OAKWOOD:
EXPLORING THE TANGIBLE & INTANGIBLE
RESOURCES OF A “BLACK ETHNIC ENCLAVE” IN
VENICE, CALIFORNIA–EARLY 1900s THROUGH 1960s

by

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This work is dedicated to my sister Lisa who cared for me during the home stretch more than I will be able to repay. And to my mother, Willena Boss, who did not make it to see its completion but with eager anticipation was (and still is) my cheerleader. Through this story, I tell hers. Like the Black pioneers of Venice, she succeeded in fulfilling the familiar Black American dream of leaving the racism of the South (with six children), finding a decent paying job (as a nurse), helping more than one child financially (with college), and owning her own home (in Watts, California.). Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to all the Black ethnic enclaves still striving for recognition, respect, and equal access.

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Table of Contents

Dedication ...................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ iii
List of Figures .................................................................................................................. xii
Abstract ........................................................................................................................... xiii

Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1
“Ethnic Enclaves” vs Other Ethnic Communities ........................................................... 6

Chapter 1. Venice Development to 1960s ................................................................. 12
Arrival of Spanish ........................................................................................................... 12
Development of Land Grants ......................................................................................... 12
   Rancho La Ballona ...................................................................................................... 12
   Boca De Santa Monica - United States Territory ........................................................ 14
   South Santa Monica .................................................................................................... 16
   Ocean Park .................................................................................................................. 17
   South Ocean Park (Ocean Park Heights)/”Venice of America” .................................. 18
Abbot Kinney’s Death to 1960s ..................................................................................... 25

Chapter 2. Black Los Angeles to 1960s ................................................................. 29
Early Migration ............................................................................................................... 29
Origins and Evolution of the ”Racing of Space” .......................................................... 34
   Slave Codes .............................................................................................................. 35
   Black Codes ............................................................................................................. 35
   Jim Crow ................................................................................................................... 36
   Racial Zoning .......................................................................................................... 37
   Racial Covenants ..................................................................................................... 39
   Redlining .................................................................................................................. 40
   Urban Renewal and Disinvestment .......................................................................... 42
   Gentrification .......................................................................................................... 43
Identifying an “Ethnic Enclave” .................................................................................... 43

Chapter 3. Oakwood as “Black Ethnic Enclave” ....................................................... 49
Development .................................................................................................................. 49
Pioneering Residents ................................................................................................. 55
   Arthur Reese and Family ......................................................................................... 55
   Irving/Irvin Tabor and Family ................................................................................ 63
   Chester Powell ......................................................................................................... 68
   Other Pioneering Residents ..................................................................................... 69
Chapter 4. Conservation in the Oakwood enclave

SurveyLA Findings

Venice Comprehensive Community Plan

Current Conservation Challenges in Oakwood

Week Ordinance

Strict Preservation Guidelines

Community Choice

Control of Narrative

Rebranding/Gentrification

Solutions to Challenges

Educate

Stronger Preservation Ordinance

Equitable Conservation

Moratorium on Demolitions

Conservation Districts and Easements

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

Further Research

Bibliography

Appendices

Appendix A – Chart: Venice Housing Stock By Age

Appendix B – Map: HOLC Security Map for Venice (including Oakwood)

Appendix C – Map: HOLC Security Map for South Venice (near canals)

Appendix D – Map: HOLC Security Map for Santa Monica (including Pico area)

Appendix E – List: Potential Historic Resources in Oakwood by SurveyLA

Appendix E continued – List: Potential Historic Resources in Oakwood by SurveyLA

Appendix E continued – List: Potential Historic Resources in Oakwood by SurveyLA

Appendix F – List: Oakwood’s Black Residents from City Directory (1907-1933)
List of Figures

Figure I.1. Map: Current Oakwood Boundaries ................................................................. 1
Figure I.2. ca. 1900s Map: “Black Section” of Venice as it Grew ........................................ 2
Figure I.3. Photo: 1910 Bungalow (renovated exterior) in Oakwood .................................. 5
Figure I.4. Photo: 1910 Bungalow (renovated interior) in Oakwood ................................. 6
Figure I.1. Map: Mexican Land Grants (including Venice area) ....................................... 13
Figure I.2. 1909 Map: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Santa Monica area) ......................... 14
Figure 1.3. 1925 Newspaper Advertisement:
   Santa Monica/Ocean Park/Venice Development .......................................................... 16
Figure 1.4. ca. 1909 Photo: “Villa City” ........................................................................ 20
Figure 1.5. ca. 1900s Photo: Street in Venice ................................................................. 21
Figure 1.6. 1916 Newspaper Advertisement: “African Dip” Amusement game .................. 23
Figure 1.7. 1942 Camp Brochure: “Hit the Nigger Baby” at YMCA Camp ....................... 24
Figure 1.8. Photo: 1937 Oil Derricks Behind Venice House ........................................... 26
Figure 2.1. 1930s Map: Home Owners Loan Corporation Security Map (L.A. area) .......... 41
Figure 3.1 1900s Map: Current Boundaries of Oakwood .............................................. 50
Figure 3.2. Photo: Arthur Reese Jr. and His Day-worker Crew in Front of Villa City ......... 56
Figure 3.3. Photo: Arthur Reese Jr. and His Day-worker Crew at Opening of “Venice of America” in Front of Villa City ................................................................. 57
Figure 3.4. Photo: Arthur Reese Jr. and Shoe-shine Crew
   in Front of Gordon Day-Work Company .................................................................. 58
Figure 3.5. Photo: Arthur Reese’s First Residence (555 Westminster Ave.) ..................... 60
Figure 3.6. Photo: Small cottage at rear of 555 Westminster Ave. ................................... 61
Figure 3.7. Photo: Arthur Reese’s Second Residence (541 Santa Clara Ave.) .................... 62
Figure 3.8. Photo: Cosmo Club and Temporary Housing
   for Black Canal Workers Near Canal Number One ................................................... 66
Figure 3.9. Photo: Cosmo Club/Tabor Residence moved to Oakwood ............................ 66
Figure 3.10. Photo: Oakwood Neighbors/Families Gather together at residence in Oakwood .... 70
Abstract

Of the three historic Black ethnic enclaves located along the Southern California coast, only Oakwood – a community tucked away in the planned vacation and exclusively White community of Venice during the early 1900s – remains. Although there were no racially restrictive covenants on the properties within the Venice area, strategies of racial separation made a distinct and indelible mark (both positive and negative) on the “ethnic enclave” of Oakwood. The author utilizes first person oral interviews, newspapers, and scholarly articles to reinsert Oakwood into the larger context of early “Black ethnic enclaves” within Southern California and challenging underlying assumptions about its place in history. This thesis will explore the de facto “racing of space” in early Oakwood, how its Black residents responded, the tangible and intangible cultural evidence left behind, and the challenges faced in conserving this place in the face of ongoing gentrification.
Introduction

The neighborhood of Oakwood today is a 1.4 square mile area located in the city of Venice, California, bounded by Rose (east), Hampton Drive and Electric Avenue (south and southeast respectively), California Avenue (east), and Lincoln Boulevard (north). (Figure I.1) Abbot Kinney, a tobacco magnate turned real estate tycoon founded Venice in 1904 and opened his “Venice of America” on July 4, 1905. Kinney governed the bourgeoning small town with paternal care until his death in 1920. Venice was incorporated as a separate city in 1911 and became one of the most popular vacation resorts along the Southern California coast in the early twentieth century. Kinney’s “Venice of America” developed blocks from an undeveloped (and un-named), marshy area. This area, free of restrictive racial covenants, would become known as Oakwood where Black servants, maids, cooks, skilled laborers, and chauffeurs like Irving Tabor created a community of their own.

Figure I.1: Map of Venice, California with color code for each neighborhood. Base map created by CJ Cole. Courtesy of Venice Beach Living, The Agency. https://venicedigs.com/neighborhoods/.
When the first Black residents moved into Venice around 1904 it was still a part of Ocean Park, whose boundaries lay north of the Pacific Electric tracks (Electric Avenue), on Westminster Avenue (previously Fredonia Street) and San Juan and Santa Clara Avenues, between Fourth Avenue (previously Fourth Street) and Seventh Avenue (previously Ballona Avenue). Soon, the “Black” boundary expanded to include Brooks Avenue (moving westward), California Avenue (moving eastward), and a small part of Lincoln Boulevard (extending westward). (Figure I.2) According to a Los Angeles City Planning Department document, a small “Negro” community grew as Venice expanded, but always within proximity to its initial boundaries. It is clear that Blacks came to Venice in the early 1900s for employment and low-

Figure I.2: Map of “Black section” in Venice as it grew. Adapted from *The History of the Naming of Tabor Courts*, Venice Community Housing Corporation, 1996 by Jacqueline Leavitt and Novelette Tabor.

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cost housing, but how Oakwood became known as the “Negro” section is still rather vague since the neighborhood also had a mix of ethnicities.³

From 1904 to his death in 1920, Abbot Kinney controlled Venice’s development and made certain that it had a community and pedestrian-friendly feel. Venice was beyond the noise, pollution, and overcrowding of the city of Los Angeles, yet accessible to its municipal benefits via electric urban street cars. Its early residents were not commuting to outlying cities for work; instead, they were summer vacationers, working and living in Venice with and for the Abbot Kinney Company, or they owned businesses along the pier. The Blacks of Oakwood were socially, and in some cases financially, equal to their White neighbors despite their positions as domestic service workers and laborers. They contributed to the life of Venice through their service, entrepreneurship, homeownership, and citizenry and left behind both tangible and intangible cultural resources.⁴

The following are terms repeatedly used throughout this paper that are generalized or taken for granted and must be clearly defined in the context of this thesis. “Ethnic enclaves” is a term borrowed from the work of scholars who continue to debate the origins of communities of color. For the sake of this paper the term ethnic enclave refers to residential communities built on social processes cultivated within the constraints of segregation, explained in the paragraphs to follow.⁵ The term “racing of space” is borrowed from authors such as Robert Weyeneth, who use the term to refer to the systematic exclusion of where people lived based on the color of their skin and/or their ethnic origin.⁶ The terms “Race” leaders, “Race” papers, or “Race” men and

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women refer to Blacks who took outward pride in their ethnic heritage.\(^7\) The author places racially restrictive covenants under the umbrella of “private” Jim Crow laws.\(^8\) This is to distinguish it from legislated segregation (“Jim Crow”) which was used to regulate public transportation, education, marriages, and laws between private citizens when conducting private property and business transactions. The term “colonial apartheid” is defined as the system of racial segregation enforced by legislation rooted in racial superiority and cultivated during the European colonization of the Americas that led to the “racing of space.”\(^9\) Lastly, the use of the word “racism” refers to the systematic practice of the belief that some races are biologically, morally, and intellectually inferior to others; and to the institutionalized discrimination of an entire culture or race based on prejudgments.\(^10\)

Oakwood is one of many enclaves created by the "racing of space." Today it is no longer in decline or controlled by racial prejudices. Today Venice and the Oakwood area are slowly being transformed by movie stars such as Fiona Apple, Emilia Clarke from “Game of Thrones,” as well as a host of Hollywood producers, trendy clothing stores, and upscale restaurants. Architecture by icons such as Frank Gehry and Steven Ehrlich have replaced modest cottage homes. State-of-the-art million-dollar residences, artists’ studios, and commercial structures continue to draw the wealthy to the former “Slum by the Sea.”\(^11\) There are a few vernacular beach cottages that were once owned and built by Black working-class service workers and

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laborers left but they are being razed to make room for the aforementioned.\textsuperscript{12} Those that are left are being significantly altered, stripped of their integrity, unrecognizable as contributors to the most popular beachside vacation resort along the Pacific Coast in the early twentieth century and to the Black enclave that helped build it. (Figure I.3, I.4, Appendix A) This is a gentrification at its worst – the lack of integration of culture and values of the existing neighborhood and the pressure to push out generations of homeowners.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} See Chapter 3 for list of properties once owned by Oakwood’s Black residents in the early 1900s.

\textsuperscript{13} Note: Gentrification grows from the word “gentry”, which means elite, nobility, or upper class. The term gentrification was first used in the 1960s by Ruth Glass, a British sociologist. She used the word to describe the haphazard inflow of the upper class into a working-class neighborhood in London’s West End.
“Ethnic Enclaves” vs Other Ethnic Communities

The work written about “ethnic enclaves” has grown more popular as the causes for their existence are challenged and/or clarified. In the context of this paper, ethnic enclaves are small homogeneous communities rooted in the history of segregation, and where legal exclusion, force, or accepted social mechanisms helped shape the environment for people of color. Although these homogenous communities may have a sprinkling of other races, they are unlike “ethnic communities,” “all-Black towns,” “cities of color,” or “immigrant enclaves.”

“All-Black towns” and “ethnic communities” were built on a model of self-segregation and resistance to assimilation. These enclaves created self-sustaining environments and took an active role in the political and economic development of their area, like the town of Seaside in Monterey, California post WWII. Other examples of “all-Black towns” include pre-WWII...
neighborhoods financed, founded, and governed by Race leaders. These townships contained Black-owned and operated businesses, a school district, post office specifically for their race, and even their own theater. The first organized all-Black town was in Edwardsville, Illinois. It was founded by a sympathetic White Virginia migrant, Edward Coles (future governor of Illinois) in 1819. Coles resettled seventeen of the enslaved peoples he freed and gave each male head of the family 160 acres of farmland. Without tools or the financial resources to sustain themselves the community failed.16 There was the all-Black settlement of wealthy Black families who built homes, erected a school, and organized the first Black baseball and amusement park on land owned by James Furlong, an Irish landowner in Los Angeles in 1905. The Furlong Tract was located south of Downtown Los Angeles, between 50th and 51st Streets, and Alameda and Long Beach Avenue.17 Some all-Black towns were founded by freed Blacks called freedmen’s towns. America's oldest freedmen’s town was in Brooklyn (later named), Illinois. The township began when eleven families consisting of free Blacks and fugitive slaves, led by “Mother” Priscilla Baltimore, squatted on Illinois soil around 1829.18 A well-known freedmen’s town was the Allensworth Colony. It was a middle-class farming community in the San Joaquin Valley that received financing from Pacific Farming Company, a sympathetic White investment company. It was founded in 1908 by a former slave, military hero, and former Los Angeles resident, Allen Allensworth.19 Another well-known freedmen’s town is the Freedmen’s Town Historic District in the Fourth Ward in Houston, Texas.20

“Cities of color” can be biracial communities like the one in New Philadelphia founded in 1836 by Free Frank McWorter, a former slave who purchased his and his family’s freedom and started a community where all races were welcomed.21 “Brick Block” that surrounded Biddy

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18 Cha-Jua, America’s first Black town, 1.
21 Cha-Jua, America’s first Black town, 34, 35.
Mason’s property in the Downtown Los Angeles area in the 1890s also began as a racially mixed ethnic enclave. White ethnic immigrants and people of color worked and lived within proximity of one another with little racial tension. The former Avila Family Rancho in Abila, or “Mudtown,” located south of Watts in Los Angeles was home to various ethnicities. Twelve of the thirty-seven lots were open to Blacks.

“Immigrant enclaves” is another term used to describe all-ethnic or majority-ethnic neighborhoods. In immigrant enclaves, immigrants are drawn to the familiar in order to prepare for assimilation. Scholars such as John Logan explain that immigrants who share the same customs, language, and the same ethnic make-up are drawn together because of “spatial assimilation,” which involves choice as a means of enhancing economic social, political and/or cultural development that support an ethnic infrastructure (churches, shops, organizations, etc.); or economic constraints, as the unskilled and impoverished laborer lacks the social and economic resources to live elsewhere. People from Southern Italy, Poland, or the Eastern Austro-Hungarian Empire who settled in dilapidated housing usually near their entry point formed immigrant enclaves. This is not the case for Blacks who formed ethnic enclaves in America in the early twentieth century. Blacks living in ethnic enclaves did not choose to live in homogenous neighborhoods like other enclaves, nor did they lack the resources to support their choices. Turn-of-the-century ethnic neighborhoods tucked within all-White, Anglo-Protestant communities in North America were the direct result of housing patterns caused by the “racing of space,” whether the neighborhoods were organically formed or intentionally designed. In response to a long history of spatial control, Black ethnic enclaves took shape after slavery was officially abolished in 1863. The nation’s racially motivated attitudes intensified after the era of

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Reconstruction (1867-1877). It was not until the Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and the Fair Housing Act in 1968 that the effects of spatial separation slowed.

The “racing of space” addressed by scholar Weyeneth sees the separation of space as an issue that goes beyond schoolhouses, waiting rooms, and drinking fountains to the design of entire neighborhoods. Neighborhood planning after Emancipation was based on what he calls the “architecture of segregation.” According to Weyeneth, the architecture of segregation is characterized by two building types, architectural isolation and partitioning.26 The spatial strategies employed by architectural isolation were exclusion – spaces dedicated to one race or another; duplication – spaces that were racially separated but supposedly equal in quality, like a delivery room in a hospital or entire schools built for Blacks-only; and temporal separation – exclusive use during specific days and times, like pools reserved for Blacks just before it was time to clean them. Where some race mixing was expected and tolerated, architectural partitioning was used. The spatial strategies employed by architectural partitioning were fixed and malleable partitions – physical barriers that were either permanent such as separate ticket booths in train stations, or moveable such as a rope that divided different races at a beach or a pool. Behavioral separation was also used in partitioning. This tactic was a mental conditioning; within a shared space, where both races adhered to customs or norms like the acceptance that White customers would be waited on first.

