Reconstruction and Reclamation

The Erased African American Experience in Santa Monica's History

ALISON ROSE JEFFERSON
M.H.C. | PH.D.

Cover: *(Top row, left to right)* The Rev. James A. Stout and family, 1919, Cristyne Lawson Collection; Verna and Arthur Lewis at the Santa Monica Beach, 1924, Shades of L.A. Photo Collection/Los Angeles Public Library; South Santa Monica Beaches, 1939, UCLA Department of Geography, Thomas Air Photo Archives, Spence Air Photo Collection; Protest at Sears Department Store, Santa Monica, ca. 1947–48, Santa Monica History Museum, Bill Beebe Collection, 3.2.8069; Burning a shotgun home in the Belmar area, 1953, Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives, donated to the Library from City Collections. *(Bottom row, left to right)* Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Ocean Park, 1908, Santa Monica History Museum, Virginia Tegner Spurgin Collection, 36.2.5866; Cristyne Lawson at the Bay Street Beach, 1953, Cristyne Lawson Collection; Vernon Brunson and friend in the neighborhood north of Santa Monica High School, ca. 1930, Santa Monica History Museum Collection, 36.2.2294.

Portions of this essay were first published by Dr. Jefferson in her book *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (University of Nebraska Press, 2020).

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This essay was developed for the Belmar History + Art project, supported by the City of Santa Monica, to inform the project's history and sculptural artwork exhibition, educational program, and website. Belmar History + Art commemorates and celebrates the African American neighborhoods of South Santa Monica and their contributions to the city's history and cultural heritage.

Belmar History + Art was inspired in part by a mandate of the California Coastal Commission to "integrate the principles of environmental justice, equality, and social equity."

www.santamonica.gov/arts/belmar

BELMAR HISTORY +ART

City of Santa Monica

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Preface

In March 2019, the California Coastal Commission held a meeting in Los Angeles to approve its landmark environmental justice policy. I had been invited to help set the tone of the meeting with a presentation on the African American experience in Southern California. During the meeting, I also suggested that additional permit conditions be added to the City of Santa Monica's construction plans for the Historic Belmar Park (the multipurpose sports field at Fourth Street and Pico Boulevard) and the bike path and walkway expansion project between the Santa Monica Pier and Bay Street. These plans would not only ensure the recognition of the historical coastal-zone African American neighborhoods, but would also improve recognition of the historical African American beach culture space at Bay Street.

The commissioners thought well of my suggestion as action to set in motion the kinds of social and environmental justice strategies they wanted to implement as part of their new mandate to help ensure equitable coastal access for marginalized communities. In late July 2019, the City of Santa Monica Department of Cultural Affairs invited me to become the historian for city's new applied history project mandated by the California Coastal Commission to fulfill a permit condition for both construction plans.

The historical narrative that follows, with its eighty-three illustrations, is an outgrowth of my decades-long study of the African American experience in California and my participation in the development of the Belmar History + Art (BH+A) project. The Santa Monica chapter from my book *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* and this essay underpin and inform the BH+A project, a multifaceted program commemorating the African Americans who lived in neighborhoods of South Santa Monica and their contributions to the city's history and culture. Explore the other project programming at the BH+A website, www.santamonica.gov/arts/belmar.

BH+A is an outgrowth of my interest to continually develop opportunities to make this history more visible though different media for people's enjoyment as they gain knowledge and inspiration that can empower them now and in the future. Its programming effort is one of the first to move forward in fulfilling the California Coastal Commission's mandate to incorporate environmental justice, equality, and social equity into its programs and operations for the benefit of all Californians. It is also the first applied history and art project of this type undertaken by the City of Santa Monica and Santa Monica Cultural Affairs, commissioned by the City of Santa Monica Percent for Art Program with additional funding support from the Santa Monica Department of Public Works.

From the project's inception, I participated in outreach and engagement activities to help the Santa Monica community learn about the project and to gain additional knowledge from African American community members. Over the course of a year, I made site visits, conducted interviews, and gathered photographs and other materials, all adding to the research resources I have been collecting over the decades. Additionally, I consulted with developers of the project's permanent

artwork, K-12 curriculum, high school students' artwork development, future ongoing educational programs, and information modes such as postcards, handouts, tours, other communication modes, and a website. Individually and collectively, this programming educates, amplifies, and encourages the public's understanding of the historical African American experience in the bay city as part of our collective and diverse California cultural heritage.

Gathered over the years and throughout my participation in the project, stories emerged of representative individuals and their community, accomplishments, and freedom struggle, and the public and private spaces they claimed as their own. Many of these stories are highlighted in this essay, the outdoor exhibition, and in the other outcomes of the BH+A project. The representative stories I have reconstructed for the project components through oral history, archival and personal collections, and site visit research recast the significance, meaning, and place of the African American experience in Santa Monica's urban landscape and heritage conservation.

In this essay I reconstruct and reclaim the erased history of the African American residents, business owners, and visitors who contributed to Santa Monica's development and cultural life from the late 1800s into the mid-twentieth-century decades. Important African American-owned businesses were established in the Belmar Triangle, located at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium site today (Fourth Street and Pico Boulevard), and other South Santa Monica neighborhoods north of the high school and in Ocean Park. The first Black spiritual and institutional space, Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church, opened at Fourth and Bay Streets in Ocean Park, just a few blocks south of the new Historic Belmar Park. The establishments in this area provided services and accommodations for African Americans from Santa Monica and elsewhere. They were particularly important for African Americans and other marginalized groups when they came to enjoy the Pacific Ocean only a few blocks away. The impacts of displacement due to waves of urban renewal infrastructure projects and anti-Black discriminatory housing practices, such as actions of economic sabotage by White supremacists to diminish Black wealth-building and discriminatory loan policies, often referred to as redlining (see page 115, note 144) also vividly come to life.

This essay and BH+A's other project programming encompass an important symbolic action of equity and inclusiveness for commemorative, social, and environmental justice. This action recognizes that African Americans and other marginalized communities have contributed to Santa Monica's colorful history and that they have a right to their own historical and cultural sites, along with access to clean air, clean water, and enjoyment of America's natural and other resources. Telling the histories of Santa Monica's erased African American neighborhoods opens up the complexity of the American story and enlivens the past for more diverse constituencies who will learn about, be inspired by, visit, and use the city's Historic Belmar Park, the Bay Street Beach, and other sites near or at the California coast.

At the conclusion of the project's development, the nation and the world are grappling simultaneously with a pandemic and a reinvigorated longing for racial equality and Black dignity and citizenship, which the Black Lives Matter movement has forced prominently onto the national agenda as part of a reclamation of and commitment to the Black freedom struggle. Belmar History

+ Art is a timely contribution to this national dialogue as it helps open and inform contemporary life for understanding of those who came before us in Santa Monica's historic African American community life. This public project helps build a broader, richer, and more accurate understanding of our shared history in our global, national, regional, and local heritage. At the same time, it is a reminder that so much is not understood about the history of Santa Monica, and of California and the nation, and that there is still history that needs to be documented.

As a historian I will continue to work toward integrating these erased stories—inclusive of the problematic, controversial, and sensitive aspects of our local and national experiences—into public narratives, as they show how the past has influenced the present and inspire informed action in working for a more just and equitable society. I will continue to firmly engage in encouraging people to use history for broader educational programs like Belmar History + Art; to expand their knowledge for the construction of a more inclusive public culture, historical memory, and national identity that draws from the diverse experiences of the American people; and to help dismantle institutional racism.

In this commemorative and social justice project journey in the City of Santa Monica, I look forward to working next on developing enhanced signage and interpretation features at the Bay Street Beach Historic District—sometimes controversially called "the Inkwell." This effort will further meaningfully amplify a broader societal understanding of African American life and expand access to California's coastal zone for all residents and visitors to Santa Monica. This project will be completed in 2021–2022.

Alison Rose Jefferson, M.H.C. | Ph.D.
Los Angeles, Winter 2020–2021

About the Author

A third generation Californian, Alison Rose Jefferson earned a Ph.D. in History from the University of California, Santa Barbara, a Master of Heritage Conservation from the University of Southern California, and a Bachelor of Arts from Pomona College. She is an independent historian and heritage conservation consultant. 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.

Her research interests explore the intersection of American history and the African American experience in California, historical memory, spatial justice, commemorative justice, and cultural tourism, with an aim to engage broad audiences through applied history projects in the struggle for social justice. Her scholarly work, public engagement, and professional service includes work with colleagues in academic and grade school youth programs, at historical sites, and in documentary films, the arts, and other public programming collaborations (Fig. 1).

Her book *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (University of Nebraska Press, 2020) rethinks the significance of the struggle for equal access for all to California's recreation and relaxation offerings at public and private spaces—part of the long freedom rights struggle by Blacks and other people of color. One of the book's chapters focuses on the history of the African American experience in Santa Monica. For her book's significant contributions to the understanding of Los Angeles and Southern California history, Dr. Jefferson was awarded the Miriam Matthews Ethnic History Award by the Los Angeles City Historical Society (2020).

Dr. Jefferson (with journalist Martha Groves) researched and wrote the stanchions and guidebook texts for the Angels Walk L.A. Central Avenue pedestrian and public transportation heritage trail to celebrate the area when it was the hub of African American life in the Jim Crow era. It will be installed in late 2020. She was coauthor with Galvin Preservation Associates Consulting to research, write, and conduct public outreach engagement for the African American History Context Statement on the City of Los Angeles' SurveyLA (Historic Preservation Survey), which was released in 2018. This is an important public document that will be used for many years for reference and decision making by the public and professionals in fields of government, heritage conservation, academia, and other.

Since 2017 Dr. Jefferson has been the coordinator of the Passport to Success LA: Life at the Beach series of field trips for underserved youth with the Santa Monica Conservancy. This innovative field trip program exposes youth to experiential learning activities in local history, heritage, and nature conservation issues, ocean stewardship and wildlife appreciation, and environmental justice policies involving beach assess and civic action intersecting with beach recreation.

(Fig. 1) Justin Best (Artist), *A Place of Celebration and Pain,* 2019
Out of the Past exhibition, 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica, December 6, 2019
Courtesy of the artist

Former Santa Monica High School student Justin Best exhibited this drawing at Santa Monica's 18th Street Arts Center as part of a joint effort between the center and the high school to create student artworks based on historical research and exploration into Santa Monica's past. As part of this effort, Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson lectured and led a workshop with the students of Amy Bouse's Advanced Placement Art class on the African American beach culture experience during the Jim Crow era and best practices for conducting oral history interviews. Justin Best was inspired to create this piece after he realized there was so much history he had not previously known about Santa Monica's Bay Street Beach. "This piece is important to me because it allowed me to learn about an important part of history that connected me with so much as a person of color who lives here now," he said.

One field trip includes the annual summer kick-off event, Nick Gabaldón Day, whose popular, key engagement activity—an introductory surfing lesson—introduces young people to a direct and visceral experience with Santa Monica's beautiful ocean settings and beach recreation (Fig. 2).

Dr. Jefferson has been a featured historian in KCET-LA programming, including the 2018 Emmy Award winning "Lost LA" episode about "The Green Book, The Negro Motorist Travel Guide" and other programs, and in the documentary films *Driving While Black: Race, Space, and Mobility in America* (2020), *White Wash,* (2011) and *12 Miles North: The Nick Gabaldón Story* (2012). She was a cocurator on the "Intersections of South Central Los Angeles: People and Places in Historic and Contemporary Photographs" exhibit at the California African American Museum (2006) and

coauthor of its catalog. She also created the text for the monument plaque marking the African American experience during the Jim Crow era at the Santa Monica Bay Street beach site, “The Inkwell: A Place of Celebration and Pain” (2008).

Her work has garnered attention in *Los Angeles* Magazine, the *Los Angeles Times,* the *New York Times,* AltaObsura.com, and ABC LA, CBS LA and KTLA television news programs, among other media outlets. For spearheading the Bay Street Beach listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Dr. Jefferson and Michael Blum of Sea of Clouds were honored with the Cultural Landscape Award from the Santa Monica Conservancy in 2020. Dr. Jefferson was also honored with the rare and prestigious James G. Cameron Award in 2017 for her many significant contributions to the understanding of African American history in Santa Monica and the Southern California region. Learn more about Dr. Jefferson’s work at alisonrosejefferson.com.

(Fig. 2) Unveiling, replica of artist Richard Wyatt’s portrait of Nick Gabaldón, commissioned by Rick Blocker, on Nick Gabaldón Day at the Bay Street Beach, Santa Monica, June 6, 2013
Courtesy of the office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

(Left to right) *Jeff Williams (Black Surfers Collective), author Alison Rose Jefferson, Wyatt, Mark Ridley-Thomas (2nd District, L.A. County Supervisor), Blocker, Meredith McCarthy (Heal the Bay), Peter Hong (staff, 2nd District, L.A. County Board Supervisors)*

This photograph was made at the 2013 Nick Gabaldón Day celebration at Santa Monica’s Bay Street Beach (sometimes controversially called “the Inkwell”). Recognized on this day are African American pioneers who lived during the Jim Crow era and who enjoyed use of the Pacific Ocean shoreline as they struggled for their rights to access California coastal public space, which by law was open to all.

Praise for *Reconstitution and Reclamation*

An abundance of promising pathways of historical reckoning. . . . offers inspiration for our times.

Patty Limerick, Ph.D., Professor of History, Faculty Director, and Board Chair, Center of the American West, University of Colorado

It is great to see how much detail and information [Alison Rose Jefferson has] been able to add to this important subject.

Paula A. Scott, Ph.D., Author of *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*

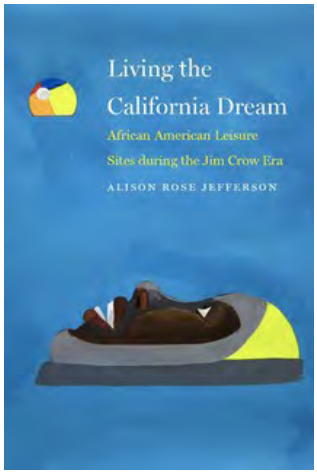
A fascinating read. . . . Alison Rose Jefferson makes a significant contribution to the limited public information on African Americans in California bay cities.

Karin L. Stanford, Ph.D., Department Chair, Africana Studies, California State University, Northridge

An amazing work. . . . [Dr. Jefferson's] original offerings are fascinating.

Nina Fresco, Board of Directors, Santa Monica Conservancy, City of Santa Monica Planning Commissioner, and civic activist

Praise for *Living the California Dream*



Jefferson brings the multi-decade campaign for Black access to leisure areas into the long civil rights movement.

Quintard Taylor, Professor of American History (Emeritus), University of Washington, Seattle, and Founder, 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.

William Deverell, Director, Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West

Jefferson's path-breaking scholarship reclaims frontiers of leisure and reanimates their contested, hidden histories.

Anthea M. Hartig, Director, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, and former Executive Director/CEO, California Historical Society

Jefferson's important and timely work creatively expands our understanding of the possibilities and limits of the California dream for Black Americans.

Lonnie G. Bunch III, Founding Director, National Museum of African American History and Culture

Acknowledgments

I want to thank everyone who has helped me over the years to recover the stories of the African American experience in California.

I am especially appreciative of those who reviewed this historical narrative. They were asked to comment on its advancement of historical research about the African American experience in the contexts of Santa Monica history and regional and national history as appropriate to their knowledge and expertise. The reviewers included five members of a formal review panel and informal reviewers composed of community members and professional and lay historians. I am grateful for their written or oral comments and observations that helped to improve this essay.

The formal manuscript review panel included Patricia Limerick, Director, Center for the American West, University of Colorado, Boulder, author of numerous publications on people in the American West, including *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1988); Karin Stanford, Professor, California State University, Northridge, author of *African Americans in Los Angeles* (2010) and coauthor with Wayne Pharr of *Nine Lives of a Black Panther* (2014); Paula Scott, independent scholar, author of *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge* (2004); Nina Fresco, City of Santa Monica Planning Commissioner, member of the Santa Monica Conservancy Board of Directors, and civic activist; and Carolyne Edwards, Director of the Quinn Research Center and member of the Santa Monica Conservancy Board of Directors.

The informal reviewers, who have knowledge of the African American experience in Santa Monica through their lived experience and via research, included Frank Gruber, Norman E. Hensley, Cristyne Lawson, and Nat Trives.

The following people shared their family stories with me and contributed materials that are featured in this essay: Cristyne Lawson, Norman E. Hensley, Andrew Calkin-Carillo, Lloyd C. Allen, Quinn Research Center, Rick Blocker, Nat Trives, Mary Waters, and the late Pearlie Jamison, Waron Turner Railey, and Navalette Tabor Bailey. Some of the stories and materials these people shared with me are also featured in the Belmar History + Art outdoor exhibition installation at Historic Belmar Park and other programming.

I want to acknowledge and thank the City of Santa Monica for the opportunity to develop the Belmar History + Art project. I want to especially thank the BH+A team for their work in completing the project: April Banks, project artist; Shannon Daut and Naomi Okuyama, Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Santa Monica, project administrators; Delana Gbenekama and her colleagues at the Department of Public Works, the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), Carla Fantozzi, Department of Parks and Recreation and other Santa Monica City staff too numerous to name here; Shelly Kale, outdoor exhibition writer/editor and consultant; Marci Boudreau and Vesna Prtroviv, Picnic Design, outdoor exhibition graphic designers; Dr. Daniel Diaz, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), History Geography Project/Center X, project curriculum consultant and coordinator; Adrienne Karyadi and Sarah Rodriguez (Santa Monica Unified School District),

Shomara Gooden (Lawndale Unified School District), and Cristina Paul (UCLA Lab School), master teachers and lesson plan developers; Natalie Patterson, Carolyne Edwards, Arianne Edmonds, d. Sabela grimes, and Susu Attar, community engagement workshop facilitators; Justin Best, Maya Lauer, Kaelen Song, and Breanna Vallejos, Santa Monica High School student artwork project contributors, and their teachers Amy Bouse and Nathaniel Fulcher; Licia Hurst, independent photograph researcher and image licensing coordinator; and Kathleen Benjamin, Janeen Jackson, and Robbie Jones, community engagement panel members.

I also want to give a shout out to Susan Lamb at the Santa Monica Public Library and David Willis in the Santa Monica City Clerk's office for helping me collect research materials that were useful for the project, especially items I requested during the 2020 COVID pandemic. I am also grateful to professionals at other public libraries and institutions who supported this work and who have helped me over the years.

Last but not least, thank you to Sue Yank and her colleagues at the 18th Street Arts Center, Amy Bouse at Santa Monica High School, and Annette Kim at the University of Southern California for working with students to engage them in local history research and exploration, for allowing me to contribute to their lesson programming, and for the opportunity to introduce the Belmar History + Art project to their students at the beginning of program development.

Reconstruction and Reclamation

The Erased African American Experience in Santa Monica's History

(Fig. 3) South Santa Monica Beaches, 1939
UCLA Department of Geography, Thomas Air Photo Archives,
Spence Air Photo Collection

For thousands of years, the accessible areas of the Santa Monica coast have attracted human settlements. This is true for the African American migrants and people from various other national and international backgrounds who were drawn here around the turn of the twentieth century. When this aerial view of the South Santa Monica coastline was taken in 1939, the city's Black community was about to quadruple over the next twenty years. By then, in 1960, African Americans had advanced the economic, social, and cultural interests of the city, helping to make the city what it is today—a distinctive urban environment. Along the way, they searched for self-discovery and equal opportunity during a time of anti-Black racism. In South Santa Monica, as elsewhere, they lived, worked, and found happiness in what the area had to offer, all the while fighting for civil rights, freedom, and equality.

(Fig. 4) The early African American neighborhoods of South Santa Monica, 1924
Ernest Marquez Collection, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California, photCL_555_05_37

Pioneering African American families lived in South Santa Monica for decades, and some of their descendants still maintain ties to the area. Under construction at the coast in this 1924 aerial photograph are beach clubs for Whites only—the Casa del Mar and at left the future Edgewater—examples of the era's racial discrimination. In the 1950s–60s, Santa Monica officials targeted these multiethnic neighborhoods in their plans to modernize the city. New civic buildings and a freeway displaced the people, homes, and businesses that had made South Santa Monica a desirable place for African Americans to live.

California Dreaming

The first African Americans moved to the oceanfront town of Santa Monica in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, joining White Americans, old Californios, and migrants and immigrants from Mexico, China, Japan, Europe, and other places. Just as these other groups trekked westward to "the mythical land" of promise, African Americans followed the railroads to California for employment opportunities, the climate, health, beauty, and freedom. The early resort town offered them personal service employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in a charming setting. The majority of African Americans looking for the good life in the Santa Monica Bay city moved from Southern states. Like African Americans who migrated to the northeastern United States, they moved West to escape the worst of the anti-Black discrimination and segregation practices known as Jim Crow.[1]

The City of Santa Monica has the oldest African American settlement of any oceanfront community in the region that includes their descendants and institutions from the early twentieth century (Figs. 3 and 4). Seduced by the escapism of this sand-and-surf resort town and escaping the state-sanctioned discrimination of the places they left behind, these pioneers, like the other migrants to the area, came to seek their California and American Dreams. They were of the working-class group who had faith in the promise of upward mobility. They valued education for their children. They saved their money and acquired property as soon as they could. They were strivers, joiners, and the civil rights leaders of the era, not unlike their compatriots who moved to other parts of the West during this period. And like their counterparts in other regions of the country, African Americans in Santa Monica tirelessly challenged oppression and discrimination to dismantle anti-Black racial barriers, when California's civil rights laws, passed as early as 1893, were not enforced.[2]

In 1905 African Americans established a new religious congregation at Hull's Hall on Third Street in the northern section of Santa Monica. In a few years it had grown into the Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church in Ocean Park. By that time, Santa Monica and the Venice area were known regionally and across the United States for their amusement and entertainment activities and their beach resorts. Boosters—including African American journalists, businesspeople, railroad porters, civic leaders, and others—successfully promoted these features, helping to draw more people to the region in pursuit of their California Dream.[3] (Fig. 5)

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[1] Paula Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 7, 47; Walter Nugent, *Into the West: The Story of Its People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 212.

[2] Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 8; Herbert G. Ruffin, II, "The Struggle on Multiple Planes: California's Long Civil Rights Movement," in *Black Americans and the Civil Rights Movement in the West*, eds. Bruce A. Glasrud and Cary D. Wintz, with a foreword by Quintard Taylor (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019).

[3] The C.M.E. Church changed its name from "Colored" to "Christian" Methodist Episcopal Church in 1954, Othal Hawthorne Lakey, *The History of the C.M.E. Church* (Memphis: C.M.E. Publishing House, 1985), 349.

(Fig. 5) *The Eagle* newspaper, December 5, 1908
Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum

The Eagle (later the *California Eagle)* was founded in the 1880s in Los Angeles and was one of the oldest African American-owned newspapers in the West when it closed in 1964. It promoted the new life opportunities offered by the region, covered news its primarily Black readership wanted to know, and provided information essential to surviving in a new environment.

Early History of Santa Monica

The accessible areas of the California coastline have throughout history been popular locations for human settlement. The Tongva people, also called the Gabrielenos by the Spaniards, lived in small, scattered communities throughout the Santa Monica Bay region along the rivers and marshes and near the Pacific Ocean before the European explorers arrived. In 1542 the Portuguese explorer Juan Cabrillo first investigated the California coast for Spain with a stop in Santa Monica Bay. He claimed the land for the King of Spain, but it was not until over 200 years later, in 1769, that missionaries were sent to colonize California.

In that year, Gaspar de Portolà began searching the Santa Monica area for northern routes along the coast and overland through the mountains. Not finding any acceptable coastal route and noting the cliffs rising from the ocean, Portolà's expedition party, which included Father Junípero Serra, established El Camino Real (the King's Highway) inland. Twenty-one missions were founded one day's journey apart throughout Alta California, as the Spanish colony that included California was known. Spanish settlement was sparse in the Santa Monica area until 1821, when California became part of the Republic of Mexico.[4]

Ranchos

Under Spanish and Mexican systems, large land tract grants known as ranchos were distributed to soldiers and individuals (Californios) as payment for their services and to encourage them to stay in Alta California. The Santa Monica Bay land grants included Ranchos San Vicente y Santa Monica, Boca de Santa Monica, and La Ballona. They included the present-day communities of Santa Monica, Westwood, Culver City, Palms, Mar Vista, Playa del Rey, Marina del Rey, and Venice. California came under American control in 1848 at the conclusion of the Mexican American War. Agrarian enterprises in the area continued to revolve around cattle and sheep, and some row crop farming dominated the economy of this period.[5]

In 1872 members of the Machado family, the owners of the Rancho La Ballona—today's Santa Monica's Ocean Park district, Venice, Palms, Culver City, and the Ballona Wetlands—sold 861 acres comprising most of the rancho's Ocean Park section to White American and wealthy widow Nancy A. Lucas, obviously an ambitious woman and business impresario who was said to be an eccentric loner. The land was situated at the rancho's northernmost corner, south of Pico Boulevard and east of the ocean to the southern boundary of present-day Santa Monica. The Lucas Ranch grew barley and other grains. After Nancy Lucas's untimely death in 1881, her sons subdivided the land into forty-seven small farm parcels.[6]

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[4] "Historic District Application for Third Street Neighborhood in Ocean Park, Santa Monica California," prepared by The Third Street Neighbors, vol. 2, 1990, 11.
[5] Wolf and Mader, *Santa Monica: Jewel of the Sunset Bay* (Chatsworth, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1949), 15.
[6] "Historic District Application," vol. 2, 20; Luther A. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History: Santa Monica Bay Cities, 1542 to 1908* (Los Angeles: Luther A. Ingersoll, 1908), 244; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*, 56.

Starting in the late 1850s to the 1860s, parts of Rancho Boca de Santa Monica canyon and beaches in Santa Monica's northernmost section were popular with Los Angeles residents for picnics and sunbathing. In one such relaxation outing in the canyon, African American Bridget "Biddy" Mason and her family members gained their freedom from enslavement. In 1851 her enslaver had brought them to California, where enslavement practices were illegal. He was attempting to force them to return to a slave state when the Los Angeles County sheriff served him a court order preventing him from taking these enslaved African Americans, who were free according to California law, out of the state. Freedom subsequently was obtained by Mason, her family, and other enslaved people in the canyon.[7] Mason, her family members, and a few of their descendants would become important members of the region's African American community as significant property owners and citizens of greater Los Angeles.

A New City

South Santa Monica developed more slowly than the northern area. While the northside was subdividing, South Santa Monica remained dominated by small farm parcels. Additionally, substantial investment from the city's founders, Colonel Robert Symington Baker and John Percival Jones, had led to their control of much of this land by the early 1870s. Travel was difficult between the two sections of the city, which were separated by an *arroyo,* or gully (where the Santa Monica 10 Freeway now runs to join the Pacific Coast Highway) and by a mile-wide unimproved tract belonging to the Southern Pacific Railroad, where Santa Monica's City Hall now stands.[8]

In 1874 Baker, a cattle and sheep rancher, and Nevada senator, and mining entrepreneur Jones led the efforts to build a railroad and a port in northern Santa Monica along with a town site by the ocean. Although their railroad was eventually obtained by the Southern Pacific and the port idea never materialized, in 1886 Santa Monica was officially incorporated.

Santa Monica land sale advertisements appeared in newspapers all over California and the United States extolling its landscape beauty, the beaches, and the potential commerce and profit opportunities the port and transportation infrastructure could offer. African American men from Los Angeles were among those buying lots and this dream (Fig. 6). Jeremiah Redding, a co-owner the Barnum Restaurant and Chop House at 36 Main Street on the northwest corner of Los Angeles Plaza, bought open land lots at the corner of Second Street and Railroad Avenue (later renamed Colorado Avenue). Charles Owens also purchased lots. His family had been in Los Angeles since

[7] Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*, 33.
[8] Historic District Application," vol. 2, 22: Luther A. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History: Santa Monica Bay Cities: 1542 to 1908* (Los Angeles: Luther A. Ingersoll, 1908), 252.

(Fig. 6) Crowds gather in Santa Monica to buy lots in "The City by the Sea," 1875
Security Pacific National Bank Collection/Los Angeles Public Library

After Robert S. Baker and John P. Jones acquired the land that would become the City of Santa Monica from the California Mexican-era ranching families, they initially hoped to make the area into a seaport and railroad terminus. They subdivided part of their holdings to create a town and constructed the Los Angeles & Independent Railroad from Santa Monica to Los Angeles to bring people out to their new town fronting the ocean. Land sale advertisements appeared in newspapers all of the country. Los Angeles African Americans Jeremiah Redding, Charles Owens, and George Smith were among those buying lots and this dream. Only a year after their purchase, they were forced to sell their lots, a result of the national economic panic of 1876 and Santa Monica's failure to recognize its dream as a port city. Despite setbacks, Santa Monica's population would continue to grow and its beach amenities would eventually make it known throughout the nation.

the 1850s and had made money in real estate investments as the region grew. Problems with the vision of a Santa Monica port coming to full fruition and the national economic panic of 1876 forced Redding, Owens, and at least one other African American, George Smith, to sell their Santa Monica land in the year after they purchased it. Despite setbacks, Santa Monica's population would continue to grow and its beach amenities would eventually make it known throughout out the nation.[9]

The city evolved as a resort community. Early hotels and bathhouses, including the Santa Monica (1875), the Arcadia (1887) and the North Beach Bathhouse (1894), were built on the north side for wealthy tourists and health-seekers. Later, pleasure piers were erected, including today's municipal pier at Colorado Avenue. Wealthy easterners and Santa Monica's founders built their homes in architectural styles such as Queen Anne, Eastlake, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival, which exemplified Victorian oceanfront living in California.[10]

Beginning in the 1880s through the early part of the twentieth century, Santa Monica played host to many of Los Angeles's wealthy and influential business and civic leaders and movie stars who sought various recreational pursuits and the "freshness of the ocean air." Some, like Frederick and May Rindge, built fine houses; theirs was at the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Ocean Avenue in northern Santa Monica. During this period, the Rindges owned the rancho land that today is Malibu and Pepperdine University. Mr. Rindge was an investor in many successful business enterprises and the president of the Conservative Life Insurance Company, then a leading California enterprise.[11]

Transformations

Santa Monica has always had a unique relationship with Los Angeles. The little city by the bay's accelerated growth as the playground of the Los Angeles environs was due to its connection to the region by electric streetcar, the railroad, and later, the automobile. At the same time, this bay city developed its own unique identity as an independent municipality with permanent residents. As Luther Ingersoll observed:

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[9] Paul A. Spitzzeri, interview by author, June 28, 2020, Los Angeles, CA.

[10] City of Santa Monica, "Historic Preservation Element, Final Draft," prepared by PCR Services Corp. and Historic Resources Group, December 2001, 11–12; Wolf and Mader, *Santa Monica: Jewel of the Sunset Bay*, 42–43; Robert S. Baker was married to Arcadia Bandini de Stearns, daughter of Juan Bandini, one of the wealthiest and highly regarded early Californians (in Spanish, *Californios*) during the Mexican era, and the widow of Don Abel Stearns, one of the earliest American settlers in Southern California. Jones acquired though his wife large landholdings and other large business interests. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 142–44, 252.

[11] Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 128–30, 245; David K. Randall, *The King and Queen of Malibu, The True Story of the Battle for Paradise* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016). In the twentieth century, the Rindge family would go on to found the Malibu Tile Company, which produced beautiful tiles and ceramics that today can still be found in many homes and commercial buildings throughout the Southland. Broken Malibu tiles are one of the featured elements of the Watts Towers, the Los Angeles landmark by Simon Rodia, who worked at the company. Products produced by (the Rindge Adamson family's) Adohr Dairy, although under another company name, can still be found on the supermarket shelves.

> The first residents of Santa Monica were a cosmopolitan lot. Some were the drifter class always attracted by any new opening or excitement, and soon passed on. Others were drawn here by the incomparable climate, which was ideal for a home, especially in old age. Many then believed in a great business future from the new port. There were a number of men, fresh from college, who had drifted to California [and Santa Monica] for a start.[12]

Over the course of the twentieth century, as regional urbanization spread and transportation systems changed from trains and electric streetcar rail lines to automobiles and freeways, Santa Monica changed, but also retained its distinctive small resort town characteristics. (Fig. 7) Later, in the 1960s, the Interstate 10 Freeway transformed the city into more of a Los Angeles suburb, a place where young professionals wanted to live because they could travel from their beachside homes to their workplaces within twenty to thirty minutes. At the same time, new people discovered the bay city as a place where they could live and work.

Throughout the decades, as the population increased in the region, transportation to Santa Monica evolved and modernized. For early transportation people rode horses or traveled in wagons and carriages pulled by horse teams. Railroad transportation to Santa Monica began in 1875 and horse-drawn streetcars from Santa Monica to the Westwood area in the 1890s, along with an electric streetcar line from Central Los Angeles to Santa Monica and the Venice area. Streetcar routes followed what are known today as Sunset and Santa Monica Boulevards. Among other lines, one route traveled along today's Exposition Metro Line. By 1903 an electric streetcar line extended through Santa Monica traveling south along Main Street and Neilson Way and through Venice and Playa del Rey to Redondo Beach. Although "modern" transportation conveniences were available, there were still dirt roads in Santa Monica and other parts of the region until well into the twentieth century.[13]

Ocean Park

As early as 1875, some of the first lots that the Lucas family sold in South Santa Monica's Ocean Park district were properties near Pico Boulevard and the ocean, where Los Angeles notables, including Major Henry Hancock, built upscale seasonal beach houses with extensive gardens. Hancock also owned the land in Los Angeles where the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the George C. Page Museum, the LaBrea Tar Pits at Hancock Park, and the Park LaBrea Apartments are situated today.[14]

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[12] Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History*, 313–14.

[13] Wolf and Mader, *Santa Monica: Jewel of the Sunset Bay*, 33. Nina Fresco's large-format Santa Monica Map with historical information on the city's development, including early train and streetcar transportation lines, can be viewed at the Santa Monica Conservancy's Preservation Resource Center. For detailed information on the development of the Santa Monica electric railways connection to Los Angeles, see Ira L. Swett's *Los Angeles Pacific, Electric Railways of Hollywood & Santa Monica Bay Cities, Interurbans Special No. 18*, Los Angeles, California, 1955, and the Pacific Electric and Los Angeles Railways website, https://www.pacificelectric.org.

[14] "Historic District Application," vol. 2, 21; "Things to Do in LA: LaBrea Tar Pits," acc. Spring 2005, http://www.laokay.com/halac/RanchoLaBrea.htm.

(Fig. 7) "Bathing every day in the year at Ocean Park, California," postcard (Los Angeles: Van Ornum Colorprint Company, 1915)
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives

The enticing storyline at the top of this postcard would have been mailed around the world by tourists and others to share their experience with friends and family while visiting Santa Monica.

