

# HISTORIC BELMAR

EXPLORING BLACK SANTA MONICA IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

ACTIVITY BOOK



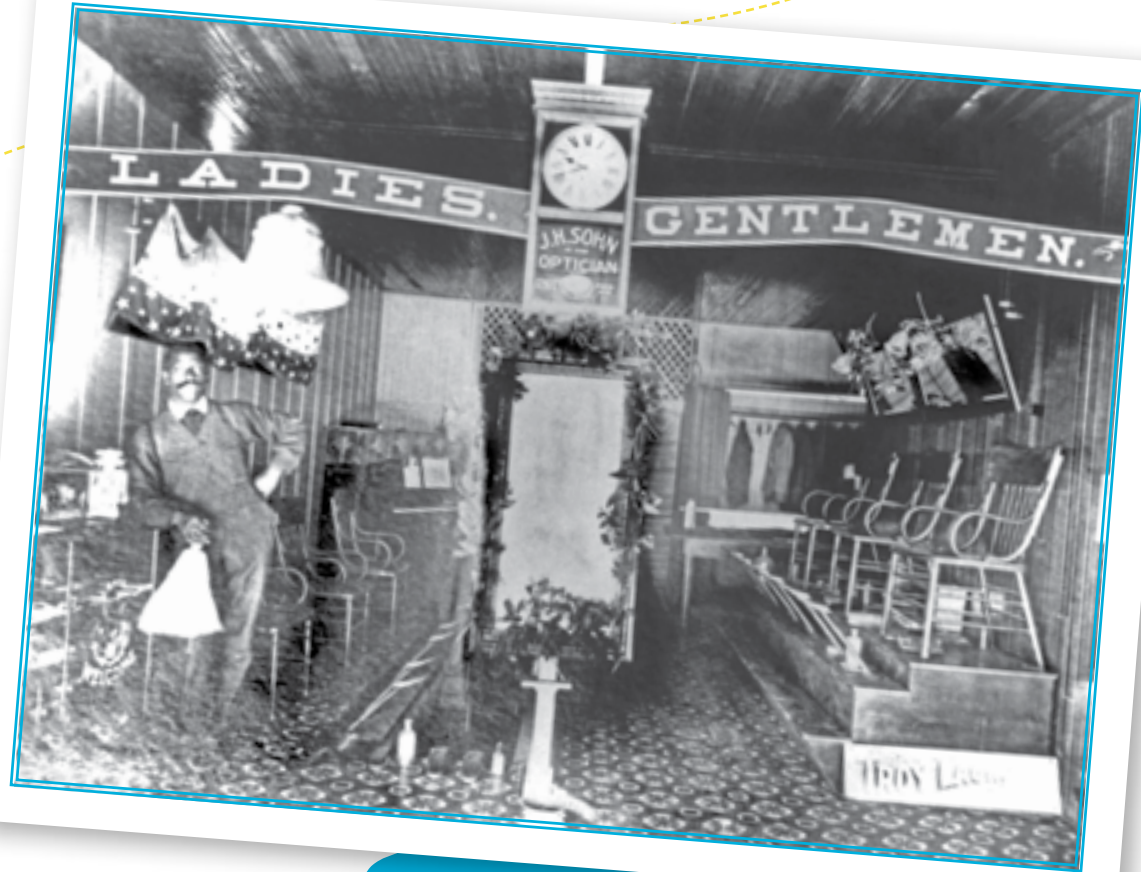
# A CLOSER LOOK

African Americans migrated (mostly from the South) starting in the late 19th century, settling throughout the West and establishing vibrant neighborhoods, like Belmar in Santa Monica, California. The **Belmar History + Art (BH+A)** project commemorates the history of the African American residents and business owners of the historic Belmar and surrounding neighborhoods. Once a thriving community, this area was razed through eminent domain\* in the 1950s in order to make way for the Civic Auditorium and the Civic Center campus.

\*eminent domain is the government's ability to take private property for public use

## Cover image

The Gordon Day Work Company (c. 1906) was located on Barnard Way near Pier Ave in Ocean Park  
Walter L. Gordon, Jr./William C. Beverly, Jr. collection,  
Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.