In the case of the small ethnic enclave of Oakwood there is no evidence of racial zoning laws or racially restrictive covenants used to prevent Black occupancy in the popular resort town of Venice in the early 1900s; and it is unclear whether Abbot Kinney set aside the area that would become Oakwood specifically for the Black service workers of Venice. However, White residents, realtors, and local vendors used de facto practices in the form of architectural isolation (showing spatial strategies of exclusion and temporal separation) and partitioning (showing spatial strategies of malleable partitions and behavioral separation) to limit where Blacks lived and what activities they participated in. Oakwood is one example of Black ethnic enclaves throughout Southern California that were created by spatial strategies of segregation. Instead of creating separate spaces as the ethnic enclaves of Pasadena and Santa Monica did, Oakwood’s Black community willingly participated in building the infrastructure of Venice; from the very beginnings when the canals were being dredged, to paving Venice’s sidewalks and leading local

civic chapters. Arbitrary yet persistent racial prejudices compelled residents of ethnic enclaves to create not only ethnic solidarity, but economic opportunities for themselves and their families which sometimes exceeded those of their oppressor. Oakwood is an example of that.

In Southern California, the physical characteristics of segregated neighborhoods (in older parts of the city) created by decisions like Plessy v. Ferguson and Corrigan v. Buckley are not easily identifiable. One reason is that demographics and gentrification shifted the characteristics of these neighborhoods as more people began to move into these cities to take advantage of lower housing prices.

This thesis identifies the tangible and intangible resources of a pre-WWI ethnic enclave hidden beneath centuries of de facto practices of segregation, one of many examples of ethnic neighborhoods shaped as a result of the "racing of space." The author hopes to capture the historic integrity of Oakwood before it fades into the recesses of Venice’s history unrecorded, and before its neighborhood becomes completely unrecognizable due to the current gentrification threatening its ethnic character. Chapter 1 focuses on the pioneering phase of Venice between 1887 (beginning of the California land boom) and the late 1960s (after the fair housing laws were passed and when Blacks were the largest racial population in Oakwood). The author has utilized first person oral history interviews, census records, and other primary sources to determine whether there is significant cultural and architectural value in the community of Oakwood to create a context statement unique to communities of color hemmed in by practices of segregation. Chapter 2 explores the journey of Black Americans and their experiences as they waded through the segregated landscape of Southern California. Because the definition of lived experiences is varied and the memory of BIPOC (Blacks, indigenous people, and people of color) is complex and multilayered, Chapter 3 will focus on the individual achievements of Oakwood’s Black pioneers, discussing how they navigated and subsequently cultivated community and spaces of their own while arbitrary and de facto discrimination regulated their freedoms. Chapter 4 summarizes the author’s findings as it relates to inserting the Black narrative into the broader context of Venice’s (thereby American) history. It also discusses how

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27 Note: Plessy v. Ferguson was a landmark 1896 U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation under the “separate but equal” doctrine. Corrigan v. Buckley was a case that began in 1922 and ended in 1926 and affirmed the constitutionality of racially restrictive covenants. For more info. on segregation laws search laws at https://www.loc.gov/ (accessed Oct 10, 2020).
tangible and intangible cultural heritage can best be managed as we move into the twenty first century.
Chapter 1. Venice Development

Arrival of Spanish

In 1769, Spanish explorer Gaspar de Portola was given the task to explore from Baja to Monterey, and to establish two settlements in order to Hispanicize (convert to Catholicism) and civilize the indigenous residents and secure the land. A series of missions, presidios (military outposts), and pueblos (farming communities) were established along the coast of California.\(^\text{29}\) One of these missions, Mission San Gabriel Archangel, founded in 1771, helped to establish Spanish rule.\(^\text{30}\) Present day Santa Monica was approximately twenty miles southwest of the mission. The local Chumash and Tongva indigenous populations became the main source of labor for the mission. As a result, the tribes moved farther north into the mountains to escape, or they became absorbed into Hispanic culture through intermarriage, which greatly reduced their numbers.

Development of Land Grants

*Rancho La Ballona*

After Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1821, Alta California became a part of its territory. Under Spanish rule land was loaned to the presidios and pueblos for a specified amount of time, but under the Mexican regime, Santa Monica lands were open to private ownership for the first time in California.\(^\text{31}\) The land – except for the former mission properties haphazardly distributed to the local native groups – was given as gifts by the Mexican government to a small number of Mexican families and divided into ranchos to encourage settlement and maintain control of Alta California, by now called California. This was known as the Rancho era. (Figure 1.1) Venice was formed out of a rancho once known as La Ballona, which included the territory of Santa Monica (composed of Venice, South Santa Monica, and


\(^{30}\) Ibid.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 10.
Ocean Park), Culver City, and Mar Vista. The La Ballona Rancho continued to be used for duck hunting and then grazing by Mexican vaqueros (or cowboys) until the first official private claim. Their land was declared clear on December 8, 1873, long after the U.S.-Mexico war ended.

Amusement resorts along the coastal wetlands were a popular investment in the late 1800s to early 1900s. Land was relatively cheap and the practice of linking existing towns or resorts via rail lines with undeveloped and vacant lands, and then developing at the end of the line became increasingly common in the decades after the Civil War. Coastal resorts were also populated with health-conscious tourists and business venturers from all over the country. Climatologists and settlers alike spread tales of how Southern California’s climate could cure such ailments as tuberculosis, “functional female disturbances” and even the effects of old age.

Life on the ranchos continued as usual until the Gold Rush when the subsequent demand for cattle made the ranchos even more prosperous. Rancho La Ballona, also known as Rancho Paso de las Carretas was granted to the brothers Ignacio Machado and Jose Augustin, and brothers Felipe and Tomas Talamantes in 1839. This rancho extended over what would later become the

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32 See fn. 35.
34 Carry McWilliams, Southern California: An Island on the Land (Gibbs Smith: Utah, 1946), 98-112.
Ocean Park district of Santa Monica (present day Inglewood, Marina del Ray, Playa del Ray, Ocean Park, and Venice).\textsuperscript{35} (Figure 1.2)

\textit{Boca De Santa Monica - United States Territory}

The United States declared war on Mexico in 1846 and California became American territory in 1848, along with western Colorado, Arizona, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico. The Land Grant Act of 1851, newly levied taxes, and the dying cattle business, gave Mexican rancheros no choice but to sell their land at low prices in order to meet these new expenses and foreign policies. As a result, land ownership was transferred to wealthy American speculators such as Colonel Robert S. Baker, railroad magnate Henry Huntington, and cigar tycoon turned real estate magnate Abbot Kinney.\textsuperscript{36} Colonel Baker was a cattleman from Rhode Island. Just before he occupied the Santa Monica area it was populated with wood-sided shanties and tents that accommodated hundreds of guests and vendors of goods for tourists. Baker purchased Sepulveda’s Ranch (located on the Rancho San Vicente y Santa

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1909, Santa Monica (present day Inglewood, Marina del Rey, Playa del Rey, Ocean Park, and Venice). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.}
\end{figure}


Monica land grant) in 1872 and portions of the Reyes-Marquez property (Rancho Boca de Santa Monica) to the northwest for his sheep ranch. Later, Baker would purchase 160 acres of Rancho La Ballona (Ocean Park district of Santa Monica) and begin the American ownership of the Santa Monica area and adjacent lands.

Baker partnered with Nevada Senator, John Percival Jones, who acquired a three-quarter interest in Baker’s property in 1874 and founded the Santa Monica Township. The town was fronted by the ocean, bound by 26th Street on the northeast side, Montana Avenue on the northwest side, and Colorado Avenue on the southeast side. Permanent encampments outnumbered temporary shanties by 1875, the same year that the Southern Pacific Railroad began services to Los Angeles and the original town site of Santa Monica was surveyed. Hotels, a small grocery store, bathhouses, a butcher shop, dancehall, and drinking establishments followed. Although Baker’s plans to make Santa Monica the major port of entry rather than San Pedro failed, his efforts helped to transform it into a boomtown by the 1880s. Abbot Kinney had a summer home there in 1886 which allowed him the opportunity to critique other amusement ventures as the vision for his Venetian resort was taking shape.37

The 1880s land boom, boosterism, a rate war with the Santa Fe Railroad in 1885, and the tame climate of the West brought an influx of people to Santa Monica, including Blacks. The 1880 census of the Santa Monica area indicates that there were a few Black live-in servants, a baker, a barber, Japanese fishermen and their families (which would eventually become a large fishing village), and Californios who remained in control of small portions of their land. In the 1920s, Santa Monica emerged as a wealthy tourist attraction and exclusionary beach clubs like the Jonathan Club that opened in 1895, gained in popularity. Politics would evolve and divide the Santa Monica area into the distinct communities of Santa Monica, South Santa Monica or Ocean Park, and Venice. (Figure 1.3, Appendix B)

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South Santa Monica

In 1891, Abbot Kinney and his business partner Francis Ryan established the Ocean Park Development Company and purchased the Pacific Ocean Casino located in South Santa Monica. Later, they purchased 275 acres of the marshy “Santa Monica Tract” near the casino from Captain Hutchinson, who obtained rights to parts of La Ballona when the Machado family...
defaulted on a loan. The area extended 1-1/2 miles south into what would become Venice. Kinney and Ryan understood that competition and partnership with rail lines was crucial to the development of seaside resorts so they convinced the Santa Fe Railroad to extend its Inglewood line north into South Santa Monica across Rancho La Ballona, giving visitors access via the Hill Street depot that began in June 18, 1892. In 1893 Kinney and Ryan sold twenty-five feet by one-hundred-foot beach lots located on their Santa Monica Tract. These cottages featured piped-in water for just $100 and competed with the established beach resort of Santa Monica. On the unsold lots, tents were erected and available to rent for summer campers.

**Ocean Park**

In 1895, South Santa Monica’s unincorporated land was unofficially named Ocean Park after the Ocean Park Development Company. Ryan died shortly after helping Kinney establish a small commercial district along Pier Avenue and after they were granted permission to build a 1,250 foot-long pier over Santa Monica’s city outfall sewer pipes on Pier Avenue. In 1901, the Los Angeles Pacific Railroad extended tracks along Pacific Avenue into the Ocean Park Development Company’s club house and the Ocean Park Country Club (where Westminster Park is now) but stopped its Pacific Palms Division line short of Kinney and Ryan’s development. By this time the area had 200 cottages, boasted a post office, a second pier, a golf course, a casino, and a horse-racing track. Kinney partnered with the Hook Brothers of the Los Angeles Traction Company in 1902 to create a miniature railway to make up for the lack of direct access into the Ocean Park area. Partnership between Kinney and the Hook Brothers was cut short due to the brothers selling their shares of the land to Henry Huntington. The brothers wanted to avoid competing with Huntington – owner of the Pacific Electric Railway and railroad cartel – to develop their land. Kinney’s new partners – Alexander Fraser, Henry Gage, and George Merritt Jones – were not interested in any of his development ideas so the partnership was dissolved.

South Santa Monica/Ocean Park’s unincorporated land officially became Ocean Park City in 1904.

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41 Ingersoll, *Ingersoll’s Century History, Santa Monica Bay Cities*, bk. 2, 96.
South Ocean Park (Ocean Park Heights)’’Venice of America’’

With a literal flip of a coin between him and his former partners, Kinney gained control of the southernmost part of Ocean Park and began implementing his vision for a beach resort town of Venice that would rival Santa Monica and even his previous Ocean Park development. Up until Kinney gained control of south Ocean Park (also called Ocean Park Heights), his dream for a Venetian-style resort was often referred to as “Kinney’s folly.”

Before Abbot Kinney had a chance to construct his “Venice of America” there were already several amusement piers in the surrounding area. The first amusement park with a Venetian theme was started by a group of investors, Moses Sherman and Eli Clark, under the Beach Land Company. In 1902, they built a colony of villas, grand hotel, and Venetian buildings and bridges in Playa del Rey called King’s Beach. Sherman and Clark also created the first inter-urban railroad and made things difficult for anyone who tried to compete with the popularity of Santa Monica, where they were also heavily invested. Just before Kinney officially began digging his Venice canals, Henry Huntington and his partner Arthur Parsons of the Pacific Amusement Company developed a canaled town called Naples near Long Beach.

Kinney’s world travels, his visit and enthusiasm for the World’s Fair and the City Beautiful Movement, his education in Heidelberg, Paris and Zurich, his work with naturalist John Muir, partnership with Indian advocate Helen Hunt Jackson, and his experiences in improving and establishing successful municipalities, prepared him for his last, greatest business venture. Five months after Ocean Park Heights was formed, he put his visionary plans for “Venice of America” into action.


Martha Groves, “Venice Turns 100, but Not Without a Fight. The centennial was seen as a way to unite the community’s…,” Los Angeles Times, June 24, 2005, https://latimes.newspapers.com/image/192889818/?terms=Kinney%27s%2Bfolly (accessed Nov 3, 2015).


Kinney instructed his superintendent Frank Durham to visit the best examples of beach resorts on the East Coast and to return with someone who could combine a Chautauqua-style venue and a family-friendly resort into one; all in the form of Italy’s Piazza San Marco, right down to the Venetian arches. Durham traveled to a suburb of Boston where he hired one of Fredrick L. Olmsted’s apprentices to be the landscape and town planner to fulfill Kinney’s dream of building a Venetian-inspired resort town.

Venice’s Pleasure Pier, businesses, amusements, and the canals were built simultaneously at a feverish rate in competition with the operations of other nearby resorts like King’s Beach and Naples. The canals, plagued with constant sewage problems from the start, were created by dredging the marsh and using it to create mounds to build on. The amount of dredging required to create canals that resembled those in Italy nearly bankrupted Kinney. Despite considerable setbacks, including huge storms that destroyed the pier just before its first opening, the canals, the Auditorium and Pavilion, and a few amusements were ready for the July 4, 1905 Opening Celebration.

Many of the early visitors to “Venice of America” were upper- and middle-class day-trippers who took the trolley or Red Car from Los Angeles just to spend the day at the beach. A beach line already extended through Santa Monica and Ocean Park along Main Street and Neilson Way through Venice and Playa del Rey to Redondo Beach; by 1911 all these lines were part of the Pacific Electric system. In anticipation of its success, Kinney planned 592 residential lots that sold for as much as $2,700. More temporary structures for visitors were erected shortly after in an area near the beach known as “Tent City.” Some say that the tents were erected in anticipation of more visitors than there were hotels; others credit Kinney’s sympathy for the less-fortunate because the tents were less expensive and at one point housed homeless and refugees. As more visitors came and stayed longer, the tents were replaced by small bungalows and the area was renamed “Venetian Villas” or “Villa City.” (Figure 1.4)
The villas had modern amenities such as electricity, gas for cooking, and laundry facilities. The perks also included amusements within walking distance. “Venice of America” boasted an auditorium, a ship restaurant (Ships Café), a dance hall, a hot salt-water plunge, a block-long arcaded business street with Venetian architecture, and an amusement pier complete with fantastic rides and concession booths. It was once characterized by the iconic beach vernacular of one- and two-story wood-framed vacation bungalows. The tightly packed homes built in the early 1900s were connected by alleyways that played a major role in the architectural and social character of this planned vacation resort. (Figure 1.5)

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In the words of the California historian Kevin Starr, Abbot Kinney was "perhaps the most conspicuous Southern Californian of his type and the entrepreneur-philanthropist in whom self-serving sagacity and another-worldly, slightly eccentric humanitarianism coexisted in creative tension." Kinney was a successful businessman, an adventurer, and a man of culture from his personal and business travels. He worked with Helen Hunt Jackson in her quest for better treatment of indigenous people. Kinney also organized the Santa Monica Improvement Company and its first pleasure pier in 1888. Although he wrote several books in his earlier years that would hint at his beliefs about women, Chinese, and “Negroes,” his future relationships with those cultures would not be confined to those beliefs in running his “Venice of America.”

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was a businessman above all and used his cultural experiences as well as his business acumen to set the tone for what he hoped to accomplish and the type of people he hoped to draw.” As a man of high culture and a reformer, he dreamed of a resort that was a center for civic and moral virtues, art, and a haven for leisure and recreation for the upper-middle class. In the beginning it seemed as if his ideals were taking hold. The Venice Assembly was inspired by the Chautauqua movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which combined adult education with entertainment.\textsuperscript{56} His suburbanized summer resort offered high-class cultural events held at the Assembly; the 2,500-seat auditorium near the wharf had a great pipe organ and high glass windows with views to the ocean. The Assembly held lectures by public intellectuals like noted sociologist Charlotte Perkins Gillman and controversial actress Sarah Bernhardt (1906).

