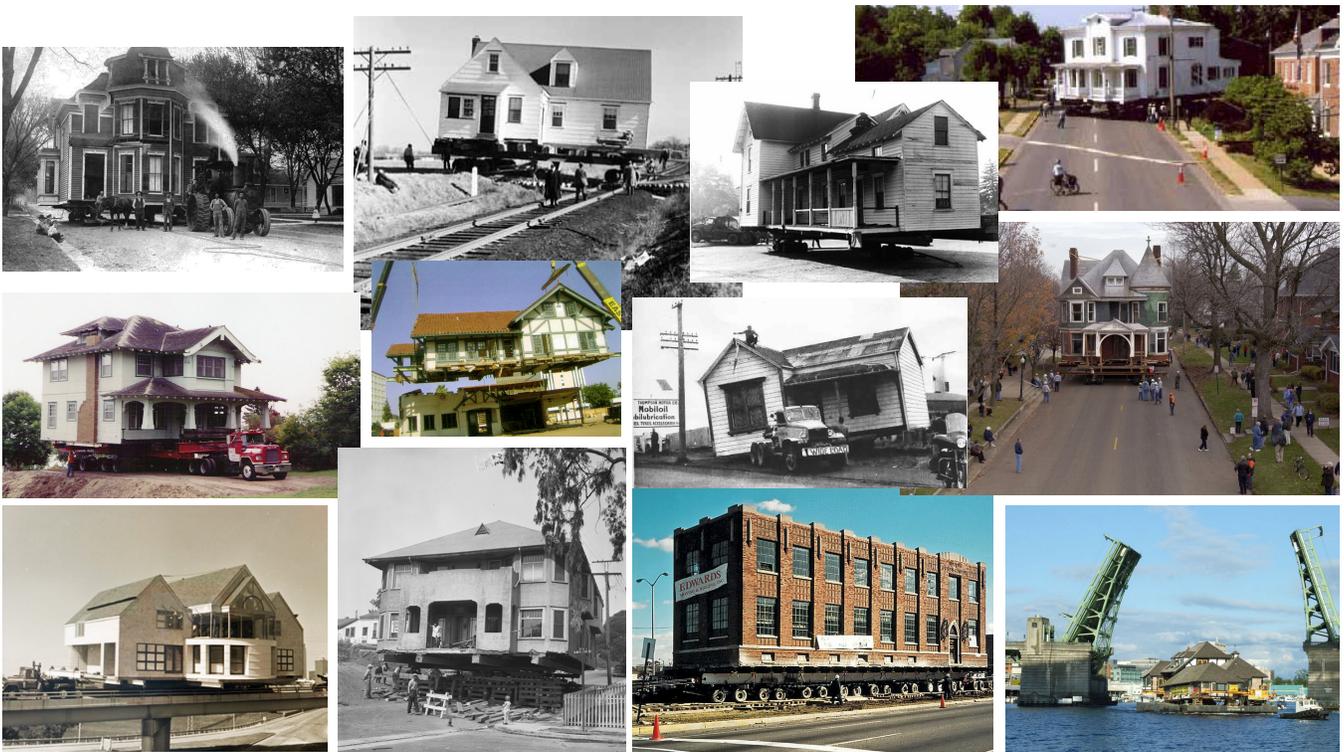
A HOUSE ON THE MOVE IN SANTA MONICA

A Local History Activity Guide
to Celebrate the 1890s Shotgun House Relocation

Early this Spring, a three-room house called a shotgun house will be moved right here in Santa Monica. Its new permanent home will be next to the Ocean Park Branch Library. Stay tuned for information on the schedule and route so you can watch an actual house moved right here in your own city.

How is it done? Why would anyone even want to move a house?

Students are fascinated by the novelty of a house being transported by truck down a city street. The following resources use this curious event to help students think through the process of house moving and changes in the local community. As the Shotgun House is rehabilitated on its new site, many opportunities to delve deeper into the city's history and preservation efforts will present themselves. When the house is completed, it will be a Preservation Resource Center and a go-to place for further explorations of local history.





Above: Santa Monica's Shotgun House in its original location at 2712 Second Street. Insets: Shotgun houses get their name from the way the doors line up, providing a clear "shot" from front to back.

I. HISTORY OF THE SHOTGUN HOUSE

The Shotgun House is very small, about the size of a garage. It was built more than 100 years ago on Second Street in Ocean Park and needs lots of repairs. The owner wanted to build a newer, bigger house on his land instead of fixing up the Shotgun House. Because it was a special, historic house, dating from the 1890s and one of the few of its kind left, some of the people in Santa Monica decided it was important to save. So they got a house mover to put it in storage until a new place could be found for it.

The Shotgun House is only one-story high and has three rooms, one behind the other. There are no hallways. The first room was a living room, the second room was a bedroom and the third room was a kitchen. The bathroom originally was in a shed attached to the side. We think it was called a shotgun house because if you shot a gun through the front door, the bullet would come out the back door without touching a wall because of how the rooms were arranged. This kind of house used to be popular in Ocean Park. They were first used as places for tourists to stay when visiting the beach. Later, people lived in them full-time.



In 2002, The Shotgun House was moved from its original site to the City Yards to await its new home. Top Row: The house was jacked up and placed on blocks so steel beams could be placed underneath. Wheels were placed underneath and the beams were lowered to rest on them for transport. Center Row: The wheels were hooked up to the back of the truck and the house slowly rolled into the street. It was small enough to pass under traffic lights without difficulty. Bottom: The Shotgun House was carefully parked while plans for a site and new use were drawn up.