Gilbert McCarroll, Santa Monica's earliest known African American entrepreneur, stands in his shoe shine parlor on Pier Avenue in Ocean Park. A sign in the shop also indicates additional business on the premises, including J.H. Sohn Optician and Troy Laundry, 1907. Santa Monica History Museum Collection, 36.2.313

## WHO

You and your family and friends can all take part in this workbook. You will learn about the residents and neighbors who lived in Black Santa Monica in the 20th Century.

## WHAT

GRAB SOME ART SUPPLIES  
AND HAVE FUN CREATING!

This workbook is full of self-guided activities. It will lead you through the history of Belmar and ask you to visualize and re-imagine the plans and dreams of the families who used to live here.

## WHY

Our histories shape the way we live and exist in the world, and it's important to learn about how people lived all around us. You will be encouraged to ask questions, look closely at what is around you and share what you are learning.

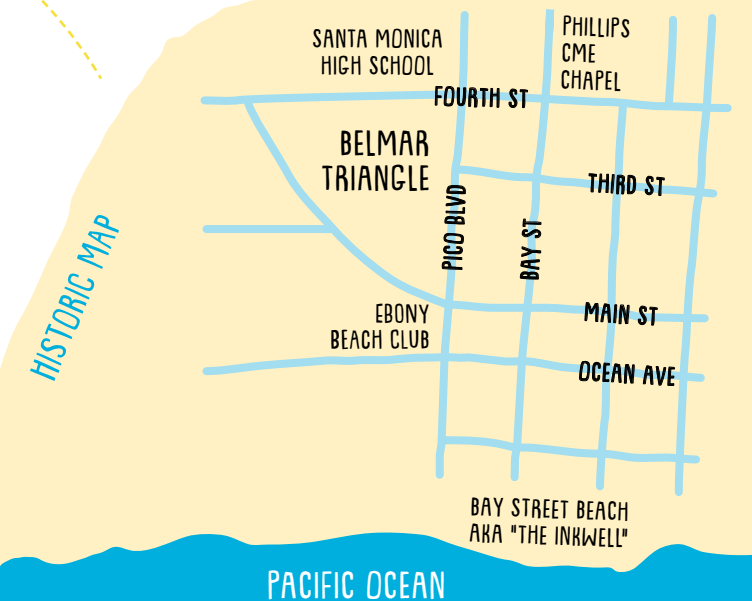
## WHEN

## WHERE

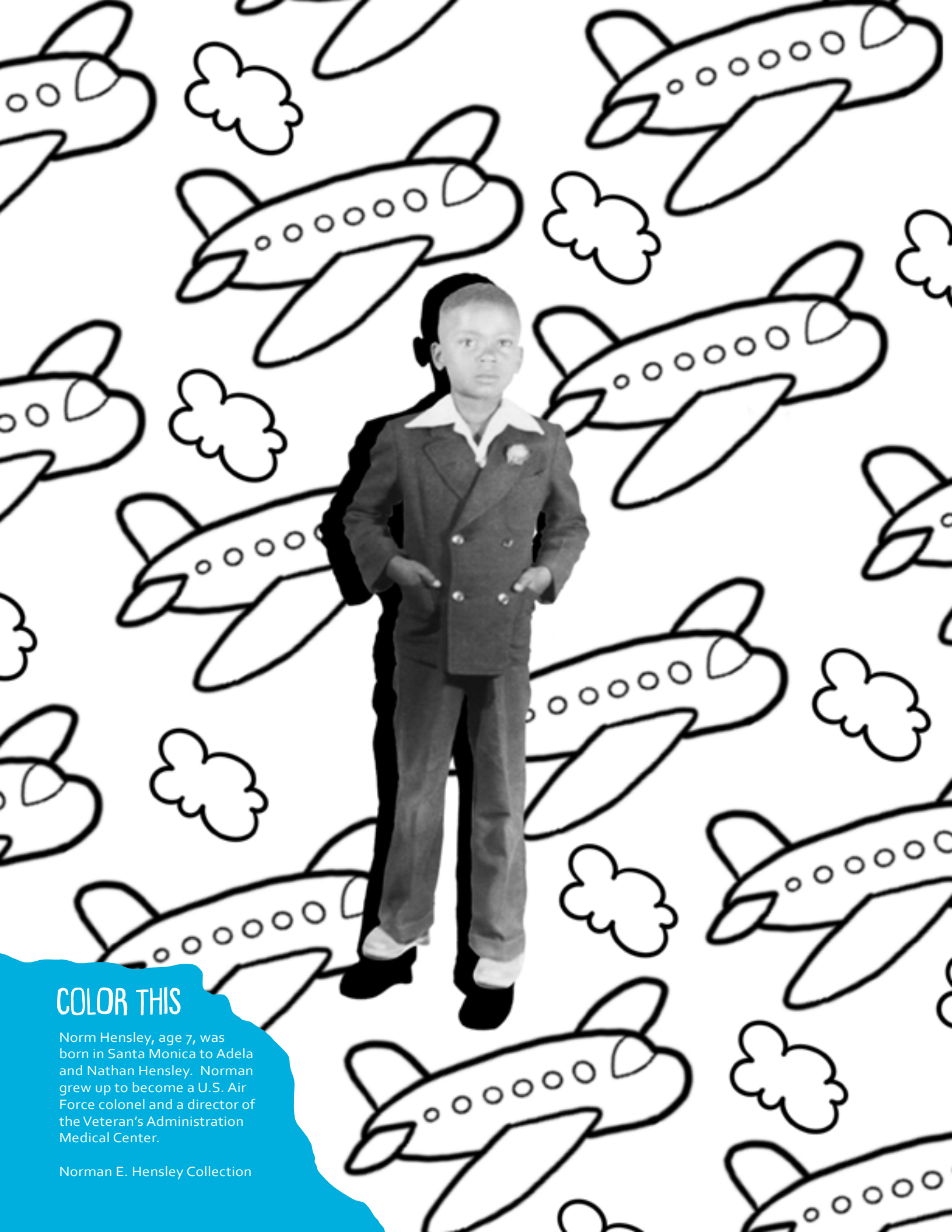
The Belmar community began in the early 1900s and was displaced by eminent domain\* in the 1950s. Today, you can imagine what life was like back then. What would be happening here now, if this neighborhood hadn't been erased?