Other wealthy and influential men of Los Angeles also invested in Ocean Park neighborhood property and built summer homes there, including Judge John D. Bicknell, Ivar Weid, Sion Stoll, E.T. Wright, H.W. Haverstick, and Cameron E. Thom. These landowners donated some of their parcels of land to the city, which in 1911 became Crescent Bay Park, located at 2000 Ocean Avenue (between Bay Street and Bicknell Avenue and fronting the Pacific Ocean shoreline). In this same area, in the 1880s, a number of ten- and twenty-acre farms produced vegetables for sale. By the 1890s, construction began on piers, other tourist attractions, vacation accommodations, and a few year-round residential structures.[15]

Originally from Indiana, the Vawters were major business and civic figures in Santa Monica during this period. The family constructed an early general store and the first Presbyterian church in Santa Monica in the 1870s. Williamson Dunn Vawter, the clan's patriarch, was one of the original five Santa Monica trustees in 1886. He developed the town's first public transportation system of

[15] "Historic District Application," vol. 2, 21–22; Nina Fresco, "Crescent Bay Park," unpublished paper, April 8, 2019; "Santa Monica, Only Seaside City with Miles of Park Overlooking Ocean," *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1911.

horse-drawn streetcars, which first made semiregular travel between the north and south sides of Santa Monica possible in 1887. His son Edwin organized the first National Bank of Santa Monica and was an entrepreneur in the establishment of the fresh flower industry, with flower fields located in the south oceanside district. He eventually sold subdivided tracts of the family's Ocean Park land (purchased from the Lucas family), which were developed for residential use, and in 1896 organized the City Water Company.[16]

In 1892 Abbot Kinney and his business associates purchased large sections of waterfront property, which they subdivided for sale into modest residential parcels (25 ft. x 100 ft.) and developed for commercial purposes. The many attractions these businessmen created from the 1890s to 1920 included bathhouses, a salt water plunge (swimming pool), hotels, piers, saloons, theatres, amusement rides, dancehalls, a race track, auditorium, and casino, as well as "plenty of opportunities for people watching." Also in the 1890s, Kinney and his associates donated land to the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.), whose pavilion, bathhouse, and an auditorium for summer picnics, concerts, lectures, and other entertainment helped make South Santa Monica a tourist destination. The Y.M.C.A. also owned several modest rental cottages near the beachfront and a eucalyptus grove. Founded in London, United Kingdom, in 1844, this international organization continues in the twenty-first century to provide wholesome recreational and educational activities and social services for boys and young men.[17]

Kinney, his associates, and the Y.M.C.A. facilities gave the Ocean Park district its bohemian and resort character in the 1890s and "the more than conventional personality it still enjoys." In 1893 the "Balloon Route" began regular electric streetcar service to bring tourists to Santa Monica from the Los Angeles environs and entice them to buy property. During the same time period, Kinney made a deal with the Santa Fe Railroad to extend its tracks to South Santa Monica, where a depot was opened that was eventually named the Ocean Park Station. As Ocean Park became defined by its amusement industry, South Santa Monica's settlement growth began to take off. In 1901, for the first time, residential parcels adjacent to the beach were offered for sale. The entire coastline from Ocean Park to the area later named Venice became known as "the Coney Island of the Pacific."[18]

The attractions and amusements situated in Ocean Park at the turn of the twentieth century made the district one of the most popular destinations in Southern California and provided work and tourist income to the community (Fig. 8). With the district's orientation toward the beach, residential development was clustered close to the ocean. By 1901 the first land boom in Ocean Park's

[16] "Historic District Application," vol. 2, 21, 23–24; Wolf and Mader, *Santa Monica: Jewel of the Sunset Bay*, 20–21.
[17] City of Santa Monica, "Historic Resources Inventory Update: Historic Context Statement," prepared by Architectural Resources Group and Historic Resources Group, March 2018, 34; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*, 65; Ingersoll, *Ingersoll's Century History,* 192, 249–51; "Historic District Application," vol. 2, (quote) 27, 28–30.
[18] Abbot Kinney also gave the Venice area its name in the early 1900s. Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*, 65; "Historic District Application," vol. 2, (quote) 27, 28–30; Victoria Bernal, "The Balloon Route: A Tourist's Trolley Trip through Early-1900s Los Angeles," KCET, acc. June 2020, https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/the-balloon-route-a-tourists-trolley-trip-through-early-1900s-los-angeles. Nina Fresco, "Ocean Park in Santa Monica…and that other Ocean Park (Venice, California)," unpublished paper, March 10, 2018.

development pushed the inland boundary of the residential area to the Fourth Street hill, where boarding houses, beach cottages, bungalow courts, and hotels were built in a variety of architectural styles, including Craftsman and, later in the 1920s, Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival. Servicing permanent residents and visitors, Main Street and Pier Avenue became the district's commercial thoroughfares.[19]

The area was ripe for banks, churches, libraries, schools, civic groups, and local businesses to develop and flourish—and for a growing Black population to create a thriving African American community.

(Fig. 8) View of the arcade at Crescent Bay Park (*right*), a public facility, in the Ocean Park district, looking north to the Santa Monica Pier, ca. 1900s–10s
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives, Elizabeth R. Sedat Collection

This photograph gives a view from the beach and the park area around Bicknell Avenue looking north toward Bay Street. In 2020 the closeness of the shoreline and the boardwalk location has a much different spatial arrangement due to the beach nourishment project and parking lot construction in the 1950s.

[19] "Historic District Application," vol. 1, 3; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*, 50–53.

African American Pioneers

People of African ancestry have been important shapers of California from the beginning of Spanish colonial settlement in 1769. When California was taken from Mexico and annexed to the United States in 1848, after much debate enslavement was prohibited. In 1850 California was admitted to the Union technically as a slave-free state, but authorities turned a blind eye to slaveholding settlers in their midst. Most of the first English-speaking African Americans in the Los Angeles region arrived as servants and enslaved persons brought to California by White officers of the U.S. military who participated in the Mexican American War (1846–1848).

For most of Black Californians, discrimination limited occupation and wealth-building opportunities through the nineteenth century. While not a paradise, the region offered greater freedom and prospects for African Americans than were available in many other sections of the country. In the twenty years after California achieved statehood, African Americans had established their presence in Los Angeles, helped families gain their freedom from enslavement, forged new lives, and seized economic opportunities. They worked to ratify their status as free Americans and built a community that extended its tentacles to towns throughout Southern California.

Lewis G. Green

Originally from North Carolina, Lewis G. Green (1827–1885) arrived in California as a U.S. Navy seaman during the Mexican American War. His status as to whether he arrived as a free or an enslaved man is unknown. By the late 1850s he moved to Los Angeles and by the 1860s he had become a successful barber, worked as a janitor, and was a land/property owner. He married and lived in Los Angeles with his wife, Marie Yancy, who was born in Louisiana in 1842. The 1880 U.S. Census for Los Angeles listed him as married and his occupation as a barber. That same year, the U.S. Census records for Santa Monica also show Green as living with his wife and son at 387 Second Street, a short distance from the beach, with his occupation listed as a janitor.[20]

Lewis Green was an economically, socially, and civically engaged citizen and property owner in the region until his death in 1885. He and other African Americans could celebrate that they had helped to build the cultural, civic, spiritual, and economic foundation for social change and equity in the city and to establish a place for the African American community throughout the Los Angeles region.[21]

Green and other Black Angelenos supported the first organized civil rights struggles in the West in the 1850s and 1860s through the statewide Colored Conventions and petition campaigns. These were organized efforts for the Black community's rights regarding education, court system

[20] Louis or Lewis G. Green, Ancestry.com; Paul A. Spitzzeri and Lewis G. Green, "Lewis A. Green: A Pioneer of the Black Community of Los Angeles, 1850s–1880s," The Homestead Blog, acc. April 6, 2020, https://homesteadmuseum.wpcomstaging.com/tag/lewis-g-green/.

[21] Alison Rose Jefferson, "Blacks in California,1850–1910: Early Black Settlers Sought Freedom, Opportunity," *Los Angeles Wave*, February 7, 2019, 1, 5.

testimony, public accommodations, public lands homesteading, and suffrage. They especially fought to overturn all discriminatory laws enacted by the California legislature since 1849. After the Civil War ended in 1865, Congress enacted the Reconstruction Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment (1865) ended the enslavement system. The Fourteenth Amendment (1868) granted African Americans citizenship, due process, and equal protection under the law. The Fifteenth Amendment (1870) established the right to vote for African American men. Women would not get the right to vote for another forty-one years in California in 1911, nine years before all U.S. women could vote in 1920. Even though the California legislature did not ratify the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments immediately, there were enough states that did to ensure their additions to the Constitution.[22]

On April 16, 1870, four days after helping to organize the ratification celebration, Green, in his most important and brave civic act of his lifetime, walked into Los Angeles County Clerk Thomas D. Mott's office to register to vote. Mott refused Green's request because he was Black. His interpretation of the new federal law was that it did not overrule the state's constitution, which did not offer the vote to African American men. Green and his Black and White supporters sued Los Angeles County and lost. Judge Ignacio Sepulveda ruled in Mott's favor, arguing that special legislation was required to carry out the Fifteenth Amendment in California, "as the right to vote cannot be denied to colored men, the qualifications necessary for the Clerks to register the individuals of that class [African Americans], are not in any manner prescribed."[23]

Before Green and his attorney, the real estate impresario Robert Widney, could make the next legal challenge, Congress enacted legislation imposing fines and other penalties on local and state governments that obstructed any individuals from voting. Green was the first African American to register to vote on June 21, 1870, in Los Angeles, followed by three other Black men. Within the year, more African American men had registered. Mott, in a sign of protest that he and other county clerks now had to allow Black men to register to vote, wrote "C" for "Colored" next to their registration numbers and noted "per Fifteenth Amendment" in the Great Register of Los Angeles County voters.[24]

By the 1870s, as the newly incorporated City of Santa Monica was being organized, African Americans throughout California could celebrate several civil rights victories, including voting, suing and testifying in court, and gaining access to public schools for their children. Some had become successful business and property owners and civil leaders, such as Lewis G. Green. Although Black Californians had more socioeconomic opportunities and encountered less prejudice than they had experienced in Southern states, they faced a complex racial hierarchy in a multiethnic environment that was considerably different from what they had experienced in the South.

[22] Jefferson, "Blacks in California,1850–1910," 1, 5. Learn more about the nineteenth century civil rights activities of the Colored Conventions at the Colored Conventions Project website, https://coloredconventions.org.
[23] Jefferson.
[24] Jefferson.

More growth and progress would arrive for the African American community in Los Angeles and Santa Monica beginning in 1876, when the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe transcontinental railroads brought rapid growth to Southern California. By the early decades of the twentieth century, the Los Angeles region would grow from an isolated frontier area to an important location in the western United States and on the Pacific Rim.

By 1910 Los Angeles was the center of African American population, political and cultural life, and business in California and the West, eclipsing San Francisco, Oakland, and San Diego. Santa Monica's African American community was an extension and part of this Los Angeles community. By the end of the next decade, the total population of Santa Monica would increase almost 50 percent, from 7,847 residents in 1910 to 15,252 in 1920. The African American community would similarly grow almost the same percentage, from 191 to 282 people. Green and other nineteenth-century Black settlers were the inspiration for African Americans to migrate to Southern California, which set up the foundation for improved life opportunities and social justice in Santa Monica and the Golden State.[25]

George W. Hunt

Santa Monica's African American pioneers developed their own sense of place and community as members in good standing in the larger bay city community and in their connection to Los Angeles. They developed social connections and churches and were agents in civic leadership and resistance to the anti-Black racist challenges they faced. An example is George W. Hunt.

Born in Virginia, George Hunt migrated to Santa Monica in the 1880s. He worked as a barber in his own shop at 902 Wilshire Boulevard. He lived with his wife, Clare, age forty-eight, who was originally from West Virginia. In the 1910 U.S. Census, they are listed with their children—a daughter, Camelia, age twenty-nine (Fig. 9), and two sons, Towscoll and George, ages fifteen and fourteen, along with a male child boarder, Leverne Floyd, age seven—as members of the household at 1548 Seventh Street, which they owned between Colorado Avenue and Broadway in North Santa Monica. When George died at age fifty-four, the *Santa Monica Bay Outlook* newspaper confirmed in its August 19, 1916, issue his status as an African American pioneer who had lived in the bay city for twenty-five years. His funeral service, the obituary announced, would be held Monday, August 21 at Smith, Williams and Company undertaking parlor in Los Angeles and he would be buried at Santa Monica's Woodlawn Cemetery. The newspaper's timely acknowledgment of Hunt's death and announcement of his funeral services offer evidence that he was a respected citizen among his Black and White contemporaries and is just one example of the connection between Santa Monica and the City of Los Angeles.[26]

[25] 1910 and 1920 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.
[26] Alison Rose Jefferson, *Living the California Dream, African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 79.

(Fig. 9) Camelia Hunt, student number 11, 1893
Andrew Calkins-Carrillo Collection

Camelia Hunt (b. 1881) was the only African American in her fourth-grade class in 1893. Her father, George W. Hunt (d. 1916), was a barber and property owner. As the *Santa Monica Bay Outlook* newspaper reported on August 19, 1916, at the time of Hunt's death he was "one of the oldest colored residents" and "a pioneer of the bay district [who had lived] in Santa Monica for a quarter of a century."

It is not known why Clare Hunt chose to divide her husband's funeral arrangements between the two cities. What is known is that by 1916 there was a thriving African American church that serviced the African American community in Santa Monica.

Pioneering Families and Santa Monica's First African American Religious Institution

Santa Monica's pioneering Black families were instrumental in forming the city's first African American religious institution, Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church.

In 1905 the Reverend Richard Edwards, a church emissary of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, later renamed the Christian Methodist Church (C.M.E.), of the Texas branch, led a mission to establish a congregation in Santa Monica for the city's small but growing Black community. In October that year, the Rev. Edwards organized a meeting at Santa Monica's Hull's Hall at 1519 Third Street, whose attendees formed the city's first C.M.E. congregation (see table on

page 33). He also enlisted the assistance of the Reverend J.W. Reese to find a suitable home for the congregation. The Rev. Reese located a building that had housed the Washington School, which was built in the 1890s at Ashland Avenue and Fourth Street and had been damaged by a fire. In the summer of 1908, C.M.E. West Texas church leader Bishop Charles H. Phillips arrived in Santa Monica and negotiated the purchase of the building from the Santa Monica School Board.[27]

On October 4, 1908, the structure was moved to Fourth and Bay Streets to become the site of Santa Monica's first C.M.E. church (Fig. 10). At that time, Fourth Street was at the edge of the residential development in South Santa Monica's Ocean Park neighborhood. Affordable for the church's budget, the land may have also been one of the few purchase options available to it as the era's White discriminatory practice were beginning to push African Americans and people of color inland, away from the beach and the amusement business activities.[28]

(Fig. 10) Phillips Chapel C.M.E. Church, 2001 Fourth Street, Santa Monica, October 4, 1908
Santa Monica History Museum, Virginia Tegner Spurgin Collection, 36.2.5866

Since its official opening in 1909 at 2001 Fourth Street, Phillips Chapel has been a center of spiritual awareness and community building. Many African Americans in Santa Monica revolved their lives around it. The structure is probably the second or third school building constructed in Santa Monica and is possibly the city's oldest continuously used public building.

[27] The C.M.E. Church changed its name to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 1954. Lakey, *The History of the C.M.E. Church*, 349; City of Santa Monica, "Historic Resources Inventory Sheet for Phillips Chapel," prepared by Leslie Heumann, 1992; James W. Lungsford, *Looking at Santa Monica: The Ocean, The Sunset, the Hills and the Clouds* (Santa Monica, CA: 1983), 39.
[28] City of Santa Monica, "Historic Resources Inventory Sheet"; Lungsford, 39.

The Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church

The C.M.E. Church denomination was the first national African American organization established by formerly enslaved people in 1870. It emerged out of the early separatist church movement among African Americans during the Revolutionary era, which led to the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) in 1816, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (A.M.E.Z.) in 1821, and many Baptist churches of this time period. The themes found in the writings and preaching of the independent Black church movement were justice, liberation, hope, love, and suffering. In addition to hearing the word and singing about God's justice and liberation, African Americans also used their new churches for coping with the social, political, and economic needs of their communities.[29]

The C.M.E. Church was established during the Reconstruction era after the Civil War, an outgrowth of the Methodist Episcopal Church South (M.E.C. South), itself a separatist branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church (M.E.C.). M.E.C., a reform movement of the Church of England that became known as Methodism at its beginnings earlier in the eighteenth century, also gave rise to the United Methodist Church. In 1844 M.E.C. South separated from the M.E.C. over the slavery issue. From that time until the end of the Civil War, enslaved people comprised a large percentage of the M.E.C. South membership.[30]

The C.M.E. Church, formed with the support of M.E.C. South, is similar in belief and practice to the United Methodist Church. Education of the formerly enslaved and their children was a major priority and activity for all Methodists. Beginning in 1882, the C.M.E. Church established several schools across the South, including: Lane College (Jackson, Tennessee); Paine College (Augusta, Georgia); Miles College (Birmingham, Alabama); Mississippi Industrial College (Holly Springs, Mississippi); and Texas College (Tyler, Texas).[31]

Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Santa Monica's Phillip's Chapel Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was the C.M.E.'s first church building west of Texas and in California. In its Monday, November 1, 1909, issue, the *Daily Outlook* newspaper reported that a cornerstone dedication ceremony for Phillips Chapel, the previous day, Sunday, October 31, had drawn more than 100 people. The new church building had been paid for by funds raised from various strong congregations in the C.M.E. fold in other parts of the country and from the local membership and other contributors, some of whom attended its dedication.[32] (Fig. 11)

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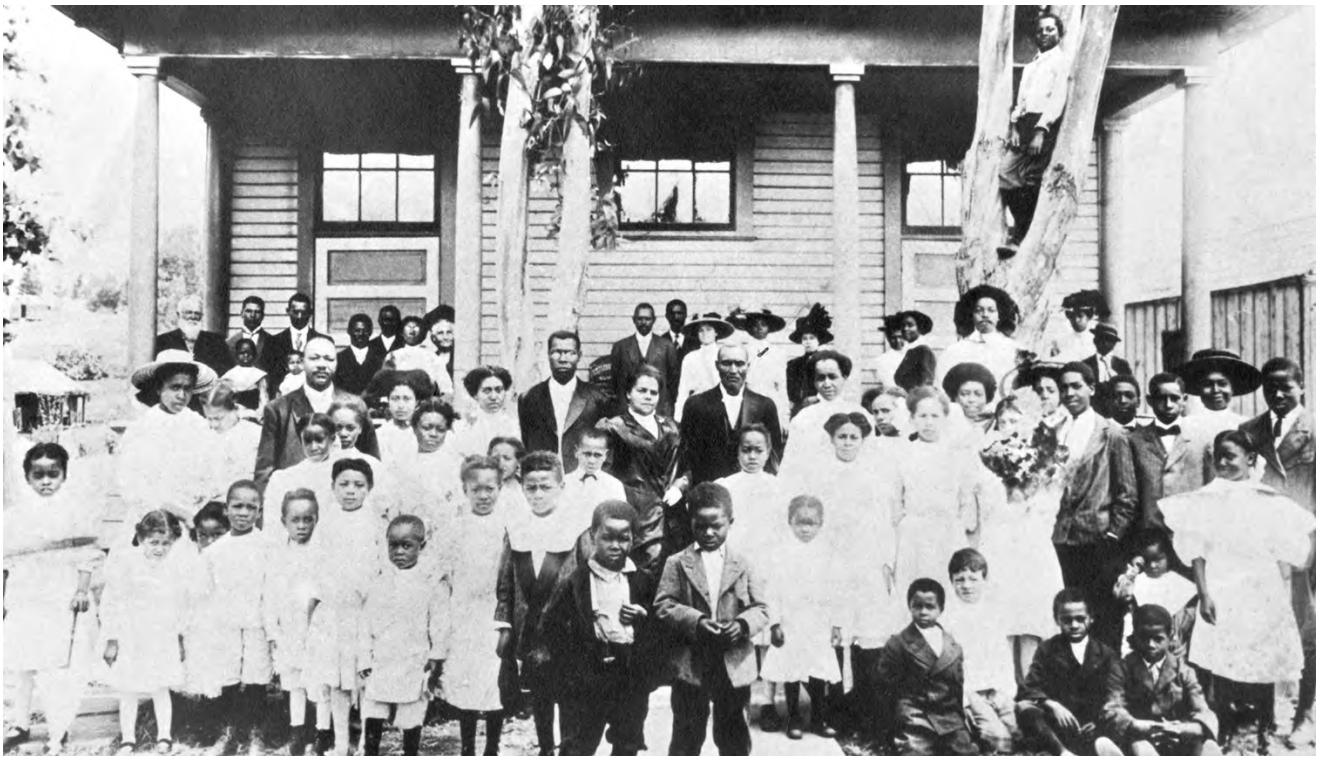
[29] J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 7th ed. (New York: Thomson Gale, 2003), 1177.
[30] Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience: Studies of Traditions and Movements* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 401; Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (C.M.E.), *Brief History,* acc. April 2005, www.eden.edu/cuic/members/denominations/amez.pdf.
[31] C.M.E. *Brief History*; Lippy and Williams, 401. The M.E.C. and M.E.C. South evolved to become what is known as the United Methodist Church in the early twenty-first century.
[32] Bishop Othal Hawthorne Lakey, C.M.E. Church, interview by author, April 2005, Los Angeles, CA.



(Fig. 11) C.M.E. Sunday School convention at Phillips Chapel, 1909
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives,
donated by Leana Brunson McClain and Donald A. Brunson, Jr.

Bishop Charles H. Phillips *(center right)* and the Reverend James A. Stout *(surrounded by children at left)* preside at an early event at Phillips Chapel, a C.M.E. Sunday School convention, in 1909. As the city's first Black-owned church, Phillips Chapel attracted many African Americans to South Santa Monica.

It is known from various church records that Phillips Chapel was remodeled in 1910 and the 1940s at its Fourth and Bay Streets location. Although altered, the church building has retained a historic Colonial Revival architectural style appearance. The 1940s renovation included eleven stained glass windows commemorating some of Santa Monica's pioneering African American families who were church members (see table on pages 34–35). These include charter member Mrs. Luvater Fritz, Mrs. Liza Heard, and Mrs. Ada Whitley, who, in a commemorative program book marking the church's Fiftieth Anniversary, in the 1950s, was noted as the "Mother of the Church" of the California Conference of the C.M.E. Church. (Fig. 12) In 2005 Phillips Chapel was designated a City of Santa Monica landmark.[33]

[33] Nancy Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture: Centennial of Santa Monica," *Evening Outlook,* May 17, 1975, 8B; Phillips Chapel C.M.E. Church File Papers, 2005; *1914–1915 Santa Monica, Ocean Park, Sawtelle and Westgate [Telephone] Directory*; author's site visits, see list of Phillip's Chapel C.M.E. Church members commemorated in the stained glass windows (see pages 34–35).

Fig. 12) Phillips Chapel C.M.E. Church, Santa Monica, 1956
Santa Monica History Museum, Outlook Collection, 1998.1.1392

The church you see today was renovated in the 1940s, as pictured in this 1956 photograph. The remodel included eleven stained glass windows commemorating some of Santa Monica's pioneering African American families who were church members.

Santa Monica C.M.E. Mission Meeting, October 1905, Hull's Hall, 1519 Third Street, Santa Monica, California

Bishop Charles H. Phillips	National Presiding Bishop of the Church	Bishop Phillips (1858–1951) resided in Texas and was born in Georgia.
Rev. Richard Edwards	Church Emissary	
Mrs. Luvater Fritz	Charter Member	Husband: John W., laborer at Simon's Brick Yard Residences: 1927 Twenty-fifth St., [B] 1532 Nineteenth St. [D & E]
Mrs. Eliza "Liza" Heard	Charter Member	Widow. Husband: Edward H., plasterer Residence: 314 Pico Blvd. [A]
Mrs. Ada Whitley	Charter Member	Husband: Daniel, teamster, Simon's Brick Co. Residence: 1921 Twenty-fifth St. [C]
Rev. J.W. Reese Rev. James A. Stout	Early Pastors of Phillips Chapel	Rev. Stout (1875–1932) became Phillips Chapel's pastor in 1909 and was born in Texas.

[A] *1914–1915 Santa Monica, Ocean Park, Sawtelle and Westgate Directory*
[B] *1915–1916 Santa Monica, Ocean Park, Sawtelle and Westgate Directory*
[C] *1917 Santa Monica Directory*
[D] *1940 Santa Monica Directory, including Brentwood Heights, Ocean Park, and Los Angeles*
[E] *1947–1948 Santa Monica Directory*

Phillips Chapel C.M.E. Church Stained Glass Windows Commemorations, 1940s

Window 1	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas M. Terry & Son (Wife: Thelma) in memory of Mrs. Henri Fletcher Mr. D.S. Fletcher	Thomas M. Terry, porter Residence: 1511 Sixteenth St. Henri Fletcher, Widower. (Wife: O.S.) Residences: 2027 Fifth St.[1] & 1511 Sixteenth St.[3]
Window 2	Stewardess Board Nos. 1 and 2	
Window 3	Mrs. J. Alexander Whitley Family, in memory of the Rev. R.C. Edwards & Mrs. A.B. Whitley	
Window 4	Rev. & Mrs. E.V. Banks & Son (Wife: Olivette)	The Rev. Banks was the church's minister in the 1940s. Part of the church renovation took place during his tenure.
Window 5	Mr. & Mrs. William Snyder (Lyda), in memory of Mrs. Harriet Friday	William Snyder, laborer Residence: 1551 Nineteenth St.[2] Harriet Friday resided with the Snyder family.
Window 6	In memory of Mrs. Laura Crutchfield By Mr. & Mrs. Frank E. Lee (Wife: Fay)	Laura Crutchfield, widow Husband: D.C. Crutchfield Residence: 1936 Nineteenth St.[4] Fay Lee, steward of the church, owned the property on Bay Street Residence: 415 Seventh St.[3]
Window 7	Mrs. Odessa Billingsley and R.F. Thompson (Ruby Faye, daughter) in memory of T. Billingsley (Troy)	1942 came to SM. Today family lives in Santa Monica, Venice, & Los Angeles. Residence: 316 Pico Blvd.
Window 8	Mr. & Mrs. James E. Taylor (Ruby M.)	James E. Taylor, carpenter Residence: 2716 Sixth St.[2]
Window 9	Mr. & Mrs. Henry Wagoner & Family (Jamie, daughter of the Rev. Stout from earlier union)	Chrissa Washington, daughter Henry, Douglas Aircraft worker Jaime, hairdresser in Santa Monica Residence: 1760-B Twenty-first St.[3]
Window 10	Mr. & Mrs. Vernon G. Brister (Wife: Ruth) & Mr. & Mrs. Webster King (Wife: Vada), in memory of mother & father	Vernon G. Brister, restaurant owner at 1915 Olympic Blvd.[2]; later liquor store operator: 1721 Fourteenth St.[3] Residences: 1711 Sixteenth St.[2] & 1749 Fourteenth St. b/t Olympic Blvd. & Michigan Ave.[3] Webster King, driver Residence: 1718 Sixteenth St.[2 & 3]

Window 11	Mrs. Mary E. Stout & Mr. & Mrs. Edward J. Carson (Wife: Clara), in memory of Rev. J.A. Stout	Mary Stout, widow (Husband: James A. Stout, former pastor of Phillips Chapel) Bernice Stout Lawson and Jamie Stout Wagoner, daughters Residence: 2009½ Fourth St.[2] Edward Carson, janitor Clara Carson, cousin of the Stouts; Stewardess Board Residence: 424 Bay St.[3]
Window 12	Mr. & Mrs. John Lee (Wife: Mary)	Mary, niece of Mary Stout and cafeteria, work in the Los Angeles public schools John Lee, gardener Residence: 419-C Bay St., Ocean Park[3]
Window 13	The Family, in memory of Mrs. Lucy Carter	Lucy Carter, widow (Husband: Levi) Residence: 1935 Fifth St.[1] Mamie (daughter), married Irving Tabor of Venice
Window 14	Mrs. Lavater Fritz, in memory of J.W. Fritz	Charter members of the C.M.E. Church; husband worked for Simon's Brick Yard Oliver (son), head of Sunday School, Chairman of the Trustee Board, & Steward Residences: 1727 Twenty-fifth St.[1 & 1a] & 1532 Nineteenth St.[2 & 3]
Window 15	Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Adams & Family (Wife: Rodessa)	LA, liquor store operator, 1668 Twentieth St.[2] Residences: 1714 Sixteenth St.[2] & 1438 Nineteenth St.[3]
Window 16	Mr. Eddie Foster (Wife: Daisy)	Eddie Foster, salvage yard operator at Twentieth St. & Olympic Blvd. Residence: 1524 Seventeenth St.[2 & 3]

[1] *1914–1915 and 1915–1916 Santa Monica, Ocean Park, Sawtelle and Westgate Directory*
[1a] *1915–1916 Santa Monica, Ocean Park, Sawtelle and Westgate Directory*
[2] *1940 Santa Monica Directory, including Brentwood Heights, Ocean Park and Los Angeles*
[3] *1947–1948 Santa Monica Directory*
[4] *1936 Santa Monica Directory*

The Phillips Chapel Community

In the decades following Phillips Chapel's official 1909 opening, evidence suggests many African American families migrated to the Ocean Park neighborhood south of Pico Boulevard to live near the church. Since that time, Santa Monica's first African American spiritual and institutional structure has been a focal point of the African American community's social, spiritual, and cultural life (Figs. 13 and 14).

(Fig. 13) Women's Day Celebration, Phillips Chapel C.M.E. Church, 1950s
Waron Turner Railey Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

(Left to right) *Unknown, Grace Blackman, Zenobia Orr, Lillie Jefferson, Vera Copeland, Jessie Stewart, Clarissa Washington, unknown, Ms. Goolesby, Turrie Turner, Frankie Russell, and Lois Jones*

African American women joined together at churches and other community places to promote equity in health, employment, education, and the social welfare of their communities. They also gathered for camaraderie and fun.

(Fig. 14) Peters Sisters trio, autographed publicity photo, 1940s
Cristyne Lawson Collection

(Clockwise from top left) *Virginia, Anne, and Mattye Peters*

For many years, the popular Peters Sisters trio lived south of Pico Boulevard at 2235 Fourth Street, just down the street from Phillips Chapel. From the 1930s to the 1960s, they sang at Phillips Chapel, in Los Angeles, and in cities around the United States and all over Europe. They made several recordings, performed with Duke Ellington, and were featured in several films.

The Reverend James A. Stout and Family

In 1909 the Reverend James A. Stout (1875–1932) left Austin, Texas, to become the first minister of the Phillips Chapel congregation. Educated at Prairie View Agricultural & Mechanical University and Houston-Tillotson University, he taught school in the Lone Star state for ten years before he entered the ministry. The Rev. Stout eventually became the presiding elder of the region and was involved with the formation of several C.M.E. churches in the West. He was very active in ensuring that Santa Monica's African American children were obtaining their rights as citizens to public education and were not sabotaged in this process by discriminatory practices that might occur on the school premises. The Stouts settled near Phillips Chapel and made Ocean Park their permanent home.

In the Rev. Stout's book *Pills of Logic and Pearls of Truth: A Collection of Sermons, Lectures and Addresses* (1919), he is described:

> . . . as a preacher who is thoughtful and convincing; as a lecturer and humorist who in a class to himself. He is in demand by both white and colored churches throughout the west. His spirit is humble, his determination unyielding, his insight keen, his spirit fearless, his heart generous and his personality engaging. He possesses a deep, musical bass voice and is a vocalist of rare quality.[34]

In addition to these admirable qualities, the Rev. Stout had quite a physically imposing presence at over six feet tall. His wife, Mary McReynolds Stout (1872–1964), also graduated from Prairie View. She was a schoolteacher before she married and became a partner in her husband's work. Accompanying the Stouts and their baby daughter, Bernice (1908–2004), in their move to California's Pacific Rim was her mother, Mrs. Ary McReynolds (1846–1920) (Fig. 15). Other relatives would follow the Stouts in migrating to Santa Monica (Fig. 16). After the Rev. Stout died in 1932, Mary Stout helped to raise her grandchildren and brother's daughter, along with managing her apartments a few doors south of Phillips Chapel at 2019 Fourth Street. The Rev. James and Mary Stout are memorialized in one of the church's lovely stained glass windows (Fig. 17).[35]

[34] James A. Stout, *Pills and Pearls: A Collection of Sermons, Lectures and Addresses*, 1919, "The Author" section, no page number, Cristyne Lawson Collection (copy in the author's possession).
[35] Cristyne Lawson, Santa Monica resident, interviews by author, February 17, 2006, June 2009, and November 6, 2010, Los Angeles, CA; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 80.

(Fig. 15) The James A. Stout family, 1919
Cristyne Lawson Collection

(Clockwise from right) *James Stout, daughter Bernice, mother-in-law Mrs. Ary McReynolds, and wife Mary*

In 1909 James A. Stout moved to Santa Monica from Texas to become the first pastor of Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Santa Monica's first African American institution, at 2001 Fourth Street in Ocean Park. He migrated with his family, shown in this photograph from his 1919 publication *Pearls of Truth: A Collection of Sermons, Lectures and Addresses.*

(Fig. 16) The Stout Extended Family, 1934
Cristyne Lawson Collection

(Left to right) *Mr. and Mrs. John and Mary Lee (Mary Stout's niece), Clara Carson (a Stout cousin), Mary Stout, and Hilliard Lawson (the Stouts' son-in-law)*

The Reverend James A. Stout, Phillips Chapel's first pastor, and his wife, Mary, led many of their relatives in migrating to Santa Monica. Some became prominent members of Santa Monica's African American community and a number are memorialized in the church's stained glass windows. Among them in this 1934 photograph are Mary Lee, who worked in the Los Angeles public schools; Clara Carson, long-time Phillips Chapel secretary; Mary Stout (widow of the Rev. Stout, d. 1932); and Hilliard Lawson, the second African American elected to the Santa Monica City Council in 1973.

**(Fig. 17) Commemorative stained glass window,
Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
"In Memory of Rev. J.A. Stout," donated by "M.M. Stout"
and "Mr. and Mrs. E. Carson," ca. 1940s**
Alison Rose Jefferson Collection

The window artwork features the winged man or angel, the symbol for Matthew the Evangelist, the author of the first gospel account in The Book of Revelation in the New Testament. His gospel writings traces Jesus's human ancestry via Joseph's genealogy from Abraham, which represents Jesus's incarnation and Christ's human nature. It implies or signifies that we should use our power to reason to achieve salvation. St. Matthew is an apt tribute for the Rev. James A. Stout, who used the power of reason to help people achieve spiritual satisfaction and peace in their lives. The window was paid for by the Rev. Stout's widow, Mary McReynolds Stout, and Edward and Clara Carson (the latter was Mrs. Stout's cousin).