However, just one year after his “Venice of America” opened and plans for a university-level research institute were unveiled, the popularity of the Assembly plummeted. It was not drawing as many visitors as the two-headed calf, the hoochie-koochie dancers, or the “African Dodger” (also known as “Nigger Dip,” or “Coon Dip”).\textsuperscript{57} (Figures 1.6, 1.7) His acute need to out-amuse his competition led him to purchase Seattle’s Yukon-Pacific Exposition Fair Ferris wheel, skating rink, and dance pavilion.\textsuperscript{58} By 1910, “Venice of America” was transformed from a high-class smorgasbord into a resort/amusement park for the working-class, dubbed the “Coney Island of the Pacific.”\textsuperscript{59} From the very beginning, a series of misfortunes seemed to plague Venice and its founder. Kinney suffered personal misfortunes (his son’s death, his divorce, and his mistresses), and financial failures (the canals almost bankrupted him); there was also an unrealized highway and other resort plans, and a shift away from the Chautauqua resort that he envisioned.\textsuperscript{60} With every setback Kinney resolved to make the most of it. In his own words he described how he remained unmoved.

\textsuperscript{56} Kevin Starr. \textit{Inventing the Dream}, 80.
\textsuperscript{58} Jeffrey Stanton, \textit{Venice of America ‘Coney Island of the Pacific’} (Los Angeles: Donahue Publishing, 1987), 30-53.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Jeffrey Stanton, “Venice California – Never Built Projects,” Venice History Site, \url{http://www.westland.net/venicehistory/articles/neverbuilt.htm} (accessed July 12, 2013).
Figure 1.6: Advertisement for African Dip, 1936. Popular amusement game between 1880s and 1950s. Courtesy of Music for Deckchairs (https://musicfordeckchairs.com/blog/2012/01/15/step-right-up/).
When we saw the mistake in the lecture course, we conceived of the idea of making Venice a musical center. We hired the best band in the country - Ellery's - at a very heavy cost... no less than $1000 to $1500 a week. Well, that was a failure too. Too expensive...Then we got the idea of having music in a palm garden...where the people hear good music without being in a constrained and uncomfortable attitude. It was another disappointment. The midway plaisir...
then came into existence. I supposed that they would exhibit interesting animals, perhaps a gold mine, strange kinds of fish, that sort of thing. I had no idea they would start side shows with "barkers." However it isn't too bad…A success, of course we shall make it a success. I haven't a doubt of it. We have to do what the people will.61

When asked whether he was disappointed by the type of people that were drawn to Venice, Kinney replied, "Understand, that I never had any idea of making this a resort for rich people. The devil can attend to the rich without assistance. And I really do think that we attracted a very decent class of people. My idea now is to combine my original idea of the university town with that of the popular resort."62

Abbot Kinney’s Death to 1960s

Kinney kept to his word and continued to run quirky amusements alongside upscale events like concerts by the Chicago Symphony until his death on November 4, 1920.63 After Kinney’s death, his son Thornton took over and a series of events would not see the resort that Kinney had planned for last much longer. One month after Kinney’s death there was a fire that destroyed the pier. Thornton quickly reconstructed it, but its hasty design could not support the many visitors coming to Venice.64 This, along with the narrow design of Venice’s streets and the growing use of cars, resulted in the sharp decline in Venice’s popularity and sustainability as an entertainment destination. In 1925, Venice was annexed to Los Angeles which was followed by a series of adversities that included failed bond initiatives for civic improvements and Sunday Blue

62 Ibid.
Laws that banned dancing and gambling on the pier. In 1929, the canals were filled in. According to the city they were too costly to maintain and filling them would provide parking as more and more people traveled by car. The Depression caused amusement revenue to decline despite the discovery of oil in 1929. By 1930, there were 375 oil wells in Venice, squatters in the abandoned cottages along the pier, no new bond issues for improving “Venice of America,” and sea pollution that resulted in a quarantine from April 1943 to July 1951. (Figure 1.8) The tidelands lease was not renewed by the City of Los Angeles’ Parks and Recreation Department, 

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so, in 1946 Venice’s pier was closed, and in 1947 it was demolished.67 Because there was a lack of investment in the area and the toll that the discovery of oil took on it, it became known as the “Slum by the Sea.”68 At this juncture, Venice, and its counterculture atmosphere, attracted immigrants, elderly Jewish people on fixed incomes (there were six synagogues in 1958 - two in 1973), Blacks from the second Southern Migration, beatniks, and political activists. Throughout the 1960s, racial tensions exploded between Black and Brown communities and the police all over the United States, including in Venice.69 By this time Venice was a mix of Mexican Americans, Blacks, students, runway juveniles, young professionals and artists, the elderly, and hip café owners.70 Also, during this time important laws were enacted that helped break down discriminatory practices, including redlining and other discriminatory practices that kept minority communities confined in relatively small areas. This included the Civil Rights Acts, the Rumford Fair Housing Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Open House Act.71 Beach city urban renewal by way of code enforcement made its way into Venice by the 1960s in order for the City of Los Angeles to “clean up” and reshape the image of Venice.72 The renewal was also called “Negro Removal” because it targeted less affluent neighborhoods where older, more likely to be dilapidated, housing was located. Houses left over from Villa/Tent City near the beachfront were also targeted due to their deterioration – Kinney built them to be temporary vacation housing in

69 Deener, Contested Bohemia, 56.
70 Ibid., 26, 40, 180.
71 Note: these Civil Rights Acts will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.
72 Deener, Contested Bohemia, 39-41.
the early days of Venice. In 1964, the City of Los Angeles demolished 555 buildings throughout Venice in the name of “slum clearance.” Thus begins the slow but steady transformation of Venice from beach cottages, canals, and community-oriented plans, to million-dollar estates, traffic congestion, and designs supporting the self-segregation of the wealthy.

Chapter 2. Black Los Angeles

Early Migration

Despite being denied the right to choose where they lived, Blacks helped in the American expansion westward, as early as its discovery. Although some came as slaves, or chattel, the new residents included independent laborers, sea navigators and land guides for Spanish explorations. Africans were part of the exploring parties of Francisco Pizarro and Pedro Menendez de Aviles. An estimated four hundred Spaniards and three hundred Black slaves accompanied Hernando Cortes to the western Gulf of Mexico. Black men helped to navigate the explorations of Christopher Columbus in the late 1400s and early 1500s. Among these we find Pedro (Peter) Alonzo Nino, a pilot on Columbus’s ship, the Santa Maria, and Diego el Negro (translation, James the Black), also known as Diego Mendez, was the cabin boy for the Capitana on Columbus’s last voyage to the Americas. Blacks enrolled among the crews of later explorers included Peter Mexia, a Black man who joined Juan Ponce de Leon in Florida in search of the fountain of youth. Thirty Black men accompanied Vasco Nunez de Balboa as he traveled across Panama in the early 1500s. In addition to being explorers, Blacks were fur-trappers, tradesmen, and gold miners. Some accompanied early settlers into New England, more than likely as indentured servants along with others, and only later became possessions to advance British Imperialism. Blacks were among the Franciscan priests and Indians who accompanied Spanish-speaking explorers who helped settle Alta California Missions in the late 1700s.

During the California Gold Rush from 1848 to about 1855, they worked alongside their slaveholders. Some were prospectors on behalf of their slaveholders. Others (both men and women) defied strict California fugitive slave laws in order to join the gold phenomenon. Freemen opened Black mining companies like the Sweet Vengeance Mine. Other gold miners like Mifflin Wistar Gibbs published the Mirror of Times – the first Black newspaper in California – and went into the business of convincing other Blacks to give up their complacent lifestyles for fortunes in the mines. Not all were Argonauts. George Washington Dennis and

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others like him provided services to gold seekers. Enslaved miners, when given the opportunity, purchased their freedom and the freedom of their families with their good fortunes. If it was by choice, Blacks came to California for many of the same reasons as others. They settled in former gold mining towns in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Sacramento, and San Francisco. They were men such as Peter Biggs who was a slave sold to Captain J.A. Smith from Liberty, Missouri and arrived in California with his master during the Mexican-American War. Biggs was left on his own after the war ended. He made his living as a barber – the first in Los Angeles – and earned additional income from the rental of his wife's property on Spring Street. Other pioneering African Americans in early Los Angeles included John and Dora Ballard, Lewis G. Green, Jessie Hamilton, and of course Robert Owens and Biddy Mason. Owens and Mason were prominent figures and land owners in the early history of Los Angeles at a time when the choice for real estate was still limited for people of color. Mason owned property in the Downtown area that became known as the prosperous settlement of "Brick Block," one of the few areas in Los Angeles where Blacks were allowed to settle and own property. It was said to be the first Negro community in Los Angeles.

Blacks arrived along with others with the help of the Homestead Act, passed in 1862 (repealed in 1976), which was instrumental in further developing the United States westward. It should be noted that this westward expansion resulted in the pilfering of lands belonging to indigenous people, further marginalizing them while benefiting the settlers. For Blacks, the Homestead Act opened up homeownership opportunities because there was no gender, racial, or ethnic limitations. Following the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution which outlawed slavery in 1865, newly freed slaves and freed people of color took advantage of this. The Act covered territory in all but the original thirteen states, as well as Kentucky, Tennessee, Vermont, Maine, Texas, and West Virginia. Anyone could claim up to 160 acres of

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government land by paying an $18 filing fee and meeting certain requirements. Lands set aside for the indigenous people would later be claimed to ensure enough land was available for eager Anglo homesteaders.\(^8\) After six months of living and farming the land the settler could then purchase it for $1.25.\(^8\) With the passing of the Fourteenth (1868) and Fifteenth (1870) Amendments to the Constitution, the Homestead Act became even more appealing to Blacks looking to leave the South.\(^8\) Some Blacks, along with other ethnicities, found success under the Homestead Act.

With or without the Homestead Act and because Reconstruction efforts to alter Southern attitudes towards people of color failed, Blacks increasingly left the South to set up all-Black townships in places like Oklahoma (Bailey and Boley), Texas (Houston, Kendleton, and Union City), and California (Victorville, Abila, and Allensworth).\(^8\) In 1883 at the Third Annual Convention For the Improvement of the Free People of Color in the United States, a man was reported to say, “To those who may be obliged to exchange a cultivated region for a howling wilderness, we recommend, to retire into the western wilds, and fell the native forest of America, where the ploughshares of prejudice have as yet been unable to penetrate the soil.”\(^8\)

Black migration was also influenced by the Pacific Railway Act, passed the same year as the Homestead Act. It gave permission for a transcontinental railroad to be built that connected the east and west. By 1876 the Central Pacific Railroad, which later joined with the Southern Pacific, completed the transcontinental line into Los Angeles and opened opportunities for

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\(^8\) Note: the 14\(^{th}\) Amendment was one of the three amendments to the Constitution ratified after the Civil War in 1866. It guaranteed citizenship to all Blacks, including former slaves recently freed, and expanded civil rights to ALL Americans. The 15\(^{th}\) Amendment granted Black men the right to vote.


anyone who could afford a ticket.\textsuperscript{85} The Blacks who had enough savings to take the transcontinental journey were a part of the upwardly mobile class that W.E.B. Du Bois called the “Talented Tenth.”\textsuperscript{86} While some Blacks came because of their own curiosity, others were recruited by big companies like the California Cotton Growers and Manufacturers Association.\textsuperscript{87} During the land boom of the 1880s, Blacks were recruited to replace Chinese laborers as a result of Southern California employers reaction to the Chinese Exclusion Act.\textsuperscript{88} The Association brought Southern Blacks to its farms near Bakersfield after a federal ban on Chinese laborers in 1882 created a worker shortage.\textsuperscript{89} Competition between the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe Railroad (which completed a line into Los Angeles in 1885) brought travel costs to an all-time low so many more Blacks found themselves headed to the Southern California coast or sending for their families. Blacks also found their way to the Southern California coast as strike-breakers. In 1903, the Southern Pacific Railroad brought in almost 2,000 Black laborers to break a strike by Mexican American construction workers, with one stroke doubling the Black population in Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{90}

Blacks were also drawn to California because it had less of a history with slavery. Max J. Bond, in his 1936 dissertation documenting Blacks in early Los Angeles history, tells of a man who came to Los Angeles in 1883 who reported that, “Negroes lived anywhere they could afford to live.”\textsuperscript{91} For someone who had lived in the Jim Crow South, this statement was truer than not, even though it was a slight exaggeration. Los Angeles offered a greater chance for success like many other cities in Southern California, but it also participated in the climate of racial hostility and the “racing of space.”\textsuperscript{92} The same year that W.E.B. Du Bois visited Los Angeles in 1913 and

\textsuperscript{86} Note: Some of the residents of Oakwood belonged to the “Talented Tenth” social class. They will be discussed in Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{92} Note: for purpose of this paper, the racing of space is defined as the systematic barriers on where people lived based on the color of their skin and/or their ethnic origin; Weyeneth, “Architecture of Racial Segregation,” 11-44.
gave it a glowing review, other prominent Blacks in the community petitioned the NAACP to establish a branch in order to address mounting concerns involving incidents of racial discrimination and unfair treatment – predicted by Jefferson Edmonds (editor of the Liberator) early on. A NAACP chapter would appear in Venice for the same reasons a decade later.

Varying experiences in the early days of Los Angeles and elsewhere made it seem as if Blacks were living in a “golden age.” Along with ethnic White immigrants (Polish, Irish, Italian, etc.), Japanese, and Mexicans, they found plenty of work and decent places to live. The service workers and laborers who made substantial enough wages to purchase or rent homes located in middle and upper-middle class White neighborhoods were generally denied access and relegated to undeveloped parcels in crowded neighborhoods. Although Los Angeles had the largest Black urban population in the West by 1910, with 7,599 people, they were restricted from living in places such as Huntington Park, Compton, east of Alameda, and in the West Adams Heights district (before it became Sugar Hill in the 1940s). Instead, the majority settled in Pico Heights, on Alameda Street between First and Third, along Central Avenue (north of Frist Street), and near Azusa and Weller Streets with little to no racial incidents. According to Charlotta Bass, who operated the California Eagle from 1913 to 1951, "The Negro settlers who were first arrivals...bought land and built beautiful homes in all sections of the city, free from restrictions, “[b]ut then came southern [W]hites and the [B]lacks ‘faced the old terror of racial hatred they had tried to forget.’”

There were some Blacks who gained access into all-White or majority-White neighborhoods simply because they were general laborers and domestic service workers for the nearby White community, like in Venice. Despite the mixed signals and deflated expectations, Los Angeles had the highest percentage of homeownership for Blacks than any

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other city in the early 1900s. There was housing as well as consistent work for the Blacks in early Los Angeles who were hired as cooks, maids, and day laborers.

Origins and Evolution of the "Racing of Space"

Even though the "racing of space" (systematic exclusion of certain people from living in certain areas based on the color of their skin and/or their ethnic origin) began long before there were actual laws governing race or space, the "racing of space" began to exist formally during the Norman Invasion in 1066 with the deliberate campaign to conquer and assimilate in order to merge the national identities of England, Wales, and Scotland into ‘Great Britain.’ The British government as well as individuals participated in growing their empire for profit, to pull ahead in national prestige, and to escape conditions of poverty and religious rule. These reasons are what contributed to the need for colonial settlements to form separate spaces, and gradually establish a structure for racial superiority. When Colonial settlements began to base their advancement on Providence and the preservation of European identity there was a natural elevation of one nationality over all others. Some colonial settlements were justified in creating physical barriers called cordon sanitaires that separated the conqueror from the conquered. In some cases, there were real threats of diseases and the barrier was necessary for survival. Sometimes space was needed to decrease conflicts between what colonizers labeled “barbarous” nations and the “civilized.” Over time, the settlement patterns of the English were characterized by conquest and separation instead of assimilation. European colonies preferred and perfected separation just in time for imperial expansion into the Americas.

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97 1910 U.S. Census records.
99 Note: cordon sanitaire is a French phrase which literally translated means “sanitary cordon.” Established under the aegis of Great Britain and France after the collapse of the Russian empire along the European borders of Soviet Russia. Steven Legg, Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi’s Urban Governmentalities (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), Preface-Chapter 1.
Slave Codes

Imperial expansion or the Mercantile Empire Phase gave rise to the American form of “colonial apartheid.” European powers initially colonized the New World with poor immigrants of all races who were looked upon as indentured servants. In exchange for an established time of servitude, immigrants would be transported to the New World, fed, sheltered, and clothed until they completed their pre-arranged years of service (normally five to seven years). Indentured servitude was also used to punish crimes. It wasn’t until later that the greatest mercantile nations introduced Black slaves as part of their strategy to conquer and colonize the Americas – beginning with Portugal, Spain, England, France, and the Netherlands.101 As long as slavery existed there was no need for the separation of space, or neighborhoods for that matter. People of color were without any rights and were simply excluded. A paternal familiarity and mutual dependence between slave and slaveholder maintained the status quo of racial superiority and allowed the two groups to live within proximity to one another with few incidents or laws regulating where Blacks and Whites lived. By the eighteenth century, slavery was a full-blown race-based system in the Americas. In 1705, Virginia enacted the first “slave codes” to organize this new system of free labor; codes varied from colony to colony to adapt to new needs.