If you live nearby, you can walk to Historic Belmar Park to learn more. You can also use Google Earth to explore or download a site guide from:

[santamonica.gov/arts/belmar](http://santamonica.gov/arts/belmar)







## COLOR THIS

Norm Hensley, age 7, was born in Santa Monica to Adela and Nathan Hensley. Norman grew up to become a U.S. Air Force colonel and a director of the Veteran's Administration Medical Center.

Norman E. Hensley Collection

# THE WORLD AROUND US

## DESCRIBE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Think of some of the main features that represent the neighborhood you live in. Is it a building? A tree? A sculpture? List 3 things that you feel define a neighborhood.

1

2

3

## SHARE THIS EXERCISE

Ask an older or younger person in your community to share their answers with you. Share yours with someone you know. How does their point of view differ from yours?



# THE WORLD WE IMAGINE

## USE YOUR FIVE SENSES

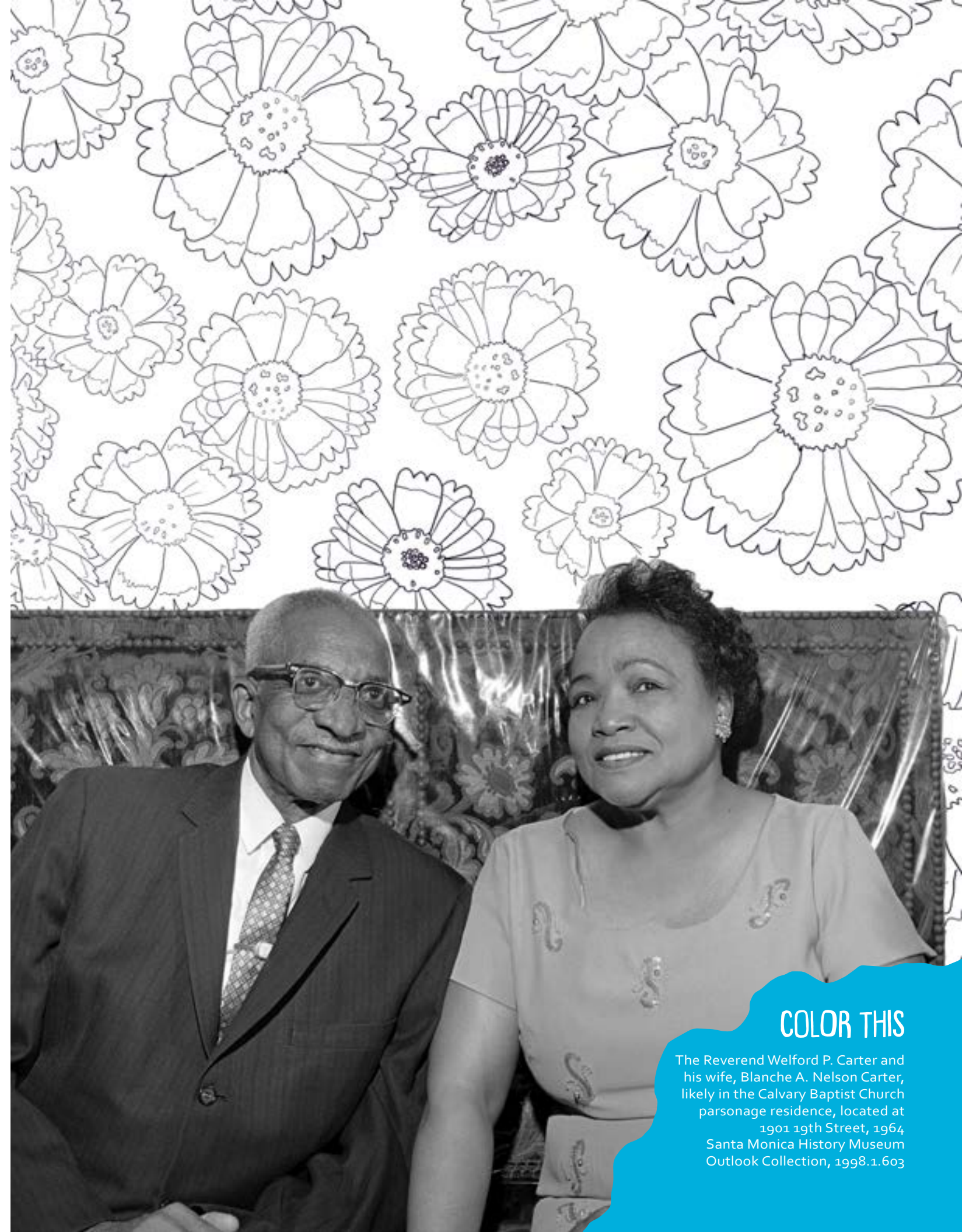
Imagine life in the former Belmar Neighborhood. What sounds do you hear in the morning?

What sight stands out on your way home?

What aroma delights your sense of smell?

What taste reminds you of home?

What kinds of elements or surfaces do you touch on your way home?



## COLOR THIS

The Reverend Welford P. Carter and his wife, Blanche A. Nelson Carter, likely in the Calvary Baptist Church parsonage residence, located at 1901 19th Street, 1964  
Santa Monica History Museum  
Outlook Collection, 1998.1.603





# COLOR THIS

Jennette Maxwell Reese (on the organ) plays a duet with her friend Bernice Stout Lawson. Both women were professional musicians, and Lawson (on the piano) was also a concert musician and music teacher educated at USC. Cristyne Lawson Collection