Stout Family Descendants

Cristyne Lawson, Bernice Stout's daughter, adored her grandmother Mary Stout, as did many others. She remembers her grandmother telling her that during the Rev. Stout's tenure as spiritual leader, the scholar and cofounder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) W.E.B. Dubois visited the C.M.E. congregants and spoke about the fight for civil rights and social justice.[36]

Cristyne also recalls that many visiting singing groups like the Peters Sisters and various civic and literary figures who visited Phillips Chapel. She remembers her grandmother telling her that renowned African American poet and writer Langston Hughes spoke at Phillips Chapel. Cristyne has loving memories of walks with her grandmother Mary Stout before dinner and on errands around Santa Monica. In the late 1940s she fondly remembers watching professional wrestler "Gorgeous" George Wagner, who threw gold hairpin souvenirs into the audience, in matches fought at the Olympic Park Arena on Pico between Third and Fourth Streets (where the bowling alley is in 2020). A World Wrestling Hall of Fame inductee, sometimes called the "Outrageous Bad-Boy," Wagner introduced theatrics and entertainment to professional wrestling and was one of the sport's first successful television personalities. Many wrestlers as well as Muhammad Ali, Bob Dylan, and James Brown have noted his influence on their public personas. Cristyne enjoyed his over-the-top flamboyant style.[37]

Cristyne's mother, Bernice, was recognized as a gifted musician at an early age. She attended Santa Monica grade schools and the community college. She earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Southern California and went on to have a very successful career as a pianist of classical and jazz music and as a music educator (Fig. 18). She married Hilliard Lawson (1904–1981) who had migrated in his adolescence to Los Angeles County from Vicksburg, Mississippi, with his mother, Molly Shaw Lawson (d. 1956–57). While living in California, Lawson attended Tuskegee Institute in Montgomery, Alabama. When he returned, he eventually settled in Santa Monica, where he worked in the catering and real estate businesses and as a mail carrier for the U.S. Postal Service. Lawson became Santa Monica's second African American city council member, serving from 1973 to 1975. He lived on Bay Street in Ocean Park at his mother-in-law's home for a good part of his children's formative years, even after he and Bernice divorced in the 1940s.[38]

Hilliard and Bernice's two daughters, Jansz (1930–1999) and Cristyne (b. 1936), grew up to be accomplished women (Fig. 19). Jansz, the oldest, graduated from Belmont High School, attended University of California, Los Angeles and became a chemical engineer. She married another engineer and they had two children, a boy and a girl. Jansz's younger sister, Cristyne, graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1953 and studied at the prestigious Julliard School of

[36] Lawson, interviews by author, February 17, 2006, June 2009, and November 6, 2010.
[37] Lawson interviews; "Gorgeous George," World Wrestling Entertainment website, acc. November 30, 2020, https://www.wwe.com/superstars/gorgeousgeorge.
[38] Lawson interviews.

the performing arts in New York City (see Fig. 82). She became a professional modern concert dancer and a member of the early dance companies of Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey. During her professional dance career and her marriage, she lived in Europe and Australia for many years, later becoming the dean of the Dance Program at Cal Arts College in Pasadena. In the first decade of the twenty-first century she retired from this position and returned to Ocean Park after living in the Silverlake section of Los Angeles for many years. Her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren live in Santa Monica and Australia with their families.[39]

(Fig. 18) Bernice Stout Lawson *(right)* and Jennette Maxwell Reese, 1940s
Cristyne Lawson Collection

In this 1940s photograph, Bernice Stout Lawson *(right)* plays piano and organ duets with her friend Jennette Maxwell Reese. Both women were professional musicians. Lawson also was a music educator.

Others family members of the Stout-McReynolds clan moved to Santa Monica and some are memorialized in Phillips Chapel's stained glass windows. The Rev. Stout's oldest daughter from an earlier marriage, Jamie Stout Wagoner, was a cosmetologist whose salon at one time was located at 424 Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica's first Black-owned medical and business space building when it was built in 1940 (Fig. 20). Jamie's husband, Henry, worked at Douglas Aircraft for a time.

[39] Lawson interviews by author, February 17, 2006, June 2009, and November 6, 2010.

Her daughter, Clarissa Washington, known to her loved ones as "Weetie," became a primary schoolteacher. She lived for many years a few doors east of the Phillips Chapel on Bay Street and loved to travel. She and her Aunt Bernice shared a love for music and a duplex building in Los Angeles until they died within a day of each other in September 2004.[40]

Mary Stout's niece, Mary McReynolds Austin (Lee), moved to Santa Monica from Texas to live with her family after her parents died in the 1920s. She retired from the Los Angeles Unified School District, where she worked in school food service. She and her husband, John Lee, a gardener, owned a rental property of small bungalows, where they also lived, a few doors east of the Phillips Chapel parsonage at 419 Bay Street. In the twenty-first century, Stout-Lawson descendants continue to live in Santa Monica and own property passed down from their pioneering ancestors.[41]

(Fig. 19) Jansz Lawson (later Bordeaux) (1930–1999) and Cristyne Lawson, ca. 1950
Cristyne Lawson Collection

Jansz *(left)* and Cristyne Lawson *(right)* pose on the porch of their grandmother Mary Stout's House at 2009 Fourth Street, a few doors south of Phillips Chapel.

[40] Lawson interviews by author, February 17, 2006, June 2009, and November 6, 2010.
[41] Lawson interviews.

(Fig. 20) Jamie Wagoner's business advertisement, 1949
Mary Waters Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

Jamie Wagoner was the eldest daughter of the Rev. James A. Stout. She ran this ad in the Thirtieth Anniversary Banquet Program of the Orpah Chapter No. 15, Order of Eastern Star organization in 1949.

Business and Property Owners

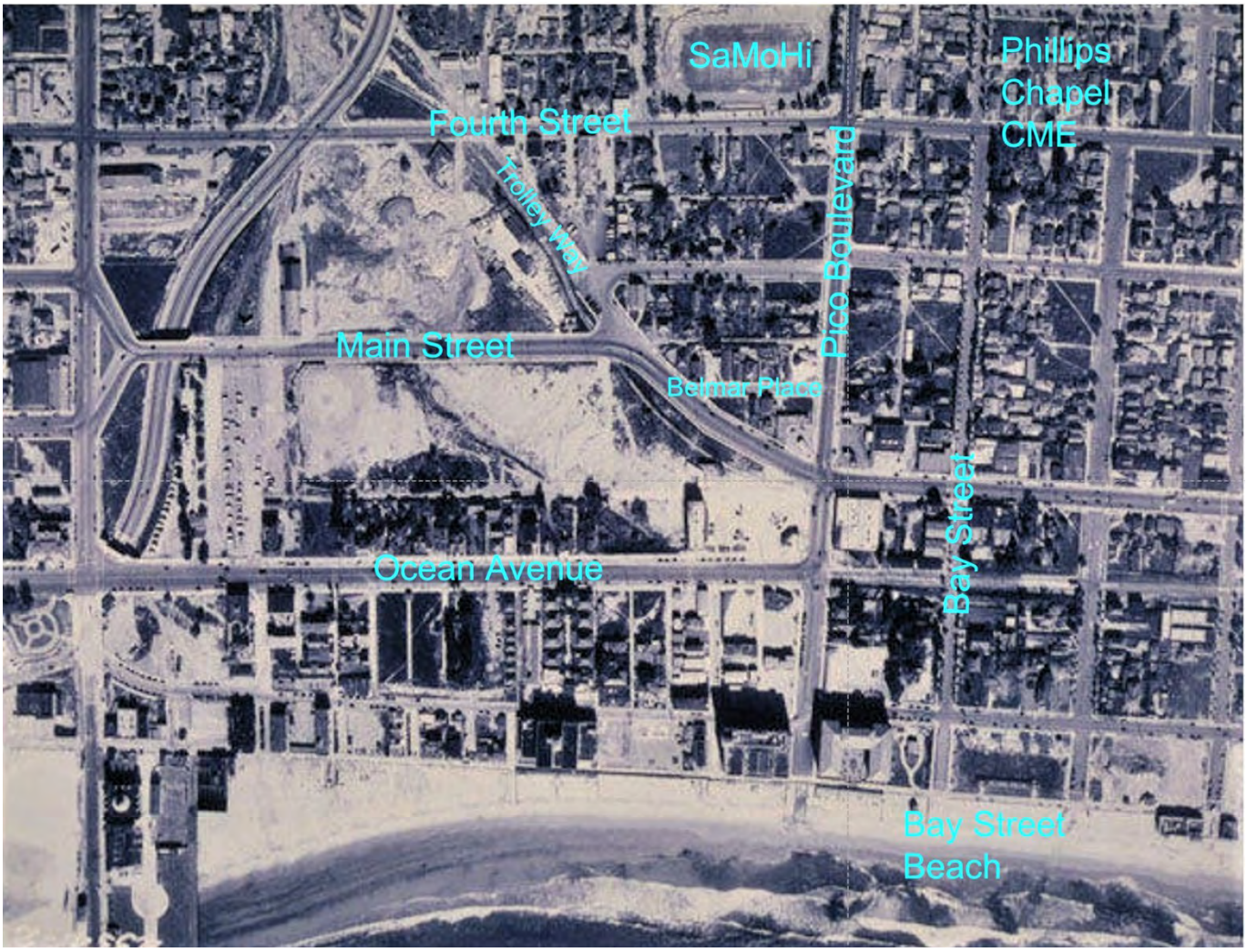
Due to discriminatory practices of the time period, African American employment opportunities in Santa Monica were limited to domestic servant and service jobs. This included ditch digging, cleaning toilets, laying bricks, washing dishes, hauling lumber, scrubbing laundry, sweeping buildings, handling luggage, shining shoes, and working as draymen and chauffeurs (with the rise in the use of the automobile and the decline of the horse and wagon). Some African Americans were entrepreneurs who ran small enterprises such as boarding houses, barber shops, beauty salons, hauling/trucking, and later other service-related small businesses. The only professionals with formal higher education during this era in Santa Monica were a minister or two. Those trained to be teachers and medical professionals, for example, would not find employment in Santa Monica until the 1930s to 1950s, or later.[42]

At the founding of Phillips Chapel in the early 1900s, segregation and discrimination in the bay cities and California generally was not as rigid as it would become later in the twentieth century. Where African Americans encountered less anti-Black resistance to their physical presence, they were able to find housing and establish businesses and institutions in Santa Monica at prices they could pay for rent or property purchases. South Santa Monica's neighborhoods at the edge of the city development in the early twentieth century offered opportunities for African Americans to find places to rent or buy near the beach.

Early South Santa Monica Neighborhoods

Until the 1950s, members of many African American families—like the Brunsons, Murrells, Chapelles, Peters, and Paxtons—lived within walking distance of Phillips Chapel in Ocean Park. African Americans also lived in neighborhood clusters on the streets of South Santa Monica—side-by-side with other people of color, Whites, and European immigrants in what is today the civic auditorium area of the Civic Center campus and north of the Santa Monica High School. Several African American families when they first moved to Santa Monica found housing and set up businesses in these sections of South Santa Monica. Other African American neighborhoods were located in North Santa Monica, around Second to Sixth Streets and Broadway. (Figs. 21 and 22) Venice also had a neighborhood of African American families, which was considered part of the Santa Monica Black community early in the twentieth century. As early as the 1920s, African American residents also began to settle in what is called the Pico Neighborhood, between Fourteenth and Twenty-fourth Streets and Pico and Santa Monica Boulevards.[43]

[42] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 77.
[43] Jefferson, 77, 246n12.



(Fig. 21) South Santa Monica, annotated detail, Fairchild Aerial Survey, 1937
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives, donated to the Library from City Collections

Pictured here are sections of the South Santa Monica neighborhoods of Ocean Park, the Belmar Triangle, and the area north of Santa Monica High School (SaMoHi). Before 1960 many African Americans resided and opened businesses in these neighborhoods, including the area around Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church in Ocean Park.

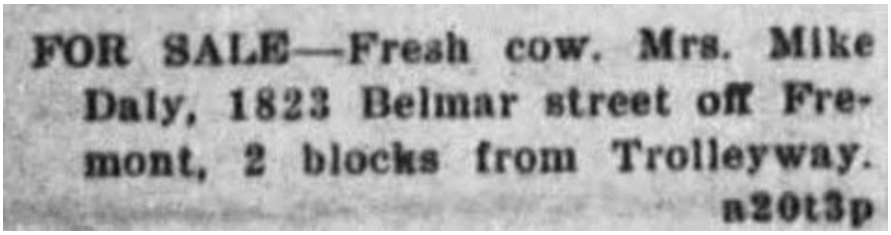
(Fig. 22) North of Santa Monica neighborhood, 1915
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives,
donated to the Library from City Collections

The area shown in this photograph north of Santa Monica High School is where early-twentieth-century African American families such as the Brunsons, Maxwells, and Gabaldóns first lived in Santa Monica.

Today's civic auditorium area is located atop a neighborhood that was called the Belmar Triangle, or just Belmar (after the local street named Belmar Place), in the early twentieth century (Fig. 23). Some African Americans became residents here, joining their other South Santa Monica African American neighbors in helping to make the city a vibrant and unique place.

The Belmar area was at the northern edge of development in South Santa Monica, adjacent to the South Pacific Railway Company's freight depot and unimproved land. South of this railroad property was the Belmar Triangle, bound by the electric streetcar (or trolley) line on the north and west (which now partially parallels Main Street), Fourth Street on the east, and Pico Boulevard on the south. Within this triangular area, the street Belmar Place ran approximately near the eastern edge of today's civic auditorium from Pico to Main Street. As early as the first decades of the twentieth century, important businesses located on and near Belmar Place provided African

Americans from Santa Monica and elsewhere accommodations and services, particularly when they visited the area to enjoy the Pacific Ocean shoreline a few blocks away.[44]


FOR SALE—Fresh cow. Mrs. Mike Daly, 1823 Belmar street off Fremont, 2 blocks from Trolleyway. n20t3p

(Fig. 23) Ad, *Daily Outlook,* April 20, 1909
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library, Santa Monica Outlook Newspaper Collection

Once a rural area with farm plots and wooden structures, this 1909 newspaper advertisement for a "fresh cow" at 1823 Belmar Street may be the neighborhood's earliest mention.

Walter L. Gordon and Gilbert McCarroll

Walter L. Gordon (1883–1949) and Gilbert McCarroll (b. ca.1872) are among the earliest known African American men who opened business storefronts on Pier Avenue near the beachfront in Ocean Park. Photographic documentation exists of both establishments.

Gordon Day Work Company, a home cleaning and janitorial service business with a multiethnic workforce of a dozen or more, opened in 1902 and lasted at least eight years. Walter Gordon and his family lived at 104 Bicknell Avenue right near the beach in Ocean Park. Gordon, who had migrated to Santa Monica from Woodville, Mississippi, later moved to Los Angeles for broader social and more lucrative business opportunities. He worked for the U.S. Postal Service as a mail carrier and also participated in successful side enterprises. By 1923 he resigned from the postal service and opened the Walter L. Gordon Company, which became a very successful real estate firm headquartered on Central Avenue in Los Angeles, the regional hub of African American life during this era. Gordon's Santa Monica operations mostly likely folded into the operations of African American businessman Arthur L. Reese (see pages 63–65), who migrated from Louisiana to the area. He and Gordon were successful partners in other Santa Monica and Venice ventures and remained friends during their lifetimes.[45] (Figs. 24 and 25)

[44] Advertisements and other reference to Belmar Street, Place, or Terrace appeared in *The Daily Outlook* as early as 1909. The *1915–1916 Santa Monica City Directory* described the street as being located near the Pacific Electric railway passenger station on Trolleyway. Cow for sale ad, *The Daily Outlook*, April 20, 1909, 1; road paving announcement, *The Daily Outlook*, February 7, 1912, 3.
[45] 1910 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 78; Sonya Reese-Davis Greenland, Los Angeles resident, interview by author, June 2020.

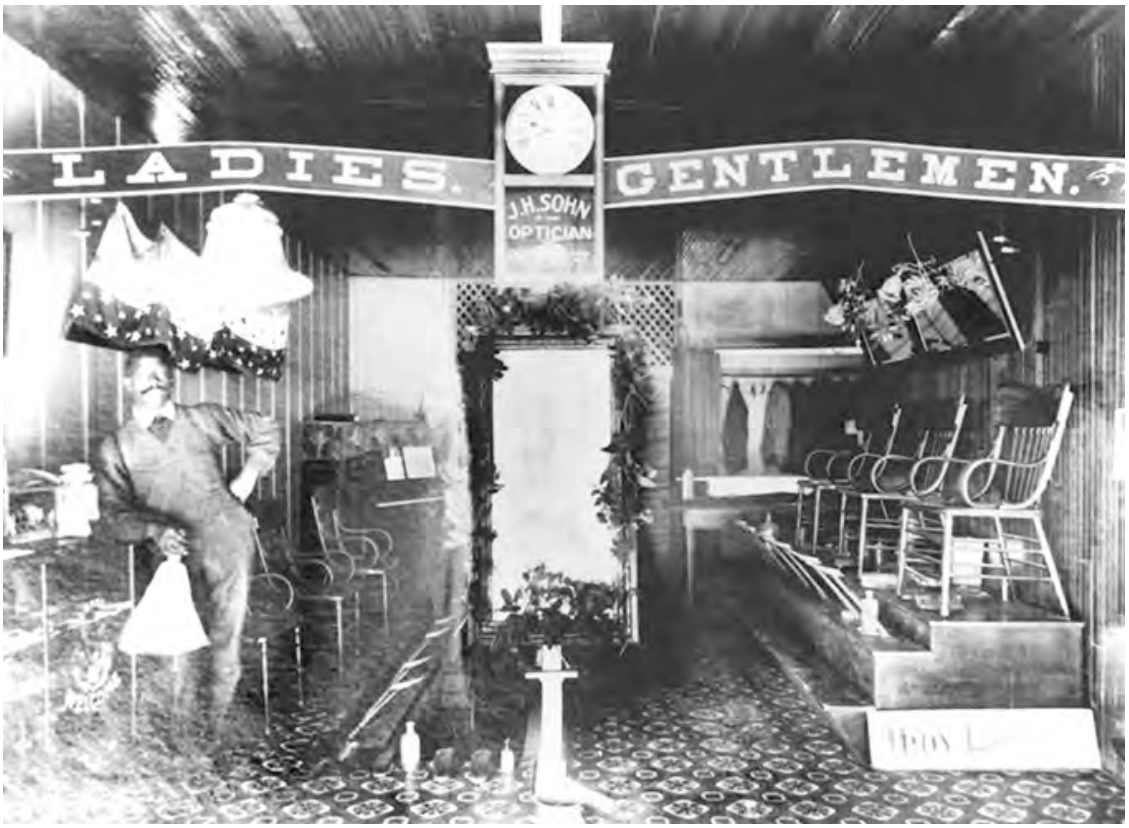
(Fig. 24) Walter L. Gordon, 1927
Courtesy of Sonya Reese Greenland

(Fig. 25) Gordon Day Work Company, ca. 1906
Walter L. Gordon, Jr./William Beverly Collection, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA; and the Arthur Reese Family Archives courtesy of Sonya Reese Greenland

In 1902 Walter Gordon opened the Gordon Day Work Company, a janitorial and house cleaning service at Pier and Ocean Avenues. He and his family lived nearby at 104 Bicknell Avenue. Over his eight years in business, he employed up to seventeen men of various ethnicities. Some are pictured in this 1906 photograph on their bicycles, with a company sign between the wheels. In 1923 Gordon started a real estate firm, the Walter L. Gordon Company, in Los Angeles.

Gilbert McCarroll's shoeshine parlor servicing men and women opened around 1907 and lasted at least to 1910 (Fig. 26). When the shop, located at 121 Pier Avenue, closed, McCarroll worked as a doorman for the California Bank. Later, in 1928, he opened Gilbert's Grocery and Soda Fountain, a very popular spot at Eighteenth Street and Broadway. Though short-lived, it was at the center of many fond memories for Santa Monica's African American residents.[46]

[46] Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture," 8B; 1910 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.



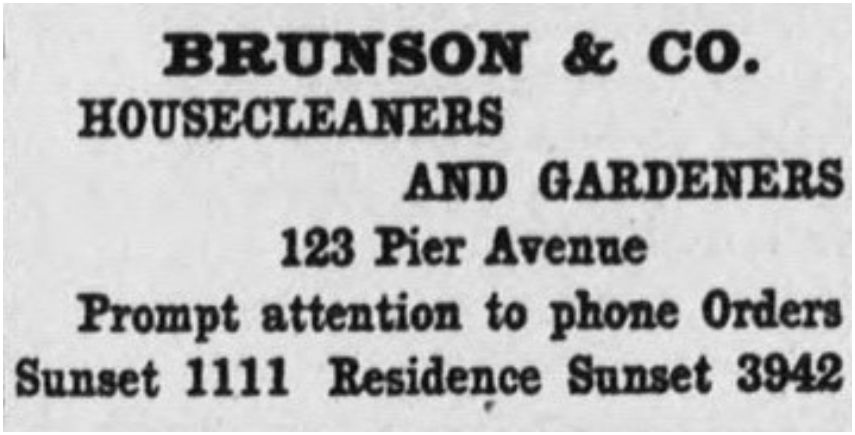
(Fig. 26) Gilbert McCarroll's Shoeshine Parlor, ca. 1907
Santa Monica History Museum Collection, 36.2.313

Gilbert McCarroll opened his shoeshine parlor "for ladies and gentlemen" at 121 Pier Avenue in 1907, around the time he took this photograph. When the shop closed in 1910, he worked as a doorman for the California Bank. In 1928 he launched the popular but short-lived Gilbert's Grocery and Soda Fountain inland at Eighteenth Street and Broadway.

Charles A.E. Brunson

Charles A.E. Brunson arrived in Santa Monica in 1905 from Americus, Georgia. He had little formal education and according to family oral history, earned a living with a horse and wagon offering home maintenance services (Fig. 27) and hauling goods around the region, including tourists' luggage from the train station to the luxury hotels along the Santa Monica shoreline and to and from the Los Angeles downtown area. Each way to downtown Los Angeles took a half a day on mostly unpaved streets, such as Pico Boulevard, which were the only road thoroughfares connecting the two cities at the time. Brunson and other Santa Monica African American men followed in the footsteps of Black entrepreneurs such as John Hall. Born in Missouri, Hall moved to Los Angeles before 1860 and established a local express wagon operation that included a line between Los Angeles and Santa Monica.[47]

[47] Donald Augusta Brunson, Santa Monica Historic Society Oral History Program, oral history interview by Barbara Wurf, February 23, 1991, 1–5; Patty R. Colman, "John Ballard and the African American Community of Los Angeles," *Southern California Quarterly*, 94, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 210–11.



(Fig. 27) Charles Brunson's business advertisement, Santa Monica *Daily Outlook,* April 9, 1908
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library, Santa Monica Outlook Newspaper Collection

Brunson also fought in the civil rights struggle of his era. The noted Black journalist Delilah L. Beasley wrote in *The Negro Trailblazers of California* that he was successful at getting an "objectionable" sign with reference to African Americans removed from a Santa Monica-area pleasure pier before 1919.[48]

In addition to Santa Monica's beach resorts, bathhouses, and amusements, there was a small dirt road five blocks from the beach in South Santa Monica that housed shotgun and other wood board cottages. Some of these homes had been moved to Fifth Street north of Santa Monica High School by residents with horses. This was where Brunson lived with his wife, Selena McDonald Brunson, and their fifty chickens and two horses, at 1745 Fifth Street. It is also where their two sons, Donald (in 1907) and Vernon (in 1909), were born.[49] (Fig. 28)

The Brunsons divorced by the time Donald began school. Charles moved to Venice and eventually remarried Theresa Edwards Trimble (a widow), becoming a stepfather to her two daughters. Selena and the boys stayed on at the 1745 Fifth Street residence where light was initially provided by kerosene lamps. The bathroom arrangement was two holes with seats in a room at the back of the house that emptied into a cesspool. There was no water meter, but service was delivered for a fee of one dollar per month. A wood burning stove was used for cooking and heating. Eventually, Selena saved enough money to bring electricity to the house.[50]

[48] Delilah Beasley, *The Negro Trail Blazer of California* (Los Angeles: Delilah Beasley, 1919), 305, Archives.org;
[49] Donald Augusta Brunson, Santa Monica Historic Society Oral History Program, oral history interview by Barbara Wurf, February 23, 1991, 1–5.
[50] Brunson interview; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 79, 247n18.

(Fig. 28) Charles and Selena Brunson, Santa Monica Pier, 1907
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives

Charles and Selena Brunson lived at 1745 Fifth Street with their sons Donald and Vernon, fifty chickens, and two horses. Selena worked at a hand laundry in Ocean Park. Charles transported goods and offered home maintenance services around the region with a horse and wagon. He also actively fought for civil rights. In 1907 they posed on the Santa Monica Pier with Donald, one of the first African American children born in the city.

Selena Brunson supplemented her child support payments with work as a piece ironer at Gallow's, a domestic hand laundry on Ocean Park Boulevard. Being a minister's daughter, she saw to it that her sons attended Phillips Chapel, the only African American church in town. The family later attended other churches in Santa Monica, including the Anglo Methodist Sunday School near Arizona Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard. In the 1920s, they became active lifetime members of the First African American Episcopal Church of Santa Monica when it was established inland at Michigan Avenue and Eighteenth Street.[51]

The Carter, Murrell, and Maxwell Families

Several other pioneering Santa Monica African American families resided in the neighborhood north of Santa Monica High School where the Brunson family lived. Originally from Kentucky, Emmett Carter (b. 1870), his younger brothers Garfield and Boyd, his daughter, Mammie, and his mother, Lucy, migrated to Santa Monica sometime between 1900 and 1910. The brothers worked various jobs, including as general laborers, plasterers, and housecleaners. Boyd at one time owned a team of horses and mules he used to grade streets and haul goods around the region and to and from Los Angeles. Emmett owned a home at 1735 Fifth Street north of the high school. Other family members followed their lead and joined them out West. The Carter's Santa Monica household appears to have provided several relatives with a place to live and leads for employment opportunities when they first arrived.[52]

Nephews Manuel Lee Murrell (1888–1975) and his brothers Herman and Richard followed the Carters to Santa Monica sometime after 1910. When he registered for the draft on June 5, 1917, Manuel listed the Emmett Carter residence as his address. The 1920 U.S. Census listed all three Murrell brothers as single and living at the Carter household and recorded Herman's occupation as a teamster and Manuel and Richard as laundry workers.[53]

In 1925 Manuel constructed a mixed use, residential and commercial building at 400–404 Pico Boulevard, across from Santa Monica High School. He and his wife, Julia (1897–1969), lived in one part of the building and rented out the remainder to African American businesspersons. The 1930 U.S. Census listed him as living with Julia and his younger brother, Eugene, who was employed as a shoemaker in a shoe repair shop. Manuel and Julia would go on to own additional real estate in Santa Monica and elsewhere in Southern California. The Pico Boulevard property became an African American community landmark building and anchor of stability and economic development. The Murrells owned it until 1975, during which time they rented space to a few African American entrepreneurs who became very successful and respected in the Santa Monica community and beyond. By the mid-1950s, the couple was also collecting rent for use of their property at Fourth Street, north of Pico Boulevard in the Belmar Triangle area, near the Pacific

[51] Brunson, interview by Wurf, 1–5; "First African American Methodist Church by the Sea History," prepared under the tenure of Rev. Felix. D. Dancy, ca. 1970s, Beverly Collins Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson.
[52] John Tabor, Las Vegas resident and retired businessman, Venice, CA, interview by author, April 2005, Los Angeles, CA; Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture"; 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.
[53] 1910 and 1920 U.S. Census; Manual Lee Murrell Draft Registration Card, June 5, 1917, Ancestry.com.

Electric Railway line and the Southern Pacific land parcel. The City of Santa Monica leased this land for a police department garage and other municipal facilities. Social and civically minded, the Murrells were active with the Santa Monica-Venice Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. and other civic and social groups.[54]

By 1938 Manuel had worked for fifteen years as a mail carrier with the U.S. Postal Service in Santa Monica. That year, he was recognized in a ceremony and awarded a red "service star" for his longtime service. The December 30, 1938, issue of the *Evening Outlook* newspaper noted that he and twenty-seven mail carriers who had served ten years or more received a silver, red, or black star award, depending on their length of service to Santa Monica residents. The honored mail carriers could wear their stars either on their coats or shirt sleeves. What the article did not mention was that Manuel was also the first African American employed by the U.S. Postal Service in Santa Monica. Over his decades of service, he received a stable income, the ability to save money, and thus upward mobility. His postal service opened up another employment path by which other African Americans living in South Santa Monica could gain social and economic mobility.[55]

Another Carter relative, Anne Carter Maxwell, her husband, James (1884–1987), and their children also moved to Santa Monica in the 1920s. They became homeowners and respected members of the African American community and the city. In the 1930 U.S. Census, the Maxwell family was listed as living at 1737 Fifth Street, a few doors from their relatives. James was a graduate of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he was a schoolteacher and principal. However, due to the era's discriminatory practices, he could not get hired in the Santa Monica schools in his profession so he joined one of the Carter men working as a plasterer. Eventually he got a job as a janitor at Santa Monica's Clover Field Airport (today called the Santa Monica Airport) and worked there until he retired in the early 1950s. Maxwell was active with the Santa Monica-Venice Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. and served as the branch president for seven years.[56]

Joseph W. Spalding

Born into this pioneering era was Joseph William Spalding (1924–1985), one of seven children of his teamster father, William H. Spalding (b. ca. 1895), and Anne Spalding (1901–1984). Both William and Anne were from Kentucky. Early in their marriage and in their first years in California, the newlyweds lived at 1718 Sixth Street in the neighborhood north of Santa Monica High School. Young Joseph was born in a house at 1803 Third Street in the Belmar Triangle. His mother,

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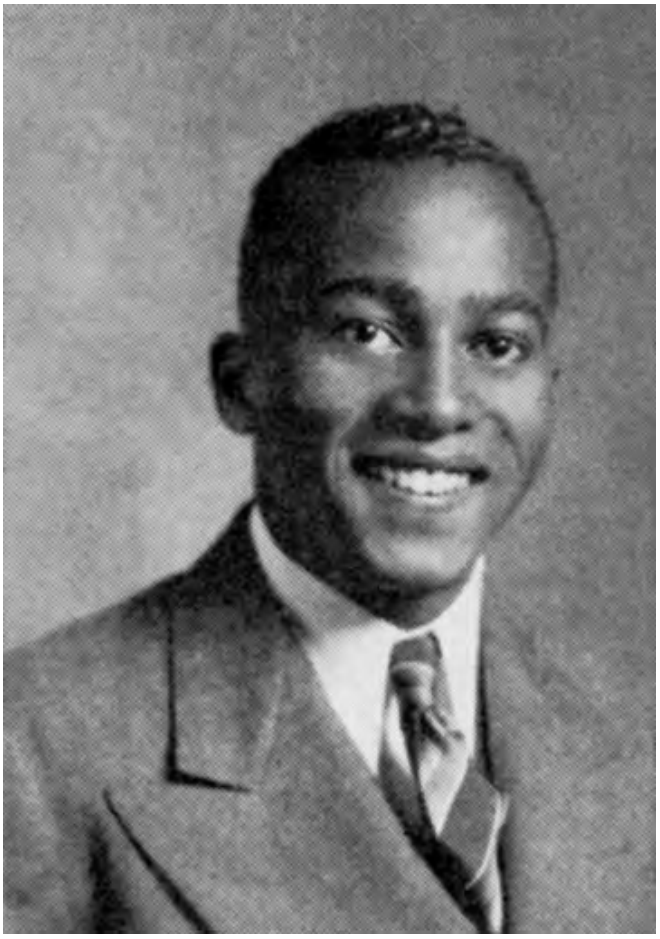
[54] 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. Census, Manual Lee Murrell Draft Registration Card, June 5, 1917, and California Death Index, 1940–1997 listing, Ancestry.com; Bandini and Jepson Tracts lot owners, Contract Log, City Council Series, City of Santa Monica City Clerk/Dept. of Records and Election Services, on site review, November 4, 2019; Navallette Tabor Bailey, retired Douglas Aircraft employee and nurse, interview by author, April 2005, Los Angeles, CA; "Branch News, California," *The Crisis*, May 1941, 165.

[55] "Letter Carriers Presented with Tokens in Recognition of Many Years of Service," *Evening Outlook*, December 30, 1938, 3; Navallette Tabor, April 2005.

[56] Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture"; Russell Snyder, "Centenarian Generous Slice of Americana Revisited," *Daily Breeze,* November 6, 1983, B1–3. Some of the information about the Carter family and James B. Maxwell was incorrect in both the *Evening Outlook* and *Daily Breeze* articles. The author was able to piece together the correct information by reviewing the U.S. Census records over multiple years, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930.

Anne, and the children later moved to 1547 Fifth Street, north of Colorado Boulevard. Public records offer evidence that William Spalding developed health issues that caused him to live for a time away from the family at the nearby veterans' facilities on Sawtelle Boulevard. A student of the Santa Monica public schools, Joseph Spalding was the only African American student for a whole year at Lincoln Junior High School (today called Lincoln Middle School) in the 1930s. During the Depression, he worked after school so he could help the family and remain in school for formal education instruction. At Santa Monica High School, even with his academic and heavy workload, he found time to become an accomplished hurdler, which earned him an invitation to the famous Fresno Relays and offers of college scholarships.[57] (Fig. 29)



(Fig. 29) Santa Monica High School graduate Joseph W. Spalding, Class of 1942
Santa Monica History Museum

Joseph W. Spalding pioneered his way through high school athletics and academics, into the business field, and even into the equestrian arena.

[57] "Success Story–'59," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 2, 1959; Will O'Neil, "Road to Pasadena No Bed of Roses," Special Supplement, *Evening Outlook*, April 24, 1964, 8B, 10B; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*, 120; William H. Spalding, U.S. National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1866–1938, and *1923 Bay Cities Directory*, Ancestry.com.