Black Codes

At the end of the Revolutionary War (1783), with the fight for America’s freedoms won, New World colonies continued to spread racial separation as a necessary component of colonization for the same reasons their colonial forefathers did. Although Vermont was the first to abolish slavery in 1777, court rulings like Dred Scott in 1857 ruled that Blacks (slave or free) could not be citizens. This made all previous leaps for equality null and void. It wasn’t until 1865 when the 13th Amendment outlawed slavery in all thirty-three states that Whites had no choice but to adapt to the new reality that Blacks were free – if only to govern themselves at the very least.102 Freedom unfortunately brought with it new constraints known as “black codes.”

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Mississippi and South Carolina enacted the first codes in late 1865. Black codes gave emancipated Blacks and freedmen certain rights, including the right to buy and own property but it limited their ability to find work and punished them harshly for breaking labor laws.

*Jim Crow*

1865 also happened to be the year that “Jim Crow” – the institutionalization of racial separation – was added to legislation. To some degree the practice of segregation was strengthened once slaves were emancipated. Their resistance was based on perceived threats to available jobs, quality of living, local customs, and their persistent views that people of color were inferior – fortified by significant so-called ‘research’ in the 19th century. After the passing of the 1866 Civil Rights Act and the 14th Amendment in 1868 – with help from the Freedman’s Bureau, Race leaders, and “Black sympathizers,” Jim Crow slowly began to loosen its legal grip on people of color. The case of *Gandolfo v. Hartman* in 1892 was the first test of equal rights for U.S. citizens in the courts. In *Hartman*, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to enforce a restrictive covenant on housing involving individuals of Chinese descent because it was held to be contrary to public policy and violated the 14th Amendment. Despite victories such as this, and protests from all nationalities concerning the injustices of racial divisions, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) that the separation of race was an acceptable practice, as long as there was equality. The Supreme Court’s rulings on race issues became so ambivalent that each state had its own interpretation of the law when it came to spatial segregation and racial equality. The government also declared that legislation was powerless to eradicate those racial constitutions established long before Reconstruction, voiding the victory of equal rights previously won by *Hartman*. Ambiguity, along with the weakening of Jim Crow, left people of

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106 Ibid., Note: the Civil Rights Act of 1866 gave all males the right of citizenship and the 14th Amendment gave all citizens equal protection under the law.

color exposed to new raced-based tactics such racial zoning. Under Jim Crow, the formerly enslaved, freedmen and other people of color experienced legislative divisions based on race. To some degree the practice of segregation was strengthened once enslaved people were emancipated in 1863. The government of the state of Mississippi had the first Reconstruction government and enacted the first Jim Crow law in 1865 which forbade Blacks to ride in coaches used or set aside for Whites.\footnote{Fleming, 

At the end of Reconstruction, because of political compromise and despite a number of amendments that assured Blacks equal civil and legal rights as citizens, Southern attitudes towards Blacks remained stubbornly racist. Susan Falck, a research associate at the California State University of Northridge at the time of this research, stated that there were more than 400 state laws, constitutional amendments, and city ordinances passed between 1865 and 1967, legalizing segregation and discrimination; 78 percent of those laws came from the South. The West had 13 percent of the total laws that legalized segregation; the Midwest had 6 percent; and the Northeast had 3 percent. Falck also stated that between 1877 (end of Federal Reconstruction) and 1947 (just before the case of Shelly v. Kraemer in 1948 that rendered racial covenants a violation of the 14th Amendment) California enacted seventeen Jim Crow laws that sought to separate the different races in matters of marriage, employment, and housing.\footnote{Susan Falck, “Jim Crow Legislation Overview,” found in U.S. History 202, The History of Jim Crow blog, http://gilberthistory202class.blogspot.com/2011/07/history-of-jim-crow.html (accessed June, 2013).} Other raced-based tactics included, urban renewal, disinvestment, redlining, racial covenants, racial zoning, and de facto segregation (discrimination not mandated by law).

**Racial Zoning**

Before zoning ordinances were used to separate people of color, they were used altruistically by idealist and special interest groups as a tool for social reform and land use control. In “The Racial Origins of Zoning in American Cities,” Christopher Silver comments on Yale Rabin's study that stated zoning in the United States was used as a “social mechanism,” beginning with the noblest of intentions. They were used to control the spread of industrialism into residential neighborhoods and to improve the blighted physical environment of slums; and
to stop their spread into better neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{110} Washington, D.C. adopted the first height restriction in 1899; other cities followed.\textsuperscript{111} This height restriction sought to control the type and intensity of land use, especially in areas of greater economic and cultural value. Social reformers such as Charles Mulford Robinson, an urban planning theorist, promoted civic improvements such as roads, site planning, playgrounds and parks, street plantings, paving, lighting, and sanitation.\textsuperscript{112} In 1908, Los Angeles became the first large city in the nation to adopt zoning laws to slow the spread of industrialism into residential neighborhoods using “block ordinances.”\textsuperscript{113} As a result of these reforms and land use ordinances that could guarantee future residents that no industries would erode their quiet enjoyment, cities at the turn of the century were encouraged to advertise, design, and build model homes. These model homes were designed for model citizens with model incomes but inevitably led to exclusive neighborhoods.

It took little time for banks, developers, and cities to recognize that zoning could also help achieve political and economic goals, that soon became more important than the early ones. Individuals began to use them as a way to enforce a newly created system of racial segregation, racial zoning – a form of \textit{de jure} segregation enforced by local laws rather than preferences. The main objective of racial zoning was to protect property values by excluding “undesirables.” In 1910, Baltimore enacted the first comprehensive racial zoning ordinance that regulated all-White and all-Black neighborhoods. The laws left inter-racial neighborhoods to choose for themselves. The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to void Baltimore’s racial zoning ordinance (\textit{Buchanan v. Warley}, 1917), a combination of events beginning in the 1920s led to the proliferation of racially restrictive covenants.\textsuperscript{114}

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\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Note: Charles Mulford Robinson wrote the first guide to city planning in 1902. “Improvement of Towns and Cities,” \url{http://archive.org/stream/cu31924014505824/cu31924014505824_djvu.txt}, (accessed Jan, 2015).
\textsuperscript{113} Silver, “Racial Origins of Zoning,” 1.
\end{flushleft}
**Racial Covenants**

Racially restrictive covenants were in play prior to racial zoning (see *Gandolfo v. Hartman, 1892*). Racial covenants could be attached to a homeowner’s property deed and prohibited the sale or rent of that property to anyone who was not White. There were some deeds that stipulated the buyer also be Protestant. De facto segregation was sometimes not enforced through written agreements but rather executed through verbal agreements between White neighbors and their realtors or neighborhood associations, varying from coast to coast and from neighborhood to neighborhood. People in white communities reacted to perceived threats such as loss of jobs, or fear of the decline in their quality of living in accordance with local traditions and the surrounding racial demographics, leading to racial divisions across the country to be even more defined. Enforcement of segregation laws, previously lax, tightened as more people of color moved or attempted to move into all-White or majority-White neighborhoods. This migration was spurred on by the two predominant cultural forces of the Harlem Renaissance which peaked in the 1920s, the “New Negro Movement” and Pan-Africanism. Blacks who embraced and spread this movement were those who stood up for the rights they were systematically denied, including the right to own and live in picturesque neighborhoods, now almost entirely off-limits. The U.S. Supreme Court sided with those who wanted to reinforce separate neighborhoods. In the case of *Corrigan v. Buckley* (District of Columbia, 1922-1926), racially restrictive covenants were rendered a legally private matter and subsequently each complaint was handled on a case-by-case basis. As a result, Los Angeles, symptomatic of the rest of the nation, relied more on racially restrictive covenants and *de facto* segregation, increasing tensions between migrating Blacks and Whites who had already settled into neighborhoods. The

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ethnically diverse city of Los Angeles saw the strictest time of segregation that it had ever known beginning in the 1920s.\footnote{U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, \textit{Understanding Fair Housing} 42, \url{https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED075565.pdf} (accessed Dec., 18, 2012).} By the 1940s, restrictive covenants on property deeds burdened eighty percent of all property in Chicago and Los Angeles. In effect, this meant that only twenty percent of the real estate was available to people of color.\footnote{Ibid.} With the ideals of racial separation firmly rooted in America’s history, the burgeoning west welcomed a vernacular environment of racial exclusivity.

\textit{Redlining}

By the 1930s prominent real estate organizations such as The National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) and government housing policies (FHA) sought to prevent “race mixing.”\footnote{Terry Gross, “A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America,” National Public Radio, Fresh Air, May 3, 2017, \url{https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america} (accessed December 10, 2020).} The Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), created in 1933, prepared color-coded security maps that laid out detailed descriptions of a neighborhood’s housing stock, racial and ethnic mix, class and income, and assigned it a letter and color, this became known as redlining.\footnote{T-RACES, “Tested for the Redlining Archives of California's Exclusionary Spaces,” Demo, \url{http://salt.umd.edu/T-RACES/demo/demo.html} (accessed May 13, 2013).} Although redlining was not a law, it was a common practice among realtors and lenders that kept immigrants, many Blacks, and other people of color pinned into stereotypical neighborhoods and helped to support racial covenants and \textit{de facto} segregation. The green areas were “first grade” and given a code of “A.” They represented the most ideal neighborhood for the market. They consisted of mostly new homes and homogeneous neighbors of (White) middle-income earners with little to no risk of defaulting on their home loans. The areas colored blue and given a code of “B” represented neighborhoods that were completely developed but still in good condition. Lenders assumed that people in this type of neighborhood could not afford to live elsewhere but were not likely to default on their home loans. The riskiest and most troubling of areas were colored yellow and red and given a code of “C” and “D.” Yellow areas represented neighborhoods that lacked homogeneity, had heavy tax burdens, dilapidated housing, and
inadequate transportation. According to the HOLC, an area that was "red lined" was a neighborhood of low-wage earning racial groups likely to default on their home loans living in older housing. In the 1940s and ‘50s, Liquidy Savings and Loan on Pico in Los Angeles red lined Venice/Oakwood. This middle-class suburb full of working-class people was increasingly "subversive" according to the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation’s (HOLC) appraisal/security map.121 (Figure 2.1, Appendix B) The Federal Housing Authority, supported by all-White neighborhood associations, block clubs, and real estate brokers encouraged officials not to mix "inharmonious racial or nationality groups" and "the occupancy of properties except by the race for which they are intended."122


Urban Renewal and Disinvestment

The 1949 Housing Act, under the guise of urban renewal, became synonymous with “slum clearance” and “Negro removal” – a term first coined by James Baldwin in the 1960s. Urban renewal gave federal, state, and local government the power to fix urban blight by razing entire neighborhoods (made up of mostly poor and ethnic immigrants) through eminent domain, and replacing them with planned communities where former residents could no longer afford to live. Slum clearance would happen in Venice on and off starting in the 1960s. Urban renewal was also used during the construction of California’s limited-access highways in the 1940s. What was initially envisioned as intercity routes that averted cities, ended up as a tool for city planners (of the segregationist mentality) to further disenfranchise and separate communities of color from their White neighbors.

The 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act (or the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate Defense Highways) provided projects that addressed the necessity for quick transportation of supplies, arms, and men, to meet war demands; it provided employment and infrastructure improvements that alleviated economic depression and improved roads; it also gave state and local government the power to decide what and where to build and to discriminate under the guise of urban renewal. Well-established and diverse communities, along with historic structures and neighborhood businesses were razed to make way for the Santa Ana (I-5), San Diego (I-405), and Santa Monica (I-10) Freeways. During the post-World War II population boom, the building of the Civic Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the extension of the Santa Monica (I-10) Freeway, forced Black and Latino residents out of the Santa Monica area through eminent domain and into nearby Venice; de facto segregation and cheap housing confined them to the Oakwood area. One could argue that neighborhoods are prime candidates for urban renewal due in part to disinvestment. In order to justify clearing entire communities for freeways and planned communities and using urban renewal efforts as their salvation, municipalities and city planners must first prove that the neighborhoods are without hope. Through disinvestment,

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landowners and local municipalities redirect necessary resources for a thriving community elsewhere; much like the City of Los Angeles did after annexing Venice in 1920.

**Gentrification**

The opposite of disinvestment is gentrification, the new face of segregation. While disinvestment withdraws support, gentrification brings in a completely different financial demographic, displacing the former.125 There is some good when a neighborhood gentrifies; dilapidated and abandoned buildings are transformed and occupied once more, there are more cultural activities and less crime, the area garners positive attention and becomes hip, and jobs are created. Unfortunately, gentrification also raises the cost of living and displaces former residents no longer able to afford to live in their own homes. The second factor, however, is that the residents are often offered significant sums of money for their houses – money that buys much larger homes with amenities such as swimming pools in outlying suburbs.

**Identifying an “Ethnic Enclave”**

Black communities within all-White suburbs in the 1900s were by nature enclaves, distinct territorial, cultural, and social units enclosed within a foreign territory.126 These communities were a direct or indirect result of the racing of space. They are unlike “immigrant enclaves,” “cities of color,” or “all-Black towns” and “ethnic communities.” Blacks living in ethnic enclaves in America in the early twentieth century did not choose to be segregated, nor did they lack the resources for better environments as some scholars argue.127 Turn-of-the-century ethnic neighborhoods tucked within all-White communities in North America are the direct result of housing patterns caused by the “racing of space,” whether the neighborhoods were organically formed or intentionally designed. In response to a long history of spatial control Black ethnic enclaves took shape after slavery was officially abolished in 1863, but it is only recently that they are being recognized as being affected. Examples of “Black ethnic enclaves” include Val Verde which was once a Mexican mining town before a wealthy White woman from Pasadena took a stand against Jim Crow in the early 1900s and made lots available to Blacks.

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127 Logan, "Immigrant Enclaves and Ethnic Communities in New York and Los Angeles."
The land was later purchased by a group of prominent Los Angeles Blacks in 1924 and transformed into a self-segregated resort town dubbed Eureka Villa. Other settlements affected by segregation along the Southland beach included a Manhattan Beach settlement founded by George Peck in 1912. Peck set aside a portion of his beachfront property for Blacks and funded a fishing pier along the beach just for them.\textsuperscript{128} There was also the two-block neighborhood between Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Streets on Highland Ave, fronting a portion of Manhattan Beach, named Bruce’s Beach, developed around 1912.\textsuperscript{129} The beach was named after a Black couple named Charles and Willa Bruce who were the first to purchase lots there. The Bruces built a bathhouse and lodge on the beach at a time when there were no resorts along the Los Angeles coast that welcomed Blacks. In 1924 the beach and surrounding neighborhood consisting of both Black and White property owners was seized by eminent domain by Manhattan Beach city officials. In 1927 the neighborhood was condemned and leveled, and the beach was leased to a private owner for a dollar a year. Then there was the Pacific Beach club in Huntington Beach that was completed in 1926 but burned down weeks later, never having the opportunity to create a prosperous and vibrant Black ethnic enclave.\textsuperscript{130} Perhaps Muchakinock, Iowa (1875-1900) closely resembles Venice’s development history and formation of Oakwood. It was one of the largest coal mining firms in the Nation to recruit Black laborers from Virginia and West Virginia. These recruits and their families subsequently settled in the town. Another early enclave that resembled Oakwood was in Pasadena. In 1874 Pasadena began as a summer

\textsuperscript{128} Alison R. Jefferson, \textit{Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites During the Jim Crow Era} (United States: University of Nebraska Press, 2020).


residence for the elite, much like Venice did. It was transformed into a year-round suburb that necessitated servants and laborers for the nearby wealthy. Those that were not live-in servants were housed near “Millionaire's Row” on North Orange Grove Boulevard. By the 1900s, Pasadena’s Black community was a small group of 250 domestic servants, general laborers, agricultural workers, and a few business owners. Like other ethnic enclaves, early Black residents of Oakwood responded to the racing of space by creating their own unique identity; becoming entrepreneurs; establishing their own groups and clubs; forming their own local churches; and even building their own dwelling units.

Ethnic enclaves are identified by certain physical attributes which give it a sense of identity and anchors a community to a specific place. Those attributes give clues as to how the residents responded to the racing of space. According to a paper published by *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* given at the AMER International Conference on Quality of Life in Malaysia, those physical attributes are outlined below. It is important to note that not all of these attributes need to be present in order to be defined as an ethnic enclave and that each community has a unique set of attributes specific to their culture. Also note that although the study’s focus is on the international case study of Malaysia, the scholar’s work is justifiably used to identify characteristics unique to ethnic enclaves created by de facto racing of space in Southern California.

- Location: people of color were relegated to older and less developed areas as part of the tactic to delineate them from their White neighbors, most often using physical barriers such as railroad tracks as in Oakwood.
- Settlement Patterns: when Blacks and other people of color found themselves unable to purchase homes outside of a certain area, they settled either very near to each other as land became available or built extensions or small cottages at the rear of their own properties. This settlement pattern has produced cultural districts distinct to that ethnicity, strengthening a conservation effort.
- Public Realms: residents of an ethnic enclave use elements in the public realm such as decorations and streetscape in order to enhance their ties to the area.