# A WALK THROUGH TIME

## DISCOVER LIVING HISTORY

Located at Fourth and Bay Street, Phillips Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church is the first African American church established in Santa Monica. The current building is one the oldest continuously utilized buildings in the city and one of the few historical Black Santa Monica buildings that are still standing today. Visit the church's neighborhood (in person or online) to uncover some history of this Santa Monica landmark and fill in your answers below.

**CURRENT LOCATION: 2001 4TH STREET, SANTA MONICA, CA 90405**

What year was Phillips Chapel built?

What is inscribed on the stained glass windows of the chapel?

Where was the chapel originally located?



Phillips Chapel CME Church Sunday School convention, 1909, Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives, Donald A. Brunson Sr. Collection



Phillips Chapel located on the corner of 4th St. & Bay St., 1908, Santa Monica History Museum, Virginia Tegner Spurgin Collection, 36.2.5866



Phillips Chapel, 1956, after 1949 renovations (more closely resembling its current appearance) Santa Monica History Museum, Outlook Collection, 1998.1.1392



# Club Casa Del Mar



## COLOR THIS

Newlyweds Verna (née Deckard) and Arthur Lewis posing in front of a fence demarcating the White-only Casa del Mar Beach Club from Bay Street (also known as Inkwell\*) Beach, 1924. Shades of L.A. Photo Collection / Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

\*The term "Inkwell" originated as a derogatory term coined by white people about many segregated beaches, and has been adopted by some Black people as a point of historical pride.