After high school, Spalding began working for Douglas Aircraft and then served in the Navy during World War II. He attended Los Angeles City College and the University of California, Los Angeles after the war. Fulfilling his dream to open a mortuary and have his own business, he attended mortician school. When he completed his course work, he apprenticed at the famed Angelus Funeral Home, one of the oldest African American-owned businesses in Los Angeles in the Central Avenue district, the heart of the African American community in Los Angeles. This company continues to service the public in the twenty-first century on Crenshaw Boulevard. He also trained at the venerable African American-owned A.J. Roberts and Sons and Conner-Johnson mortuaries, both of which were located in the Central Avenue district. Early in his career as a mortician, he served for a time as Santa Monica's deputy coroner.[58]

When Spalding was a child, he had wanted to be a doctor. But thinking practically, since his family was poor he could not envision how he was going to be able to find the money to get through medical school. Instead, he pursued a career in one of the era's few professions where African Americans could utilize their expertise for Black empowerment and economic development, becoming the first African American to own a mortuary in the west Los Angeles County coastal environs. Spalding eventually owned three mortuary businesses, the sites they were located on, and other real estate in Southern California and beyond. During the early years operating his first mortuary in Santa Monica, at 1909 Colorado Boulevard, he and his family resided on the second floor above the business.[59] (Fig. 30)

In an announcement in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, Spalding invited the public to attend the opening celebration of his first mortuary on Mother's Day in May 1959. Attendees included African American civic leaders such as the Reverend Welford P. Carter of Santa Monica's Calvary Baptist Church; educator Alfred T. Quinn, the first African American teacher hired by Santa Monica schools in the 1950s; and Los Angeles County coroner Dr. Theodore J. Curphey. Also in attendance was Norman O. Houston, president of Golden State Mutual Life Insurance, the largest African American business in the West at the time, which provided the insurance program for the new operation. In remarks at the celebration Houston declared that Spalding's business was "a glowing symbol of progress in Santa Monica" and that Golden State Mutual was "happy to have played a part in the evolution of this outstanding business achievement."[60]

In 1964 Spalding opened his second funeral home in Los Angeles on LaBrea Avenue near Jefferson Boulevard. In the early twenty-first century, it continues to serve the public. Several years later, in 1970, he became the first African American to open a mortuary in Las Vegas, Nevada. Throughout his long business career, Spalding was involved with many community activities. He was active with and served as president of the Los Angeles County Funeral Directors Association. He was an original member of the Cosmos social businessmen's club, which was founded in 1947,

[58] "Success Story–'59," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 2, 1959; O'Neil, "Road to Pasadena No Bed of Roses"; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*, 120.
[59] O'Neil; Mays Andrews, Jr., "Business News," *L.A. Sentinel*, May 29, 1975, B11.
[60] O'Neil; "New Mortuary Called Symbol of Progress," *L.A. Sentinel*, May 14, 1959, (quotes) B14; Photo Standalone 35 – No Title, *Los Angeles Sentinel*, May 7, 1959, C1; Andrews.

serving as its president for a time. Many Cosmos charter members were distinguished African American businessmen and public servants in Los Angeles. The club continues to provide fellowship and business networking opportunities for its members in the early twenty-first century.[61]

(Fig. 30) Business advertisement of Joseph W. Spalding, 1965
Mary Waters Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

Joseph W. Spalding ran this 1965 business advertisement in the Souvenir Program of the Annual Meeting of the Grand Lodge of the Knights of Pythias of California on July 25–29, 1965. At the bottom of the ad, he featured his first funeral home at 1909 Colorado Avenue, the first Black-owned mortuary in the west Los Angeles County beach area. Spalding opened another funeral parlor in Los Angeles on LaBrea Avenue near Jefferson Boulevard, which continues to serve the public in the twentieth-first century. In 1963 Spalding rode a trick horse in the famous Tournament of Roses Parade. A photograph of the event was used to demonstrate the diversity of Black accomplishments to schoolchildren.

Spalding was also the first African American equestrian invited to participate in Pasadena's Tournament of Roses Parade. On New Year's Day in 1963, he rode in the parade on a horse that performed tricks, with a silver mounted saddle worth about $10,000. The Los Angeles Board of Education placed a photograph of Spalding and his horse on a brochure for school children to expand their view of African American accomplishments in California history. It can be imagined

[61] Andrews, Jr., "Business News," B11.

that as he rode his trick horse, Spalding was quite rightly pleased with all that he had accomplished.[62]

Evelyn Moore

While Joseph Spalding was growing up, Evelyn Moore (b. 1892) was establishing a beauty business, along with becoming one of the first African American women to run a business storefront in Santa Monica. Originally from Texas, Moore joined the thousands of small businesses established by African American men and women in the early decades of the twentieth century that catered to a mostly Black clientele in both rural and urban areas.

As a beautician in the late 1902s, Moore may have begun her business working out of her homes at 1817 and 1821 Belmar Place, where she lived with her husband, Clarence (ca. 1892–1946). Over the years, Clarence, a Mississippi native, held several jobs, including as a railroad train waiter, a bootblack, and a janitor. City directories listed the couple as living in the Belmar Triangle as early as 1923. Moore opened the Moore Beauty Salon in the late 1920s. The *1928 Bay Cities Directory* listed her business at 1729 Broadway. According to a family member interview collected by the Quinn Research Center, by the 1930s the shop was located in the 1700 block of Fourth Street, just north of the Belmar Triangle.[63]

In any event, one photograph has been discovered that shows Evelyn and Clarence Moore proudly standing in front of the salon and its advertisement of PORO beauty culture treatments and products (Fig. 31). It can be assumed that Evelyn was an agent of PORO products, which she used on her clients in the salon and sold to them to use at home or resell to others. Then as now, the haircare and beauty treatments and supplies businesses were important not only for African Americans' health, grooming, and well-being, but also in the creation of opportunities for jobs, education, a path to upward mobility, and economic independence for Black women. Annie T. Malone, who owned PORO, and Madam C.J. Walker's company were the largest Black women-owned beauty and haircare products businesses for African American women in the nation before 1940. As a Black woman confronting sexism and racism in an anti-Black society, Moore, like Malone and Walker, most certainly would have had to overcome many challenges, even as an agent of the successful PORO company and in her own small business operation in Santa Monica.[64] (Figs. 32 and 33)

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[62] O'Neil, "Road to Pasadena No Bed of Roses"; "New Mortuary Called Symbol of Progress," *L.A. Sentinel*, May 14, 1959; Photo Standalone 35 – No Title, *L.A. Sentinel*, May 7, 1959; Andrews, "Business News."

[63] 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census, 1921, 1923, 1925, 1927–1928, and 1930–1931 Santa Monica City Directories, U.S. World War I Draft Registration Card 1917–1918, Evelyn Moore and Clarence A. Moore, Ancestry.com; Carolyn Edwards, retired schoolteacher, former Santa Monica resident, and Quinn Research Center founder, interview by author, June 21, 2020.

[64] "Who Was One of Madam C.J. Walker's Most Important Role Models?," acc. July 26, 2020, https://freemaninstitute.com/poro.htm; Moriah James, "Sizzle: Annie Turnbo Malone, Madam C.J. Walker, and the Complicated History of the Hot Comb," National Museum of African American History & Culture, January 10, 2019, acc. July 26, 2020, https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/collection/sizzle.

(Fig. 31) Evelyn and Clarence Moore at Moore Beauty Salon, 1930s
The Clisby Family Collection/Quinn Research Center

Evelyn Moore opened her beauty shop for "Manicuring" and "Beauty Culture." On her sign she advertised the "PORO hair and scalp treatment" that she offered. The *1928 Bay Cities Directory* listed the salon's address at 1729 Broadway. Family oral history asserts that in the 1930s, her shop was in the 1700 block of Fourth Street just north of the Belmar Triangle. Evelyn migrated from Texas and Clarence from Mississippi to California.

(Fig. 32) *PORO Hair & Beauty Culture,* brochure cover, 1922
New York Public Library Digital Collections

(Fig. 33) "Your Big Opportunity," advertisement for Los Angeles-area PORO agents, *California Eagle,* November 4, 1927
Internet Archive (www.archive.org)

"The opportunity of the PORO Agent to render genuine service is boundless. PORO profits bring economic independence," PORO College boasted in its 1922 brochure *(top)*. In Santa Monica Evelyn Moore, like many Black women entrepreneurs, responded to the alluring opportunities for the financial rewards of selling PORO treatments presented by Annie Turnbo Malone's PORO Products company in its recruitment materials, including this 1927 advertisement in Los Angeles's *California Eagle* newspaper *(bottom)*.

Arthur L. Reese

Originally from Louisiana, Arthur L. Reese (1883–1963) arrived in Los Angeles as a Pullman porter in 1902–03 looking for new life possibilities. When he read in a local newspaper about Abbot Kinney and the building of Venice-of-America just south of Santa Monica's Ocean Park district, he rode the streetcar out to Venice to see what kind of economic opportunities might be available for him with the Kinney operation. Returning to New Orleans, where he and many of his family members at that time had been living, he resigned from his railway job. Shortly thereafter he migrated to Southern California and began life anew in Los Angeles proper before moving to the Venice district.[65]

Reese's first bay cities enterprise was a shoeshine business. Later, among other business ventures, he opened a maintenance operation which prospered. He later became the maintenance supervisor for the Kinney facilities and eventually was put in charge of the amusement decorations, which earned him the moniker "The Wizard of Venice" (Fig. 34). He subsequently was involved in business ventures in Venice and other Southern California locations. During his business career, he supervised a work force of a few dozen people, many of them his family members whom he had recruited to move to California to work with him. These included his brother, Joseph Allen (known as "J. Allen") and other Reeses, Tabor family members, and members of other families who worked for him or Abbot Kinney. These men and women were the earliest African American workers and residents of Venice.[66]

Arthur Reese's other notable achievements include his appointment to the local election board and to the Venice Chamber of Commerce in 1920. During this time period in the United States, it was not common for an African American businessman to be a member of White business associations. Another of his civic accomplishments was as a founding member of the Crescent Bay Lodge Number 19, an African American Masons organization established in 1910 in Santa Monica. He also served as the organization's leader, the Lodge Worshipful Master, in the 1940s. The Lodge today continues at Eighteenth Street and Broadway. As an early Phillips Chapel member, Reese found time to sing in the choir while his wife and childhood sweetheart, Gertrude (ca. 1885–1950), played the piano. Their union produced two sons who were born in Los Angeles and Venice and attended local schools. Reese's descendants continue to own property and contribute to preserving the historical legacy of African American experience in the Santa Monica-Venice community—a legacy whose erasure is threatened by recent waves of new neighbors and new construction.[67]

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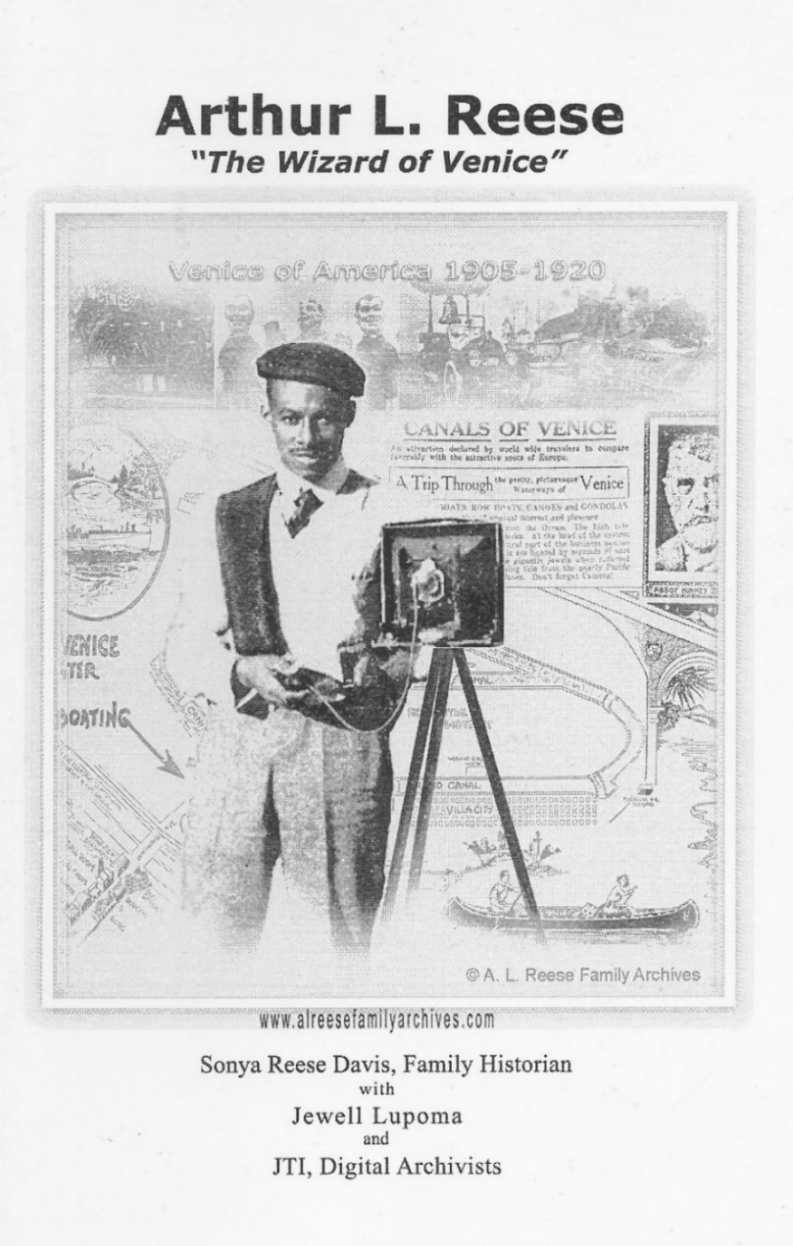
[65] Alexander, *Abbot Kinney's Venice-of-America*, 1–5; Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture"; "J.A. Reese–He's Walked World," *Evening Outlook*, April 24, 1964, 8B; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 247n22.
[66] Alexander.
[67] Alexander, 1–5; Sonya Reese-Davis and Jewell Lupoma, *Arthur L. Reese, "The Wizard of Venice"* (Los Angeles: jtiDEMC Publishers, 2006), 1–3.



(Fig. 34) Cover of a 2006 publication about Arthur L. Reese by his granddaughter, Sonya Reese Davis, 2006
Courtesy of Sonya Reese Greenland

Reese was a successful businessman and one of the first African Americans to settle in the Oakwood neighborhood of Venice, California. An early member of Phillips Chapel, he sang in the choir while his wife, Gertrude, sometimes played the piano for services. He migrated from Louisiana to Southern California in the early 1900s and was the catalyst for many of his family members to also move to the Los Angeles and Santa Monica environs. Reese was called "The Wizard of Venice" because of his masterfully creative decorations of the Venice amusement buildings owned by Abbot Kinney, a White developer of the bay cities.

Both Arthur and his brother J. Allen were founding members of the Santa Monica-Venice N.A.A.C.P. Branch and both served as its president. In a manner similar to Charles A.E. Brunson, Arthur, in his role as N.A.A.C.P. Branch president in 1918, took successful action for Santa Monica officials to remove an objectionable discriminatory sign at the merry-go-round on the Looff Pier, which operated under a city license. As in other parts of the United States, this social justice and civil rights action illustrates the continued attentiveness which African Americans had to maintain for their citizenship rights to be respected.[68]

Joseph Allen ("J. Allen") Reese

J. Allen Reese (1890–1972) credited Arthur with the ideas and daring that had encouraged him in 1909 to move to California from New Orleans, where he had worked as a railway clerk. By the time he arrived, Arthur had been able to circumvent the racist restrictive real estate covenants that kept African Americans from buying land and living in houses in what became known as the Oakwood neighborhood of the Venice district: He convinced a White person to sell him a land parcel. While he was still living in Los Angeles, Arthur built a home on this parcel where J. Allen most likely stayed for a while.[69]

In 1914 J. Allen began employment as a U.S. Postal Service mail carrier in the Venice district. He served the community in this capacity for forty years until he retired in December 1950. It was said of J. Allen Reese that while on the job he "walked around the world three or four times without ever leaving his community." Well respected by his community and by fellow workers, he was president of the National Association of Letter Carriers in Venice for two years and its secretary for several years. He also parlayed his skills, interests, regional knowledge, and connections into a business endeavor as a real estate broker. In addition to being a charter member of the N.A.A.C.P. in the bay cities, founded in 1918, he was an early member of Santa Monica's Calvary Baptist Church, founded in the 1920s. His name was sometimes listed as a contributing writer of Santa Monica and Venice news in the pages of the Los Angeles-based African American-owned *California Eagle* newspaper, the earliest and one of the long-standing in business in the West when it closed in 1964. Founded in the 1880s, this publication covered news its primarily Black readership wanted to know and also provided information essential to surviving in their new environment.[70]

After his retirement from the U.S. Postal Service, J. Allen moved into the new field of community service. For at least ten years, he was the treasurer of the Broadway Federal Savings and Loan Association, founded in 1946 by several industrious and civic-minded Afro-Angelenos, including the dentist and civic leader H. Claude Hudson. This enterprise serviced the conventional

[68] Alexander, *Abbot Kinney's Venice-of-America*, 1–5; Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture"; "J.A. Reese–He's Walked World," *Evening Outlook*, April 24, 1964, 8B; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 247n22.
[69] Reese-Davis and Lupoma, *Arthur L. Reese,* 3–5.
[70] J.A. Reese–He's Walked World," (quote) 8B; Robert L. Leake, "The History of Calvary Baptist Church," Calvary Baptist Church Men and Women's Day program bulletin, Santa Monica, CA, October 20, 2001.

loan needs of African Americans and other marginalized consumers who were ignored by the then-existing financial institutions.[71]

J. Allen and his wife, Mildred (b. ca. 1894), who was also from Louisiana, married in Los Angeles in 1915 (Fig. 35). They built their Venice home at 600 South San Juan Avenue, where they lived for most of their lives. Early in their marriage, they had lived in the Belmar Triangle into the mid-1920s, perhaps while they were finishing up construction and upgrades on their Venice property. In any event, according to available records, the couple lived at 1811 Belmar Place for five years or more. Their residence was a unit in the African American-owned establishment La Bonita, which rented rooms and apartments for short- and extended-term stays. During this era, in addition to lodging, La Bonita also had business offerings of a bathhouse and other accommodations and services for African Americans. This enterprise's facilities were on multiple lots a few blocks from the beach and conveniently located near the Pacific Electric Railway Line that traveled from Central Los Angeles through Venice and other beach areas south to Redondo Beach.[72]

William H. and Richard Dumas

Another early African American businessman, William Henry Dumas (1878–1970), traveled throughout the Santa Monica area with horses and a wagon, offering his services in construction, house cleaning, gardening, and transporting goods (Fig. 36). Dumas began his service around 1928. Originally from Georgia, he and wife, Celia (b. ca. 1886), lived with their three children, Albert, Lucinda, and Mary, ages eighteen, ten, and eight, respectively, in a rented home at 1718 Sixth Street in the neighborhood north of Santa Monica High School by 1930. Celia worked from home as a laundress and young Albert worked as polisher at a shoe shop.[73]

[71] "J.A. Reese–He's Walked World." Broadway Federal Savings and Loan was founded in 1946 by H.A. Howard, a real estate broker, H. Claude Hudson, a dentist and community leader, and Paul R. Williams, a noted architect. During this era, even if White institutions offered loans to people of color and other marginalized consumers, they carried high interest rates; Broadway Federal Savings and Loan Association website, acc. December 22, 2019, https://www.broadwayfederalbank.com/history.

[72] "J.A. Reese–He's Walked World"; La Bonita ad, *Los Angeles New Age*, August, 28, 1914; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 88–89.

[73] 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.

(Fig. 35) Joseph Allen ("J. Allen") Reese, 1920s–30s
Navalette Tabor Bailey Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

Joseph Allen ("J. Allen") Reese migrated from Louisiana to Southern California in 1909. He and his wife, Mildred lived for a time at La Bonita, the successful Black-owned bathhouse and lodging. In 1914 Reese began working for the U.S. Postal Service in Venice and was the district's first African mail carrier. He was a founding member and president of the N.A.A.C.P. Santa Monica-Venice branch and an officer of the Los Angeles-based Broadway Federal Savings and Loan founded by African Americans in 1946.

(Fig. 36) Business advertisement of William H. Dumas, 1939
Norman E. Hensley Collection and Mary Waters Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

William H. Dumas used his team of horses for excavating and to bring goods and services to clients in and around Santa Monica. He proudly described his business and team of horses in this photograph that accompanied his business advertisement in the 1939 Twentieth Anniversary Souvenir Bulletin of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church. For eleven years, he wrote, his efficient "Teamster service . . . has proven satisfactory" with his customers.

The Dumas family lived right next door to Nicolás and Cecelia Gabaldón and their children, Geraldine and Nicolás, Jr., ages nine and three and a half, respectively, at 1718½ Sixth Street. The younger Nicolás would become a local surfing folk hero to some people by the early twentieth-first century (see pages 102–05). By 1940, after the high school's rebuilding and expansion following the 1932 earthquake, both families would move to the Pico Neighborhood. William and Celia would own and live in a house at 1838 Nineteenth Street into their senior years.[74]

From available public records, it is not clear when William Dumas and his family moved to Southern California from Georgia. What is known is that his brother, Richard Dumas (1872–1952)

[74] 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.

and his wife, Carrie (b. ca. 1871), resided in Santa Monica by 1910. That year the U.S. Census listed their residence at 1517 Twentieth Street. The recently married couple were the only African Americans living on their block and listed on the census enumeration sheet, which held demographic information for fifty individuals. Like his younger brother William, Richard worked with horses. At that time, Richard was a teamster (a person driving a team of horses or other pack animals pulling a wagon) working on a ranch. Carrie worked at a laundry business.[75]

By 1919 Richard and Carrie would move to a house that they would own and live in for many years at 1544 Nineteenth Street in the Pico Neighborhood. In 1921 at the Dumas home, the First African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church by the Sea was organized. This important event marked the beginning of the building of the third African American-owned spiritual and civic intuitional space and the growth of the small Black community in Santa Monica. The families of Richard and William Dumas would be active members and supporters of this church throughout their lives.[76]

[75] 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.
[76] 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. Census; "First African American Methodist Church by the Sea History," ca. early 1970s, Beverly Collins files/Alison Rose Jefferson Archives.

1920s: Challenges and Opportunities

During the 1920s, the entire Los Angeles area saw financial success from the oil and movie industries. Santa Monica citizens decided not to become a part of the City of Los Angeles, but to remain an independent municipality. Tourism and leisure continued to define Santa Monica. The beachfront was booming with new, sumptuous beach clubs. Douglas Aircraft Company moved in to start "a new economic era" for the city. The population grew to 37,146 in 1930 from 15,252 in 1920. The African American community increased by 62 percent, from 282 in 1920 to 740 in 1930. By this time, African Americans resided and opened businesses in the South Santa Monica neighborhoods of Ocean Park, the Belmar Triangle, and the area north of Santa Monica High School (SaMoHi). Santa Monica began the transition from a residentially oriented community to an important industrial center. Building construction boomed, new financial institutions were established, and the first independent department store on Los Angeles County's west side, Hensheys, opened.[77]

African Americans' social life was developed around family, church, their evolving social and civil rights organizations, business establishments, and a sense of place as citizens of the larger Santa Monica and Los Angeles communities. Organizations and institutions like Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church, the Black Masons, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) were joined by the women's group the Philomathean Charity, Literary and Art Club. Formed in 1921, the Philomathean club provided service and empowerment to the African American community and became a member of the California Association of Colored Women's Clubs in the 1930s. Eleanor Lane's home in the 1500 block of Fifth Street in North Santa Monica was its first meeting site. While Annie Coleman was president, in 1935 the club purchased and met at its first property purchased at 1438 Seventeenth Street. Around the early 1950s, when the club's membership reached fifty-eight, members would purchase a new clubhouse building on Broadway and Eighteenth Street. The Philomatheans continue to own this Santa Monica building and support charitable causes, including through funding annual college scholarships in the twenty-first century. In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, the growing African American community welcomed other local men's and women's groups, including the Royal Crown Club, the Hunting Club, the Popularity Club, the Pythias, the Order of Calanthe, Club Les Uniques, the Social 16, the Royal 12's, the Utopia Study Club, among others.[78]

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[77] Ed Mooseburgger, "Sleepy SM Leaps on Industrial Bandwagon," *Evening Outlook*, May 17, 1975, 4C.

[78] "A Brief History of the Club," The Philomathean Club/Brenda Heavens Files, Santa Monica, California, no date (copy in author's possession); "The California Association of Colored Women's Clubs was formed in 1905 as an affiliate of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. At its inception, the association recognized the need for social services and encouraged local efforts to meet that need," *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California,* acc. December 26, 2019, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/5views/5views.htm; Carolyne Edwards, retired schoolteacher, former Santa Monica resident, and Quinn Research Center founder, interview by author, April 2005; Anne Firor Scott, "Most Invisible of All: Black Women's Voluntary Associations," *Journal of Southern History* 56, no.1 (February 1990): 3–7.

Santa Monica's African American community did not develop the civic and social organizations that are associated with Black professionals who have completed higher education. Those who wanted to participate in such groups as the Black Greek-Letter sororities and fraternities, the Links, and Jack & Jill journeyed to Los Angeles for those outlets. Many Santa Monica community members had family and friends in Los Angeles (Fig. 37). Their deep ties continued the social and civic exchange between the communities of both cities that had begun in the early days of American settlement of California in the 1850s.[79]

(Fig. 37) Ralph Bunche and friends Connie, Helen, and Margaret at the Ocean Park beach, ca. 1923
Shades of L.A. Photo Collection/Los Angeles Public Library

As a student at University of California, Los Angeles, Ralph Bunche—who later became a renowned diplomat, civic rights advocate, and 1950 Nobel Peace Prize winner—enjoyed coming to the beach in Ocean Park in the 1920s. He and his friends sometimes stopped by to visit the Stout family, particularly Bernice Stout. When she was in grade school in the 1940s, Bernice's daughter, Cristyne Lawson, fondly remembers Bunche's visits to see her mother and grandmother, Mary Stout, for Sunday visits and dinners.

[79] "The Divine Nine" or National Pan-Hellenic Council—the nine historically African American fraternities and sororities—included Delta Sigma Theta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alpha Phi Alpha, Omega Psi Phi, Phi Beta Sigma, Seta Phi Beta, Sigma Gamma Rho, and Lota Phi Theta. All but one of these groups were founded before 1930 to further the social, scholastic, and professional interests of its members; BlackGreek.com, acc. June 25, 2020, http://www.blackgreek.com/index.html. Local Jack and Jill of America chapter programming revolves around themes set by the national body, founded in 1938 to instill civic values and leadership skills; Jack and Jill of America, acc. June 25, 2020, https://jackandjillinc.org/about-us/. The Links were established in 1946 as a volunteer service organization of women committed to enriching, sustaining, and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry, The Links, Inc., acc. June 25, 2020, https://linksinc.org/the-links-incorporated/.

These local and national institutions provided African Americans a broad community of networks centered around the collective Black experience that bound them together. In forming them, African Americans responded to the realities of the time, based on their past experiences and future expectations. Some of these groups grew to be resourceful and influential, as they acted to shape and enrich African American lives, shelter them from insults to their dignity by Whites, improve their community, and provide better futures for their children. Small and large, they were a source of great pride to African Americans as tools in the fight against the violence and humiliation of Jim Crow-era White supremacy and for self-fulfillment and joy.[80]

Only a few bay cities public places and privately owned establishments allowed African American patronage. As White Americans from Southern states became more entrenched in California and the African American population increased, so too did attempts by institutions and informal restrictions to cultivate anti-Black racism. As in Los Angeles, African Americans in Santa Monica learned by experience that they were not welcome at many hotels, restaurants, theatres, and other establishments. For 1920s recreation and relaxation activities, this meant that Black Santa Monicans and Angelenos could visit certain beach areas more comfortably than others (Fig. 38). Additionally, due to lax enforcement of California's civil rights laws making it illegal to discriminate at public accommodations, African Americans were sometimes forced to swim at municipal pools on the day right before the facilities were to be cleaned, or to attend movies, concerts, and thespian presentations at selective theatres, or to be relegated to sit in segregated seats at enterprises that allowed them entrance.[81]

Santa Monica Hospitality

Beginning in the 1920s, the area known as the Belmar Triangle (see pages 48–49) made a significant contribution to the commercial and residential opportunities available to African Americans. Belmar Place was the site of enterprising operations and residences for Blacks either visiting the region or establishing residency in the city.

The *1915–1916 Santa Monica City Directory* described Belmar Place's location as running north from Pico Boulevard between Main and Third Streets at the Pacific Electric Railway passenger station on what was then called Trolleyway. Until the 1950s, some of the businesses in this neighborhood helped expand its influence in attracting African Americans from Santa Monica and all over the Los Angeles County region and beyond who came to enjoy the sand and surf a few blocks away at the Pacific Ocean shoreline.

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[80] My ideas about institution and community formation are informed by Williams Sturkey's discussion of these topics in *Hattiesburg: An American City in Black and White* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019).

[81] Lonnie Bunch, "The Great State for the Negro," in *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans In California*, eds. Lawrence DeGraaf, Kevin Mulroy and Quintard Taylor (Seattle and London: Autry Museum of Western Heritage and University of Washington Press, 2001), 138, 142; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge*, 55–56; Robert M. Fogelson with a foreword by Robert Fishman, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press,1967/1993), see Chapter 9.

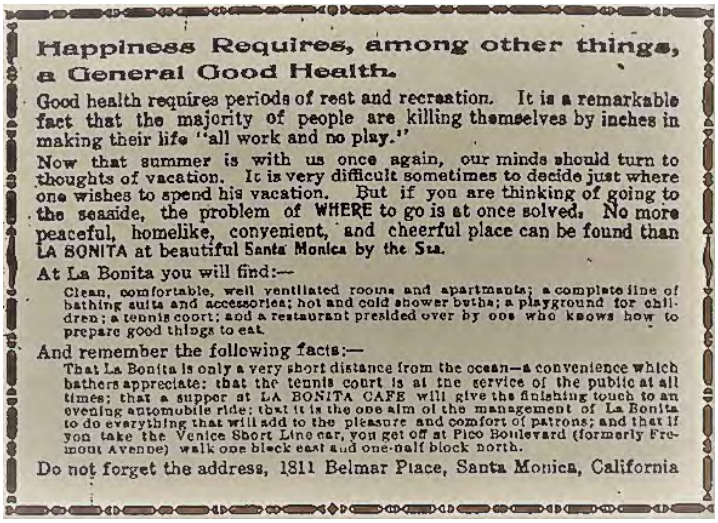
(Fig. 38) African American beachgoers at the Santa Monica Beach, 1928
Rick Blocker Collection

Hazel Maybier Brown (later Temple) *(far right)* and her fellow beachgoers are sitting in front of the future Edgewater beach club (today Shutters on the Beach hotel) at Pico Boulevard and the oceanfront in Santa Monica. After this and other private oceanfront clubs were erected, the beach where African Americans concentrated was just south of Pico Boulevard at Bay Street, known as the Bay Street Beach. African Americans were excluded from the lavish clubs' private facilities, but those establishments could not prohibit them from the enjoyment of public beaches.

The Belmar Triangle

The Black-owned bathhouse and lodge La Bonita (Figs. 39 and 40) first appears in ads around 1914. It was operated by Mrs. Frances Warner, with her husband, Mose, and their daughter, Mrs. Helen Warren. Located at 1811–1825 Belmar Place, this Santa Monica business would have a succession of owners and services in addition to lodging until the 1950s. The annual national guide *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (Fig. 41), which from 1936 to 1963 helped African American travelers find safe accommodations across the country, listed La Bonita for a few years as a tavern or bar. Although he was not a regular patron of bars, retired Santa Monica businessman Lloyd C. Allen remembered with a smile Thursday evenings at La Bonita during the 1940s, which were particularly "happening" because of all the maids who would socialize there when they got off work.[82]

Near the trolley stop at Belmar Place and Main Street, Dumas and Griswold operated The Arkansas Traveler inn, which specialized in their version of Southern style barbecue and fired chicken. The Sunset Lodge of African American Elks Club formed in 1925 in temporary quarters of what was once La Bonita's cafe space at 1811 Belmar Place. Thirty-four of Santa Monica's African American citizens were initiated into the lodge. Later, Knowles and Foster owned Everybody's Cafe, located at Fourth Street and Pico Boulevard. The establishment's 1940 ad in the short-lived, African American-owned *Bay Cities Informer* newspaper showcased their offerings of quick service, barbecue, and special chicken dinners on Sundays and Thursdays.[83] (Figs. 42 and 43)



Happiness Requires, among other things, a General Good Health.

Good health requires periods of rest and recreation. It is a remarkable fact that the majority of people are killing themselves by inches in making their life "all work and no play."

Now that summer is with us once again, our minds should turn to thoughts of vacation. It is very difficult sometimes to decide just where one wishes to spend his vacation. But if you are thinking of going to the seaside, the problem of WHERE to go is at once solved. No more peaceful, homelike, convenient, and cheerful place can be found than LA BONITA at beautiful Santa Monica by the Sea.

At La Bonita you will find:—

Clean, comfortable, well ventilated rooms and apartments; a complete line of bathing suits and accessories; hot and cold shower baths; a playground for children; a tennis court; and a restaurant presided over by one who knows how to prepare good things to eat.

And remember the following facts:—

That La Bonita is only a very short distance from the ocean—a convenience which bathers appreciate; that the tennis court is at the service of the public at all times; that a supper at LA BONITA CAFE will give the finishing touch to an evening automobile ride; that it is the one aim of the management of La Bonita to do everything that will add to the pleasure and comfort of patrons; and that if you take the Venice Short Line car, you get off at Pico Boulevard (formerly Fremont Avenue) walk one block east and one-half block north.

Do not forget the address, 1811 Belmar Place, Santa Monica, California

(Fig. 39) La Bonita business advertisement, *California Eagle*, August 8, 1915
Internet Archive (www.archive.org)

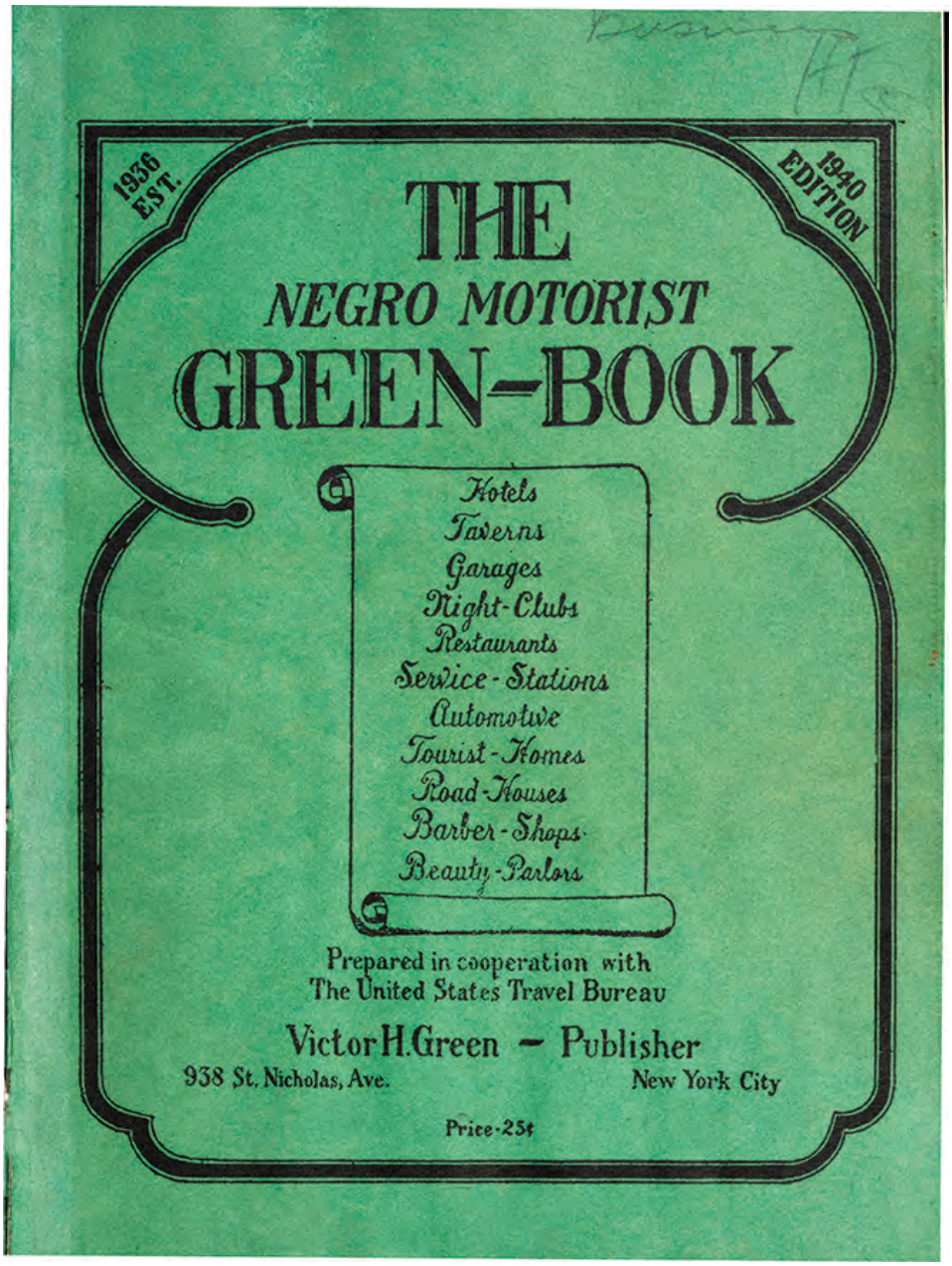
"No more peaceful, homelike, convenient, and cheerful place can be found than La Bonita at beautiful Santa Monica by the Sea," boasts La Bonita in this ad promoting the establishment as a source of "rest and relaxation" for "general good health."