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use of vegetation is an important aspect of Indian culture and thereby its display in the public realm anchors their identity. Black ethnic enclaves in U.S. blend private and public spaces to create anchors for their community. These spaces create community in an otherwise hostile environment and can even help to instill a sense of sociability with others outside of the ethnic group.

- Architecture: when people of color moved into a segregated area, they were often left to build their own homes without any support from local contractors, builders, or designers. Depending on their skills, their homes were built with materials and methods that were rudimentary and piecemeal. Those with skills combined their knowledge with the local building typology and architectural language or style. Both the skilled and the unskilled may have decorated the interior of their dwellings with a color scheme as well as signage that reminded them of where they came from. Although this style is fairly new for mainstream designers, it has been practiced by ethnicities without much though.\(^{132}\)

- Language: in some cases, ethnic enclaves displayed a variety of dialects as sub-cultural groups joined together, and at times integrated with the local dialect. One such example is the vernacular language of Haitian Creole, Louisiana Creole, and Mauritian Creole that formed from interactions between Africans and Europeans that developed on European Colonial plantations in the 17\(^{th}\) and 18\(^{th}\) centuries.\(^{133}\)

- Celebrations: people of color who were segregated created opportunities for congregation using festivals, celebrations and ceremonies. These celebrations were also an opportunity to disarm racist notions created by ignorance and invite the dominate race to experience the joys of another culture.

- Predominating Religion: because people of color could not congregate with Whites of the same religion, they either created off-shoots of that denomination or


separate congregations of the same religion in order to satisfy the need for shared experiences.

- Attire: within ethnic enclaves some cultures carry traditional attire with them into new places. Whether on display publicly in celebrations, showcased in private, or worn everyday depending on the occasion. The attire is a way of recognizing and connecting with their place of origin. In Asian cultures some have continued to wear a traditional one-piece clothing called shenyi (deep robe) that can be traced back to the late Zhou Dynasty (1046–221 BC).\textsuperscript{134}

- Ritual and Practice: in ethnic enclaves the rituals and practices are the same as back home. The use of piñatas are as common as balloons for celebrations in Mexican enclaves. In the Mexican tradition the piñata is a symbol of temptation, faith, and overcoming temptation.\textsuperscript{135}

- Food: the tradition of potlucks in communities of color help pass on cuisines that represent culture, religion, and group attachment. The Mexican fiesta and Black southern potlucks are a few of cuisines that exemplify this tradition.

- Trade: co-ethnic networking was vital to the livelihoods of those in ethnic enclaves, as well as an opportunity for the members in the community to purchase specialized ethnic goods that they were unable to get anywhere else. Co-ethnic networking was a necessity for Black enclaves in the early 1900s as they were shut out of basic services such as barbershops, grocery stores, and sometimes even medical facilities.

Entrepreneurship during the early 1900s was out of necessity for much the same reasons as co-ethnic networking was. For people of color, even in the bourgeoning Southern California area, jobs were difficult to secure and were generally service jobs that paid the least (cooks, washers, maids, etc.). Venturing into business was a matter of survival because it was easier for


Blacks to sell to Whites (and other minorities) than it was to get a job from them. How some of these characteristics manifested in the Oakwood neighborhood will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Author William Deverell, in his book *Whitewashed Adobe*, describes an “urban and institutional anatomy of prejudice” in Los Angeles where “ethnic others” were placed in cultural categories. They included labor segmentation, leisure, housing, transportation, and memory. As previously stated in Chapter One, scholar Robert Wyeneth sees the separation of space as an issue that goes beyond schoolhouses, waiting rooms, and drinking fountains to the design of entire neighborhoods. Blacks living in ethnic enclaves in the early twentieth century were hemmed in by racism and comprised of various economic and social classes; located in urban as well as suburban areas; functioned as support for vacation/amusement resorts; and formed industrial satellites and domestic service suburbs. The fact that some neighborhoods had a sprinkling of other ethnicities does not take away from what defines it as an ethnic enclave. Oakwood in Venice, California is one example of the many neighborhoods in Los Angeles affected by racial zoning, de-facto segregation, the architecture of segregation, and other tactics discussed earlier that have impacted the memory, and physical and cultural landscape of entire communities. Oakwood and other Los Angeles neighborhoods that are poor, ethnic, and older, still bear the scars of the racing of space; they also tell a tale of resilience and fortitude in their response.

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Chapter 3. Oakwood as “Black Ethnic Enclave”

Development

Although there were Blacks living scattered throughout Southern California, clusters of majority-Black neighborhoods along the coast were few. Oakwood is the last of three historically Black ethnic enclaves located along the Southern California coast. (Figure 3.1) Bruce’s Beach in Manhattan Beach and Belmar Triangle in Ocean Park (south of Santa Monica) no longer exist.\(^{138}\) The few blocks of parcels occupied by Blacks in Venice consisted of simple bungalows, owner-built dwellings, multiple buildings on a lot, and communal short-cuts. The Blacks of Oakwood provided vital support to the “Venice of America” amusement park during its construction and after. They are likely to have helped to dredge and construct the canals, as many came to Los Angeles looking for work. They also worked on the pier for the Abbot Kinney Company.\(^{139}\) They were active citizens and business owners serving the Venice community as general laborers, live-in maids, cooks, and laundresses alongside ethnic Whites, Japanese, and Chinese immigrants at the numerous businesses, hotels, concessions, and amusements that instantly sprang up after the canals were completed.\(^{140}\) They worked for places like S.S. Rex (Tony Cornero’s gambling ship), and exotic entertainment venues like Sebastian’s Café, also known as Venice Café on Winward Avenue (famous for its jazz and vaudeville acts in the 1920s).\(^{141}\) All the while, there were circuitous rules that did not allow them to freely

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\(^{138}\) For more information on Bruce’s Beach and Belmar Triangle see, Alison Rose Jefferson, “African American Leisure Space in Santa Monica. The Beach Sometimes Known As the ‘Inkwell,’ 1900s–1960s,” Southern California Quarterly 91, 2 (2009): 155-89. [Link](https://doi.org/10.2307/41172469) (accessed December 10, 2020). Note: Belmar Triangle was between Main St. and 4th St., and Santa Monica Blvd. and Pico Blvd., a few blocks from Bay Street Beach (a strip of beach along the segregated Southern California coastline frequented by Blacks derogatorily known as the “Inkwell”).

\(^{139}\) Betsy Goldman – Venice California Real Estate, “Venice History: The Story of Venice-of-America,” [Link](http://www.betsysellsvenice.com/venice-history/) (accessed August 2, 2013). Note: According to Betsy Goldman, a real estate agent and member of the Venice Historical Society, workers for the canal were paid $8 a day, a substantial amount at that time; 1910 U.S. Census; 1910 Los Angeles/Venice Telephone Directory.

\(^{140}\) 1910 U.S. Census; 1910 Los Angeles/Venice Telephone Directory.

participate in the amusement parks’ amenities or purchase property beyond the “Black” boundary.\textsuperscript{142} There were some exceptions because de facto segregation was arbitrary. Other exemptions for the early Black settlers of Venice were because some were a lighter complexion and could go undetected, or because they were well-known in the small beach community and not everyone was racist. Interviews with Oakwood pioneers, despite their varied experiences, confirm that homeownership and job opportunities outweighed the cost of moving into sections of Los Angeles where the racing of space (specifically architectural isolation and partitioning) were used. By 1912 there were thirty-three Blacks living in the Oakwood section of Venice and


Figure 3.1: Map of current boundaries of Oakwood. Adapted from The History of the Naming of Tabor Courts. Venice Community Housing Corporation, 1996 by Jacqueline Leavitt and Novelette Tabor.
two African American churches. The Tabor and Reese families accounted for a large percentage of the early residents as they relocated to initially help Reese on the pier. When Abbot Kinney died in 1920, Venice began its slow decline. After the 1925 annexation by the City of Los Angeles, the area began its transformation into an “alternative beach community” but the racial divide remained intact in the Oakwood area. Venice went through a second wave of disinvestment in the 1930s (continuing to set up for “slum clearance”). The influx of people into the Los Angeles area during World War II (1939-1945) because of defense building projects, along with absentee landlords and widespread demolition of “old” and “substandard” housing, stimulated urban renewal in the Venice area. On the upside Venice had one of the cheapest housing stocks along the beachfront at that time. This gave anyone, especially the poor and elderly on fixed incomes, an opportunity to gain ownership, including owning dilapidated beachfront cottages. During the 1930s the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) assisted by the Federal Housing Authority and mortgage lenders began to prepare “neighborhood security maps” and color-code neighborhoods according to their salability, redlining the most undesirable and at risk for defaulting on loans. This redlining further characterized Venice as a slum. By the end of the 1930s, racial boundaries in the “colored” areas of Los Angeles, including Oakwood, were well defined due to the redlining practices. Santa Monica, Venice, and South Venice were coded “red” for having what the HOLC reports subjectively described as the most “subversive” elements or showing signs of becoming entirely disrupted or unstable (i.e. non-homogenous, older and substandard housing, inability of residents to obtain a loan). (Appendix B-D) Cheap housing and the end of WWII brought more poor people into Venice and Oakwood. By the 1940s there were 346 Blacks living in Oakwood. Manufacturing and war jobs at McDonnell Douglas, Hughes Aircraft, and North American located on the Westside near Venice increased the population of working-class Blacks. By 1950, the Black population in Oakwood was 1,157. Further crowding occurred as many Blacks and Latinx were displaced into the Venice area when the Civic Center in downtown Los Angeles was built in the late ‘50s (destroying

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143 Deener, *Contested Bohemia*, 32.
Belmar Triangle), and when Interstate 10 cut through Santa Monica’s Pico district in the late ‘60s (destroying Sugar Hill). By 1960, the Black population in Oakwood tripled to 3,191. By 1970 Blacks were the largest single population group at 45%. In the 1960s, the Community Redevelopment Agency, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning, and the Haynes Foundation conducted studies about the renewal potential of Venice in order to create a new coastal identity and beach renewal that had been brewing in Los Angeles since the 1930s, starting west of Lincoln Blvd. The agencies came to the same general conclusion that Venice was in need of slum clearance. The city introduced code enforcements that condemned approximately 446 buildings between 1960-1965. These code-enforcement programs mostly affected bohemian groups along the Canals and along the boardwalk, Blacks in Oakwood, and elderly Jewish residents bordering Ocean Park. Groups like the Peace and Freedom Party who formed the Free Venice movement to fight against development and the code-enforcement programs, formed other anti-development groups like the Canal Emergency Action Committee and Save the Canals Committee. The entire Venice community banded together and prevented the widespread demolition of what characterized Venice Beach at the time – shanties and quaint beach cottages along with Venetian-style storefronts. Local activists renovated buildings when they received word they would be demolished. One such building was transformed into the Venice Canals Community House with permission from the owner. Under the leadership of new mayor, Sam Yorty, local property-owning groups continued to rally for dramatic changes to the Venice environment thus attracting middle income residents that would be able to enjoy pleasures usually reserved for the very wealthy. Unlike Santa Monica who added more than


147 Hunt, Black Los Angeles, 82-84; Deener, Contested Bohemia, 32; Rosemary Lord, Los Angeles, Then and Now (Thunder Bay Press, 2007).


151 Deener, Contested Bohemia, 133-138.
10,000 dwelling units between 1960-2010, Venice was successfully able to fend off developers up until the late ‘90s. Since the housing supply stayed the same while demand increased, the value of properties soared.

There was a less unified community of black and brown neighbors when the second wave of Latinx immigrants arrived in Oakwood from the late 1950s through the 1980s. Scholar Andrew Deener credits this to the difficulty in establishing social connections between the groups due to the variety of Latinx moving in.\textsuperscript{152} This social disconnect, along with the war on drugs in the ‘80s and ‘90s, caused an increase in turf wars between black and brown residents in Oakwood.\textsuperscript{153} By this time land values were still moderately cheap compared to other beach properties so it attracted the young and adventurous middle-class home-owner who unintentionally revitalized the area and gradually altered the environment. It also moved the needle towards displacing long-time residents as well as provided them with an opportunity to escape the concentrated crime in the area and cash out, causing a decline in Oakwood’s people of color. Today the Black population is 12%.\textsuperscript{154}

The “Black section” of Venice did not officially become labeled Oakwood until the 1960s, according to former resident and pioneering family, John Quincy Tabor Jr. A scan of the archives of the \textit{Los Angeles Times} begins to use the name Oakwood starting in the late 1940s. The naming of the Oakwood neighborhood coincides with racial tensions and Urban Renewal throughout the city of Los Angeles beginning in the late 1940s. As stated earlier, in a document published by the Los Angeles City Planning Department, the Oakwood area was recognized as a small “Negro” community that grew as Venice expanded, but always within proximity to its initial boundaries.\textsuperscript{155} There was no evidence of racial zoning laws or racially restrictive covenants used to restrict Black occupancy in the popular resort town of Venice, nor is it clear whether Abbot Kinney roped off a “servants zone” for Blacks when building his resort.\textsuperscript{156} Census records and first-hand accounts show that Blacks were not welcomed outside of the boundaries mentioned earlier (see figure I.2), especially south of the Pacific Electric tracks

\textsuperscript{152} Hunt, Black Los Angeles, 85; Deener, “The ‘black Section’ of the Neighborhood,” 45-57.
\textsuperscript{153} Deener, “The ‘black Section’ of the Neighborhood,” 55.
\textsuperscript{156} Note: Tuscaloosa Newspaper, January 16, 1994 supposedly names the area a “servants’ zone.” The information could not be verified at this time.
(Electric Avenue) in the early days of Venice. One columnist in the Santa Monica Weekly Interpreter told the Black population in nearby Santa Monica: “Negroes, we don’t want you here; now and forever, this is to be a white man’s town.” Venice Vanguard was also very vocal in their support of racial segregation. In one issue it challenged anti-Black occupancy laws from St. Louis and Louisville that prohibited Blacks from occupying predominantly White neighborhoods. It read, “The mixing of people…of decidedly opposite colors is not at any time desirable.” White residents and realtors used de facto practices in the form of architectural isolation (showing spatial strategies of exclusion and temporal separation) and partitioning (showing spatial strategies of malleable partitions and behavioral separation) to limit where Blacks in Oakwood could live and what activities they could participate in. Oakwood is an example of a Black ethnic enclave in Southern California that was created by spatial strategies of segregation (whether organic or by design). The following is an account of community resilience and determination as well as how the Blacks in Oakwood navigated the racing of space in Venice – unlike other Black ethnic enclaves that created parallel cultures. The Blacks in Venice responded to the racing of space by creating unique family structures: tightly interwoven kinship through marriage and childbirth, social groups and clubs, businesses and bartering, religious denominations, and of course shared living arrangements and generational wealth through real estate.

159 “Blacks Create a Parallel Culture,” Santa Monica’s Evening Outlook, May 17, 1975.
Pioneering Residents

Arthur L. Reese and Family
(1883 - 1963)
New Orleans, Louisiana

555 Westminster Avenue (first residence)
541st Santa Clara Avenue / 1221 6th Avenue (Reese-built)
600 San Juan Avenue (Joseph Reese)

Many claim that Arthur L. Reese’s was one of the first to take up residence in Oakwood. There is evidence that he was one of a handful to secure his own living quarters in Venice at the start of “Venice of America.” The Reese family was originally from New Orleans, Louisiana and lived near a bayou. Reese was a Pullman Porter who came to Los Angeles in 1902 with his wife Gertrude and son, who were also from Louisiana; another son was born just after they moved to the Venice area. Reese was operating a shoeshine stand in the Santa Monica/Ocean park area in 1903 when he heard that Abbot Kinney was planning his themed amusement park. Looking for more business opportunities he took the Red Car into Venice in 1904 and found the resort town full of potential business opportunities. It was not long before Reese was shining shoes on the Venice pier and later operating a towel concession business, employing his cousins, the Tabors. (Figure 3.2) When Abbot Kinney noticed Reese and his industriousness, he offered him a job working as a janitor for his Abbot Kinney Company. The 23-year-old Reese would soon oversee a janitorial day-work service on the pier for Abbot Kinney’s Villa City. (Figure 3.3) Abbot Kinney, impressed by Reese’s entrepreneurial spirit, convinced him to combine his janitorial company with Kinney Enterprises and become head of maintenance. Reese continued to operate and expand his own business.