## COLOR THIS

Nick Gabaldón (1927-1951) is the first documented surfer of color in the Santa Monica Bay. Born to an African American mother and a Mexican American father, Gabaldón was a pioneer surfer who paved the way for generations of Black and Brown surfers.

Illustration based on a painting of Gabaldón by Richard Wyatt Jr., collection of Rick Blocker.

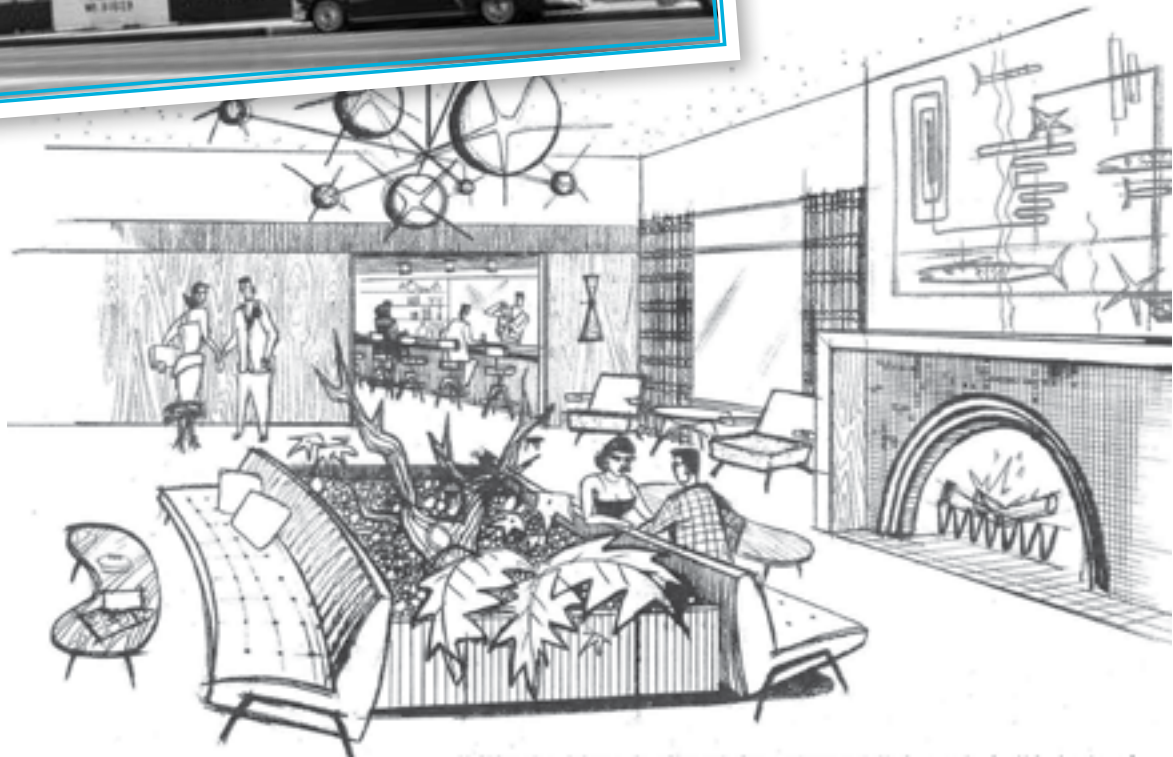


# ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

The Ebony Beach Club (EBC) was a proposed project by Belmar community member Silas White. Mr. White purchased the building at 1811 Ocean Ave. with the intention of turning it into a beach club for Black beach goers. However, the EBC was taken by the City of Santa Monica as part of eminent domain although it was not developed for public use. Drawings for the EBC show sketches for lodging to banquet halls and more.



Ebony Beach Club Building,  
c 1958  
Santa Monica History  
Museum, Gilmore Family  
Collection 2020.FIC.1.1



A page depicting  
the proposed  
lounge from the  
Ebony Beach  
Club architectural  
drawing set by  
Silas White

## DRAW OR COLLAGE A POSTCARD

What if the Ebony Beach Club was successfully built and still existed today? What kind of facilities do you imagine beach goers of today would want? Use the space below to draw or collage a modern lounge for the Ebony Beach Club.