[82] Lloyd C. Allen, Retired Santa Monica businessman and civic activist, interview by author, April 2005, Los Angeles, CA.

[83] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 88–89; The Sunset lodge possibly built a new meeting house for their activities at 1807 Belmar Place. "Colored Elks Form Santa Monica Lodge," *Evening Outlook*, November 28, 1925, 3; Everybody's Cafe ad, *Bay Cities Informer*, January 5, 1940, Quinn Research Center and Santa Monica History Museum Collections.

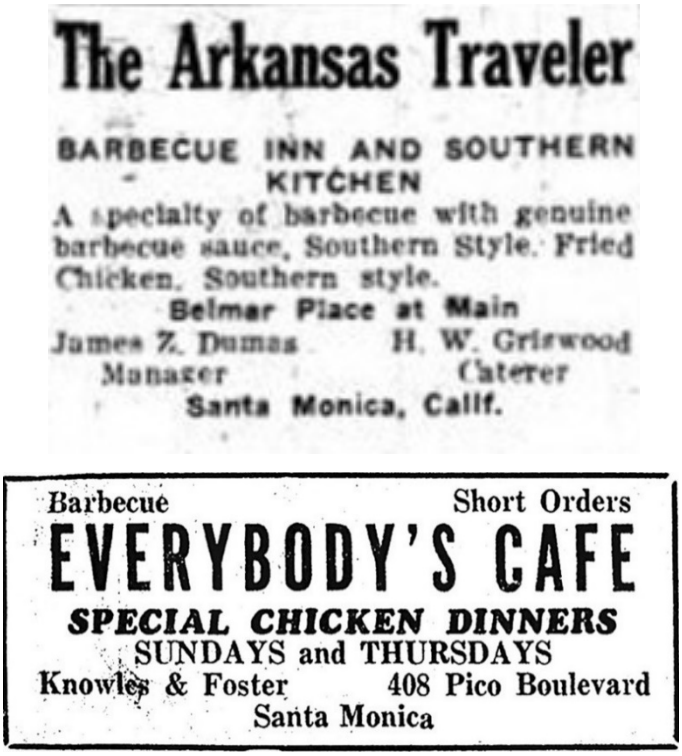
(Fig. 40) La Bonita business advertisement, *Los Angeles New Age*, August 28, 1914
Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

The Black-owned bathhouse and lodge, La Bonita, serviced African American clients, particularly those visiting the beach, from around 1914 through the 1950s on Belmar Place, a street that ran north and south between Pico Boulevard and Main Street where the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium is located in 2020.



(Fig. 41) ***The Negro Motorist Green Book,*** **1940**
New York Public Library Digital Collections

Under different management teams, portions of La Bonita's business lasted into the 1950s. Over the years, the establishment was sometimes listed in *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. From 1936 to 1963, this publication guided African Americans on the go to hotels, restaurants, garages, and other establishments that welcomed them.



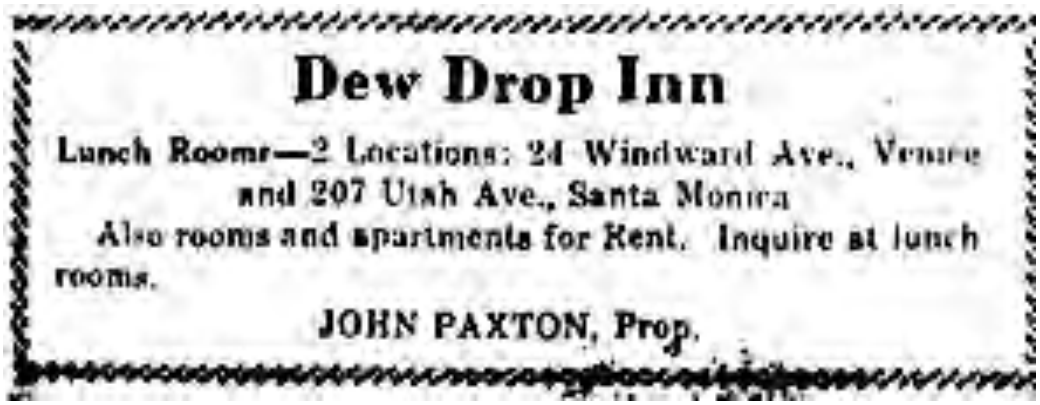
(Figs. 42 and 43) Advertisements, Santa Monica African American-owned businesses, 1930s–40s

(Top) The Arkansas Traveler, *California Eagle*, June 27, 1930
Internet Archive (www.archive.org)
(Bottom) Everybody's Cafe, *Bay Cities Informer*, January 5, 1940
Quinn Research Center and Santa Monica History Museum

North Santa Monica

North Santa Monica, where the Calvary Baptist Church purchased its first meeting space in the 1920s from the Seventh Day Adventists at Sixth Street and Broadway, also offered establishments that catered to African American residents and visitors. "Mr. A" and Julia Thurman ran The Rest-A-While at 1538 Fifth Street and Utah Avenue (today known as Broadway). As its moniker suggests, the Rest-A-While featured small cottages where African American out-of-towners could relax and change their clothes before walking down to the beach. Amanda and John Paxton, who lived in Ocean Park at 2019 Fourth Street, owned the Dew Drop Inn and Cafe at 207 Utah Avenue (today Second Street and Broadway), as well as a small apartment building. Donald Brunson, who grew up to be a leader in the Boy Scouts and other civic organizations as well as a U.S. Postal Service mail carrier, remembered walks by the store as a boy and admiring "the best looking pastries in town."[84] (Figs. 44 and 45)

[84] Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture."



(Figs. 44 and 45) Advertisments, North Santa Monica African American-owned businesses, 1930s
Internet Archive (www.archive.org)

(Top) Black beachgoers could change their clothes at the small cottages of the Rest-A-While, owned by "Mr. A" and Julia Thurman, at 1538 Fifth Street and Utah Avenue (aka Broadway); *California Eagle*, June 25, 1930

(Bottom) Amanda and John Paxton lived in Ocean Park at 2019 Fourth Street. They owned the Dew Drop Inn and Café, also located on Utah Avenue. *California Eagle*, June 27, 1930

Anti-Black Discrimination

While African Americans were able to develop some hospitality enterprises, other establishments were at risk. In 1922 White American homeowners in Ocean Park organized the Santa Monica Bay Protective League for the express purposes of keeping Blacks out of the area. With a particular attention to their business interests and their slogan "A Membership of One Thousand Caucasians," the league pursued one of its goals: to stop African American patrons from enjoying evening entertainment and relaxation activities near the beach.

Caldwell's Dance Hall

The Protective League's cause began after disagreements with the owner of a Black-owned nightclub for African Americans over his patrons' decorum. George W. Caldwell's dance hall was located at 1816 Third Street near Pico Boulevard, south of La Bonita on the southern border of the Belmar Triangle. On Sunday evenings, the popular night spot hosted events and parties, which league members asserted lasted all night. The league's complaints that Caldwell's customers were disorderly and that the place was "a public nuisance and detriment to the city" influenced Santa Monica authorities to pass an ordinance prohibiting dancing on Sundays in this area.[85]

At the time of this controversy, Caldwell's dance hall was the only place in Santa Monica where African Americans could go dancing at a nightclub. Caldwell, an African American, responded by moving his dances to weeknights (Fig. 46). The authorities then adopted "a blanket ban on dance halls in residential districts." Many African Americans believed that these discriminatory and aggressive policing actions were aimed at suppressing their freedom of expression and leisure pleasure enterprises. They saw such attempts to limit African American autonomy as examples of the encroaching Southern-style anti-Black discrimination that was then emerging in California and which needed to be prevented and eradicated (Fig. 47).[86]

Housing, Real Estate, and Employment

In addition to business and property ownership discrimination, African Americans and other people of color encountered informal discriminatory housing practices and racist restrictive real estate covenants that were sometimes written into property deeds. Both practices pushed African Americans into particular neighborhoods, like the Belmar Triangle and eventually the Pico Neighborhood, where they could rent relatively inexpensive housing for their new life opportunities. The anti-Black actions of the Santa Monica Bay Protective League and a Santa Monica newspaper editorial directed at African Americans summed up the sentiments of White residents succinctly and clearly: "We don't want you here; now and forever, this is a White man's town." The battle over the rhetoric of White supremacy, civil rights, and the denial of freedom escalated as more White Americans from the South continued to migrate West.[87]

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[85] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 89–90; "Protective League Made Permanent Organization," *Evening Outlook*, June 8, 1922; "League Asks Council to Close Hall," *Evening Outlook*, July 14, 1922, 1; "City Fathers to Restrict Dancing," *Evening Outlook*, July 24, 1922, 1.

[86] Flamming, *Bound for Freedom,* 272; Jefferson; "Protective League Made Permanent Organization"; "League Asks Council to Close Hall"; "City Fathers to Restrict Dancing."

[87] Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 200.

(Fig. 46) Business advertisement, Caldwell's Dance Hall, *California Eagle*, June 10, 1921
Internet Archive (www.archive.org)

Notices like this 1921 advertisement brought African Americans from all over the Los Angeles environs to George W. Caldwell's dance hall at 1816 Third Street. A year later, the city ruled against nightclubs in residential neighborhoods, just to close Caldwell's down. Throughout the Jim Crow era in California (1900s–60s), Whites prevented African Americans from holding businesses or property by the ocean. They believed this would keep more Black visitors away from the beach. Caldwell's popular dance hall was an early target. In 1922 members of a White homeowners' group, the Santa Monica Bay Protective League, convinced the city to shut it down.

(Fig. 47) Headlines from Black and White newspapers about anti-Black economic sabotage, April–July 1922
California Eagle; Internet Archive (www.archive.org); *Los Angeles Times*

This comparison of headlines from the African American-owned *California Eagle (top)* and the White-owned *Los Angeles Times (bottom)* shows Black and White perspectives on the economic sabotage actions toward African Americans in the early 1920s by White supremacists, which were designed to keep African Americans from establishing businesses and community sites by Santa Monica's Pacific oceanfront. White prejudice and sabotage dragged on throughout the twentieth century.

Despite White people's anti-Black racial hostility, African Americans had access to more employment opportunities, such as yard work and janitorial positions with the City of Santa Monica and with Douglas Aircraft (founded in 1921), Simon's Brickyard, and other businesses. Still, there would be no Black medical or dental professionals until the 1930s, policemen until the 1940s, firemen until the 1960s, and public schoolteachers until the mid-1950s. There would be a total of three Black churches by 1930, and an increase in the number of small businesses established in various clusters throughout the Black neighborhoods, which was augmented in later decades by two gas stations, an appliance store, a few beauty salons and barber shops, and several successful maintenance operations.[88]

Leisure Activities and the Santa Monica Beaches

The era's White supremacist economic sabotage to diminish Black wealth-building and its anti-Black racist animus did not prevent African Americans from developing a social space and a sense of place along Santa Monica's Pacific shoreline. In the mid-1920s, the oceanfront land where Blacks enjoyed the beach—near the former Crystal Plunge (swimming pool), which was wrecked by a 1905 storm and lay vacant around where Pico Boulevard met the sand—was sold to new owners, who constructed the exclusively White and lavish Casa del Mar and Edgewater beach clubs (Fig. 48). The site remembered in popular memory as the primary congregating place of African American beachgoers during the Jim Crow era moved south to around Bay Street and Bicknell Avenue in front of Santa Monica's Crescent Bay Park. African Americans from the Los Angeles environs rode the electric streetcar and came by automobile to the public shoreline, less than a quarter of a mile south of Pico Boulevard, to visit their friends and to socialize at a Southland beach where they would encounter less racially motivated harassment.[89]

History suggests that White people first used the controversial name "the Inkwell" for this beach site. The name, a pejorative reference to Black beachgoers' skin color, was used to describe several leisure sites around the country that were associated with African Americans during the Jim Crow era. Some African Americans took agency to repurpose the offensive term, transforming the hateful moniker into a badge of pride or belonging. Today the name is not universally used or recognized to describe places frequented by African Americans, even within the Black community.[90]

The Bay Street Beach was an enjoyed place of African American recreation and relaxation well into the mid-twentieth century, even after the nearby private White beach clubs and public beaches became a more important Santa Monica oceanfront center of cultural activities. Some African American visitors would stop by La Bonita, the Black-owned bathhouse and small lodge on

[88] Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,*106; Marcus Tucker, Jr., retired Long Beach judge and former Santa Monica resident, interview by author, April 2004, Los Angeles, CA; Nat Trives, former Santa Monica City Councilperson, interview by author, April 2005; 1920s Santa Monica & Bay Cities Directories.
[89] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 81–82; Nina Fresco, "Crescent Bay Park," unpublished paper, April 8, 2019.
[90] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 87.

(Fig. 48) Newlyweds Verna (Deckard) and Arthur Lewis posing in front of a fence demarcating the White-only Casa del Mar beach club at the Santa Monica Beach, 1924
Shades of L.A. Photo Collection/Los Angeles Public Library

These Black beachgoers were denied entry to the Casa del Mar beach club. Located along the ocean at Pico Boulevard, it was the first of many White beach clubs in the area. But African Americans did not give up their rights to public beaches. They found other beach space to enjoy further south between Bay Street and Bicknell Avenue.

Belmar Place, or Thurman's Rest-A-While at Fifth Street and Broadway in North Santa Monica. There they could rest, change their clothes, and rent a bathing suit as well as a guest room before proceeding to the beach.[91]

In an interview, Navallette Tabor Bailey (1914–2010), a niece of Arthur L Reese (see pages 63–65), recalled her visits to the Bay Street Beach. In her nineties and living in the family home in Venice, she described the fun occasions she had as a blossoming young woman at the beach and at parties in Santa Monica. With a girlish grin and the voice of a woman who had enjoyed her life, she told the author, "We would go up to the beach in Santa Monica so we could meet the L.A. boys." A retired Douglas Aircraft employee and nurse, she also remembered with great affection being in an Easter program at Phillips Chapel C.M.E. Church when she was four years old.[92]

In 2008 the City of Santa Monica officially recognized this important gathering place with a landmark monument at Bay Street and Oceanfront Walk that included a plaque titled "A Place of Celebration and Pain." Officials also recognized Nick Gabaldón, the first documented Southern California surfer of African American and Mexican American descent in the Santa Monica Bay. On June 26, 2019, more official acknowledgement of the site's significance occurred with its designation as the Bay Street Beach Historic District—extending to encompass fifty-three acres of public trust land—and the district's listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service. (Figs. 49–51) The Bay Street Beach Historic District is now formally recognized as an important national seaside site of recreation, leisure, and civil rights struggle by African Americans from all over the Los Angeles region and the nation during the Jim Crow era. It is the first historic district in Santa Monica to receive this national honor.[93]

[91] Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 272; Allen, interview by author, April 2005; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, Chapter 3.
[92] Bailey, interview by author, April 2005.
[93] Bay Street Beach Historic District for Listing on the NRHP!," Alison Rose Jefferson website, acc. December 24, 2019, http://alisonrosejefferson.com/national-park-service-approves-bay-street-beach-historic-district-listing-on-the-nrhp/.

(Fig. 49) Santa Monica Beach from the Pacific Ocean, no date
University of Southern California Libraries, California Historical Society Collection

(Fig. 50) A view of Santa Monica Beach Looking North from Ocean Park, no date
Santa Monica History Museum Collection, 36.2.3357

These two views show the location of the Bay Street Beach between the low, white structure of the Pacific Bath House and the Casa del Mar beach club to the north. From the mid-1920s into the 1960s, African Americans from South Santa Monica and throughout the Los Angeles region favored using this public beach in the stretch of sand between Bay Street and Bicknell Avenue for recreational and leisure activities.

(Fig. 51) Postcard, Looking South Toward Ocean Park from Beach Clubs, Santa Monica, California (Los Angeles: Western Publishing & Novelty Co., no date)
Alison Rose Jefferson Collection

In this stylized drawing, the Bay Street Beach is just south of the lifeguard tower, the small yellow, octagon-shaped building with the red tile roof. The palette of grouped umbrellas of the White-only Casa del Mar beach club is a colorful example of White privilege and advantage at the public beaches.

Property Ownership and Land Development by the Beach

At the same time the Santa Monica Bay Protective League was closing down Caldwell's dance hall in 1922, it blocked the development by of an African American investment group led by businessmen Charles S. Darden, Esq. and Norman O. Houston to build a "first-class resort with beach access" at Pico Boulevard and the oceanfront, the site today of the Shutters on the Beach hotel. Due to White opposition, including its expression at a city council meeting, the Santa Monica authorities denied a construction permit for the proposed African American resort. Understanding this displeasure, then White property owner, William P. Roberts, father-in-law of Harry H. Culver (founder of Culver City), rescinded the property sale, which was already in a lease-to-buy arrangement.[94]

[94] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, Chapter 3; "Harry Culver Agrees to Subscribe $10,000 to Buy Sand at Pico," *Evening Outlook*, June 1,1922, 1, 8.

Additional measures were also implemented to attempt to bar African Americans from the beach. White American property owners who had recently subdivided several lots of beach frontage "placed a Caucasian restriction on their properties, barring Negroes from ownership or occupation." These White owners, including Carl F. Schader, George M. Jones, Robert C. Gillis, Charles "Roy" Leroy Bundy, and their associates, urged other property owners throughout the area to also institute the Caucasian clause in order to prevent the leasing, occupancy, or sale of any property to persons not of Caucasian origin.[95]

A philosophy was also emerging from White civic leaders that the beaches should be preserved for the public, particularly where African American land development projects were concerned. During the 1920s several "save the beach for the public" campaigns were implemented to keep African Americans from creating or maintaining beach-front resorts. In 1923 these efforts blocked African American businessman and aspiring politician Titus Alexander from building a "beach park for the amusement of the Los Angeles African American community" near what is now the Hyperion Water Treatment Plant in El Segundo. Bruces' Beach (also known as Bruces' Lodge) in Manhattan Beach, which had provided African Americans recreation space in the South Bay beginning in 1912, was forced to close. The Bruce family, other African Americans, and a few Whites with vacation homes in this Manhattan Beach section were evicted under the banner of a campaign that the land should be used for a public park in 1924–25. One of the uglier campaigns to keep African Americans from enjoying the beach and related business opportunities was the destruction of the nearly completed Pacific Beach Club in Huntington Beach in 1926. Arsonists burned the beautiful new facility to the ground shortly before it was scheduled to open.[96]

After Bruces' Beach was razed, in 1927 the N.A.A.C.P. challenged a ploy by authorities to make Manhattan Beach's African American resort community a White-only beach. They leased the beach area, taken by eminent domain laws, to a private individual for a dollar per year. The leasee, however, excluded African Americans. After a series of maneuvers—including the first Los Angeles-area civil disobedience protest organized by the N.A.A.C.P. to challenge the private lease on what was supposed to be public land—Manhattan Beach trustees revoked the private lease and upheld unrestricted beach access for all. After this, as African Americans became more confident in demanding their rights to public beach space, attempts of racial restrictions at public beaches began to fade away. In spite of various unpleasant anti-Black events that persisted even into the 1950s, many African Americans from all over the Los Angeles region continued to visit wonderful sites for the pleasures offered by the Pacific Ocean's shoreline.[97]

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[95] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, Chapter 3; "Harry Culver Agrees to Subscribe $10,000 to Buy Sand at Pico"; "Community Welfare Body Is Formed to Act on Colored Amusement Resort Question," *Evening Outlook*, May 24, 1922, 1.

[96] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 43–44, 94–95, 195–201; "Grand Jury Probe Urge in Riot," *L.A. Sentinel*, August 29, 1940, 1.

[97] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 46–48, 72–73.

There were also personal assaults on individual African Americans designed to inhibit their freedom to use the public beaches north of Santa Monica, in Manhattan Beach, and even near the Santa Monica Pier as late as 1940. Some incidents turned violent. Legal challenges were made to these discriminatory practices. Victory in a lawsuit was awarded to Arthur Valentine after he was shot by off-duty sheriffs for crossing onto what was purported to be private beach property near Topanga Canyon with his family and friends at a Memorial Day celebration in 1920. The Grand Jury indicted the deputies for assault with a deadly weapon with intent to do bodily harm, but after three years in court the charges against deputy sheriffs Archie Cooper and Frank DeWar were dismissed, allegedly due to "insufficient evidence." As a 1947 *California Eagle* newspaper commentary, which included a discussion about the Valentine case, asserted, "while a satisfactory victory was not won, at least Negroes of this community served notice on that element seeking to establish a Jim Crow policy on the ocean beaches . . . they would fight to the last ditch to protect and preserve their citizenship rights."[98]

[98] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 85, 249n35; Pablo Capra, "Cooper's Camp," Brass Tasks Press Blog, acc. December 23, 2019, http://brasstackspress.blogspot.com/2019/06/lower-topanga-archive-6-17-19.html; "On the Sidewalk" column, *California Eagle*, January 2, 1947; Flamming, *Bound for Freedom,* 183.

1930s and 1940s: Forces for Change

During the Depression years of the 1930s, South Santa Monica's amusement and resort business started to decline. Racial bigotry, unemployment, vice, local government corruption, and an earthquake all had a negative impact on the City of Santa Monica. Young gymnasts and street performers established an area in the sand just south of the Santa Monica Pier that became known as Muscle Beach. Watching the workouts of athletes and performers became a very popular free weekend activity, even for a few African American beach visitors. The bodybuilding sport and careers of "fitness innovators" such as Joe Gold of Gold's Gym and Jack LaLanne were launched from their days showing off at Muscle Beach. Airplane orders from Douglas Aircraft were an economic bright spot for the city. As tourism declined, Douglas employment grew for all Santa Monica residents, although proportionally not as much for African Americans. With the limited social reforms and benefits of the New Deal and Work Progress Administration (W.P.A.) programs, after 1932 the U.S. Postal Service and other federal, state, and local agencies opened up employment opportunities for African Americans. Several in Santa Monica found work as mail carriers and at other government agencies.[99]

Santa Monica took advantage of W.P.A. funds to construct a number of new facilities, including a new City Hall in 1938–39 near Main Street and the arroyo (today the Santa Monica 10 Freeway). This helped to provide jobs, including for African American Vernon Brunson (1909–1987), who became an architectural designer. Through a competition, he contributed to the design of the new Classic Art Deco-style City Hall, with Donald B. Parkinson and Joseph M. Estep as the project architects of record. Vernon was also a member of the Architectural Review Board for this new facility. In addition to his design, drafting work, and small construction projects, he was a contributing writer to the *California Eagle* newspaper and a Santa Monica correspondent for the *Associated Negro Press*.

The construction of the Main Street Bridge over the arroyo in 1925 had made South Santa Monica more accessible to the northside and the business district. This and the city's increasing population expanded and created new neighborhoods further inland from the coastal zone. In 1938–39 a new Santa Monica City Hall building was constructed on an eight-acre unimproved land tract, once a freight depot owned by the Southern Pacific Railway Company north of the Belmar Triangle neighborhood. It replaced the old City Hall built in 1903 at the corner of Fourth Street and Santa Monica Boulevard. As early as 1931, Santa Monica elected officials had asked voters for funding to improve the 1903 facility via a number of ballot propositions, but without success. One proposition asked for funding to repair the old building and enlarge the campus at its North Santa Monica

[99] Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 106, 110–11; Ed Mooseburgger, "Sleepy SM Leaps on Industrial Bandwagon," 4C; Octavia B. Vivian, *The Story of the Negro in Los Angeles County 1936*, compiled by Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, under the Supervision of Hugh Harlan, Washington, D.C., 1956, 35.

location. Another sought to acquire "lands at some suitable location between Colorado Avenue and Pico Boulevard and Fourth Street and Ocean Avenue . . . for a Civic Center site."[100]

Along with these changes to the city's civic environment, the activist tradition in the Santa Monica African American community turned up a notch in the 1930s as national laws were passed that aided African Americans across the country in the struggle to assert and maintain their civil rights as it related to housing and employment discrimination. Men like the Reverends Welford P. Carter (1903–1965) and Alfred K. Quinn (1895–1981), the Rev. Quinn's son, Alfred T. Quinn, and others would be important motivating forces for change in the city and the African American community. They worked to break down barriers to employment in the public and the private sectors. During this decade, a few African American entrepreneurs continued to build service businesses and new healthcare professional practices opened. African Americans were able to find places to rent and buy in Santa Monica, even though fewer of them could live in the South Santa Monica neighborhoods closer to the beach due to a combination of increased housing and land costs and racial discrimination.[101]

As Santa Monica's Black population joined African Americans around the nation in their impatience for social and economic equity and in their heightened social activism against racist discrimination, they nevertheless pursued rich cultural and social lives that cemented their connection to the community. Afro-Angeleno Wallace Decuir, a retired Los Angeles firefighter and businessman who was also a Cosmos Club member, recalls enjoyable family outings to Santa Monica in the 1930s and 1940s to visit the Quinn, Whitaker, Tucker, and Carter families. He had found memories of riding his bicycle with his friends from his home near Central and Vernon Avenues in Los Angeles to Santa Monica, along with picnics at the Bay Street Beach. Price M. Cobbs, M.D., the author's uncle—who was a management consultant, coauthor with William H. Grier, M.D. of the classic *Black Rage* (1968), and author of *My American Life: From Rage to Entitlement* (2005)—remembers as a youth growing up in 1940s Los Angeles going to Santa Monica with other boys of his church, Phillips Temple C.M.E. in Los Angeles, to help install a new roof on the Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.[102]

Although African Americans in Santa Monica established their own short-lived newspapers—*The Bay Cities Informer* (1940), *The Plaindealer* (1944), and *The Glancing* magazine (1950s)—to help disseminate information to the local community, many also subscribed to African American publications in Los Angeles, such as the *California Eagle*, the *New Age/New Age Dispatch,* and the

[100] Proposition No. 4 discussion, Santa Monica City Council Minutes Book, December 1, 1931, 245–46; "Santa Monica Offers Old Municipal Building for Sale," *Los Angeles Times*, July 17, 1938, 8.
[101] Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 128; Mooseburgger, "Sleepy SM Leaps on Industrial Bandwagon," 10B; Nat Trives, former Santa Monica City Councilperson, interview by author, April 2005, Los Angeles, CA; Anne Morgenthaler, "SM Negro Leader Dies," *Evening Outlook*, January 22, 1965, 1; "First African American Methodist Church by the Sea History," ca. 1970s.
[102] Wallace Decuir, Los Angeles resident and retired fireman and businessman, interview by author, November 1, 2004, Los Angeles, CA.

Los Angeles Sentinel. They sought news about Santa Monica, as well as regional and national news that was important to help uplift the Black community for social and political advancement.[103]

The Reverend Welford P. Carter

The Reverend Welford P. Carter, originally from Louisiana, and his wife, Blanche A. Nelson Carter (1904–2000), who was born in Arkansas, married and teamed up in Los Angeles in 1924. The power couple left their marks as leaders in many areas of service to the Santa Monica community and as California citizens. Their achievements have been almost erased from public memory and most certainly overlooked in written local history narratives. (Fig. 52)

(Fig. 52) The Reverend Welford P. Carter and his wife, Blanche A. Nelson Carter, 1964
Santa Monica History Museum, Outlook Collection, 1998.1.603

Blanche A. Nelson Carter was a college graduate and educator. She was the first African American-elected official in Santa Monica, serving on the School Board for almost ten years (1968–77). Her husband, the Reverend Welford P. Carter, was an educator, too—of hope and faith. In the 1940s, the Rev. Carter, pastor at the Calvary Baptist Church, was the first African American to run for a Santa Monica City Council seat.

[103] Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 128.

The Rev. Carter developed some of his skills from watching his father, a Baptist minister in Louisiana who was a pioneer in the Southern civil rights movement, and from his training at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. His formal divinity training was at the West Coast Theological Seminary of Berkeley, California (today the American Baptist Seminary of the West). Beginning in 1939 and for the next twenty-five years, he served as pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in accordance with his philosophy that the church was the center of his congregants' spiritual, social, and cultural life. Before he died in 1965 at age sixty-two, the Rev. Carter grew the congregation from seventy to 1,200 members. He led the campaign to purchase land for a new and larger church building at Twentieth Street and Broadway in 1947 and an education center in 1955. The latter building was renamed in his honor as the Welford P. Carter Educational Center in 1960.[104]

The Rev. Carter's leadership extended beyond Santa Monica, with more than thirty years of service in the Western Baptist State Convention, where he also acted for a time as president and executive director. He also served as a board member of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. He had very firm convictions and was vocal about the clergy's role as an important force in the long civil rights struggle and as leaders in the fight for equal rights. In the 1940s, he was president of the N.A.A.C.P. Santa Monica-Venice branch. As has been overlooked, while he was serving as the Santa Monica Race Relations Committee chairman and its representative to the Los Angeles Country Race Relations Committee, in 1947 the Rev. Carter became the first African American candidate in Santa Monica history—in a field of forty-six candidates—to seek election to the Santa Monica City Council. With the support of progressive groups and Mexican American organizations, he ran in the first election held under a new city charter that included a Fair Employment Practices clause. Political observers of the era thought that the Rev. Carter had a good chance of winning the post. Mexican American Salvadore Morales also ran in this city council election cycle. Both men were supported by liberal groups that thought the council should include Mexican American and Black American elected representatives.[105]

The Rev. Carter placed ninth in a very close election. Since the top seven candidates were automatically elected, there was no runoff. Although he missed getting elected by a small margin, the Rev. Carter, at the time a former president of the local N.A.A.C.P. branch, was chosen by city employees as a representative on Santa Monica's seven-member Personnel Board. This was at a period in American history when a reactionary, antilabor offensive was on the rise across the country. The African American-owned *Los Angeles Sentinel* newspaper reported that the Rev. Carter was elected by a group of White Santa Monica employees who were drawn to his program to further democracy in the government's employment practices and his defense of labor's rights during his city council run. His support of the working person and African American entrepreneurship

[104] Morgenthaler, "SM Negro Leader Carter Dies"; "Church Has Varied Hold on Negroes," Special Supplement, *Evening Outlook*, April 24, 1964, 11A; "Welford P. Carter," California, County Birth, Marriage, and Death Records (1849–1980) and "Blanche N. Carter," U.S. Social Security Applications and Claims Index (1936–2007), Ancestry.com; "Rev. Carter in Santa Monica Council Race," *L.A. Sentinel*, February 6, 1947, 1; Leake, "The History of Calvary Baptist Church," October 20, 2001.

[105] "Rev. Carter in Santa Monica Council Race," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, February 6, 1947, 1; Morgenthaler, "SM Negro Leader Carter Dies"; "Church Has Varied Hold on Negroes."

threaded through the Rev. Carter's lifetime of service to his Calvary Baptist congregation and Santa Monica citizens. Because of his leadership position in the Santa Monica community and the region, he was able to informally help some African Americans find employment, acquire loans for home purchases, and receive assistance in developing their businesses. It is likely that some who benefited from his spiritual guidance and community leadership at one time lived in South Santa Monica neighborhoods in the Civic Center area. In his leisure time, the Rev. Carter was a deep-sea fisherman in the Pacific Ocean waters off the California coast, where he enjoyed catching big fish like albacore tuna.[106]

The Rev. Carter's wife, Blanche A. Nelson Carter, was a recognized powerhouse in her own right and held many community positions of responsibility. She graduated from Woodbury College, Santa Monica College, and University of California, Los Angeles and taught elementary school for several years. She was a sought-after speaker and conducted workshops and study groups for interdenominational and interracial groups. Like her husband, she was associated with numerous civic, community, and religious groups, serving at one time on the boards of the Santa Monica Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.), the American Red Cross, and the Community Concert Association. She was president of the Santa Monica Bay Area Council of Churches and held other leadership positions in the Women's Auxiliary to the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., including director of missionary education, and was an active member of the youth development department for many years. Blanche Carter also worked with the coordinating council of the N.A.A.C.P., the Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.), the National Council of Negro Women, and the Girl Scout Council. The Carters' work with others for community betterment and quality education for all would open up opportunities for African Americans as Santa Monica elected officials in the 1960s–70s.[107]

Norman E. Hensley

Norman Elijah Hensley (b. 1938) was born and raised in Santa Monica following his parents Nathan (1904–1985) and Adela's (1901–1985) move to the city from Little Rock, Arkansas, in the mid-1930s. He and his college-educated parents joined family members who had migrated to Santa Monica and Los Angeles. In the Hensleys' early Santa Monica years, they lived in the Belmar Triangle area at 321 Pico Boulevard. When Norman was a student in the 1940s at John Muir Elementary and at John Adams Jr. High (today called John Adams Middle School), they lived at 621 Bay Street. While he was attending Santa Monica High School, his parents purchased a home

[106] "Rev. Carter Nosed Out," *L.A. Sentinel*, March 20, 1947, 1; "SWP Organizer Withdraws: Back Caston, Hudson," *L.A. Sentinel*, February 20, 1947, 2; "Liberals Support Carter for Council In Santa Monica," *L.A. Sentinel*, March 13, 1947, 9; Trives Interview, March 24, 2020; "Rev. Carter: profile of a Negro Leader," Special Supplement, *Evening Outlook*, April 24, 1964, 12A.

[107] "Rev. Carter: Profile of a Negro Leader"; "S.M. Woman Will Fill Term on School Board," *L.A. Times*, October, 6, 1968, WS3; "Mrs. Blanche N. Carter Named School Board Prexy," *L.A. Sentinel*, August 10, 1972, A3; "Supervisors Cite Blanche Carter," *L.A. Sentinel*, November 12, 1970, C8.

at 1528–1530 Sixteenth Street between Colorado and Broadway Boulevards at a property that stayed in the family until the 2010s.[108] (Figs. 53–55)

From around 1935 to the 1970s, Norman's father, Nathan M. Hensley, owned a used car lot at 888 Santa Monica Boulevard. He worked as a mechanic with his White business partner, Robert "Bob" Fonell, from Venice who served as the front person in sales, especially to Whites and in other situations where it was useful. Selling cars to African Americans was an important service as it helped them to travel around the United States freely with dignity and to control their own destiny. In an interview with the author, Norman described how his father regularly dined for lunch with Fonell and at meetings for the local White-dominated business organization at the renowned Fox and Hounds Restaurant, which opened in 1947 on Wilshire Boulevard near Twenty-ninth Street. This

(Figs. 53 and 54) The Hensley Family, 1945–46
Norman E. Hensley Collection

The Hensleys first lived at 321 Pico Boulevard in the Belmar Triangle and later at 621 Bay Street (1940s) in Ocean Park. Nathan was a car mechanic and a business partner of a used car lot. In selling cars to African Americans, he helped them show off their dignity in public and ensured their personal freedom and safety when traveling during the Jim Crow era. Adela worked as a hotel maid. Their son, Norman, was born in Santa Monica. He became a U.S. Air Force colonel and a director of the Veteran's Administration Medical Center. These photographs show him around age seven and peeking out the front window of the family's Cadillac.

