

LIVING THE CALIFORNIA DREAM

African American Leisure Sites during the
Jim Crow Era
ALISON ROSE JEFFERSON

"Jefferson brings the multi-decade campaign for black access to leisure areas into the long civil rights movement and reminds us that recreation and racial justice propelled black Southern California's desire to enjoy the beaches, lakes, and valleys of the region."—Quintard Taylor, Scott and Dorothy Bullitt Professor of American History (emeritus) at the University of Washington, Seattle, and founder of BlackPast.com

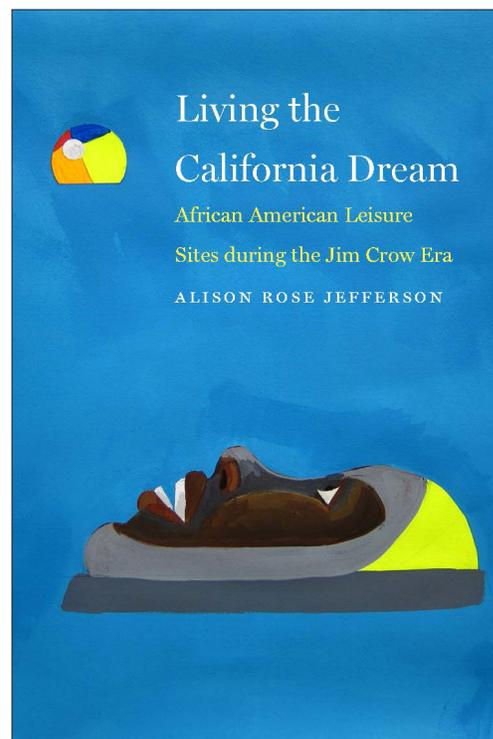
"This is an important book. It brings to life those Southern California places fundamental to the construction of an African American California Dream. And it does so by thoughtfully considering the lives of those people whose tough struggles for a piece of the California sun were marked by inspirational courage."—William Deverell, director of the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West

As Southern California was reimagining leisure and positioning it at the center of the American Dream, African American Californians were working to make that leisure an open, inclusive reality. By occupying recreational sites and public spaces, African Americans challenged racial hierarchies and marked a space of black identity on the regional landscape and social space.

In *Living the California Dream* Alison Rose Jefferson examines how African Americans pioneered America's "frontier of leisure" by creating communities and business projects in conjunction with their growing population in Southern California during the nation's Jim Crow era. By presenting stories of Southern California African American oceanfront and inland leisure destinations that flourished from 1910 to the 1960s, Jefferson illustrates how these places helped create leisure production, purposes, and societal encounters.

Black communal practices and economic development around leisure helped define the practice and meaning of leisure for the region and the nation, confronted the emergent power politics of recreational space, and set the stage for the sites as places for remembrance of invention and public contest. *Living the California Dream* presents the overlooked local stories that are foundational to the national narrative of mass movement to open recreational accommodations to all Americans and to the long freedom rights struggle.

Alison Rose Jefferson is an independent historian and heritage conservation consultant. She is currently working on public history projects, including the research and narrative production for the Central Avenue heritage trail with Angels Walk L.A. Previously she was a historian at Historic Resources Group in Southern California and has worked as a consultant with the Center for Oral History Research at the University of California, Los Angeles.



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