160 Unless otherwise noted, information in this section was derived from the Author interviews with the Tabor, Reese, and Powell families (April/June 2013).
162 Adler, History of the Venice Area, 4.
Figure 3.2: Arthur Reese with his day-worker crew pose in front of Venice’s Villa City. Photo from Sonya Reese archives in *Arthur L. Reese. The Wizard of Venice: Venice of America, 1905-1920*. Permission courtesy of Sonja Reese Greenland.
Reese in turn convinced Kinney that he should hire Blacks because there were many that needed and wanted to work; the men could do the janitorial work and the women could work in the hotels.\textsuperscript{163} However, Reese could not successfully convince Blacks living in Los Angeles to work in Venice because no one would rent or sell to them. It was much easier for them to work in Downtown Los Angeles where there were neighborhoods open to people of color and closer to jobs like along Central Avenue and in Watts. Based on the 1910 census and telephone directories, there were seven Black families living in the Oakwood area by then.\textsuperscript{164} To help supply the Kinney Company with labor, Reese convinced more of his family to come to Venice. The Reese and Tabor families all moved to Venice by the end of the 1920s. Reese’s other businesses included a garage business where he washed cars, and a janitorial company with a


\textsuperscript{164} 1910 U.S. Census; 1910 Los Angeles City/Venice Telephone Directory.
partner called Gordon Day-Work Company. (Figure 3.4) He also bought Kinney’s boathouse where he and his brother Edward operated the Venice Boat and Canoe Company until 1929. They rented gondolas, motorboats, canoes, and row boats for

the Venice canals. After discovering his natural decorating abilities, the Kinney Company hired Reese to decorate the Dance Pavilion, the amusement pier, and other buildings in Venice. He was asked to decorate for a big event to take place at the grand ball room in the auditorium on the Venice pier with $16,000 worth of decorations supplied by Hamberger’s Department Store

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165 “Alison Rose Jefferson: An Interview with Navalette Tabor Bailey (Oakwood Resident and cousin to Arthur Reese)”, by the City of Santa Monica Beach Stories Initiative Interview Transcripts, June 10, 2009, [00:19:53:02].
(which is now Macy’s). With a crew of eighteen it took a year and a half to put it together. Unfortunately, fire would consume his effort and the pier in 1908.\textsuperscript{166} He continued to take classes in decorating to complement his natural skills, opening his own decorating and contracting business. He also designed and made parade floats and gondolas to use in the canals. He received awards and accolades for his designs. In 1910, Reese came up with the idea to have a Mardi Gras because the Venice pier was losing customers to other amusement piers nearby. He was from New Orleans so he was very familiar with festivals, especially the Mardi Gras that was highly popular in Louisiana then, as it is now. In August, the first Mardi Gras Festival in Venice was held. Reese was the head decorator every year it was held until 1941. The parade often featured his spectacular cartoon-like papier-mâché Mardi Gras heads. In the 1919 City Directory Reese is listed as “chief decorator” for the Abbot Kinney Company.\textsuperscript{167} Joseph Reese, Arthur’s brother, became the first mail carrier in early Venice who began his career as a volunteer. He lived at 600 San Juan Avenue, just down the street from his brother Arthur. The Reese Family married into Black families already settled into Santa Monica. His wife Gertrude Circy’s family may have already been in Venice upon his arrival.\textsuperscript{168}

After several attempts to purchase from other White landowners in the Venice area were unsuccessful, Reese is said to have paid cash for his first parcel at 555 Westminster Avenue (formerly Fredonia Street) with the help of a Jewish gentleman in 1910 while he still lived in Los Angeles. (Figure 3.5) His cousins, the Tabors, helped to build a small cottage at the rear of the property, using wood from the old Venice piers. (Figure 3.6) The Tabors lived there and shared in the abundant workload that “Venice of America” provided until they purchased homes of their own and started their own businesses.\textsuperscript{169} There were many homes in the Oakwood area that had “granny flats” at the rear of the property for family members moving to Venice. In 1913 Reese built a craftsman home on 541 Santa Clara Avenue.\textsuperscript{170} (Figure 3.7)

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid; Stanton, “Venice Timeline 1890-1909,” Venice History Site, \url{https://www.westland.net/venicehistory/articles/1890.htm} (accessed May 29, 2015).
\textsuperscript{167} 1919 Los Angeles City Directory, Santa Monica/Venice area.
\textsuperscript{168} U.S. Census 1910 and Author’s in-person interviews.
\textsuperscript{170} Author interviews with the Tabor and Reese families (April/June 2013); Historic Resources Group, SurveyLA-Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey, “Venice-Individual Resources,” March, 2015, \url{https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/f8aed1c-cde8-4c6c-b538-5a535d7e792d/Venice_Individual_Resources_0.pdf} (accessed June 2, 2018).
Figure 3.5: Arthur Reese’s first residence at 555 Westminster Ave. (formerly Fredonia Street) in Oakwood, Venice. Photo from Sonya Reese archives in Arthur L. Reese. The Wizard of Venice: Venice of America, 1905-1920. Permission courtesy of Sonja Reese Greenland.
Figure 3.6: Small cottage built by the Tabor cousins at the rear of Arthur Reese’s first residence at 555 Westminster Ave, (formerly Fredonia Street) in Oakwood, Venice. Photo from Sonya Reese archives in Arthur L. Reese. The Wizard of Venice: Venice of America, 1905-1920. Permission courtesy of Sonja Reese Greenland.
Reese was well respected as an entrepreneur and a businessman. He was also civically engaged in the affairs of Oakwood. He was the founding member of the Crescent Bay Lodge Number 19, a masonic lodge formed in Santa Monica in 1910. He was also a member of the Venice Chamber of Commerce in 1920, when it was uncommon for an African American to be a member of a White organization of this type. He and his brother Clarence formed the local NAACP chapter in Venice in the 1930s because they saw Black women being harassed on the corner of Rose Ave and Lincoln Blvd. every time the circus came to town. When the circus left, the brothers decided to start a branch of the NAACP in Venice. In the 1940s Reese served as the Venice lodge’s charitable and benevolent activities organization leader and Worshipful Master. The lodge still exists at Seventeenth Street and Broadway. Reese also owned lakefront property on Lake Elsinore near Riverside where he rented cottages. He was also an investor in Lake Shore Beach Co. with Sallie Taylor Richardson and Charles S. Darden (1878-1943). Reese was head of the building committee that hired Paul R. Williams to design the First Baptist

172 “Alison Rose Jefferson: An Interview with Navalette Tabor Bailey (Oakwood Resident and cousin to Arthur Reese)”, by the City of Santa Monica Beach Stories Initiative Interview Transcripts, June 10, 2009: [00:18:49:12].
Church of Venice in 1927 (founded in 1910) at 510 San Juan Avenue.\textsuperscript{174} The community of Venice has attempted to honor Reese by giving him the moniker, “The Wizard of Venice.”\textsuperscript{175} 

Irving (or Irvin) Tabor and Family\textsuperscript{176} 
(1893-1987) 

Morgan City, Louisiana

605-607 Westminster Avenue (Tabor Courts - sold\textsuperscript{177})
615, 617 Westminster Avenue (owned by Tabor’s nephew, Alvin)
1310 Sixth Avenue (Abbot Kinney/Tabor Residence - sold)
613 Westminster Avenue (Charles Tabor – demolished 1960)

Irving Tabor was also from Louisiana. He was the first one of the cousins to join Arthur Reese in 1910. When no one would sell land to Tabor, he built a small cottage at the rear of Reese’s property at 555 Westminster Avenue.\textsuperscript{178} Irving began working alongside his cousin Reese as a janitor on the Venice Pier. He is listed in the 1910 Census Directory as an auto operator and in the 1920 Directory as an Amusement Decorator. Irving Tabor became Abbot Kinney’s chauffeur and personal assistant when Kinney approached Tabor while he was cleaning the pier. Kinney was having a Model T shipped from Chicago and needed a driver, so he asked Tabor if he wanted the job. Tabor said yes without knowing how to drive but quickly learned from a mechanic named Joe Lane from Heinickle Ford. Abbot Kinney and Tabor became friends according to the Reese and Tabor families. He had a room in the Kinney House while he worked for him. Kinney is said to have never slept where Tabor was not welcomed, sometimes sleeping

\textsuperscript{174} Cultural Heritage Commission, Los Angeles Department of City Planning Recommendation Report, First Baptist Church of Venice, Dec. 6, 2018, \url{https://planning.lacity.org/StaffRpt/InitialRpts/Item%202006%20CHC-2018-5305-HCM.pdf} (accessed Dec. 10, 2020). Note: the (1927) original First Baptist Church designed by Williams was moved to 11205 S. Vermont Ave. in Westmont. Currently the 1967 church occupies the lot and is being threatened with demolition for housing. For ongoing battle to save the 1967 First Baptist Church see Chapter 4 Ongoing Struggles.

\textsuperscript{175} Save Venice, VENICE, CA BLACK HISTORY GALLERY, \url{https://savevenice.ca/black-history/gallery/} (accessed Dec. 11, 2020).

\textsuperscript{176} Note: unless otherwise noted, information in this section was derived from the author’s in-person interviews with the Tabor, Reese, and Powell families conducted between April and June, 2013.


in his car. When they met, it had been at least fifteen years since Kinney wrote his reflections on Chinese, women, and “Negroes.”\footnote{Note: beginning in 1883 Kinney published racist and misogynistic books, Op-eds, and columns. For more info see f.n. 49.} Perhaps the hard-working people he employed and intelligent women he hired to speak at his Chautauqua events convinced him that his beliefs about the superiority of White men (as a race and gender) were wrong. From all accounts, Kinney treated the Reese and Tabor families with respect, unlike the intolerant environment they navigated in Venice. Navalette Tabor (daughter of Irving Tabor) reported that she did not think of Kinney as a prejudiced man and “…certain things he had no control over…and we didn’t force, force the issue at that time.”\footnote{“Alison Rose Jefferson: An Interview with Navalette Tabor Bailey (Oakwood Resident and cousin to Arthur Reese),” by the City of Santa Monica Beach Stories Initiative Interview Transcripts, June 10, 2009: [00:38:43:05].} Irving’s older brother, Charles Tabor, went into commercial fishing and supplied the Venice markets with fresh fish. Charles was listed as a teamster in 1910 and as workman for the shipyards in 1920. Tabor’s other brother, Clarence, was listed as a carpenter. Charles Tabor and his brother John Quincy both ran a trucking business and had a contract to haul materials and debris out of the Santa Monica Canyon. John Quincy was also a master carpenter. When the larger trucking companies took over in the 1929, Charles turned to his carpentry skills to support his family. His sister, Jenny Tabor, with her husband Alphonse Henry, started a cement contracting business (the first Black cement contractor); they built some of the sidewalks in Venice on Rose, Main, and close to the beach. As other cousins arrived, they worked on the pier as well, some were gondoliers on the Venice canals, others helped Reese with his shoeshine business or towel business on the pier. The Tabor and Reese families started their own businesses and were held in high esteem by the community, becoming leaders not just in Oakwood but in Venice as well. Tabor later became Chief Messenger and Guard for the Santa Monica office of the Bank of America and founded Tabor’s Bay City Maintenance Company, the first African American-owned maintenance company in the area. Tabor passed away in 1987.\footnote{Los Angeles Conservancy, “Irvin Tabor Family Residences,” Historic Places, \url{https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/irvin-tabor-family-residences} (accessed Dec. 10, 2020).}

Irving Tabor’s granddaughter, Jataun, described her experience on the pier as a young person whose family worked for Abbot Kinney. “My family could use the pools and baths that Blacks were not allowed to use at the time.”\footnote{Free Venice Beachhead, “Venice Community Activist Whose Story Goes Back to Abbot Kinney: Jataun Valentine,” Interviews, \url{https://freevenicebeachhead.com/2014/03/} (accessed Aug. 2, 2017).} The Tabors tell of the time the Ku Klux Klan
burned crosses on their (or their own) front lawns to intimidate the Black families and how their family would get together and take turns watching each other’s houses, sometimes carrying loaded guns. Eventually the Klan left them alone. John Quincy Tabor Jr. remembers not being able to go to the salt plunge with his boy scout group at twelve years old. The attendee (who knew the Tabor family) made him go get a health certificate from the Surgeon at City Hall. He returned with the certificate and was able to swim that day. He also says that he did not experience the racism that his older (or darker complexioned) cousins did. He was never turned away from a movie or had to sit in the balcony. He also stated that it was “easier when people knew you.”

Before the Cosmos Club was made into an eight-room home for the Abbot Kinney Family (located at One Grand Canal – the central and most luxurious waterway in Venice), it was a bunkhouse for canal workers. This is where Black canal workers could stay because they could not find housing in Venice. The Cosmos Club was remodeled into the Kinney home in 1916, (Figure 3.8, 3.9) The house was given to Irving Tabor by Abbot Kinney’s widow after she died in 1927. Even though the house officially belonged to Tabor, the Kinney heirs owned the land. White Venetians relentlessly protested the possibility of Tabor and his family moving into the neighborhood, so Tabor and his brothers John and Charles cut the house into three pieces and moved it to 1310 Sixth Avenue, the “Black section” of Venice, using their hauling trucks. It was seamlessly reassembled and currently stands at 1310 6th Avenue as a historic cultural monument. The Venice community has attempted to honor Tabor by remembering him as Abbot Kinney’s trustworthy personal assistant and driver. He also has a small alleyway named after him and his cousin Reese – Tabor and Reese Courts.

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Figure 3.8: Cosmos Club in its temporary location before it becomes the Kinney Residence, circa 1907. Photo Courtesy of Virtual Venice (http://www.virtualvenice.info/visual/canals.htm).

Figure 3.9: Irving Tabor Residence in Oakwood area. Credit to FLICKR: THE CITY PROJECT: KNOXIJUM. Photo courtesy of Atlas Obscura (https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/kinney-tabor-house)
Many residents in Oakwood owned multiple properties in the area and in the surrounding Beach community. Blacks in Oakwood kept their properties in the family by passing them down to the next of kin as most family’s intent on leaving legacies did. Irving Tabor also owned a beach lot in Marina Del Rey which he sold for a large profit. His older brother Charles Tabor, who worked in the shipyards, lived four blocks over at 613 Westminster Ave in 1931. John Quincy Tabor’s mother-in-law bought property right in the center of the Marina before it became a marina, and later sold it for a nice profit. As the story goes, Francis Tabor’s grandmother secured a loan made by a local banker (Mr. Hurtle from Security First National) with his oil-rich property that fronted the canals. When the banker could not repay the loan, Tabor’s grandmother took control of the property until she eventually sold it. Charles Tabor could not read or write but was a master carpenter who used his skills to build homes and additions for his family during their time in Venice. Irving Tabor purchased property located at 605-607 Westminster Avenue between 1916 and 1922, now called Westminster Place or Tabor Court. Initially, there was at least one building on the property. In 1922, Tabor relocated two California-style bungalows to the property from Abbot Kinney’s St. Mark’s Island. He constructed several other buildings using salvaged materials from the Venice pier boathouse and amusement park. Tabor sold the property and moved into the house that Kinney’s wife left him which was relocated to the Oakwood area due to racism. The bungalows were priced at 5.8 million in 2017. Jenny Tabor (Irving Tabor’s sister) and her husband Alphonse Henry lived at 709 Vernon Ave, the first family to move outside of the original “Black” section. Navalette remembers her father (Irving Tabor) going over to the Henrys house to help “protect it.” Their White neighbors had no choice but to accept them as did other sections of Venice when they saw the influx of Blacks increase in the 1920s.

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187 “Alison Rose Jefferson: An Interview with Navalette Tabor Bailey (Oakwood Resident and cousin to Arthur Reese),” by the City of Santa Monica Beach Stories Initiative Interview Transcripts, June 10, 2009: [00:35:43:01].
Chester Powell

(1916 - 2018)

Hope, Arkansas

540 Westminster Avenue

*owned multiple properties in Oakwood

Chester Powell moved to Oakwood in 1948. His sister was already renting the rear property of Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes on Westminster in Venice before she convinced her brother to buy a house there instead of in Watts. Mr. Rhodes sold him the house next door to his. Powell’s journey, albeit exciting, is common for those leaving the South around WWII. His mother wanted him to leave Hope, Arkansas because she was afraid for his life as a young Black man in the South. The twenty-year-old Powell and a few other young men traveled in a beat-up car that his father gave him as far as they could. When the car broke down in a Sundown Town in Arizona they barely made it out before nightfall. They abandoned the car and slept in an abandoned house, picked cotton, and jumped trains aided by a Pullman Porter, until they made it to Santa Monica, California. Powell settled in Venice in Venice and worked on a gambling ship owned by Tony Cornero that only allowed Blacks onto the ship if they worked there. Like many pioneering Blacks of Oakwood, Powell amassed enough wealth to send his kids and grandkids to college as well as purchase real estate for future generations. His civic contributions included joining the NAACP at Calvary Church on 20th and Delaware because of the moving story of the Scottsboro Boys. Powell helped to maintain Black homeownership in Oakwood by

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191 Unless otherwise noted, information in this section was derived from the Author interviews with the Tabor, Reese, and Powell families (April/June 2013).

192 James W. Loewen, Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism (United States: New Press, 2005), 70; Loewen, “Sundown Towns and Counties: Racial Exclusion in the South,” Southern Cultures (2009): 22-101, http://www.proquest.com/ (accessed Dec 14, 2012). Note: Sundown Towns were all-White communities where Blacks and other people of color were not allowed to be after dark for fear of being jailed or lynched. They often posted racist and threatening signs at their city limits that read, “Nigger, don’t let the sun go down on you in (insert name of town).”


194 Note: the Scottsboro Boys were nine black teenagers falsely accused of raping two white women aboard a train near Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1931. The series of trials and retrials were the most heinous executions of racial injustice in a court of law.
quietly amassing multiple properties according to his daughters Patricia, Charlotte, and Michelle before his death in 2018.