[108] Norman Hensley, retired U.S. Air Force Colonel, Veteran's Administration Medical director, and former Santa Monica resident, interview by author, December 14, 2016, Fairfield, CA.

(Fig. 55) Norman Hensley at a school Minstrel/Black Face minstrel pageant, ca. mid-1940s
Norman E. Hensley Collection

Norman Hensley appears in this photograph of Minstrel/Black Face pageant attendees at Santa Monica's John Muir Elementary School in the background *(left of center)*. During the 1940s, when he was in grade school, Minstrel/Black Face imagery was included in the school curriculum and in plays, music (Stephen Foster songs, 1830s), and costumes. In the 1930s, the federal Work Progress Administration distributed these Jim Crow discrimination materials masquerading as American culture to schools all across the nation. In California, African American parents worked successfully with the N.A.A.C.P. to remove these materials from the public education system.

was at a time while other men of color worked for the restaurant's service staff. Norman's mother, Adelia, had been a schoolteacher and principal in Little Rock. When she could not get hired as a teacher in Santa Monica due to the school district's discriminatory hiring practices, she found a job as a maid at the Charmont Hotel at Third Street and California Avenue (now the Charmont Apartments, opened 1929).[109]

After high school, Norman received his undergraduate education degree in Biology at the University of California, Los Angeles and his graduate education in Public Health at Harvard University, graduating in 1956 and 1974, respectively. As a career military man, he rose to the rank of colonel in the U.S. Air Force and worked as a hospital administrator and a director of the Veteran's Administration Medical Center for most of his working career. An only child, he has fond memories of growing up in Santa Monica. He believes that because his father was a successful local businessman, he was hassled less by Whites. In discussions with Norman, it is hard to uncover in the nuances of his recollections the truth about the level of prejudice and racism he may have experienced during his formative years. In his elder years, Norman recalled challenging his White Santa Monica High School teachers when they would utter anti-Black racist and discriminatory remarks during classroom lessons and in their dealings with him—despite being a good student and successful athlete.[110]

Hensley's experience growing up in Santa Monica was vastly different from African Americans just a decade earlier, like that of the young Donald Brunson, who was denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America until an integrated troop was formed in 1925. Even then, he could not gain his swimming merit badge because he was not allowed to swim in private and public pools. Instead, he had to swim the fifty yards required distance in the Pacific Ocean to fulfill the badge requirements. It was not until 1940 that African American scouts were allowed to participate in swimming meets at the Miramar Club pool.[111]

Doctors Marcus O. Tucker and George E. Hurd

Doctors Marcus Othello Tucker (1895–1944), a physician, and George E. Hurd (1906–2001), a dentist, were the first African American medical professionals who lived in and served the Santa Monica community beginning in the 1930s. Early in their careers, they both maintained offices and/or resided in Ocean Park. In 1940 the *California Eagle* announced that the two had celebrated the formal opening of their new offices on November 10 that year in a new building constructed by Dr. Tucker at 424 Pico Boulevard. This building, in 2020, is not yet formally recognized as a historic local, state, or national landmark.[112] (Fig. 56)

[109] Hensley, interview by author, December 14, 2016.
[110] Hensley interview.
[111] Brunson, interview by Wurf, 1991, 9.
[112] M.L. Gilmore, "Birthday Party Honors Venice Man," *California Eagle*, November 14,1940, 3-A.

(Fig. 56) Dr. Marcus O. Tucker's 1940 medical building, 2020
Photograph by Jason Abraham

There were no African American doctors or dentists in Santa Monica . . . until Marcus Othello Tucker and George E. Hurd arrived in the 1930s. Drs. Tucker and Hurd practiced at 404/402-B Pico Boulevard, at the corner of Pico Boulevard and Fourth Street, in the Black-owned landmark building of Manuel and Julia Murrell until 1940. In that year, Dr. Tucker built a medical building at 424 Pico Boulevard across from the Belmar Triangle and Santa Monica High School. He and Dr. Hurd moved their offices there and continued to provide quality healthcare to the community. The Tucker building was the first Black-owned medical facility in Santa Monica. Here he and Dr. George Hurd administered to African American, Mexican American, and White patients alike.

As there were not enough African Americans in Santa Monica to solely support their practices, both doctors treated a combination of African Americans, Mexican Americans, Whites, and other groups as patients. Both developed substantial practices and were engaged in various civic and community projects to make life better for African Americans in the Santa Monica community and the region. The Tucker medical building and the two doctors' success were a source of tremendous pride in the African American community. In contemporary times and with the community's changed socioeconomic circumstances and inland geographic movement, the significance of this building as an anchor and landmark for community making and their success and accomplishments as a source of pride takes on new meaning.[113]

[113] Gilmore, "Birthday Party Honors Venice Man"; "The Negro in the Greater Santa Monica Bay Area" Special Supplement, *Evening Outlook*, April 24, 1964, 7A, 14A; *Physicians and Nurses Directory 1930, California Occupational*

Dr. Tucker had left the Kansas City environs of Missouri around 1930 with his mother, Elizabeth, and his brothers, Ralph and Earl, to begin new lives in Santa Monica. He had trained to become a physician and surgeon at the University of Missouri and graduated in 1928 from the venerable African American medical and healthcare training institution, the Meharry School of Medicine in Nashville, Tennessee. As was the custom in Missouri at the time, the state paid for Dr. Tucker to train in Nashville because Black medical students could not work in Missouri's White hospital wards.[114]

The Tuckers settled in Santa Monica. In 1930 the *California Physicians and Nurses Directory* listed Dr. Tucker's address as 612 Bay Street in the Ocean Park district. Later, in 1937, Marcus and his wife, Essie, a graduate of Fisk University in Nashville, purchased a lot and built a house at 1958 Twentieth Street inland from the beach. Designed by the renowned African American architect Paul Revere Williams of Los Angeles, the house was constructed by the equally well-known African American general contractor Wince V. King, who was often hired to construct Williams-designed homes for successful African American professionals and entrepreneurs. The Tuckers were one of the few African American families who lived in this section of Santa Monica, which at that time was near the edge of town. The Tucker residence is one of the few Williams-designed structures known to survive in Santa Monica.[115]

Before Dr. Tucker died in 1944 at age forty-eight, in addition to managing his private practice he had served on the staffs of the Santa Monica, Culver City, and St. John's Hospitals and at the Santa Monica Health Clinic. He was a member of the American Medical Association and of the Los Angeles County Medical Association. The Tuckers were actively involved in the civic life of Santa Monica and Los Angeles. Dr. Tucker was a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and the Knights of Pythias.[116]

Mrs. Essie L. McLendon Tucker (1904–1988) was a partner with her husband in social, civic, and business activities. She forged her own leadership path before and after his death to encourage a better lifestyle for African Americans and on behalf of Santa Monica community members generally. After graduating from Fisk, she was a schoolteacher in Georgia before she married and moved to Santa Monica. She began teaching in the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1945 at a time when the Santa Monica school district's continued discriminatory employment policies prohibited hiring African American teachers. She was also a successful businesswoman, particularly in the real estate area. In 1941 she became the first African American to serve on the Board of Directors of the Santa Monica Y.W.C.A. and, in 1964, on the Santa Monica Real Estate Board. She was president of the N.A.A.C.P.'s Santa Monica-Venice branch in the 1940s. An active member of

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Licenses, Registers and Directories (1876–1969), California Death Index, 1940–1997, and U.S. Social Security Death Index, 1935–2014, Ancestry.com.

[114] Tucker, interview by author, April 2004, Via Telephone; Marcus Othello Tucker, 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.

[115] *Physicians and Nurses Directory 1930, California Occupational Licenses, Registers and Directories (1876–1969*); Marcus O. Tucker Residence, Santa Monica, CA, acc. March 14, 2020, https://www.paulrwilliamsproject.org/gallery/residence-dr-marcus-o-tucker-santa-monica-ca/.

[116] "Dr. M.O. Tucker Claimed by Death," *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, March 14, 1944, 3.

the Los Angeles chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, she rose to a regional national leadership position in this organization. She was also a leader in the National Council of Negro Women and the Women's Auxiliary of the National Medical Association. Essie Tucker loved to travel, especially internationally. As early as the 1920s, she embarked on her first international travel adventure, a six-week European tour.[117]

The Tuckers' son, Marcus O. Tucker, Jr. (1934–2012), became Santa Monica's first African American deputy city attorney, serving from 1963 to 1965, and the first African American Long Beach Municipal Court judge. He later rose to be a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge. He was an early advocate of restorative justice for teenage offenders. The younger Tucker maintained a lifelong enjoyment of popular dancing; his friends say he was a good dancer. Former Santa Monica Mayor Nat Trives, the first African American mayor in the city (1975–77) and the younger Tucker's longtime friend, fondly remembers introductions to the world of Black celebrity at the Tucker home, where he was invited to many social events.[118]

Dr. George E. Hurd, Jr. (1906–2001) and his wife, Ella Laura Fisher Hurd (1908–1996), made their way to Santa Monica after living in Los Angeles. A man of many talents, Dr. Hurd had learned about Santa Monica during his travels as a sideman playing saxophone and clarinet with accomplished band leaders such as Kid Ory and Lionel Hampton. This skill helped him pay his way through the University of California, Berkeley, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1934 and a Doctorate of Dental Science a year later. He was the first of three African Americans to attend and graduate from the University of California, Berkeley Dental School. The Hurds married in 1929 and evidence suggests that his wife most likely also earned her bachelor's degree alongside her husband at UC Berkeley.[119]

Born in Houston, Texas, Dr. Hurd and his parents moved to Oakland, California, in 1916, when he was eleven. An only child, from an early age Dr. Hurd learned from his parents that the best paths for African American success were in the professions. His father had made a living as a railroad dining car waiter and his mother worked as a seamstress from home. As the interviewer in a 1964 Santa Monica *Evening Outlook* newspaper article observed about him, "Music had its charms, but those of dentistry were more substantial." Dr. Hurd's wife, Ella Laura, was born and raised in San Francisco. Her father, John, was an insurance company clerk, while her mother, Ella,

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[117] Tucker, interview by author, April 2004; "Alpha Kappa Alpha's Pioneering Sorors Open Doors," acc. March 14, 2020, http://akapioneers.aka1908.com/index.php/component/mtree/vocations/community-organizations-1/2234-tucker-essie-j?Itemid=; Santa Monica Council Seats New Officers," *L.A. Sentinel*, June 18, 1964, C2; "Mrs. Tucker Named Woman of the Year by Seta Phi Beta Sorority of L.A.," *Evening Outlook*, March 5, 1964, 9.

[118] Josh Dulaney, "Marcus O. Tucker, 1934–2015: Superior Court Judge Who Helped Troubled Kids Turn Lives around Dies at 80," *Press–Telegram*, August 10, 2015; "Santa Monica Black Legal Pioneer Dies," *Santa Monica Lookout*, August 26, 2015.

[119] George E. Hurd and Ella L. Fisher Hurd, 1910, 1920, 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census, U.S. Social Security Death Index (1935–2014), and U.S. Social Security Application and Claims Index (1936–2007), Ancestry.com; "Two More Negro Success Stories"; "The Negro in the Greater Santa Monica Bay Area," Special Supplement, *Evening Outlook*, April 24, 1964, 7A, 14A.

managed a household that in addition to herself and her husband included six children, a nephew, and a lodger.[120]

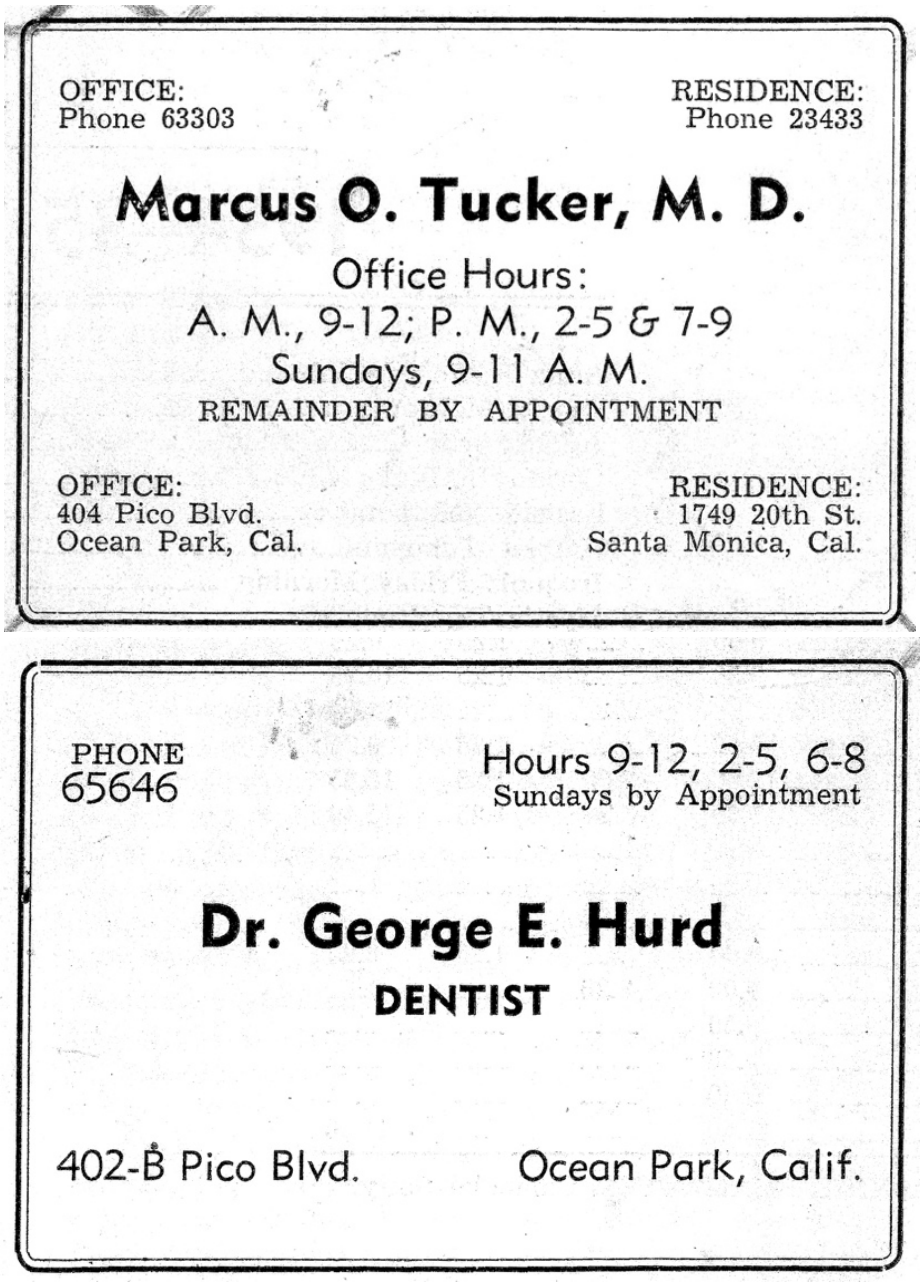
At the time Dr. Tucker opened his medical building in 1940, the Hurds were renting office space at 402-B Pico Boulevard (Figs. 57 and 58) in the building a few doors west that was owned, since the mid-1920s, by the African Americans Manuel and Julia Murrell (see pages 55–56). Dr. Hurd had opened his dental practice in 1935, and Ella served as his assistant. After serving in World War II as an Army Dental Corps captain in Italy and Africa, Dr. Hurd hired well-known African American architect James H. Garrott of Los Angeles and construction manager Don Ely of Culver City to construct a new professional building for him at 1871 Ninth Street, north of Pico Boulevard and east of Lincoln Avenue. The *Los Angeles Sentinel* reported that Dr. Hurd held an open house event for his new dental facility on April 18, 1948. During this period, the Hurd family purchased a mid-century modern ranch-style home at 2401 Beverley Avenue, a few blocks south of Pico Boulevard in Ocean Park. Both buildings continue to stand in 2020.[121]

After surmounting some opposition from White community members, Dr. Hurd began his tenure on the Santa Monica Planning Commission around 1955, serving for more than ten years. In another election attempt for Santa Monica civic service, he also twice ran, unsuccessfully, to become a Santa Monica School District Board of Education member in the 1950s. He held an appointment on the Board of Education's Lay Advisory Committee in 1956 and on the Citizens Advisory Committee in 1958. Dr. Hurd also served on the Board of Directors of the Boys Club of Santa Monica, the American Red Cross, and the Family Service of Santa Monica. He and Ella were socially active with several civic organizations and clubs in the Santa Monica-Venice and Los Angeles areas, including with the San-Mo-Venice Couples Club, which for many years held an annual elaborate costume-themed gala.[122]

[120] "Two More Negro Success Stories"; 1910 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.

[121] The children of Dr. and Mrs. Hurd, Jr. were born after the 1940 U.S. Census, or if they were born before this census count they were not listed in the enumeration sheet. "The Negro in the Greater Santa Monica Bay Area"; "Dr. Hurd Holds Open House at New Offices," *L.A. Sentinel*, April 29, 1948, 12; Bill Robertson, "Resort City Needs Negro Leadership," *L.A. Sentinel*, January 26, 1967, D1.

[122] "Dentist B of E Candidate in Santa Monica," *L.A. Sentinel*, March 26, 1959, A4; "Caribbean Theme for Couple Club Affair," *L.A. Sentinel*, September 8, 1955, B4.



(Figs. 57 and 58) Business cards, *Journal of California Federation of Colored Women's Clubs,* 1936
Mary Waters Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

Before they moved to the Tucker medical building at 424 Pico Boulevard, Drs. Tucker and Hurd practiced at 404 and 402-B Pico Boulevard, respectively. Dr. Hurd later opened his own medical building at 1871 Ninth Street. Around 1955 he joined the Santa Monica Planning Commission and served for more than ten years.

Nicolas “Nick” R. Gabaldon

Born in Los Angeles, Nicolás “Nick” Rolando Gabaldón (1927–1951) grew up in Santa Monica and has become a folk hero as a surfing pioneer of color. When he and his surfing mate Wayne King graduated from Santa Monica High School in 1945, they were some of the few students of color attending the school (see page 123). After high school, Nick served a year in the U.S. Navy and then attend Santa Monica College while working various jobs. Surfing aficionados credit him as the Santa Monica area’s first documented surfer of African American and Mexican American descent. Although little is known about the details of his life, his passion, athleticism, love, and respect for the ocean live on as the quintessential qualities of the California surfer.[123] (Fig. 59)

Gabaldón died in a surfing accident at the Malibu Pier in 1951 at age twenty-four. His legacy offers an empowering story of the pursuit of freedom and of self-fulfillment. In contemporary times, it is easy for diverse audiences to connect with him. His story links to more complex culturally inclusive stories of our collective national and global history, beach access issues, and watershed stewardship because of surfing’s romantic attraction and emotional entanglement with nature, beauty, the physicality practice, and pure fun. Gabaldón is representative of African Americans of his era who challenged racial and class structures by confronting the emergent politics of leisure, recreation, and nature access when they surfed and hung out at the oceanfront—a public space that was at the core of California’s formative, mid-twentieth-century identity. Economic and political issues have been important in the African American struggle for equality in the nation, but stories like that of Gabaldón and others who frequented the beach demonstrate how the struggle for leisure and public space also reshaped the long freedom rights struggle.[124]

As mentioned earlier (see page 68), when Nick was a toddler the Gabaldón family lived in the neighborhood north of Santa Monica High School at 1718½ Sixth Street, where many other African Americans and Mexican American families, as well as Whites, also lived. His father, Nicolás Gabaldón (b. ca.1901–1970), a Mexican American, was originally from New Mexico. The 1930 U.S. Census recorded that the elder Gabaldón was a laborer working in a private home and that he was a World War I veteran. His occupation in the 1940 U.S. Census is listed as a laborer for a federal Work Progress Administration project, which indicates that his private employment was probably interrupted due to the Depression. From available evidence it appears that the elder Gabaldón moved to Santa Monica sometime after 1922 and married his wife, Cecelia, around 1926.[125]

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[123] Alison Rose Jefferson, “Nick Gabaldon (1927–1951): A Southern California Surfing Pioneer,” TheUltimateHistoryProject.com, acc. October 19, 2020, http://ultimatehistoryproject.com/nick-gabaldoacuten-southern-california-surfing-pioneer.html. For illumination on the current and historical experience of people of color, indigenous peoples, female surfers, and how their stories are informed by issues of access and social-economic context, see Dexter Zavalza Hough-Snee and Alexander Sotelo Eastman, eds., *The Critical Surf Studies Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

[124] Jefferson, “Nick Gabaldon (1927–1951).”

[125] 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census, *1922 Santa Monica City Directory,* and California Death Index, 1905–1939, Ancestry.com.

(Fig. 59) "In the Spirit of Nick," from the multimedia installation *Soul to Sole Walking on Water: Nick Gabaldón* by Yrneh Gabon Brown, 2016
Unzipping the Code: Adventures in 90404 exhibition, 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica, April 19–May 21, 2016
Courtesy of the artist

Nick Gabaldón (February 23, 1927–June 6, 1951) grew up in the bay city during the Jim Crow era with all its challenges. In his pursuit of self-fulfillment and freedom, Gabaldón is representative of twentieth-century African Americans who challenged racial and class hierarchies by confronting the emergent politics of oceanfront public space access that was at the core of California's identity. Considered Santa Monica's first documented surfer of African American and Mexican American descent, he has become somewhat of a folk hero for many.

Brown's work, part of an exhibition exploring history and neighborhoods of the African American community, told Gabaldón's story of a Santa Monican of color who broke racial barriers by integrating the surfing community on the margins in the 1940s.

Brown's inspiration in making art about Gabaldón's experience is part of his desire to produce work that amplifies more societal awareness and understanding of the stories of people of the African diaspora in a celebration of their resilience and commitment to overcome adversity. Based on Gabaldón's story, Yrneh's full art installation speaks to Gabaldón's coastal residency, his enjoyment of the beach and surfing at Santa Monica's Bay Street Beach and Malibu's famed Surfrider Beach, and some of his life challenges and joys. It includes art pieces in multiple materials and videos of public interviews and of Yrneh embodying Gabaldón's performance experiences on land and in the ocean, which are viewable at https://www.yrnehgabon.com/nick-gabaldon.

Cecelia Raines Allen Gabaldón (b. ca. 1900–1951), an African American woman, was born in California and possibly in Santa Monica. Cecelia's mother, Luella Raines (1874–1932), was living with her mother, Mattie Leach, and her children at 177 Third Street in North Santa Monica in 1900. Both women were self-employed, working in the laundry business. Cecelia's parents were both originally from Texas. Public records in 1910 indicate that Cecelia was living with her mother, Luella, who was a servant in a private home, and her siblings Luessa (Luisa), sixteen, and William, fourteen, at 1823 Fourth Street in the Belmar neighborhood. Cecelia's siblings were also born in California, indicating that her mother, Luella, had arrived in California sometime in the early 1890s before her first child was born.[126]

It can be assumed that Cecelia and her siblings attended grade schools in Santa Monica. In 1918 she married Guy Allen, who was from Texas and was a railroad car cleaner. The newlyweds lived at 714 Bay Street in Santa Monica's Ocean Park neighborhood, not too far from where Cecelia grew up. Their union produced a daughter, Geraldine (b. ca. 1921–2004), who became an older sister to young Nick and a stepdaughter to her second husband, Nicolás. Cecelia had worked as a maid in private homes before her first child was born. Evidence supports that many of Cecelia's relatives resided most of their lives in Santa Monica. Some are buried in Santa Monica's Woodlawn Cemetery, including Cecelia, her mother, Luella, and her son, Nicolás Rolando Gabaldón (Fig. 60).[127]

As with other families, the new construction and expansion of the high school following the 1932 earthquake was a motivating factor for the Gabaldón family to move from Sixth Street to a new residence at 1707 Nineteenth Street. When both Nick and his mother died in 1951, the family still lived at this home. This house no longer stands—a victim of the Interstate 10 Freeway construction that cut through the middle of Santa Monica's Pico Neighborhood.

Social Justice and Employment Activism

With the World War II build-up throughout the 1940s, African Americans gained jobs in greater numbers in more diverse occupations. An economic expansion created a new industrial base in Santa Monica, which included defense and other wartime industries. African Americans gained more union memberships, which gave them a stronger foundation to stand on to protect employment discrimination. These accomplishments resulted in a growing impatience with discrimination and *de facto* segregation. The quality of city services and educational opportunities continued to be a

[126] 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 U.S. Census, California County Birth, Marriage and Death Records, 1849–1980, and Find A Grave Index, 1600s–Current, Ancestry.com.
[127] 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census, California County Birth, Marriage and Death Records, 1849–1980, and Find A Grave Index, 1600s–Current.

(Fig. 60) Richard Wyatt, portrait of Nicholás "Nick" Rolando Gabaldón, acrylic on canvas, 30 in. x 24 in., 2013
Rick Blocker Collection

Artist Richard Wyatt's painting is an interpretation of Nick Gabaldón's appearance from the few photographs of him that are known to exist. Rick Blocker, who commissioned the painting, asked Wyatt to portray Gabaldón as happy and casually dressed. Wyatt posed his subject to look directly out at the viewer and chose a green background to evoke the Pacific Ocean's color complexity.

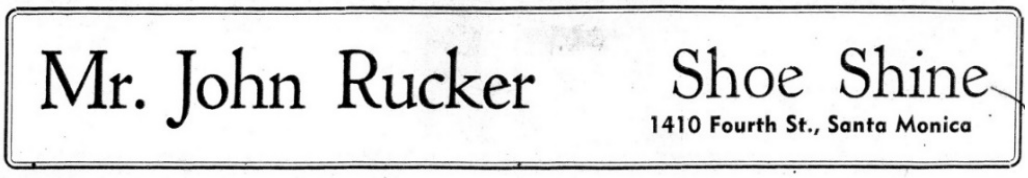
problem for African Americans across the country as well as in Santa Monica. Teachers continued attempted to discourage Black children's academic aspirations and used explicitly racist textbooks and curriculum. Greater numbers of African Americans moved to Santa Monica who were college graduates.

As in other parts of the country, African Americans began to take more forceful and direct actions to challenge discrimination. Up until this time toward the mid-twentieth century, local Black Santa Monica citizens had continuously confronted White discrimination where they could and with some successes, through various tactics, such as writing letters to their city officials demanding change with threats of legal actions and lawsuits against businesses. With more direct actions during this era, such as targeted civil disobedience and legal actions, they began to get service in restaurants, stores, movies, and live performance theatres that heretofore had denied them access or imposed *de facto* segregation. Looking back over many decades, Hilliard Lawson, one of the only African Americans to serve as a city council member in Santa Monica's history, noted in a 1975 *Evening Outlook* article that African Americans began to get broader accommodations services locally in the 1930s and 1940s, when national laws against discrimination were passed and enforced. Further, he asserted, this heightened national activity intersected with this period of African Americans' more energetic action for their consumer and citizenship rights in the Santa Monica and Los Angeles environs.[128]

John "Johnnie" Rucker, Jr.

A case in point involving John "Johnnie" Rucker, Jr. (b. ca. 1909) demonstrates an assertive and strategic action to overcome racial discrimination and *de facto* segregation in Santa Monica. When Rucker and his date purchased tickets to see a movie at the Wilshire Theatre, they purposefully sat down in the section usually reserved for Whites. The police were called and arrested them when they refused to change their seats. With the support of the N.A.A.C.P., Rucker took the Wilshire Theatre to court and won the case. Using the court judgment as leverage, he patronized other Santa Monica movie theatres. Originally from Kansas, the Rucker family had arrived in Santa Monica in the early decades of the twentieth century and owned their home at 617 Bay Street in Ocean Park. The elder Rucker and his son worked at one time in a barber and shoe repair business near Third Street and Broadway (Fig. 61). The younger Rucker attended local schools. He became one of the first African American police officers in Santa Monica and the owner of several Ocean Park properties on Bay Street.[129]

[128] Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture"; Trives, interview by author, April 2005; Bert Staggers, retired Rockwell employee and Santa Monica resident, interview by author, April 2005, Los Angeles, CA.
[129] Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 128; Hensley, interview by author, December 14, 2016; 1925 Santa Monica High School Yearbook and 1930 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com; Trives, interview by author, March 24, 2020.



(Fig. 61) Business ad, Journal of California Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1936
Mary Waters Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

The Rucker family had arrived in Santa Monica in the early decades of the twentieth century and owned their home at 617 Bay Street in Ocean Park. The elder Rucker and his son John "Johnnie" worked in a barber and shoe repair business at one time near Third Street and Broadway. In the 1940s, Johnnie broke down discrimination and segregation at Santa Monica movie theatres.

The Quinn Family

Another noteworthy civil rights contestation during the 1940s in Santa Monica was Alfred T. Quinn's (1922–2003) charge of discrimination against Henn's Drive-In restaurant. When the University of California, Los Angeles coed and his girlfriend, Silvia "Dottie" Price, a resident of Venice who later became his wife, pulled into the car service area, a waitress told them that she could not serve them. Young Quinn and his girlfriend left the restaurant, but he returned with a few of his African American male friends a week later for counter service inside. Again, they were denied service and asked to leave. The young men literally "sat" their ground quietly waiting to be served, while a chef came from the kitchen waving a knife to intimidate them. The restaurant's manager called the police. From a nearby pay telephone booth, Quinn called his father, the Reverend Alfred K. Quinn, by then a recognized local community leader who was involved with organized civil rights actions in and outside of Santa Monica. When four Santa Monica policemen and the Rev. Quinn arrived at the restaurant, the elder Quinn suggested that they all move to police headquarters, where he explained to Henn's manager that he would file a discrimination complaint against him. After the police chief became involved, both parties came to a resolution and no charges were filed. In his action, Alfred T. Quinn joined other Black college students around the country who had begun similar protests against discrimination and segregation practices in public establishments.[130]

The Reverend Alfred K. Quinn, his wife, Essie C. Jones Quinn (1898–1941), and their four children (Daisy, Phyllis, Alfred, and Martina) had moved to Southern California from Cincinnati, Ohio, in the 1920s. Their fifth and youngest child, Irene, was born in California in 1930. Before his theological training, the Rev. Quinn worked as a railroad dining car waiter. He earned his higher education degrees at Ohio State University, Biola University, and the University of Southern California's School of Religion. The Rev. Quinn began his ministerial work in 1927 at St. Paul American Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in the Imperial Valley and ministered at a few other regional churches before he was assigned as the First A.M.E. By the Sea, where he served from 1936 to 1944. He also spent some time working in Africa during his long career. The Rev. Quinn set up a few new churches in Southern California in Brawley and three churches were named for

[130] Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture."

him in Africa. He rose in the A.M.E. leadership to become a bishop. A respected regional and national community leader, the Rev. Quinn served in leadership roles at several organizations, including as the Los Angeles County Chaplain, representative to the Los Angeles County Supervisors' Commission on the Aged, and national representative for the Council of Churches, among others.[131]

While Alfred T. Quinn and his father fought for equal access to establishments, sister and daughter Daisy Quinn Payne (1917–1997) took advantage of the era's civil rights actions to get jobs in corporate operations in work and pay-grade assignments beyond the menial labor level. In the mid-1950s at Santa Monica's General Telephone Company office, she became the first African American information telephone operator and from there she advanced to supervisor. A distinguished musician, she played piano and organ and directed choirs at many A.M.E. churches and other places around Southern California. She also wrote social columns for some of Santa Monica's short-lived Black publications, including the 1950s African American-owned *Glancing* magazine.[132]

Daisy Quinn and LeVert M. Payne (1911–1996) married in 1939. As newlyweds, they lived at 621 Bay Street in the Ocean Park district. They had two children, Martin and Carolyne. Originally from Fort Worth, Texas, young Payne moved to the Los Angeles environs in the mid-1930s on a cousin's advice. His cousin, Christin Frisby, had moved to Los Angeles and found a good job he liked at the then rising African American-owned Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company. Payne moved from the Lone Star state with two friends and fellow Texans, Robert Brown and Silas Tippins. They shared a residence in Ocean Park when they first moved to Santa Monica in 1936. All three men would find employment, marry, and for the remainder of their lives reside in the bay city. Brown and Tippins worked for the U.S. Postal Service. Throughout his life, Payne was employed in service jobs such as custodian, delivery person, and porter, at Santa Monica's Criterion Drugstore, Douglas Aircraft, and Von's Market. He and Daisy were active in various social clubs and occasionally were mentioned in the social columns of African American newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Sentinel*. The couple saved their money to invest in a home and other real estate in Santa Monica and beyond.[133]

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[131] A Quinn family ancestor was a founder of the African American Episcopal Church denomination in Philadelphia, Edwards, interviews by author, April 2005 and January 22, 2020; Virgie W. Murray, "Dr. Alfred K. Quinn Was a Religious Giant In Los Angeles," *L.A. Sentinel*, July 16, 1981, A3; Essie Caroline Jones Quinn, Ancestry.com; Find a Grave, acc. April 12, 2020, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/179521824.

[132] Edwards interviews; "Daisy L. Payne-Thompson Passes," *L.A. Sentinel*, May 22, 1997, C6; *Glancing* magazine, no date (in author's possession).

[133] Edwards, interview by author, January 22, 2020; LeVert M. Payne and Daisy L. Quinn Payne, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.