## CAPTION YOUR POSTCARD

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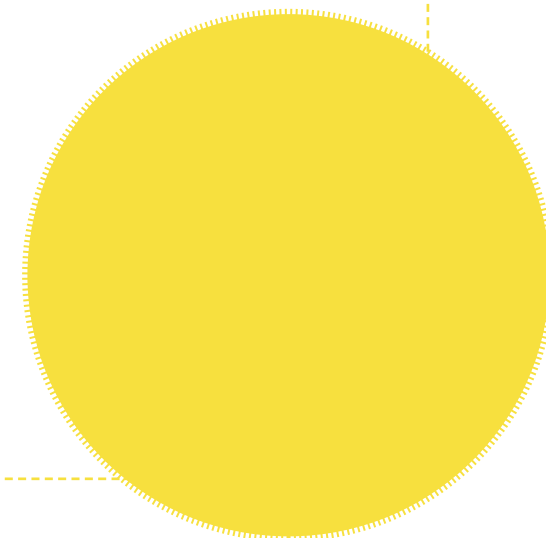


# STORIES BUILD WORLDS

## TELL A DIFFERENT STORY

What if the Ebony Beach Club is open in the future? Using all five senses, write a story about a day at the beach or the EBC. This exercise is meant to stimulate your imagination, don't worry about making it perfect.

Set a timer for 15 minutes. Go!



# BUILD A WORLD

## CUT AND COLLAGE

Create a street view using these images of historical buildings from early Black Santa Monica. First, tear out these two pages. Then cut out the images and **collage them on the last two pages of this activity book**. Bring the collage to life and make a neighborhood with people, plants, sidewalks and more. Add other cutouts from old magazines or draw your own additions!



Rendering of Manuel & Julia Murrell's building, which became the Allen Maintenance Company, ca. 1975  
Santa Monica Public Library, Outlook Newspaper Collection



Ebony Beach Club Building, c 1958  
Santa Monica History Museum, Gilmore Family Collection 2020.FIC.1.1



Wilshire Theater, Santa Monica, built c. 1930. Courtesy of Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives. Donated to SMPL from City Collections.