**Other Pioneer Residents**

The following residents of Oakwood have been identified through the 1910 and 1920 Census Data as well as through interviews with the Reese and Tabor families unless otherwise noted. Regina Stanton is said to be among the first residents in Venice, arriving in 1905. I wanted to acknowledge her participation in the founding of Oakwood despite limited information on her as the first to take up residence in the “Black section” of Venice.\(^{195}\) Rev James A. Stout was pastor for the First Baptist Church of Venice when it was established in 1910. Other Black pioneers included the Sheffields, H.H. Rhodes, and the Kelso family. Rev Kelso served as pastor for First Baptist Church of Venice in 1912. They all owned property in Oakwood and were good friends. (Figure 3.10) The Wheelers were employed as maids at the Waldorf Hotel.\(^{196}\) John B. Fant from South Carolina was a pioneering resident of Oakwood and friend of the Tabor and Reese families. He was a drugstore porter who lived with his wife Bessie from Massachusetts. Bessie was a servant for a private family. They lived just one block east of the Reeses on San Juan. Mr. Fant used his house to rest Black workers who worked on the pier in shifts. Edward Newell, a Jamaican-born U.S. citizen and his wife Victoria from Louisiana lived at the rear of Fant’s property. Newall was a laborer doing odd jobs and his wife was a cook. Beulah Brown from Missouri was a washerwoman who lived with her daughter Jennie on Vernon Avenue. C.J. Middlebrook lived on Westminster. He was a boxer on the pier. James Thomas, a long-time resident of Oakwood, recounts his experience living in Venice. “See, you wasn’t accepted cross Lincoln. You wasn’t accepted too much south of California [Blvd.]. And you didn’t cross Washington [Blvd.]. Never! We just knew we were outside of where we was supposed to be.”\(^{197}\)

In a recorded interview, Pearl White, who moved to Venice during WWII stated that [B]lacks “couldn't live beyond Flower” until after Prop 13 was passed.\(^{198}\)

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\(^{195}\) Hunt, *Black Los Angeles*, 85.


\(^{198}\) Ibid., Pearl White.
Today, Blacks can live anywhere in Venice that they choose, but they are being pushed out of the very place to which their families had been relegated. Instead of falling prey to disinvestment, Oakwood is experiencing a common phenomenon that is taking over older and mostly neighborhoods of color everywhere, gentrification. Gentrification grows from the word “gentry”, which means elite, nobility, or upper class; a new way of separating people not based on race but class. The solution is to protect those neighborhoods whose importance lies in their people and their stories; not only to preserve the tangible but the intangible as well. This is a difficult concept when it comes to the preservation of resources belonging to people of color, but change is possible through community-centered action.

As discussed in Chapter 2, ethnic enclaves are identified by a unique set of attributes specific to their culture. The Blacks who moved to Oakwood were responsible for triggering a
specific way of responding to the racing of space.\textsuperscript{199} Although not as prevalent as their Black neighbors in Santa Monica, Black-owned mom and pop stores in the neighborhood may have also been a way to service the needs of their community while combating racism.\textsuperscript{200} Oakwood’s Black population in the early 1900s was “not allowed” to live outside of Oakwood’s boundaries unless they were live-in help. There were a few that broke that barrier but not without harassment and threats.\textsuperscript{201} With restrictions as to where in Venice they could settle, Blacks used proxies (sometimes of Jewish heritage) to purchase property in the area. As Black families moved into Oakwood, some built small cottages at the rear of their homes for family, creating a settlement pattern and a port of entry. This pattern can still be seen in Oakwood where properties have yet to be demolished or significantly altered. Oakwood residents blended private and public spaces to interact with one another daily. The first wave of Latinx neighbors joined them in this practice, creating a close-knit neighborhood. They found they had a lot in common despite their ethnic differences, especially when it came to being mistreated because of their ethnicity. The Tabor and Reese families were skilled craftsmen and artisans who drew upon their experiences from their New Orleans upbringing. They built boats, cabins, furniture for their families back home. These skills came in handy when no one would sell them homes or local support from contractors and builders was scarce because of segregation. They built homes in the architectural language and style in Venice at the time – small wood and stucco bungalows, some in the craftsman style; and because of their skills, there was nothing piecemeal about their work. Although Reese and his crew designed, built, and decorated the pier for Venice’s festivals, they were not welcomed to participate. They were not only extricated from entertainment on the pier, but they were not allowed to congregate in White churches; the city directory in the early 1900s distinguished Black churches as “colored.” The formation of separate religious institutions in ethnic neighborhoods like Oakwood’s First Baptist Church, were formed out of necessity. As far back in America as slavery, places of worship were the only places where Blacks were relatively free from discrimination – aside from the places that they called home.

With each barrier, Blacks found ways to deal with the racing of space out of necessity, from homeownership to co-ethnic networking. These ways show up in the physical environment

\textsuperscript{199} Deener “The ‘black Section’ of the Neighborhood,” 45-67.
\textsuperscript{200} Hunt, “Black Los Angeles,” 88.
\textsuperscript{201} Author interviews with the Tabor, Reese, and Powell families (April/June 2013). See info on residents above.
of Oakwood as well as the patterns of settlement, traditions, and festivals. The conservation of ethnic neighborhoods depends on recognizing every aspect of a community’s narrative in order to reveal their unique characteristics. In doing so, the demolition and alteration of designated and potential historic resources can be tempered with cultural diversity and environmental sustainability.
Chapter 4. Conservation in the Oakwood Enclave

Survey LA Findings

SurveyLA completed their historic resource survey of Venice in 2015. Oakwood was identified as a Planning District (“a rare example of an early-20th century African-American enclave in Venice”) instead of a historic district due to its lack of integrity. Research conducted for this paper can confirm that seven of the resources listed in the 2015 survey – two bungalow courts, two homes, and three churches – were owned and/or built by the early Black residents. (Appendix E) It should be noted that the bungalows identified in their survey are clearly constructed and/or lived-in after the Black ethnic enclave of Oakwood had been established. Non-parcel resources such as 18th Avenue Brick Street and the Mildred Avenue Canal Bridge may also be associated with Blacks who did the labor or owned businesses that hauled the material for construction. Since the 2015 survey, several of the resources associated with the early Black residents have become historic cultural monuments such as the Irving Tabor Family Residences and the Bethel Tabernacle Church of God in Christ/Monday Women’s Club. Further investigation may reveal even more resources associated with the Black pioneers of Venice. A fourth Church in the neighborhood, the First Baptist Church of Venice built in 1967 (685 East Westminster Avenue), is also associated with the Black population in Oakwood but did not meet any of the criteria of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance to be considered a potential resource.

SurveyLA’s Citywide Historic Context Statement of African American History in Los Angeles has a limited context statement for Residential Development and Suburbanization -


1880-1980, under the themes of deed restriction, segregation, and ethnic enclaves. Those tools are not nuanced enough to capture the community of Oakwood. They are more suited for Black ethnic enclaves of the South, where racial covenants more directly impacted neighborhoods. The SurveyLA themes should be broadened to include ethnic enclaves created by de facto segregation which had as much of an impact on communities of color in Los Angeles as those governed by deed restrictions. SurveyLA is still exploring ethnic/cultural contexts therefore, new development in Oakwood should be regulated until a more inclusive context statement and resources associated with the various ethnicities in Venice can be clearly identified before they are lost. Structures associated with early Blacks in the Oakwood area have lost their integrity due to unintentional (because they are forgotten or undiscovered) or intentional neglect, or significant alterations. This section of Venice is a part of the larger narrative of the racing of space in Southern California therefore, it deserves more than consideration for local planning purposes and a more sensitive approach to designation despite loss of integrity. The definition of the lived experience is varied, and preservation should aid communities in keeping resources that tell a complete story of their environment.

Venice Comprehensive Community Plan

A Planning Workshop for Oakwood was conducted in 1988 with participants from the Powell and Tabor families who were instrumental in forming the early neighborhood of Oakwood. (see Chapter 3 for more information on these families). This workshop identified a vision for Oakwood that wanted to see the following: maintaining the current character (small scale, low height, beach community atmosphere); support of affordable housing; development plan for the popular beach tracks of Rose Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard; and more landscaping. Although the drug and gang wars of the ‘80s and ‘90s no longer plague Oakwood, there still exists a palpable social and economic divide between two classes of residents (the wealthy and the homeless) and the police who respond. “Skid Rose” Avenue has become as popular and
populated with posh retail and upscale coffee shops as the major thoroughfare of Abbot Kinney Boulevard, while its sidewalks are lined with homeless encampments.\textsuperscript{207} As far as maintaining the character of Oakwood as a small-scale beach community, tech moguls have moved into the area, beginning earnestly in 2011 with Google. Along with the hollywood elite and the wealthy, these new residents have tripled the property values in Oakwood and transformed the small cottages into mega mansions with uncharacteristic privacy fences which, from the viewpoint of the homeowners, are necessary to deter unsavory and criminal characters.\textsuperscript{208}

The preservation section of the 1988 Community Workshop was conducted by Betsy Goldman, president of the Venice Historical Society at the time. Goldman explained a historic designations to the community and cited the Kinney-Tabor House as an example of a historic designation. She referenced a 1981 survey of historic buildings in Oakwood which could not be located. Goldman also announced the need for an updated survey for the entire Venice coastal area and a map of historic resources in the Oakwood area for use in future planning.\textsuperscript{209} The Venice Historical Society also conducted oral history interviews with the Black residents of Venice for their perspective on life in Oakwood.\textsuperscript{210}

In addition to the Oakwood Community Workshop, a comprehensive community plan for Venice was completed in 2000. This plan, much like other Los Angeles community plans, recognizes that within their planning area is a "diverse community that is socially and economically vibrant with unique architectural and historical characteristics."\textsuperscript{211} Residential community issues identified in the 2000 plan repeat the 1988 Planning Workshop concerns: maintaining low-density character of single-family neighborhoods and protecting them from


incompatible uses; preservation of residential neighborhoods; provision of more affordable housing; the need to promote rehabilitation of residential areas; and a desire to improve the quality of housing in some parts of the plan area. The Venice Community Plan also addressed commercial, industrial, transportation, recreation, and open space issues. The plan is currently being updated due to significant physical growth and change in the community.212 The 1990 historic resource survey referenced in the community plan identify a little over forty landmarks, only one of those is associated with the early Black residents of Venice/Oakwood – the Kinney/Tabor residence at 1310 Sixth Avenue. The Kinney/Tabor residence was designated a Historic-Cultural Monument/HCM (#926) in 2008.213 Since then, other resources associated with the early Blacks living in Oakwood have been identified. The Tabor Courts at 605-607 Westminster Avenue were designated an HCM (#1149) in 2017.214 The Monday Women’s Club/Bethel Tabernacle Church of God in Christ was recently nominated an HCM (#1206) on January 14, 2020.215 As part of the Venice Community Plan Update effort a resurvey of historic resources in the Venice Coastal Zone Area is currently underway and is welcoming community input.216 The 2000 Venice Community Plan outlines objectives and goals that guide policy which will ensure that the community’s historically significant resources are protected, preserved, and enhanced. The policies put in place include adhering to preservation ordinances; cultural heritage commission requirements and design standards; educating to interest the community in cultural, historical, and architectural resources; and encouraging building code flexibility to preserve structures. These well-thought-out objectives are founded on the premise that significant resources will be appropriately identified. What is not taken into account is that historic

212 See f.n. 217 for recent community concerns that call for an update.
215 Ibid.
resources which have contributed to the diversity and history of Venice have been consistently overlooked as not significant enough to warrant protection. There are still gaps in how and who identifies resources which may have intangible significance but are nonetheless unique to the historic character and complete story of Venice. In order to be successful where previous attempts at addressing community needs have failed, the Los Angeles City Planning survey team’s invitation for community input will need to do more than just hear the community’s suggestions regarding historic resources. The City will need to ensure that they are including resources that tell the full story of Venice. If Venice’s Community Plan truly reflected the will of the community, the local council would enforce what is already written about keeping the historic character of neighborhoods intact; the city would scrutinize demolition permits and regulate appropriate infill; there would be community-led development to ensure equitable conservation and encourage the designation of local resources based on specific ethnic and geographic culture.

This paper focuses on the contributions of Blacks in Venice, but it must be noted that their history is connected to other ethnicities throughout Venice’s history. If not for Jewish property owners in Venice, Blacks would not have been sold land. If these extant resources are not properly identified how can the owners receive assistance to maintain and enhance them, and thus preserve their architectural integrity using city funding? In an effort to create comprehensive and sustainable change, the Community Plan Update will need to be consistent with the Local Coastal Program/LCP. In order to be certified for the first time ever, Venice has to update its Land Use Plan/LUP – last implemented in 1999 and certified in 2001, and its Local Implementation Plan/LIP – last updated in 2004 but not certified. In 2016 the City held an open forum for residents of Venice to voice their concerns and to assess community issues in preparation for updating the LCP. 217 Residents expressed a myriad of concerns that have been a consistent plea throughout the development history of Venice. It is clear that either community concerns are going ignored, or solutions are not being enforced. Some of the concerns expressed by residents in the 2016 community forum as it relates to preservation were: maintaining the diverse and original architectural character of Venice, especially the demolition of affordable

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homes being replaced by large scale and incompatible houses; housing for the homeless and mentally ill as a solution to preserve character and diversity; land use plans that have development standards that are not clear, objective, measurable, and enforceable; a plan review process that is less cumbersome; lack of protection for cultural and historic resources identified in the Coastal Zone; navigating loans that are impossible to obtain but necessary to upgrade older homes; what defines city, state, and national resources broadened; overly restrictive building codes that hinder development (exceptions abound in Venice). One resident expressed the need for the city to do better when it comes to ensuring the sixth, seventh, and eighth generation of Oakwood families were represented in the invite-only planning meetings. Many expressed their disappointment of having gone through similar workshops and questionnaires without actual interaction or dialogue with those who could implement the suggestions.

There is one thing that should remain from the last LUP that addresses the concerns of the community and that is the stipulation that properties not eligible for monument status, as well as monuments, be flagged for review by the Department of Building and Safety and the Cultural Heritage Commission for all building and demolition permits. This requirement goes beyond the city’s preservation ordinance that places a temporary stay of demolition, substantial alteration or removal pending determination to designate a monument. If enforced, this LUP stipulation would allow those properties that have been surveyed and recorded as potentially eligibility, as well as those resources not yet identified, to be saved from demolition and alteration (endangering its eligibility) while raising awareness to their significance, and until local designation could be obtained. Communities and preservationists need help identifying the many significant resources (especially intangible heritage) throughout the city. At the very least, this LUP stipulation (along with the City of Los Angles’ Preservation Ordinance) will help identify and record more historic resources before the wrecking ball; at best, demolition will be stalled long enough to create preservation solutions that are more appealing and save historic resources that reflect a diverse community.

Current Conservation Challenges in Oakwood

Weak Ordinance

Generally accepted standards for designation are based on guidelines set by the National Register of Historic Places/NRHP and determine which properties should be considered for
The City of Los Angeles has received an A+ from LA Conservancy during its 2014 countywide assessment for improving preservation at the local level and uses the generally accepted standards for determining designation, yet the city’s ordinance contains no language regarding protecting those or potential resources when not triggered by the California Environmental Quality Act/CEQA. There are three levels of designation for historic properties (local, state, and federal). Local designation is the strongest because each local government can create protections unique to their story through preservation ordinances. This does no good if the identification of significant resources continues to be dictated by entities (city officials and developers) outside of the community.

**Strict Preservation Guidelines**

Venice acknowledges the role that Blacks played in the early days of the community by dedicating streets and buildings after them. They are written about in newspaper articles and interviewed when issues of racial injustice or Black History Month comes around. Acknowledgements, honorariums, and history tours are not enough. There is still an underrepresentation of designated resources associated with the contributions of these early Black residents. One reason for this underrepresentation is an overly technical, legalistic approach to deciding what merits designation. It is understandable that without standards, anything can be determined significant, therefore the need for the NRHP guidelines. If each municipality has the authority to designate landmarks based on its own criteria for designation, using the language of the NRHP as a guide, Venice could establish a set of criteria that acknowledges the tangible as well as intangible contributions of its residents who were relegated to the “Black” section of town through de facto segregation in the early 1900s – a context for how communities in Los Angeles developed that has yet to be flushed out.