Francis "Frank" H. Barnes and the Sears Store Protest

Through perseverance, persuasion, court action, and civil disobedience, African Americans in Santa Monica slowly gained employment at General Telephone, Sears Roebuck and Company, Safeway stores, and other businesses that local African American leaders identified as places where Blacks could find jobs in capacities other than janitorial and menial jobs. Some African Americans seeking this broader array of jobs lived in the neighborhoods near the Civic Center campus and the high school. Joining African Americans around the country who were fighting discrimination in a variety of ways, one Santa Monica effort gained regional and national attention in the push for economic equality and equity. The effort was a protest against discriminatory hiring practices by Sears Roebuck and Company, which had opened its Santa Monica store at 302 Colorado Boulevard at Third Street in August 1947. The store refused to hire George Whitaker—an African American veteran who lived in Santa Monica and who later became an attorney—for a sales job. The Santa Monica-Venice branch of the N.A.A.C.P. took up Whitaker's cause and that of other qualified applicants who had been denied clerical or sales jobs, challenging Sears' hiring policy. As the *Los Angeles Sentinel* reported, Sears management admitted to the local store's policy not to hire African Americans as salesclerks and made no commitment as to when this policy would change.[134]

Julius Rosenwald (1862–1932) had been the president and a major stockholder of Sears, Roebuck and Company. The company's roots as a general merchandise mail-order business began in the late nineteenth century serving rural America. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Sears had become a household name. Some have called the company the Amazon.com of its early days. Soon it established retail stores. The son of Jewish immigrants from Germany and a "self-made man," Rosenwald was committed to public service as well as capitalism. In his philanthropy, he generously supported educational programs to assist African Americans in the rural and segregated South, which made a tremendous impact on literacy gains among those who had limited access to education.[135]

In their business and philanthropic operations, the Rosenwald family was not interested in loudly and directly confronting Santa Monica's repressive Jim Crow-era norms and practices. During the time of the Santa Monica store protest from late 1947 to early 1948, Julius Rosenwald II (1914–2003), the elder Julius Rosenwald's grandson, sent a telegram to the local N.A.A.C.P. branch president. In his message, partially printed in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, he defended the store's actions, noting that corporate leadership allowed local store management "to select employees according to their appraisal of best qualified applicants for the job." He also asserted that "the company policy has always been non-discriminatory" and that several "Negroes" had been

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[134] "Sears Santa Monica Picketed, Boycotted in 'Jobs' Campaign," *L.A. Sentinel*, November 20, 1947, 2; "Santa Monica N.A.A.C.P. May Win Victory," *L.A. Sentinel*, April 1, 1948, 4; "Plan Picketing of Sta. Monica Sears," *L.A. Sentinel*, October 16, 1947, 2; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 128.

[135] Karl Zinsmeister, "Julius Rosenwald," ThePhilanthropyRoundtable.org, acc. July 11, 2020, https://www.philanthropyroundtable.org/almanac/people/hall-of-fame/detail/julius-rosenwald; "Sears," History.com, updated March 13, 2019, acc. July 11, 2020, https://www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/history-of-sears.

employed in the Santa Monica store since its opening. During the Jim Crow era, the Rosenwalds and some of their elite peers in the North, such as businessmen and philanthropists William H. Baldwin, Andrew Carnegie, and John D. Rockefeller Sr., communicated, especially through their financial giving, their desire to improve the lives of Black Americans. At the same time, however, they acted in a contradictory manner through their continued support of White supremacy, maintaining the subordination and limited employment opportunities of African Americans in service of their own version of capitalism and public philanthropic service.[136]

During World War II and the 1940s generally, the N.A.A.C.P. had become much more powerful after Supreme Court victories in civil rights cases helped to create a dramatic increase in its national membership. Its Santa Monica-Venice branch president, Francis "Frank" Henry Barnes (b. 1911), a U.S. Postal Service worker, and other N.A.A.C.P. members, such as small business owner Lloyd C. Allen (see pages 135–38), organized a picket line to parade around the Sears store's perimeter. Two to three hundred protesters showed up every night for several months, carrying signs with memorable phases such as "No Second Class Citizenship" and "We Can Buy at Sears, Why Can't We Sell?" and chanting the slogans "No, no, no Jim Crow" and "Democracy has got to grow." (Fig. 62) Many people of color and Whites refused to cross the picket line. Thousands of leaflets promoting the boycott were distributed throughout the bay city. The *Los Angeles Sentinel's* publisher, Leon H. Washington, offered strategic support for the Santa Monica effort when he spoke at a N.A.A.C.P. mass meeting. A few years earlier, Washington was a leader of the "Don't Spend Where We Can't Work" campaign, which broke down the discriminatory hiring practices of Los Angeles's Central Avenue stores and helped increased awareness of the community's economic power. Now he admonished the Sears protestors to refuse "to succumb to pressures from within the group as well as outside to give up the fight until it is won."[137]

After the N.A.A.C.P. branch's coordination of one of the largest protests against Sears in the nation, at the store management's prodding the Santa Monica City Council unsuccessfully attempted to rush through a special ordinance "against any picket line anywhere in the city." More than 150 people, including local labor leaders and other sympathizers, joined N.A.A.C.P. members in attending the council meeting to protest the ordinance, which they recognized as "a threat to the entire labor movement of Santa Monica" and elsewhere. Representing the N.A.A.C.P., Frank Barnes (Fig. 63) and Hilliard Lawson, who for a time had been a mail carrier with the U.S. Postal Service, spoke against the council's proposal. They and other speakers underscored the proposed ordinance was unconstitutional and contrary to both the federal and California courts, which had repeatedly upheld the right to picket as freedom of speech as defined by the U.S. Constitution. The

[136] "N.A.A.C.P. Greets Sears Directors with Picket Line in Santa Monica," *L.A. Sentinel*, February 12, 1948, 9; Lila MacLellan, "A Viral Twitter Thread Revealed Sears's History as a Disruptor of the Jim Crow-era Racism," Quartz at Work, October 16, 2018, acc. July 11, 2020, https://qz.com/work/1425905/the-sears-mail-order-catalogue-subverted-jim-crow-era-racism/; Maribel Morey, "Julius Rosenwald Was Not a Hero," HistPhil.org, June 30, 2017, acc. July 11, 2020, https://histphil.org/2017/06/30/julius-rosenwald-was-not-a-hero/.

[137] "Sears Santa Monica Picketed, Boycotted in 'Jobs' Campaign," *L.A. Sentinel*, November 20, 1947, (quotes) 2; "Santa Monica N.A.A.C.P. May Win Victory," *L.A. Sentinel*, April 1, 1948, 4; Allen, February 4, 2020, April 2005; Frank Henry Barnes, U.S. WWII Draft Cards (1940–1947), Ancestry.com.

council's proposal failed. But Frank Barnes soon found that Sears management would attempt to intimidate him personally to stop the civil rights action he led.[138]

(Fig. 62) Picket line at Sears Roebuck and Company, 1947–48
Santa Monica History Museum, Bill Beebe Collection, 3.2.6352

In late 1947–early 1948, hundreds of people began picketing the Sears Roebuck department store on Third Street and Colorado Boulevard. At the time, the store hired African Americans in menial jobs only, such as janitorial work. For months, protestors formed a picket line to demand equal hiring and pay. For months they chanted and carried signs, "We Can Buy at Sears, Why Can't We Sell," "No Second Class Citizenship," "No, no, no Jim Crow," and "Democracy has got to grow." Led by the N.A.A.C.P., the Sears protest was one of Santa Monica's earliest civil rights demonstrations and one of the largest against the department store that took place in the nation.

[138] Santa Monica Seeks Emergency Law to Block Job Fight at Sears," *L.A. Sentinel*, March 18, 1948, (quotes) 1; "Protests Stymie Attempt to Block Job Fight at Sears," *L. A. Sentinel*, March 25, 1948, 2; Amina Hassan, *Loren Miller: Civil Rights Attorney and Journalist* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 173–74.

(Fig. 63) Frank Barnes, 1948
Santa Monica History Museum, Bill Beebe Collection, 3.2.8069

Originally from Oklahoma, Francis “Frank” Henry Barnes was president of the N.A.A.C.P.’s Santa Monica-Venice branch and an employee of the U.S. Postal Service. Because he took a leadership role in the 1947–48 equality-in-hiring campaign against Sears Roebuck and Company, he was not allowed back at his job. After bringing the matter to court and winning his case, he returned to work. Though the Sears unrest drew national attention, the store did not change its discriminatory practices until 1955, when it hired its first African American store clerk.

Federal Government Loyalty Board Charges of Disloyalty Against Frank Barnes: Loyalty Case Number 37

When a Sears manager realized that Santa Monica's N.A.A.C.P. branch president Frank Barnes was a federal employee, the company used Executive Order 9835, the Smith Act of 1940, which required federal employee to take a loyalty oath to the government, to get Barnes suspended from his job with the U.S. Postal Service. Barnes was vaguely charged with disloyalty to the U.S. government because he had associated with "subversive" organizations. Although a variety of multiethnic church, labor, and liberal groups and individuals from Santa Monica and Los Angeles had participated in the picketing, Sears took up its cause directly with the N.A.A.C.P., led by Barnes, who was in charge of the entire negotiation and protest coordination. This attack on Barnes, the *Los Angeles Sentinel* accused in its reporting, was another "attempt to suppress freedom of speech and action." It was also an attempt by a private corporation to not only influence a government agency in helping it uphold a discriminatory policy but also intimidate an American citizen taking action to contest the policy. The N.A.A.C.P. national office requested Los Angeles-based attorney Loren Miller, head of its West Coast legal department, to engage in an energetic defense of Barnes.[139]

Originally from Oklahoma, Barnes had been a mail carrier for six years when the disloyalty charges were lodged. He was not the only U.S. Postal Service employee targeted for membership or activity in the N.A.A.C.P. during this time period. Twenty-five U.S. Postal Service workers in six cities around the country had been suspended from their federal jobs due to vague accusations of alleged un-American activities and their undertakings with the N.A.A.C.P. The N.A.A.C.P. national office viewed these loyalty purges as subterfuge tactics used by "small-time bureaucrats who mask as patriots while prostituting our fundamental freedoms." The N.A.A.C.P. labor secretary denounced the Federal Loyalty board and charged that the attacks on the accused Black postal workers were due to "their fearless and uncompromising fight against the vicious practices of racial discrimination."[140]

Eventually, Barnes was exonerated of the disloyalty charge and returned to his job, with full back pay, seniority rights, and benefits. He later ascended to important leadership positions within the N.A.A.C.P.'s West Coast Regional office. In statements after his exoneration, he and others noted that the court's decision was a vindication of the rights of civil servants who are N.A.A.C.P. members and leaders of other organizations to continue the fight for equality and opportunity and against discriminatory employment practices. As Barnes's attorney Loren Miller, told reporters: "We regard this decision as a significant victory in the fight to prevent subversion of the presidential Loyalty Order to serve private ends." After Sears threw the N.A.A.C.P. protest into disarray with its

[139] "How to Squash Protest," *L. A. Sentinel*, May 13, 1948, 7; "N.A.A.C.P. Head Rejects Charge of 'Disloyalty,'" *L.A. Sentinel*, June 17, 1948, 16; "Walter White Seeks Barnes' Reinstatement," *L.A. Sentinel*, May 27, 1948, 3; "N.A.A.C.P. to Defend Leader in Job Fight," *L.A. Sentinel*, May 13, 1948, (quote) 1.
[140] "NAACP Plans Aid to Purged Postal Clerks," *L.A. Sentinel*, November 25, 1948, (quotes) 11; 1940 U.S. Census, Ancestry.com.

intimidation move against Frank Barnes, the boycott slowed and eventually stopped. The company's discriminatory hiring policy did eventually change, voluntarily, in the mid-1950s.[141]

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As these examples demonstrate, during the 1930s and 1940s African Americans in Santa Monica and elsewhere around the country took advantage of the broad political and economic opportunities that arose, in part, as a result of the expanded role of government during the Depression era. Black America used this time to demand equality and assert a political role that they had not been able to take since the end of Reconstruction. In Santa Monica, everyday African American men and women, along with the organizations they formed, followed national trends in using every resource at their disposal to destroy obstacles to equal opportunity. The emerging power of African American voters in the North and the West, coupled with the development of civic rights organizations and the support of antiracist policies among White allies in labor and politics, helped push meaningful structural improvement in Black America's condition. These efforts helped to shape the policies and programs of the New Deal, which laid the basis for a strong national state and a political coalition that allowed for hope in federal solutions to Black America's problems and for successful challenges to the nation's racist hierarchy system.[142]

By the 1940s, Santa Monica land parcels were developed, for the most part, with open land scattered among the housing and remaining agricultural, industry, and commercial developments inland to Lincoln Boulevard. From the late 1930s to the 1950s, the City of Santa Monica, with the help of federal funds, embarked on expanding Santa Monica High School and school district offices, along with the construction of other buildings for a new Civic Center campus in South Santa Monica. Area beaches were cleaned up to make them more appealing to White middle- and upper-class residents and visitors, a significant forgotten aspect of urban renewal called out by historian Elsa Devienne in her work on the bay city oceanfront.[143]

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[141] Barnes Views His Exoneration as 'Nice Christmas "Present,'" *Evening Outlook*, December 10, 1948, acc. March 16, 2020, https://santamonica.pastperfectonline.com/photo/60174B55-F240-4CD5-975C-655919153694; Smith, "Blacks Develop Own Culture"; "'Justice' IS Blind," *L.A. Sentinel*, January 27, 1949, C5; Hassan (Miller as quoted in L. LeMar, "Postal Worker Wins Case in 'Red' Firing," December 25, 1948, 3), 174; Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 146–47.

[142] Flamming, *Bound for Freedom,* 308; Sides, *L.A. City Limits*, 34–35, 38, 44–45; Lawrence DeGraaf, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890–1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 39, no. 3 (1970), 350-–51; J. Max Bond, "The Negro in Los Angeles," PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1936, 30; Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998)*,* 270; Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), ix, 330–31; Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country, Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 68–69; Anthony Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933–1940* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, publisher, 1989), 253–55.

[143] Elsa Devienne, "Urban Renewal by the Sea: Reinventing the Beach for the Suburban Age in Postwar Los Angeles," *Journal of Urban History* 45, no. 1 (2019): 2, 4–5, 9–17.

The land for these projects was aggregated over several years through eminent domain proceedings, in which the government acquired private property for public use with compensation payments. At the time, South Santa Monica neighborhoods included housing and small commercial properties that were owned or rented by many African Americans and other marginalized groups. The families who lived in this area between the arroyo and Pico Boulevard had to find new homes at a time when land at or closer to the beach was becoming more valuable and expensive to buy. Because of the history of racist restrictive real estate covenants and discriminatory social practices, including loan policies called redlining, it had become more difficult for people of color to purchase homes in Santa Monica. In this era, generally these groups could not buy property in Santa Monica north of Wilshire or south of Pico Boulevards.[144]

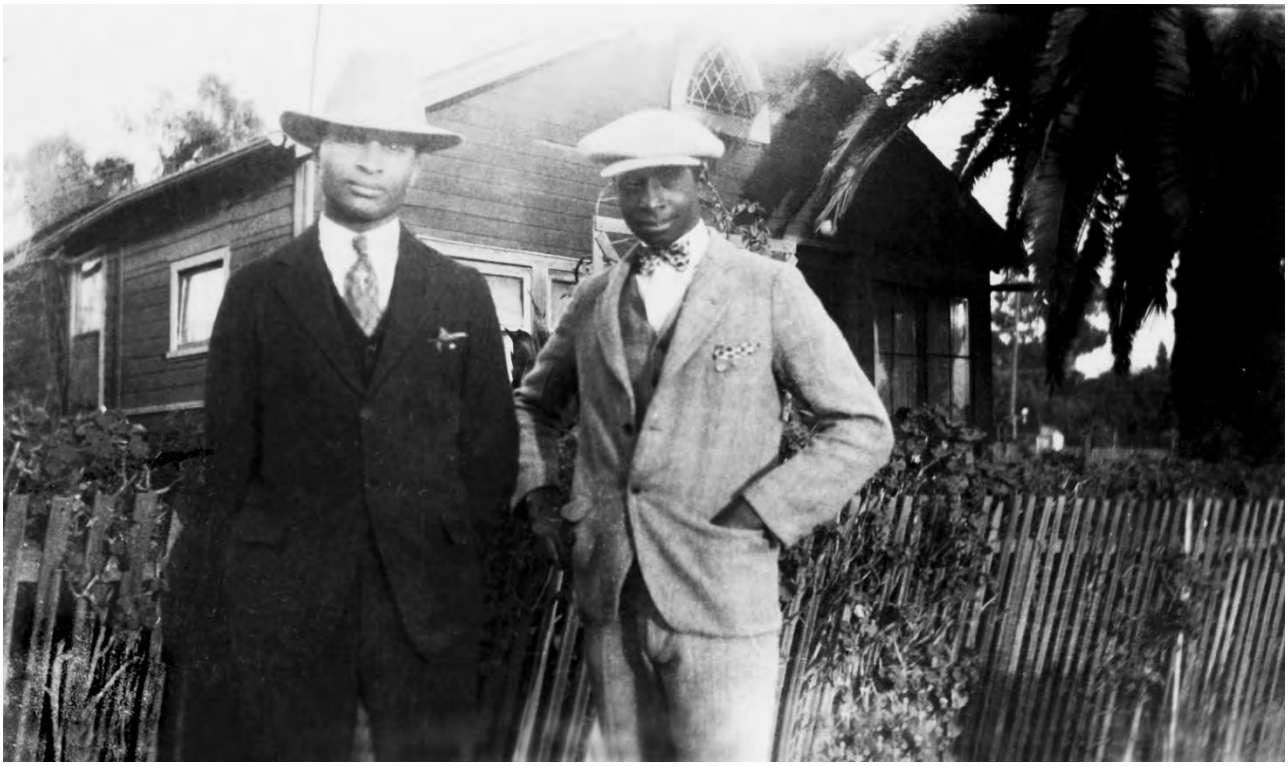
As the city's population grew from 53,500 in 1940 to just over 88,200 in 1960 and the African American population from 1,265 to just over 4,000, affordable housing would become a problem for all residents in Santa Monica, but especially for African Americans.[145]

[144] Redlining was government policies of the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), later Federal Home Administration (FHA), from 1934 to 1962, that told banks where it would be safe (White neighborhoods) and unsafe (Black or other marginalized group neighborhoods) to invest their money or offer loans. On federal policy maps, these "unsafe" neighborhoods where no investment would go and where the HOLC/FHA refused to insure mortgages are outlined in red. In the post-World War II years, these policies promoted investment in new suburban tract developments for Whites while draining investment from urban centers composed mostly of Blacks and other people of color. Law enforcement and the legal system were allowed to uphold these standards by supporting violent resistance to Blacks and other families of color moving into White neighborhoods. These policies have limited people from housing opportunities and their associated benefits, including the choice of where to live, whether to rent or own, and wealth generated by homeownership and equity in education resources. They have hindered the economic growth of areas, creating lower property values, which continue to impact communities of color in many aspects of life; Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc./Liveright, 2017); HOLC/FHA Redlining map (1939), showing the color-coding and rating system of Los Angeles Metropolitan neighborhoods, Los Angeles Public Library, acc. July 2020, https://www.lapl.org/sites/default/files/LosAngelesHOLC%20%281%29.JPG; Flamming, *Bound for Freedom,* 219–20; County of Los Angeles Land Use Map, 1937, Huntington Library Collection, San Marino, CA; City of Santa Monica 1957 Master Plan, May 14, 1957, 52.

[145] Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 125.

1950s and 1960s: Expansion and Displacement

The planned enlargement of South Santa Monica's civil built infrastructure required the destruction of neighborhoods that were composed of mostly small businesses and lower-income homeowners, renters, and people of color. (Fig. 64) As with numerous urban modernization or renewal efforts across the United States in the mid-twentieth century, Santa Monica officials viewed eliminating older buildings as a sign of progress. This was a time before historic preservation (or heritage conservation, the more inclusive term of the activities to preserve American "heritage" beyond the sole consideration of saving a historic building for its cultural significance) and affordable housing for diverse citizens became important values that would impact urban planning and the quality of life for individuals and communities.



(Fig. 64) A typical home in the Belmar area and north of Santa Monica High School, ca. 1930
Santa Monica History Museum Collection, 36.2.22

Vernon Brunson *(right)* and a friend pose at a Craftsman-style home in the neighborhood north of Santa Monica High School. There and in the Belmar Triangle, other nearby homes were long wooden buildings called shotgun houses. Inexpensively built, they were easy to relocate . . . and even easier to burn. A few of the targeted neighborhoods in the city's redevelopment plan were torn down in their entirety, including the Belmar Triangle. During the 1950s, the city forced Belmar residents to leave their homes and close their businesses under eminent domain condemnation eviction and land purchase compensation proceedings. In its place would be a new civic auditorium and courthouse grounds.

Erased Neighborhoods

Demographics, socioeconomic mix, and affordable housing opportunities were dramatically altered in the direction of making the City of Santa Monica less diverse when the Belmar Triangle and other South Santa Monica neighborhoods were destroyed during the Civic Center expansion process and other waves of urban renewal infrastructure projects in the mid-twentieth century. These intentional actions made the California coastline, generally and in Santa Monica, specifically, less accessible for marginalized communities, with consequences that continue to impact equitable coastal accesses in the twenty-first century.

A "Blight" on the City

Through eminent domain proceedings, the Belmar Triangle was razed to build the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium at Main Street and Pico Boulevard (Fig. 65) and part of the Los Angeles County Courthouse grounds at 1725 Main Street. Both opened in 1958. By 1950 many of the residents of this neighborhood were African Americans. In the city's 1950s annual reports, public officials claimed that the Belmar area was "blighted" and that only substandard and dilapidated structures and dwellings were burned down and removed for health and safety reasons. They sent local newspapers the photographs used in the annual reports that showed the burning of these so-called blighted structures. They subsequently featured these photographs in the city's publicity campaign to perpetuate justification for the neighborhood's destruction (Fig. 66). Many of Belmar's modest houses and apartment buildings that the city destroyed were of the same type and in the same condition as structures south of Pico Boulevard, which remained untouched. Today they would be considered historically significant structures worthy of preservation.[146]

Historically, the Belmar Triangle was a first home to many African American families who migrated to Santa Monica to begin new lives. They also lived near the Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church, where they became active members. Pearlie (b. ca. 1923–2020) and Leroy Jamison (1920–2002) and other family members followed Odessa and Troy Billingsley, Pearlie's relatives, who migrated from Texas to South Santa Monica in 1942 for good jobs with the city's wartime industries, such as at Douglas Aircraft and the shipyards (Figs. 67 and 68). For several years, these families lived on Pico Boulevard near Third Street and on Belmar Place before moving to other sections of the city and beyond. In an interview, Pearlie Jamison told the author that she was excited to move to the Los Angeles area in 1944 to begin her new life and to raise her children in Santa Monica.[147]

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[146] Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 129–30; 1951–1952 City of Santa Monica Annual Report, Santa Monica Public Library. "Urban Renewal and Redevelopment," City of Santa Monica 1957 Master Plan, 66–73.

[147] Pearlie Jamison, retired, Santa Monica resident, interview by author, April 2005, Los Angeles, CA; Waron Turner Railey, retired, former Santa Monica resident, interview by author, April 2005, Los Angeles, CA.

(Fig. 65) Guests arrive at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium for the annual Academy Awards, 1961
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives, Fred Basten Collection

Since it opened in 1958, the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium at 1855 Main Street has been home to numerous events, including one in which Martin Luther King, Jr. was a speaker in 1964.

(Fig. 66) City planners watch as a shotgun house burns to the ground, July 1953
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives,
donated to the Library from City Collections

City officials claimed that homes in the Belmar Triangle were no longer safe. To further justify their actions, they took pictures of some of Belmar's oldest and most worn buildings and sent them to newspapers to build support for their actions. Then they burned the neighborhood down. Before the decade ended, the Belmar Triangle had completely disappeared.

(Fig. 67) Odessa Billingsley, 1940s
Waron Turner Railey Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

Odessa Billingsley, her husband, Troy, and their children migrated from Texas to Santa Monica in 1942. They came for new employment opportunities in the World War II years, paving the way for other family members also seeking better jobs and the chance for a better life in Southern California. In this family snapshot, Odessa Billingsley (later Campbell) looks very much at home in the kitchen of her residence on Pico Boulevard near Third Street in the Belmar area.

(Fig. 68) The Billingsley, Turner, and Jamison families, 1950
Waron Turner Railey Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

(Left to right) *Leroy and Pearlie Jamison, cousins; the Rev. James Steverson, assistant pastor at Phillips Chapel, and his wife Onnie; Ida Buchanan, mother of the bride; newlyweds Waron Turner and James Raines; Odessa Billingsley, aunt; Barbara Sapp, aunt; Martha Steverson, the Rev. Stevenson's mother; Rosanna Redding, Leroy's mother; and Aaron Sapp, uncle*

The Billingsley, Turner, and Jamison families moved from Texas to Santa Monica in the 1940s. They worked in wartime industries, including jobs at Douglas Aircraft and the shipyards. Some lived on Belmar Place and at Third Street and Pico Boulevard. Many were members of the nearby Phillips Chapel C.M.E. Church. In this photograph, they celebrate the 1950 marriage of Waron Turner and James Raines *(center)* with family and friends in the Billingsley home on Pico Boulevard near Third Street. The Billingsleys are memorialized in one of Phillips Chapel's stained glass windows.

In the Way of Progress

From the 1930s to the 1950s, some African Americans could afford to purchase homes in Santa Monica. Some, like LeVert and Daisy Payne, even participated in the Federal Housing Administration and urban renewal programs to develop rental properties to house the influx of workers who were maintaining the production lines for the war effort. Their new multifamily housing complex was located in the Pico Neighborhood bounded by Euclid Avenue/Fourteenth Street on the west, Santa Monica Boulevard on the north, Twenty-fourth Street on the east, and Pico Boulevard on the south. Many of the families displaced by the new Civic Center development and freeway construction of the 1950s to 1960s moved to this established inland neighborhood to rebuild their lives. They found it the most affordable section of the city where they faced less resistance in buying or renting properties. Until the early 1950s when the electric streetcar was razed, they were also attracted by the easy reach of the public transportation line, which ran through the neighborhood between Olympic and Colorado Boulevards and along Santa Monica Boulevard.[148]

From their temporary residence at a Belmar boarding house, Pearlie, Leroy, and other Jamison family members moved into an apartment building owned by Henry and Jamie Wagoner, the daughter and son-in-law of Phillips Chapels' Reverend James A. Stout, at Twentieth Street and Michigan Avenue in the Pico Neighborhood. The family next purchased a duplex in the same area. When the city initiated its redevelopment plans for the area, the Jamisons were forced to leave their home because it was in the path of the forthcoming Interstate 10 Freeway. The Jamisons were some of the last residents to sell their property in the freeway eminent domain eviction and purchase process. In 1962 they purchased and relocated to an apartment building near Twentieth Street and Michigan Avenue. Pearlie worked in a variety of manufacturing and service jobs while caring for her immediate and extended family who came to live with her family. Her husband, Leroy, was a carpenter.[149]

Another Billingsley relative, Waron Turner (later Raines and then Railey), migrated to the bay city when she was fourteen years old. She came with her mother, Ida Hellman Buchanan, who was Odessa Billingsley's sister. Waron graduated from Santa Monica High School in 1946 (Fig. 69). In an interview, she told the author that among her otherwise pleasant memories of her early California years was one of the prejudice she had experienced during her high school years. Waron was shocked and outraged, upon realizing that she and her African American friends could only swim in the local pool on the days before it was cleaned.[150]

[148] "Vast Housing Project for the Area Disclosed," *L.A. Times*, May 25, 1943; Santa Monica Historical Society Files; Edwards Interview, April 2005 and January 22, 2020.
[149] Jamison, interview by author, April 2005; Railey, interview by author, April 2005.
[150] Jamison interview; Railey interview.

(Fig. 69) Santa Monica High School graduates, 1946
Waron Turner Railey Collection of Alison Rose Jefferson

(Left to right) *Celestine Clisby, Grace Spalding, Waron Turner, and Ernestine LeSears*

Waron Turner, a niece of Odessa Billingsley, moved to Santa Monica from Texas in the 1940s when she was fourteen years old. She was one of 300 students in the 1946 graduating class of Santa Monica High School at 601 Pico Boulevard. Only a few of them were African Americans. At the time, the high school was smaller and sat on land scattered among houses and commercial buildings. The school expanded in the 1950s, displacing many Black families and others of marginalized communities who lived nearby.

Displacement by the Interstate 10 Freeway

In the 1950s, construction of a freeway route to the west side of the Los Angeles basin was part of a California Highway Commission plan to put all Southern Californians within four miles of a freeway. After the electric streetcar service to Los Angeles from Santa Monica was removed, and with no freeway yet, it could take two hours to get to downtown Los Angeles due to the congestion on the streets and all the traffic lights. After much discussion and debate about where the Interstate 10 route should terminate, two serious contenders emerged: Santa Monica and Venice.

At the time of this freeway route discussion, Robert McClure, editor of the *Outlook* newspaper and a Santa Monica civic leader, was a California Highway Commission member. Santa Monica boosters decided to endorse Santa Monica as the Interstate 10 end point because they believed that having an exit near the downtown area would be good for local business. They reasoned that increased numbers of people in the region would be able to more conveniently drive to Santa Monica to shop and that a new freeway would encourage tourism. Civic leaders also judged that the publicity Santa Monica would receive from having its name on the freeway terminus point had some value. The city would be designated "the western end point for the national highway system." The name Santa Monica would be on every sign leading to the West Coast.[151]

In selecting a route for the Interstate 10 Freeway in the 1950s, the California Highway Commission sought "the most direct and practical location" with the lowest costs in construction and in land purchase fees. Supposedly, freeway designers were concerned with civil engineering rather than regional planning, but highway planning of the era made some areas White only and divided multiracial communities. Freeways were built to attract White people to new suburban housing whose developers obtained generous federal financial assistance and were barred from building racially integrated housing by Jim Crow federal lending policies. Additionally, in many cities around the nation, including Santa Monica, beginning in the late 1930s local, state, and federal governments worked together in routing the national interstate highway system to destroy or shift the residential placement of African American families and those of other marginalized communities.[152]

The routes for many Los Angeles freeways were purportedly chosen as part of transportation infrastructure that was already in place. In the case of Santa Monica, the freeway path crossed through the areas north of Santa Monica High School—near the former electric streetcar line and part of a major east-west road, Olympic Boulevard—and swaths of the Pico Neighborhood, despite the existence of almost undeveloped land nearby that could have been used instead. These areas

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[151] Stella Zadeh, "SM Freeway Links LA with Bay Communities," *Evening Outlook*, May 17, 1975, 8D; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 134.

[152] David Brodsly, *L.A. Freeways: An Appreciative Essay* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 31; Rothstein, The Color of Law, 65, 122, 127–31; Nancy Smith, "Freeway Splits Minority Neighborhood," *Evening Outlook*, May 17, 1975, 8D; Scott, 134–35: Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 185–223; City of Santa Monica 1957 Master Plan, 34–38, 41; on protest of the damage that highways produced, see Eric Avilia, *The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

were primarily composed of African Americans, Japanese Americans, and Mexican Americans. Although there were many white-collar workers at the time, Santa Monica's African American community and other communities of color had much more of a blue-color characteristic in the late 1950s to early 1960s than in the early decades of the twenty-first century. Homeowners and renters were small business owners, civic activists, and strivers for a better life for themselves, their families, and their community. Due to the nation's historical racialized class structure and disenfranchisement of people of color, these middle-class communities of long-time renters and home and business owners bore the brunt of the negative impact of the freeway construction. Because of racism, structural inequality, and federal government policies such as redlining (which identified Black and other marginalized group neighborhoods on maps in "red" to denote places where financial institutions should not invest or loan money), their properties and neighborhoods were considered less economically and socially valuable by the White bureaucrats and elites who controlled the decision-making process of the urban modernization and regional transportation infrastructure.[153]

A study conducted by the Santa Monica-West Los Angeles Fair Housing Committee in 1961, and described in the *Evening Outlook*, reported that 40 percent of the residents asked to relocate for the freeway route were homeowners who had lived in their houses an average of 17.4 years. Property values in these neighborhoods were lower than in other areas of the city, and in many cases, the prices they obtained for their homes during the eminent domain purchase period were not sufficient to buy housing in other Santa Monica areas. Although many strides had been made to combat housing discrimination by the early 1960s, there continued to be areas where African Americas were vigorously discouraged from attempts to purchase property. In Santa Monica, they confronted obstacles in purchasing homes north of Wilshire and south of Pico Boulevards. Many families that lost their homes moved to neighborhoods outside of Santa Monica, such as Venice, Inglewood, the San Fernando Valley, and other Los Angeles areas.[154]

Beach Beautiful

In the 1950s–60s, another redevelopment project was concentrated along the shoreline of South Santa Monica's Ocean Park district. Here city officials razed housing and commercial buildings in order to construct public parking lots and for private developers to erect two seventeen-story posh beachfront towers (Santa Monica Shores) and other structures. The city also implemented a beach nourishment project to clean up and widen the Santa Monica beaches, as well as to replace what city officials and elites considered the beach-area's honkey-tonk (bawdy) or

[153] For a definition of redlining and link to a 1939 Los Angeles Metropolitan area redlining map, see note 144, page 115. "Relocation Study: City May Aid Families Displaced by Freeway," *Evening Outlook*, August 9, 1961, 11; "Santa Monica Ousts 400 Families," *L.A. Sentinel*, October 13, 1960, A1; "Negroes Getting Aid in Relocating in Santa Monica," *L.A. Times,* December 22, 1966, WS1; "Freeway Runs Through Sore Spot," *Evening Outlook,* April 24, 1964, A9; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 13.
[154] Smith, "Freeway Splits Minority Neighborhood."

lowbrow amusements, which included older food stands, bars, and a few nightclubs.[155] (Figs. 70–72)

These projects displaced mostly low-income residents who were older White Americans and a few who were people of color. They were developed and built simultaneously with the Interstate 10 Freeway construction and the downtown shopping area on Third Street (today's outdoor mall, the Third Street Promenade) with public parking structures. All took advantage of federally funded redevelopment programs to clear older buildings in the bay city that were purportedly "blight."[156]

(Fig. 70) Seaside Park (aka Crescent Bay Park) and Businesses, ca. 1920
University of Southern California Digital Library, California Historical Society Collection

(Left to right) *The Ball Room, The Rendezvous, Ice Cream, Tom's, and Pacific Bath House*

The shoreline businesses of Ocean Park—visible in this 1920s photograph of the public park and Bay Street Beach (Bay Street and Bicknell Avenue)—were destroyed with the 1950s–60s beach nourishment and widening and parking lot development programs to make the beach more appealing to middle- and upper-class White residents and visitors.

[155] Devienne, "Urban Renewal by the Sea," 100–08, 112–14; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 130, 133; "Luxurious $9 Million Santa Monica Shores Completed for Kern County Land Company," *The Web Spinner* 21, no. 9–10 (Sept.–Oct. 1967), 3.

[156] A backlash occurred against development in Ocean Park after the two towers were built, stopping plans for additional high-rise apartment buildings along the coastline, Devienne, "Urban Renewal by the Sea," 108–14; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 130, 133; City of Santa Monica 1957 Master Plan.

(Fig. 71) City of Santa Monica, Los Angeles County Master Shoreline Plan map, Division of Beaches and Parks, Dept. of Natural Resources / Dept. of Engineering State of California, 1947
University of Southern California Library, Special Collections

In this map study of the beach for a 1950s sand replenishment program, planners and engineers identified the beach space African Americans' enjoyed with the words "Colored Use."

(Fig. 72) The Santa Monica Shores, 1967
Published in *The Webb Spinner* 21, no 9–10 (September–October 1967)
Courtesy of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum

With amenities such as balconies with ocean views, a pool, and a golf course, the Santa Monica Shores twin towers at the Ocean Park beachfront set the stage for upscale living that was financially out of reach to people of color and other marginalized groups.