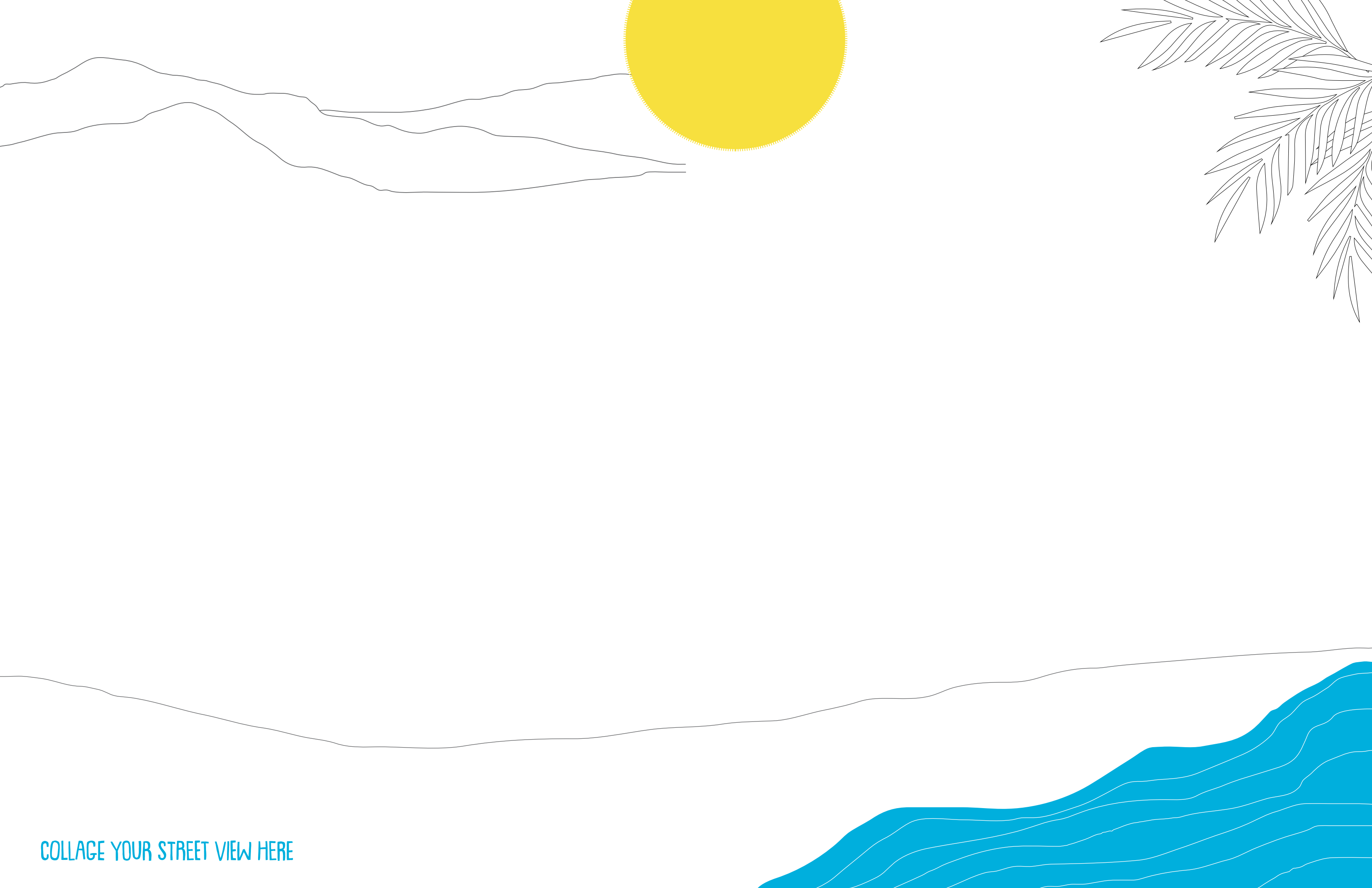


Dr. Marcus O. Tucker's medical building, built 1940 at 424 Pico Blvd.  
Photo by Jason Abraham, 2020

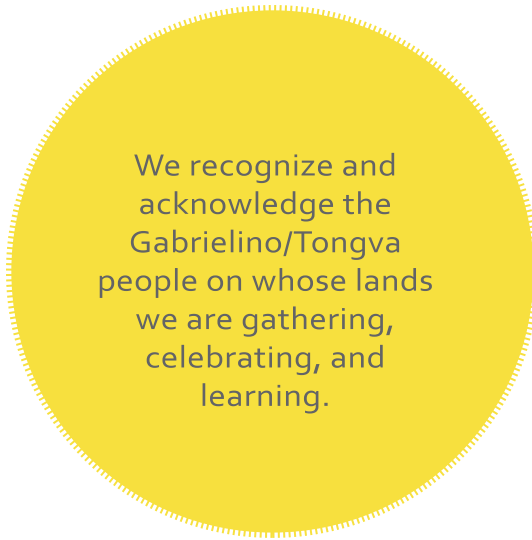


Advertisement for La Bonita, a Black-owned bathhouse and lodge on Belmar Place, Los Angeles New Age, Aug 28, 1914. Courtesy of Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley





COLLAGE YOUR STREET VIEW HERE



We recognize and  
acknowledge the  
Gabrielino/Tongva  
people on whose lands  
we are gathering,  
celebrating, and  
learning.

This activity booklet is funded by City of Santa Monica Cultural Affairs and is part of a worldbuilding series by [April Banks](#), designed and facilitated in collaboration with artist [Susu Attar](#). It is an extension of student workshops by April, Susu and [Natalie Patterson](#), created as part of Belmar History + Art (BH+A) in 2020 and 2021.

The histories conveyed in this activity booklet are taken from the historical interpretive panels forming the permanent exhibit at Historic Belmar Park, based on research by [Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson](#).

BH+A is a project of the City of Santa Monica, commissioned through its Percent for Art Program, and made possible by Santa Monica Cultural Affairs and the City of Santa Monica's Public Works Department. The project historian was Alison Rose Jefferson, M.H.C., Ph.D. and the project artist was April Banks.

[santamonica.gov/arts/belmar](https://santamonica.gov/arts/belmar)