II. HOW TO MOVE A HOUSE

Moving an old house is complex and fascinating. It is usually done by experienced professionals because they have the proper equipment and are experts at knowing how to keep the home from being damaged. A mover must find a route with wide enough streets for the house to pass on the way to the new location. The mover works with people in city government to determine if it is necessary to move traffic lights or overhead wires along the selected route. Then they prepare the house to be moved by disconnecting it from water pipes, gas pipes and electrical wires. Next, the house is hoisted onto a flatbed truck which is slowly driven through the streets along the special route they planned at a time when there is very little traffic. At the new location, it is lowered into place and the electricity and water are reconnected.

Discussion question: What things do movers have to plan for before they load the house to move it?



This is an architectural rendering of how the Shotgun House will appear at its new site on Second Street, just north of Ocean Park Boulevard. The new location is only three blocks from where it was originally built, and on the same street.

III. THE SHOTGUN HOUSE AFTER THE MOVE

A group called the Santa Monica Conservancy works to keep important historic buildings in Santa Monica from being torn down. The Conservancy has raised the money to move the Shotgun House and do the repairs. It will become a place to get information about Santa Monica history and how to fix up historic houses and stores.

Its new name will be Preservation Resource Center. The house will be located on the edge of the Third Street Historic District where you can see dozens of other historic houses from the early 1900s.

Discussion question: When might be the best time of day to move a house?

Discussion question: What problems might occur along the path/route to the new neighborhood?



Ocean Park, Cal.

*Looking S
February 2, 1910*

Above: Vintage postcard of Third Street in Ocean Park showing early shotgun houses. The image was based on a photograph. Right: Bungalows and shotgun houses were built right on the sand around the turn of the century to house tourists. (photo USC archives)



IV. REASONS FOR MOVING A HOUSE

Encourage your students to come up with as many reasons as possible. Here are some examples.

- Landowners want to build something else on their property.
- The house is in danger of being damaged or destroyed from something, such as flooding, so it needs to relocate to a safer place.
- The house is in the path of new development such as a freeway, shopping center or apartment building.
- When we reuse historic homes, they continue to show us how people used to live, how their houses were built and how Santa Monica became a special place.
- It is more environmentally friendly, and often less expensive, to repair and reuse a house than it is to demolish it and send many useful parts and materials to a dump or landfill.



V. LITERATURE CONNECTION

Using literature can help students appreciate the predicament of old houses in a growing city. Read aloud *The Little House*, written by Virginia Lee Burton in 1942. It tells the story of a country house that is slowly surrounded by the encroaching city. It falls into decline but is finally rescued and moved out to the country. This classic book can be found in most Santa Monica libraries and at bookstores. After reading the story to your students, ask them to think about Santa Monica over 100 years ago when the Shotgun house was first built.

Questions for discussion:

- What do you think Santa Monica was like 100 years ago?
- What would have been different from the way it is now?
- What would have been the same?
- Our town is still changing. What changes have you noticed in your own neighborhood?

Resources:

Walt Disney animation of the book, *The Little House*, 1952 - YouTube
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y881yjtFluQ



VI. ART CONNECTION

Here is an illustration by David Blackwood whose family lived in on Bragg's Island in Newfoundland where the people survived by fishing and sealing. In 1949, Newfoundland joined Canada and the government wanted the people living on the island to move to the mainland. Some villagers took their sturdy houses with them when they moved because their families had lived in them for hundreds of years.

You can learn more about the artist David Blackwood at:

Black Ice: David Blackwood Prints of Newfoundland | AGO Art ...

www.ago.net/black-ice-david-blackwoods-prints-of-newfoundland/



The Shotgun House c1980, when people still lived there.



SANTA MONICA CONSERVANCY

Celebrating Our Architectural Heritage

The Santa Monica Conservancy will operate a Preservation Resource Center in the rehabilitated Shotgun House. Copious thanks go to the tireless volunteers and generous donors who made the Shotgun House project possible. Since 2002, the Santa Monica Conservancy, a nonprofit organization, has promoted the cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits of preserving Santa Monica's unique historic resources. The Conservancy offers weekly historic walking tours of Downtown Santa Monica and partners with the City of Santa Monica to provide a docent-led interpretive program at the Annenberg Community Beach House. For more information visit www.smconservancy.org.

VII. OTHER RESOURCES

Websites:

- <http://www.smconservancy.org/property/shotgun-house-3/>
- http://search.aol.com/aol/image?q=shotgun+house&v_t=keyword_rollover
- How Stuff Works "The 10 Heaviest Buildings Ever Moved" - Science science.howstuffworks.com/engineering/.../heaviest-building-moved.htm

Videos:

- How to Move a House - YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=ft_JHv5PXhQ
- The heaviest building ever moved on wheels - YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnJwbhos9eM
- How to move a wooden house from one place to another ... - YouTube www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwWgkm3rhuM

Books:

- Mary Fitzpatrick and Alex Lemann. *New Orleans' Favorite Shotguns*. Available at www.prcno.org.
- Jim Kemp. *American Vernacular, Regional Influences in Architecture and Interior Design*. Washington: American Institute of Architects Press, 1990.
- Dell Upton. *America's Architectural Roots, Ethnic Groups that Built America*. Washington: The Preservation Press, 1986.
- Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, ed. *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1986.