Erased Dreams

Silas "Sy" C. White (1905–1962) (Fig. 73) was an ambitious man who enjoyed life in the bay city and in Los Angeles, even when things did not always go the way he wanted. He and his wife, Elizabeth R. Linly White (1905–1997), were able to build a new house for themselves and their daughter, Constance (b. 1933), affectionately known by most as "Connie," around 1947 at 1959 Twentieth Street after moving from another house they had bought in Santa Monica in the 1930s. Originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Silas moved to the Los Angeles environs around 1925–26. Before and after his move, he worked for a time as a waiter on railroad cars. He married Elizabeth in Los Angeles in 1928. Her family was originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee, also. The Linlys had moved to Los Angeles and Santa Monica environs in 1907 with their then two-year-old daughter. Elizabeth, who worked in the catering business, was a member of the Philomathean Charity, Literary and Art Club and the founder of the Utopia Study Club, an African American women's social, literary, and arts group, in 1949. Some Utopia parties were covered in the *Los Angeles Sentinel* with descriptions of activities that suggested they were very elegant affairs and thoughtfully executed by the hostesses for themselves and their guests.[157]

(Fig. 73) Silas White, from the Ebony Beach Club promotional brochure, ca. 1957
Constance White Collection

In Los Angeles, White began working for the U.S. Postal Service as a mail carrier, among other jobs, in the 1930s. During the course of his postal service career, lasting into the 1950s, White developed several businesses, including a Santa Monica laundromat on Pico Boulevard between Eighteenth and Nineteenth Streets and a Los Angeles hamburger stand in the West Adams neighborhood at Dunsmuir Avenue and Adams Boulevard. In the 1940s, he also opened a real estate business, handling property transactions and managing his own investments in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, with offices in both cities. In the 1950s, he joined Southern California's real

[157] Constance "Connie" White, retired educator, Hayward, CA, interviews by author, Spring 2005 and December 28, 2019, Los Angeles, CA; "Utopians Hold Anniversary," *L.A. Sentinel,* August 2, 1951, C2; "Utopia Club Officials Take Oath at Meeting," *L..A. Sentinel,* July 7, 1949, C2.

estate impresarios and good life promoters in developing more sophisticated businesses centered around leisure pursuits. He was a business partner in Tommy Tucker's Playroom, a restaurant and bar that catered to an African American aspirational and elite clientele on Washington Boulevard, a little east of LaBrea Avenue in Los Angeles.[158]

The Ebony Beach Club

In 1957 White led an investment group effort to open the Ebony Beach Club in a defunct Santa Monica building that had once housed the White people's Elks Club. His group purchased the building at 1811 Ocean Avenue a few blocks from the Pacific Ocean in the greater Civic Center area near Pico Boulevard. A supporter of White's vision and a charter member of the club was none other than the suave, renowned pianist and pop vocalist Nat King Cole. White's group planned to significantly renovate the old Elks Club building, which had been vacant for thirteen years before his group's acquisition. The Ebony Beach Club investors aspired to create "a symbol of gracious living," as was described in a 1959 *Los Angeles Sentinel* article.[159]

A 1950s promotional brochure stated, "The purpose of [the Ebony Beach] club is for the pleasure, social enjoyment, recreation and entertainment of its members and to foster and perpetuate social relations." (Fig. 74) The private, year-round facility would be supported by membership fees. The club would offer a cocktail lounge and dining facilities, game rooms, and a ballroom. Other offerings included a Finnish-style steam room and masseur, changing rooms, showers and lockers for beachgoers and health club users, and a complete barbershop. Members would be able to rent a few guest rooms for overnight stays and sign up for chartered boat fishing trips, amateur golf tournaments, and hunting trips, among other activities. The brochure's illustrations, designed in a 1950s modern graphic style, featured images of people of ambiguous ethnic identities to illustrate the users of the club facilities.[160]

As president of the Ebony Beach Club, White had bought the Elks Club property through a lease-sales agreement in May 1957 from Bennett Dorsey, a White Los Angeles real estate broker who had owned it since 1944. In an interview, Connie White (Silas' daughter) informed the author that Dorsey and her father had known one another for many years. Within two months of this acquisition, and before the club could open its doors to members' enjoyment, the Santa Monica City Council voted on eminent domain condemnation proceedings in August 1958. City officials began actions to acquire five parcels of land, including the lots where the old Elks building was situated in order to clear it purportedly for Civic Center parking, as reported to the *Los Angeles Times* by City Manager Randall M. Dorton. Dorton claimed that additional parking was needed for civic events at the new Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, the City Hall, and the new Los Angeles County Courthouse.

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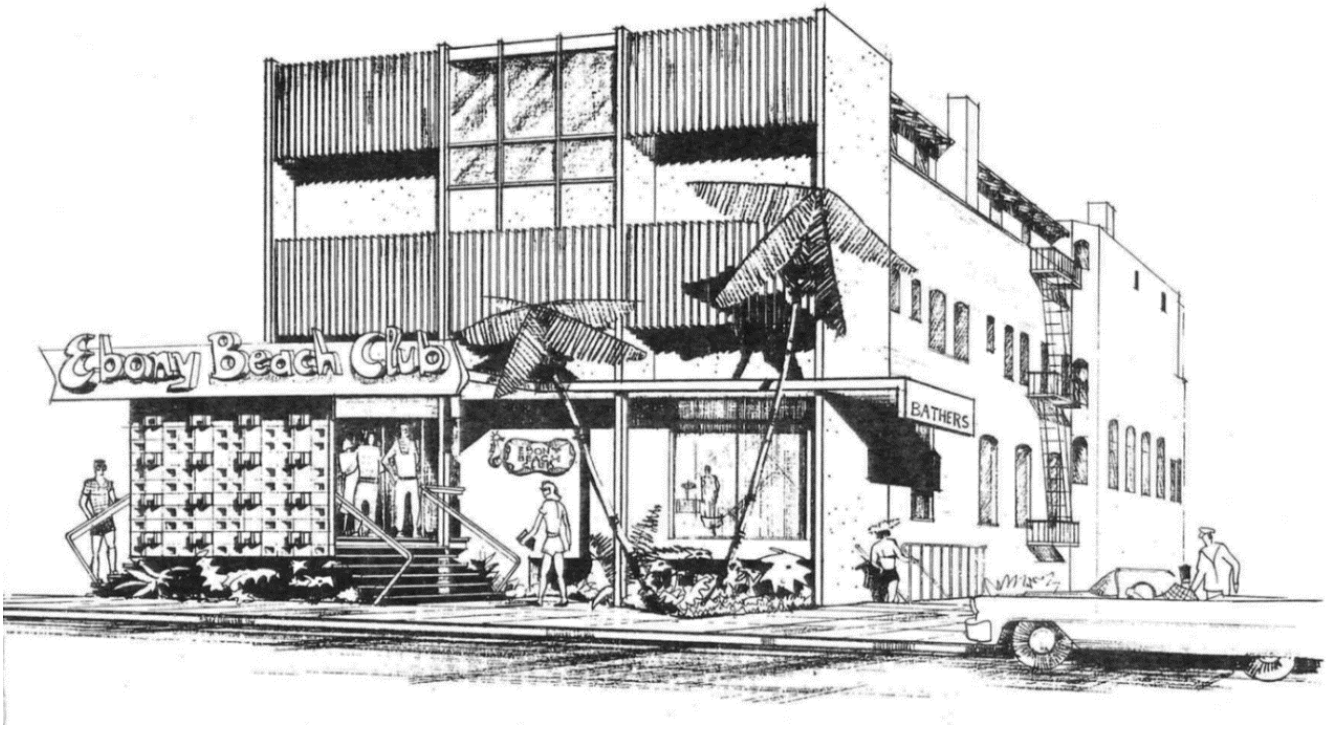
[158] White interviews.

[159] "Beach Club Controversy Goes On: LA New Site for Trail," *L.A. Sentinel*, August 6, 1959, (quote) A1. "SM Sued over Ebony Club Deal," *Evening Outlook*, January 7, 1959, 1; "Ebony Club Owner Paid for Land," *Evening Outlook*, November 27, 1959, 1.

[160] "The Ebony Beach Club" promotion brochure, 1950s, Constance White Collection (copy in author's possession); White interviews, Spring 2005 and December 28, 2019.

He further held that a club with a large membership and no parking lot "would aggravate an already critical parking situation."



(Fig. 74) Drawing from the Ebony Beach Club promotional brochure, ca. 1957
Constance White Collection

In 1957 African American businessman Silas C. White led an investment group that planned to open a Black membership-based beach club at Ocean Avenue and Pico Boulevard. The Ebony Beach Club's promotional brochure stated that the place was "for the pleasure, social enjoyment, recreation and entertainment of its members and to foster and perpetuate social relations." A supporter of White's vision and charter member of the club was none other than the suave, renowned pianist and pop vocalist Nat King Cole.

This move was not without controversy in Santa Monica. White declared to the *Los Angeles Times* that the city's action was "tainted with discrimination." Some councilmen argued that the land was much too valuable and too far away from City Hall to be used for parking. But these councilmen did not prevail in the city council's ensuring land acquisition vote. The other councilmembers did not think racial discrimination played a factor in this situation.[161]

White and his fellow investors did not see it the same way. The renovated clubhouse was scheduled to open in October 1958, only two months away. The investors and Dorsey followed up by filing a Superior Court case charging that the Santa Monica City Council "'entered into a scheme, plan and conspiracy' to discriminate against Negroes," as reported by the *Los Angeles Sentinel*. Their lawyers charged that the city had full knowledge of the club's operation because the necessary permits had been obtained for the facility's use and renovation. They asserted that the city's

[161] "S.M. to File Lawsuit for Beach Land," (quotes 1 and 2), WS1; "Beach Club Controversy Goes On."

condemnation action was enacted to prevent the establishment of an African American club a few blocks from the Pacific Ocean. In protest, White erected a giant sign on the front of the building accusing the city of racial discrimination (Fig. 75). In an interview with a *Los Angeles Sentinel* reporter in January 1959, he emphasized that prior to the club's acquisition, the building had been

(Fig. 75) Ebony Beach Club, ca. 1959
Lolita Lowell, Santa Monica History Museum, Gilmore Family Collection, 2020.FIC.1.1

An abandoned building at 1811 Ocean Avenue at Pico Boulevard was the site of the future Ebony Beach Club, purchased by Black entrepreneur Silas A. White and his investment groups. After many years of White supremacist sabotage of African American land acquisitions for amusement facilities near the beach, another act of racial discrimination occurred within two months of the announcement of the beach club: the City of Santa Monica rushed in and took over the land through eminent domain proceedings for a purported parking lot, forcing White and his investors to abandon the project. When city officials seized the land in 1959, White put up this sign asserting racial discrimination.

A transcript of the sign reads:
Ebony Beach Club, Inc. | 1811 Ocean Ave. | Silas C. White, Pres. | To our members | S.M. City Officials used eminent domain condemnation | For racial discrimination! | We bow our heads to the greatest public good… | …But NEVER to official confiscation! | Executive Offices 5331 West Adams Blvd. | Los Angeles, Calif. | WE. 3-1323.

vacant for thirteen years and that if the city needed the property it had plenty of earlier acquisition opportunities before the Ebony Beach Club had acquired it. The plaintiffs asked the court to award them $125,000 for the property as well as money and liability incurred for fixtures and equipment in the building's renovation.[162]

In August 1959, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Clarence Kincaid directed the jury to only consider the land value in deciding the case. Consequently, the judge and jury ignored the racial discrimination charges made by the club management and Dorsey. After a six-day condemnation lawsuit hearing, the jury determined that the City of Santa Monica would have to pay the Ebony Beach Club $74,000 in condemnation compensation for the former Elks Club property. Despite an appeal by the club and other legal maneuvers, by January 1960 the city was accepting bids for the building's demolition and debris removal. In the aftermath of the condemnation acquisition, the now city-owned site became a hotel, along with parking for its guests.[163]

In the twenty-first century, an upscale, stylish hostelry called the Viceroy Hotel sits on the land where the Ebony Beach Club would have opened. The city continues to own this site and derives economic benefit from the hotel's revenues and occupancy tax. After the Ebony Beach Club dispossession, White and his associates also attempted to purchase the Hotel Deauville just north of the Santa Monica Pier and to turn it into an African American beach club. From oral histories of people who lived through the era, it is not clear of the year White attempted to purchase the hotel. However, during the mid-1950s for parties and other social events, African Americans had enjoyed the use of this then private facility. White died in 1962, and in 1964 the Hotel Deauville mysteriously burned down. In 1970 the City of Santa Monica purchased the land, which in the twenty-first century is a beach-area parking lot.[164]

The 1960s and Beyond

Although institutionalized racism under the guise of municipal action had stopped development of yet another Black-owned beach resort service business, and systematic dispossession of Black coastal landownership prevailed in South Santa Monica, African American advances came in other arenas as the 1960s unfolded. Santa Monica's civic life did open up a bit as a result of continuing pressure for civil rights action from African Americans; a few became elected representatives.

Blanche A. Nelson Carter

Blanche A. Nelson Carter, widow of the Rev. Welford P. Carter, who had led Calvary Baptist Church (see pages 91–93), became the first African American appointed, and then

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[162] "S.M. to File Lawsuit for Beach Land" (quote 1); "Discrimination Charge Denied by S.M. Aide," *L.A. Times*, January 11, 1959, WS6; "Property Hassle Hits Beach City, $125,000 Bias Suit Pushed," *L.A. Sentinel*, January 8, 1959, (quote 2) A1.

[163] Elks Club Decision to Be Appealed," *L.A. Times*, September 6, 1959, WS1.

[164] "Building to Be Razed in Bay City," *L.A. Times*, January 3, 1960, WS13; Trives, interview by author, April 2005; *Los Angeles Sentinel*, mid-1950s–1964; Scott Harrison, "From the Archives: Deauville Beach Club Destroyed in 1964 by Fire," *L.A. Times*, April 4, 2019.

elected, to the Santa Monica School Board, serving from 1968 to 1977. When she was reelected to her second four-year term, she was the top vote getter.[165]

This was at a time of high national and local emotions about how to redress racial inequality in the American educational system, the benefits of desegregation and integration, and a determination for quality education in communities of color. The Santa Monica Unified School District had purportedly rearranged school boundaries that provided each school with "a good racial mixture" to prevent *de facto* school segregation, as reported in the *Los Angeles Times* on October 10, 1968. In the article, Carter asserted that her tenure allowed African Americans and the Spanish-speaking community to express how they felt about the schools. In line with her efforts to support the uninterrupted struggle in American history for equal access to quality education, she called for the recruitment of more teachers and other professional staff members of color. She noted that many African American parents complained that White teachers were not interested in the problems or success of Black children. She further asserted the importance for children of color to see role models who looked like them to deepen their self-confidence in the school environment.[166]

Carter also was the first bay city citizen elected to the Santa Monica School Board who lived south of the upscale Montana Avenue. During her tenure, she served as board president and as a board member of the Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization and the California School Boards Association Delegate Assembly. Carter resided in Ocean Park for a time and from her home she could easily walk to her school board office in the 1700 block of Fourth Street next to the Santa Monica High School sports fields.[167]

More firsts occurred for African Americans in Santa Monica governance in the 1970s when Nat Trives (Figs. 2 and 80) was elected to the city council from a field of eighteen, serving from 1971 to 1979. He was Santa Monica's first Black mayor from 1975 to 1977. Hilliard Lawson (see pages 40 and 42) also served on the council from 1973 to 1975. (Figs. 76 and 77) Additionally, Dr. George E. Hurd (see pages 96–97 and 99–101) was serving on Santa Monica's Planning Commission since his 1955 election and Joseph W. Spalding (see pages 56–60) was completing ten of his eleven years as chairman of the Personnel Board.[168]

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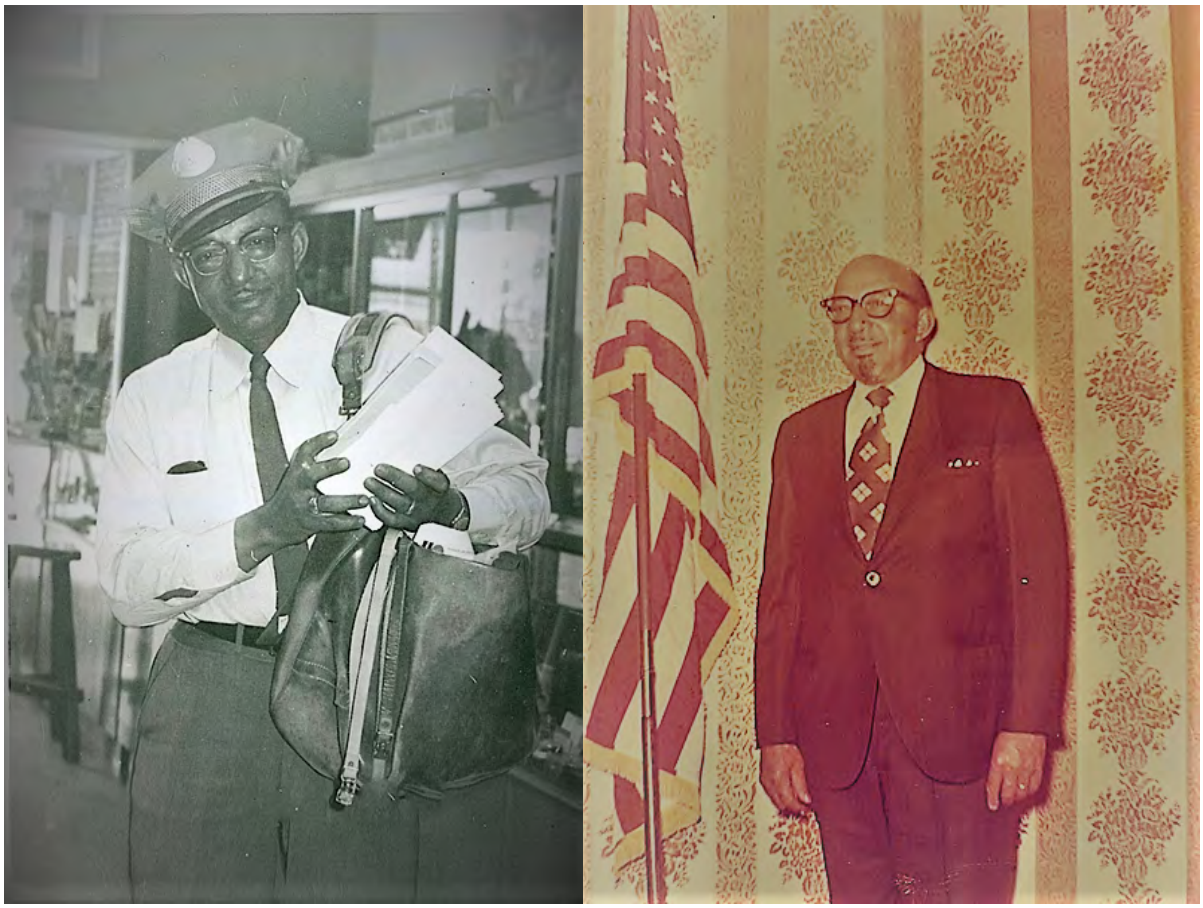
[165] "President Elected by S.M. Trustees," *L.A. Times*, July 16, 1970, WS3.

[166] "S.M. Woman Will Fill Term on School Board," *L.A. Times*, October 6, 1968, WS3; "President Elected by S.M. Trustees," *L.A. Times*, July 16, 1970, WS3; Ray Ripton, "New School Board Member Seeks to Close Racial Gap," *L.A. Times*, October 10, 1968, (quote) WS1.

[167] Santa Monica's Montana Avenue is and was then a street of independent retail shops that divides the more expensive houses of the most affluent north of it from the rest of Santa Monica to the south, *L.A. Times*, July 16, 1970, WS3; Barbara Baird, "Election in S.M. Portends Major Policy Changes," *L.A. Times*, April 14, 1977, WS1; Ripton, "New School Board Member Seeks to Close Racial Gap"; Leanna Y. Ford, "People in the News," *L.A. Sentinel*, May 3, 1973, A2.

[168] Robertson, "Resort City Needs Negro Leadership"; Andrews, "Business News."



(Figs. 76 and 77) Hilliard Lawson *(left)* stopping to pose for a photograph while delivering mail on his U.S. Postal Service route in Santa Monica, ca. 1940, and *(right)* at a Santa Monica City civic event, 1979
Cristyne Lawson Collection

A man of many careers and talents, Hilliard Lawson was the second African American to serve on the Santa Monica City Council from 1973 to 1975. For several years he was a mail carrier for the U.S. Postal Service. He was like numerous African Americans who took advantage of the stable income government jobs provided, allowing them to save money that over the decades brought opportunities for social, economic, and upward mobility. An Ocean Park resident for many years, Lawson was also an entrepreneur who owned a catering business and property, while he also worked as a real estate agent.

Lloyd C. Allen

Small business owner and civil rights activist Lloyd C. Allen (b. 1921) moved from Louisiana to California in 1939, joining other relatives who had already migrated to Santa Monica and Venice. He lived for a time with his brother at the southwest corner of Fourth Street and Pico Boulevard in a small apartment building in Ocean Park, south of the Belmar area where a gas station operates in the twenty-first century. In 1949 he founded a maintenance and janitorial supplies business and rented space to operate it in the Black-owned building of Manuel and Julia Murrell at the southeast corner of Fourth and Pico (Fig. 78). As a tenant, Allen would run his business there for twenty-six years. In 1975 he purchased the building from the Murrells and owned it for the next thirty years, selling both the building and the business in 2005. Although, this building continues to stand in 2020, it has not yet formally been distinguished as a historic local, state, or national landmark due to its significance as an African American site of contestation, economic development and community building.

Allen was the first African American on the Recreation and Parks Commission in the late 1960s to early 1970s (Figs. 79 and 80). An active member of the N.A.A.C.P., he also helped organize the Santa Monica Business and Professional Men's Council. A fond memory for Allen includes one of this group's accomplishments: hosting the Reverend/Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak about equality and the civil rights concerns of the day. A capacity crowd attended this event at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in 1961. Allen was also one of the people who were instrumental in developing Virginia Avenue Park at Twentieth Street and Pico Boulevard. When it opened in 1976, it was the first park added to Santa Monica in twenty-eight years and a much-needed recreational space for this neighborhood of mostly people of color, which had become much denser in population.[169]

Allen also served in leadership positions in the Rotary Club, the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce, and at the Calvary Baptist Church. He played an instrumental role in Nat Trives's election to the Santa Monica City Council in 1971 and was nominated by Governor Ronald Reagan and appointed by President Richard Nixon to the Selective Service Board in Santa Monica in the 1970s.[170]

[169] Allen interviews, April 2005 and February 4, 2020; Robertson, "Resort City Needs Negro Leadership"; Andrews, "Business News"; "Virginia Avenue Park," Imagine Santa Monica, Santa Monica Facts, Santa Monica Public Library Digital Resources, acc. February 2020, www.smpl.org.

[170] Allen interviews; "Two More Negro Success Stories"; Lloyd C. Allen biography, Black History Month Exhibit, Santa Monica City Hall, February 2020.

(Fig. 78) Rendering of the Murrell building, later the Allen Maintenance Company, ca. 1975
Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library, Santa Monica Outlook Newspaper Collection

Lloyd C. Allen published an ad with this rendering of the building at 400–404 Pico Boulevard in *The Santa Monica Outlook* newspaper in 1975. That year, he purchased the site from the African Americans who had owned it since 1925, Manuel and Julia Murrell. The Murrells had purchased the lot and constructed the building where they lived and rented space to African American entrepreneurs and professionals who began their operations there. Allen owned it for the next thirty years, selling both the building and the business in 2005.

(Fig. 79) Small business owner and civil activist Lloyd C. Allen, 1970s
Lloyd and Norma Allen Collection

In the late 1960s, Lloyd C. Allen became the first African American to serve on Santa Monica's Recreation and Parks Commission. When this photograph was made in the 1970s, he was helping to develop the Virginia Avenue Park at Twentieth Street and Pico Boulevard in a multiethnic neighborhood.

(Fig. 80) Santa Monica officials and Senator Alan Cranston at the Memorial Park Gym opening, ca. 1971
Nat Trives Collection

(Left to right) *Lloyd C. Allen, Santa Monica businessman and Recreation and Parks Commissioner; Betty Dituri with unidentified child; her husband, Anthony Dituri, Santa Monica mayor; Nat Trives, Santa Monica City Council member; Blanche A. Nelson Carter, Santa Monica School Board member; and U.S. Senator Alan Cranston*

This photograph, published in the *Santa Monica Outlook* newspaper, was taken at the newly built Santa Monica Memorial Park Gymnasium in 1971. Lloyd Allen was the first African American to serve on the Santa Monica Recreation and Parks Commission during the 1960s–70s. He lived for a time in Ocean Park, where his janitorial service and supply business was located for more than fifty years. Blanche Carter, who also lived in Ocean Park for a time, was the first African American-elected official in Santa Monica (and on the School Board), serving from 1968 to 1977. Nat Trives was the first African American elected to the Santa Monica City Council, serving from 1971 to 1979.

* * *

By the 1960s, along with their persistent action for total freedom, Black Santa Monica residents had joined other African Americans around the nation in benefiting from the U.S. and California Supreme Court decisions between 1948 and 1968 that, at least on paper, moved toward the total abolition of all legal and vigilante racial restrictions and discrimination in housing, education, employment, and even recreation facilities. The first results, U.S. Supreme Court decisions *Shelley v. Kraemer (1948)* and *Barrows v. Jackson (1953),* ruled that enforcement of racially restrictive covenants on property deeds violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and were unenforceable (unconstitutional). The combination of *Kraemer and Barrows*, along with other enforcement efforts in the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)*, the *Civil Rights Act (1964)*, the *Voting Rights Act (1965),* and *Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act (1968),* prohibited most forms of discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin.

After a dramatic 61.7 percent increase in Santa Monica's African American population in 1960 to 4,060 from 1,555 in 1950, the growth of the Black community leveled off into the early decades of the twenty-first century. In the same period, the city's population grew from 71,595 in 1950 to 83,249 in 1960, an increase of 14 percent, and would continue to grow by 5 to 10 percent into the twenty-first century. The 1940s–60s civil rights legal victories and their enforcement, which weakened racial exclusionary customs and laws maintaining racial restrictions, could not stop the displacement of African Americans and other marginalized communities in Santa Monica.

The destruction of African American neighborhoods in South Santa Monica and in the Pico Neighborhood due to civic building projects and the Interstate 10 Freeway construction diminished the way many Black families' had obtained generational wealth-building opportunities—through homeownership and business development, the way that most Americans build wealth. The era's social justice actions that improved African Americans' quality of life and societal opportunities could not stop the domino effort of the civic modernization projects that forced many Black Santa Monica owners of property and businesses to sell and move to other places. Curtailed was their ability to pass their property and businesses on to descendants so they could continue to live and thrive in the bay city.

Epilogue

In looking at the African American neighborhood patterns and Santa Monica's development over the course of the twentieth century, one sees a continued pattern of dislocation due to social injustice and White supremacist economic sabotage actions to diminish Black land acquisition and wealth-building. The earliest twentieth century African American neighborhoods discussed previously were located on the edge of the developed city land, farthest from the shore in the North and South Santa Monica neighborhoods. As early as the 1920s, the Santa Monica Realty Board president made public statements about local realtors' understanding that "Colored people" should be confined to certain districts; this attitude persisted into the 1960s.[171]

As Santa Monica's population increased throughout the twentieth century, African Americans were squeezed out of the neighborhoods nearest to the beach due to of a combination of White supremacy, anti-Black economic sabotage, housing discrimination, and eminent domain land purchases for civic projects. African Americans' ability to afford to buy homes or other property in these neighborhoods were also impacted because their employment opportunities had been historically limited by the structural, social, and economic conditions of the period. When communities of color started to move inland as the city expanded, they settled around the transit and manufacturing/agriculture corridors and again more or less at the city's outer limits.[172]

In a succession of different plans and actions, in the mid-twentieth century until recently in the 2010s (except for the 1980s), there was a pro-development mindset within the ranks of Santa Monica's civic leadership. With their historic efforts to renovate and improve the "renowned resort city," Santa Monica civic leaders intentionally neutralized several decades of civil rights, social justice, and wealth-building progress when they pushed out long-lasting communities of color and other marginalized groups through the development of the Interstate 10 Freeway, the Civic Center and Santa Monica High School expansion, and the Ocean Park coastline residential towers and parking lots. As historian Paula A. Scott observed, they destroyed a large area of affordable housing, thereby reducing the economic and cultural diversity of the city and making it less likely for future generations of these groups to purchase homes and develop businesses in Santa Monica. The modernization efforts did help prevent middle- and upper-class White flight from the Santa Monica beaches, but also exposed the complexities of the systematic dispossession of coastal landownership faced by African Americans and other marginalized groups.[173]

In the twenty-first century, Santa Monica's economy continues to revolve around tourism and much less around manufacturing and aviation. Real estate transactions and office rentals are playing an increasing role in the city's economy. There is little land available to build on unless something is torn down. Moderate-priced housing is becoming nonexistent. With freeways and the

[171] Flamming, *Bound for Freedom,* 220.
[172] Sanborn Maps; County of Los Angeles Land Use Map, 1937, Huntington Library Collection, San Marino, CA.
[173] Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 122, 127–31, 217; City of Santa Monica 1957 Master Plan; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 136–37, 144–49; Devienne, "Urban Renewal by the Sea," 99–125.

reimagined, newly opened light rail (2012)—the Metro Expo line—people of all ethnic groups have more opportunities to travel to a variety of different employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities throughout the Southland. Real estate prices continue to rise and a larger percentage of people rent their residences than own. Many of the city's current residents work in management, professional, or related occupations. Others work in sales or office administration work. Fewer Santa Monicans today would be considered "blue-collar" workers. Most would be deemed part of the more privileged economic groups in our society. Many smaller businesses in Santa Monica are closing because they cannot compete with the big chain-store merchandising and advertising budgets.[174]

Although the stability of the African American community in Santa Monica has suffered from the various urban redevelopment projects and the freeway intrusion during the middle decades of the twentieth century, their small community has survived. Its population decreased to 3,526 in 2010 from its high of 4,218 in 1970. African Americans have remained at around 4 to 5 percent of Santa Monica's total population from 1960 to 2019. The populations of Spanish surname and other communities of color, meanwhile, have increased more significantly (see population table on page 145). Still, new migrants and immigrants supply the population of both groups. As a whole, the Pico Neighborhood continues to be home to the majority of residents from communities of color in the bay city. This neighborhood has begun to attract a more diverse pool of renters and buyers, including many more Whites, some of whom are viewed by a vocal segment of longtime residents as gentrifiers who are not concerned with the multiethnic community's value as a contributor to the vibrancy and economic life of the city.[175]

Since the 1970s, Santa Monica citizens and their elected representatives have made a few important policy decisions around maintaining housing at a cost where multiple levels of the workforce can continue to afford to rent and buy housing and contribute to community life in the bay city. In Santa Monica's coastal areas, which fall under jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission founded in 1972–76, its policies also have made a contribution to the maintenance of a more diverse housing stock. But many more creative solutions need to be studied and implemented to support and sustain comfortable housing choices for a wide and diverse socio-economic citizenry. Santa Monica has been a place where diverse people have made contributions of a lasting nature over time starting with the Tongva/Gabrielino people. Only time will tell if this trend will continue in the future. Citizens, policymakers, and educators have the chance to learn the lessons of history to make informed judgments about contemporary issues and to work toward a more just and equitable society for all in Santa Monica and beyond.[176] (Figs. 81 and 82)

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[174] City of Santa Monica Profile, prepared by Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), May 2019, 11, 25, 26; Scott, *Santa Monica: A History on the Edge,* 136–37, 144–49.
[175] 1960–2020 U.S. Census and U.S. Census Quick Facts Population Estimates, July 1, 2019 (V2019), acc. October 14, 2020, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/santamonicacitycalifornia,US/PST045219; Scott, 144.
[176] Scott, 150–51; California Coastal Commission website, acc. July 2020, accessed July 2020, https://www.coastal.ca.gov/whoweare.html.

(Fig. 81) Black beachgoers from Los Angeles at the Bay Street Beach, 1926
Shades of L.A. Photo Collection/Los Angeles Public Library

(Left to right) Grace Williams, Albert Williams, Mary Mingleton, Willie Williams

Black visitors to Santa Monica swam and socialized at the beach at Bay Street and Ocean Front Walk until the 1960s. Like these beachgoers in 1926, African Americans found less anti-Black hostility at the Bay Street Beach than at other Southern California beaches. Still, Whites called it “the Inkwell,” in reference to the color of Black beachgoers’ skin.

(Fig. 82) Cristyne Lawson at the Bay Street Beach, 1953
Cristyne Lawson Collection

A descendant of the pioneering Stout family in Ocean Park, Cristyne Lawson made this photograph at the Bay Street Beach in 1953. She attended Julliard, New York City's renowned performing arts school, and danced with the famous dance troupes of Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey. Her grandparents, the Rev. James A. and Mary Stout, moved to Santa Monica's Ocean Park district in 1909. Their descendants continue to live in the bay city in the twenty-first century.

Postscript

In this essay, and with the Santa Monica chapter of my book, *Living the California Dream, African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* as its underpinning, I have told representative stories of the now-erased Belmar Triangle and other South Santa Monica neighborhoods that were destroyed during waves of urban renewal infrastructure projects in the mid-twentieth century. In telling this history of Santa Monica's African American experience, I have attempted to make this local, state, and national history in California more visible, while recasting its significance and public meanings in the bay city's urban landscape and heritage conservation.

Reconstructing and reclaiming this history represents the greater complexity of the American story and enlivens the past for more diverse constituencies who will read about, visit, and be inspired by this and other stories of historic areas and landmarks of Santa Monica and other places along the California coast. The stories illuminated in these two historical accounts, combined with the Belmar History + Art multifaceted education, inspirational, and remembrance programming, will continue to resonantly amplify a broader public's understanding of Black life and its urban landscape in Santa Monica as part of our collective and diverse California cultural heritage to provide broader coastal zone accessibility for present and future generations. (Fig. 83)

(Fig. 83) Author and historian Alison Rose Jefferson (*third from left)* with longtime Santa Monica and Venice community members at the groundbreaking for Historic Belmar Park, site of the erased Belmar Triangle neighborhood, August 27, 2019
Courtesy of the City of Santa Monica

(Left to right) *Nat Trives, Jataun Valentine, Alison Rose Jefferson, LaVerne Ross, Lloyd C. Allen, and Norma Allen*

Santa Monica Population Characteristics

Year	Total	Anglos	Other Races	African Americans	Percentage Minority	Percentage African American
1900	3,057	2,958	39	60	3%	2%
1910	7,847	7,589	87	191	3.5%	2%
1920	15,252	14,866	104	282	2.5%	2%
1930	37,146	33,539	2,867	740	10%	2%
1940	53,500	51,691	544	1,265	3.4%	2%
1950	71,595	69,801	239	1,555	2.5%	2%
1960	83,249	78,122	1,067	4,060	6%	5%
1970	88,289	81,935	2,136	4,218	7%	5%
1980	88,314	75,676	15,052	3,594	21%	4%
1990	86,905	72,116	15,448	3,973	22%	5%
2000	84,084	60,482	20,521	3,081	24.5%	4%
2010	89,736	69,663	16,547	3,526	18.4%	3.93%

Source: U.S. Census

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