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Another reason for an underrepresentation of resources associated with the early Black residents of Venice is because the resources do not meet current integrity standards. Typically, to qualify for designation, a building or property must meet age and integrity requirements as well as meet at least one designation criteria. The property must be old enough to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance, typically fifty years or older for state and federal designations. There is an exception to this rule if the resource meets special requirements. The property must still look the way it did at the time of significance (integrity discussed below). To meet one or more of the designation criteria it must be associated with events, activities, or developments that were important in the past; or the lives of people who were important in the past; or embody significant architectural history, landscape history, or engineering achievements; or has the potential to yield information through archeological investigation about our past. With historic resources associated with communities of color, significance is often intangible. The Cultural Heritage Commission denied an HCM designation to the First Baptist Church of Venice because they contend it did not meet any of the criterion of the Cultural Heritage Ordinance, it was also less than fifty years old at the time of the nomination (1967-2018).\textsuperscript{221} It fell short of meeting the criteria for significance within the context of the cultural and social history of the African American community in Venice as the applicant argues.\textsuperscript{222} Although the growth of the Black enclave of Oakwood was at its peak at the time of the church’s construction, and it is not associated with the most significant years of Oakwood’s development (1904 -1920s), the role the church building played leading up to that peak is significant in the larger context of the racial climate in America. Life in Venice in the 1960s coincided with the civil rights and Black culture movements so it is possible that it was also used for social gatherings and community meetings, similar to how the Nazarene Church (now New Bethel Baptist Church of Venice) was used.\textsuperscript{223} It was literally built by the early Oakwood community and served as an important gathering space for over six hundred congregants by the time of its construction. These are significant and meaningful contributions.\textsuperscript{224} The First Baptist Church is also significant based on the

\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 3
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 16.
uncomfortable fact that an environment of racism – through de facto and arbitrary tactics, and the racing of space – was responsible for the creation of a “Negro” section in Venice and produced a thriving ethnic enclave that contributed to the economic, political, and multi-ethnic environment of early Venice.

Traditional tools of preservation can be a hinderance to protecting cultural resources significant for their historic trends, events, or people. Resources like the First Baptist Church should be protected for its ability to tell the full story of Blacks in the history of Venice and for its ongoing value to the Black and Latinx families that continue to use it as a resource. This, and cultural resources in other communities of color, is an issue of intangible cultural heritage. The intangible resources and cultural significance in communities must be considered in the designation process if neighborhoods and their historic character are to survive erasure. The communal aspect that the church symbolizes has a great deal more meaning than the building itself. It is understandable that criteria must be met, however the interpretation of what exemplifies significant contributions to a community continues to focus on tangible heritage and strict rules. It is also understandable that preservation standards and designation criteria must not be compromised to accommodate individual structures, but communities should be allowed to supplement those standards and criterion in order to better interpret their unique communities, especially those with intangible heritage.

Potential historic resources must maintain their architectural integrity with respect to location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association in order to become eligible for designation. Standards of integrity are not measured in the same manner for tangible resources as they are for intangible ones; and most often we consider structures for their architectural merit rather than their connection to historic trends, events, or people. Structures with architectural merit are likely to maintain their integrity more than structures with intangible significance, which make it difficult for communities like Oakwood to “prove” rightful significance for some of the resources associated with the Black pioneers of Venice. What is becoming more evident to decision-makers is that although structures have lost integrity because of poor maintenance or dilapidated conditions, it does not necessarily mean they have lost the ability to tell their story, especially if visual alterations can be reversed. An example of a historic resource being considered more for its intangible heritage than its architectural significance is the Irvin Tabor Family Residences in Oakwood. The residences are spread out over two lots with
eight vernacular bungalows located at 605-607 East Westminster Avenue. The residences meet two of the Historic-Cultural Monument Criteria and have been designated a Historic-Cultural Monument despite alterations that have compromised its integrity.

The First Baptist Church, despite the loss of significant features due to alterations (removal of interior furniture, stain glass windows, and hardware), and a recent fire that damaged a portion of the front façade, still has the ability to convey its historical, architectural and cultural significance necessary for designation. It should be given discretion based on the same reasons the Tabor Family Residences have been designated, because the level of historic cultural significance outweighs the lack of integrity. This type of discretionary judgement is one that provides more opportunities for designating a more diverse set of resources. The city can direct an update for these antiquated standards of significance that are compounding threats to cultural resources, especially those in communities of color that lack integrity. In coming to terms with racial disparity and systemic racism, the City of Los Angeles has a responsibility to address the dilemma of culturally diverse neighborhoods of color being erased from history.

Community Choice

It should be a community that decides what in their community matters. Communities should have first right of refusal to develop; given the opportunity to imagine how their communities will be shaped; determine their own social value; and control the narratives of degradation, decay, and beauty in their own backyards. Significance at the local level should be just that, a local decision. This is how preservation can help communities celebrate what is valuable to them and give them a sense of control and ownership over the places where they live, while ensuring that historic resources are protected and tell a full story of our diverse history.

Dolores Hayden in her book *The Power of Place*, talks about a discussion in an op-ed of The New York Times between Herbert J. Gans and Ada Louise Huxtable in 1975. The argument was started by Gans’ attack on the New York’s Landmark Preservation Commission. He was discontent with how the Commission designated and preserved mostly buildings of the rich and architecture of the famous. Huxtable’s argument was to defend the preservation of great

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226 Note: HCM criteria: “Reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community” as a representative example of residential properties associated with the African American community in Venice during the early 20th century, and it “is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history” for its association with Irvin Tabor.
architecture because it was great architecture, whether money made it great or not. What Huxtable missed, as Gans followed up with, is that the entity that decides what is “great” in public history also gets to decide how public funds are spent to support it. As quoted by Gans, “Private citizens are of course entitled to save their own past, but when preservation becomes a public act, supported with public funds, it must attend to everyone’s past.” That was forty-five years ago. Communities still struggle to be involved in the future of their own neighborhoods, especially communities of color. In the aftermath of the current social unrest and a call to heed the lessons of systemic racial inequality, preservation professionals are engaging in conversations to flush out strategies to protect the significance of intangible heritage and guide developers and city officials to create change that is more sympathetic to the historic past of BIPOC/Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color. Community-centered branding that highlights cultural significance is one of the ways that neighborhoods are preserving their tangible as well as intangible heritage, while allowing room for diversity and growth.

**Control of Narrative**

The failure of historians and conservationist to acknowledge the accomplishments of the oppressed in sites of trauma is something that affects many Black communities. When neighborhoods are defined by their struggles and trauma, the solution becomes to send outside forces in to “fix” what is wrong instead of relying on community perspectives to “enhance” what is already there. Since the publishing of *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California* (1988), there has been a concerted effort to fully recognize and appreciate the accomplishments and contributions of an ethnically diverse California. The challenge now is to capture the nuances of those varied views; to understand that struggles (especially BIPOC) are not the defining moments of a particular culture or the spaces they inhabit; lived experiences are as varied as our country is ethnically diverse. Oftentimes the collective trauma of Blacks obscures their individual achievements. People of color are multilayered, with a rich and

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complex memory that is often brushed aside as unimportant to the larger narrative of history. Without Black slaves, there would have been no Monticello. The racing of space in Venice – as in other parts of America – unintentionally cultivated communities that gave back more than what was taken from them, and this should be remembered alongside racial injustices. Remembering this “Black section” of Venice for the accomplishments of its residents is telling the entire story and giving control of the narrative to those whose story it is to tell. The longstanding homeownership of third, fourth and fifth generations of Black residents (albeit fewer than originally) is what defines Oakwood as the "Black section" today, not because they are relegated there. The early Black families in Oakwood did not concern themselves with race problems even though they were keenly aware of them. Therefore, their accomplishments, achievements, and contributions should not get lost in the story of their struggle and segregation. As long as resources continue to be measured by strict guidelines and focus more on what communities lack, without consideration for the potential each structure has to reflect a diverse community, more historic resources will be lost, and gentrification exacerbated.

Rebranding/Gentrification

The City of Los Angeles has consistently tried to rebrand Venice since its attempt at creating a new coastal identity in the 1930s that made way for “slum clearance.” Its current attempts to rebrand parts of Venice to attract more tourist and direct money into the district has succeeded. Unfortunately, the high-end stores and more recently, the Silicon elite are rapidly erasing the unique character of Venice’s neighborhoods and creating a new form of gentrification. Young professionals and upper-class homebuyers moving into middle and working-class neighborhoods because of cheap housing is no longer the driving force of this new form of gentrification, developers and real estate investors are. Rebranding has amplified gentrification and sped up the erasure and displacement of the remaining Black and Latinx community who fight to hang onto homes passed down through generations. Rebranding has also made it easier to demolish or significantly alter the older, working-class, vernacular beach bungalows that are concentrated in the Oakwood area. At best, gentrification has encouraged

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231 United States Zip Codes, 90291, https://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/90291/ (accessed Nov. 20, 2014); Note: Almost thirty-six percent of the housing stock in Venice was constructed in 1939 or earlier, see Appendix A.
reinvestment where previously aging housing and pockets of the community have been neglected and provided an opportunity for homeowners to triple their initial investment. At its worst, gentrification has created privileged enclaves where access, amenity, and community are controlled by the elite. Despite consistent requests from the entire community, and community plan updates, nothing substantive has been implemented to protect the character of Venice’s neighborhoods and their resources. Instead, the city continues to promote segregated spaces and spur gentrification – no longer based on race but centered on social class.

One example of this new form of gentrification is the planned demolition of the First Baptist Church of Venice. The Church and the parking lot across the street were sold in 2017 to Jay Penske, son of billionaire auto racing entrepreneur Roger Penske and chairman and CEO of Penske Media. Penske has plans to “better the community” by putting his family’s mansion there.\(^{232}\) Even with the sale of the property under a legal cloud, the City of Los Angeles has done little to support the wishes of the community who have rallied around the building’s cultural value. The physical structure is unremarkable, yet it houses a familiar story of resilience in a time when Blacks were not accepted beyond Oakwood’s borders.

Solutions to Challenges

**Educate**

Educating homeowners, developers, and the community about what is important and how to maintain that important structure (including technical assistance) can not only save historic resources but contribute to the diversity in housing stock and in residents.\(^{233}\) Contributions made by the early Black residents of Venice are not hard to find if you know where to look and who to ask. The history of the first Blacks to live in Venice is not purposely hidden, but if their story is not well-known, the community cannot embrace the cultural resources as part of the full story of Venice. If the community doesn’t know the full history, Community Plans cannot represent the entire community. Resources and accomplishments associated with the early Black residents of


Venice will continue to be overlooked or seen as unimportant if no one takes the time to learn their story. Naming a street “Tabor Courts” without context or explanation as to why it has been commemorated is superficial and does little to provide protection for resources that tell that story. Some family members admit that they are still discovering just how much the Tabor, Reese, and other early Black families influenced “Venice of America.” Sonja Reese-Greenland recently discovered a boat that her grandfather designed and built with the help of Venice High School Student as decoration for a defunct bank that was later donated to the Venice Historical Society. It fell into disrepair until Stewart Oscars, a carpenter and long-time resident of Venice, was asked to repair it in 2019. In doing so, he learned about Arthur Reese and the Black community in Oakwood which he had never heard of. Perhaps a digital program of historic markers would be a start, allowing the entire community to contribute as well as learn from the stories of their neighbors who were there before them. There are a number of elementary schools and one high school in the area, perhaps there could be a retelling of Venice’s history to include more than a cursory view of how and why Blacks came to live in what was later called “Oakwood” in the early 1900s.

**Stronger Preservation Ordinance**

The City of Los Angeles has adopted a Preservation Ordinance, but it does not outline protections for all types of historic resources. The preservation ordinance is local legislation enacted to protect historic districts, individual buildings and archaeological sites from destruction or insensitive altering. It is a legal means by which local communities can identify, evaluate and protect historic properties. Each community can tailor its designation criteria to reflect the specific significance of the community’s unique local resources. A good preservation

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ordinance not only outlines the criteria the community has established for designating their local landmarks but contains language regarding the protection for the designated resource and enforcement of the ordinance as well.\textsuperscript{237} The City of Los Angeles’ General Plan does not yet include a Historic Preservation Element; an optional long-range vision for protecting the built environment permitted under state law. There are seven required elements of a General Plan including conservation, but the preservation element deals with community character and the natural environment, not the built environment.\textsuperscript{238} A Historic Preservation Element can guide the city of Los Angeles in their efforts to protect historic resources through a set of goals, objectives, and policies that can then be integrated into the Venice Community Plan, without hindering the goals for growth and development outlined in the General Plan.

\textit{Equitable Conservation}

Equitable conservation asks the question, “Will demolishing or altering this neighborhood asset enhance or honor the memory of this particular culture or erase it?” In order to ensure the future of equitable conservation in Oakwood, the City of Los Angeles must include strategies that are sympathetic to a historic past. This is made possible only when the community has input, especially members who have been consistently deprived of racial equity. Once the community is educated on how their Black neighbors have been deprived of equal access in amenities, programming, funding, and given low priority, the city can then invest in the homeowners and businesses who have been adversely affected by the deprivation, an act of reparation. This could be achieved using direct and indirect economic incentives to encourage affordable upkeep of older and historic properties, based on the needs of individual communities.\textsuperscript{239} Investing in the community could be achieved by assisting legacy businesses that encourage ethnic diversity. Maybe the Mardi Gras Festival that Arthur Reese introduced to Venice gets revived with the purpose of helping intangible heritage to survive, thrive, and benefit from the Venice brand.


\textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 21.

Moratorium on Demolitions

Currently, once an application for designation of a site (including significant trees or other plant life located on the site), building or structure is of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles is complete, there is a temporary stay of demolition, alteration or removal pending the determination to designate it as a monument. Because of the rapid growth and demolition in the Oakwood area, there should be a moratorium on all demolitions before the history of Oakwood is literally uprooted. The moratorium, or at the very least, scrutinization at the City Planning Department should last until Survey LA’s limited context statement regarding ethnic enclaves is flushed out and there is an updated survey of potential and designated historic resources in the Oakwood area. Resources in the area that do not meet current significance or integrity requirements may be worthy of special consideration.

Conservation Districts and Easements

For structures in Oakwood that fall short of meeting criteria for a local, state, or national historic designation, but nevertheless have important cultural, visual, or other significance, conservation districts and conservation easements can be alternative forms of protection. Conservation districts are meant to maintain a unique community center, or emphasizing an important cultural element of a community, preserving the character rather than the historic fabric of existing neighborhoods. Dallas, Nebraska, and Cambridge, Massachusetts have all adopted some form of conservation district as an alternative to the more stringent historic district regulations.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ California Office of Historic Preservation Department of Parks and Recreation: Technical Assistance Series 14, Drafting Effective Historic Preservation Ordinance, 46.
Conclusion

Summary of Findings

"We should emphasize not Negro History, but the Negro in history. What we need is not a history of selected races or nations, but the history of the world void of national bias, race hate, and religious prejudice."

- Carter Woodson, 1875-1950, historian known as the 'Father of Black History.' Author, 'The Mis-Education of the Negro’ (1933)

From the very beginning, the right of occupancy in Venice has been contested. It started with the land on which it sits being stripped away from the indigenous people – Tongva and Chumash. Mexicans were then driven from the land by the California Land Act. Currently, the people whose only choice of housing in Venice was Oakwood are being displaced due to gentrification – the haphazard influx of the upper-class into working-class neighborhoods.241 According to Douglas Flamming in his book “Bound for Freedom,” Blacks were often relegated to the most undesirable places to live, only to turn around and find those very same places hip and desirable and their existence in jeopardy due to gentrification as in Oakwood.242 The success of Venice’s early Black population was due in large part to their tenacity, skill, and ability to navigate a prejudice environment while at the same time contributing to its success. Despite the sprinkling of Black-owned businesses in the majority-White community (especially along Washington Blvd.), Oakwood was primarily a residential enclave.243 The early Black residents in Oakwood lived among Mexicans, ethnic Europeans, and Jews, but they were not allowed to live anywhere else in Venice except north of the Pacific Electric train tracks in an undeveloped and

distant section to become known as Oakwood/the “Black section.” Despite the racial hurdles that these early residents in Venice faced, the opportunity that Abbot Kinney provided them, along with their enterprising spirit, allowed them to cultivate places that were worth investing in; spaces where they could enjoy all the freedoms of land ownership and community. Oakwood has formed generations of Black homeowners whose blocks were made up of multiple houses on a single lot, connecting yards (a fusion of personal/private spaces), and tightly grouped bungalows (a common beach vernacular).

Like the Green Book was for Black travelers during segregation, ethnic enclaves were an oasis of freedom in a time when Black freedoms were uncertain and arbitrary. They were vital refuges for an undisturbed Black life. Close ties with family and community were not exclusive to Blacks living in Oakwood but theirs was born of necessity like many other Black ethnic enclaves. The need to be rooted someplace and have ownership over your own body and land was a driving force for Black homeownership in the early decades after emancipation. These aspirations and mental security would be instilled in the generations that came after. In Los Angeles in 2000, although Blacks were less educated and had less income than Whites (non-Hispanic), the majority of them aged sixty-five and older accounted for a homeownership rate 5% higher than Whites – twenty-six percent for Blacks and twenty-one percent for Whites.\(^{244}\)

Homeownership was treated like any other tradition for the early residents of Oakwood. Third and fourth generations attest to being encouraged to buy property of their own in Oakwood and were passed down or gifted property from their relatives with the expectation to do the same.\(^{245}\) Having no idea that most of their properties would be worth five times as much in the future, they focused on preserving their family’s legacy and memories. Blacks in Oakwood found value in living next door to people with similar values, customs, and traditions that could be shared, and skills that could be bartered. This was a sort of social capital in the community. In doing so, they created communities that gave them back their dignity. The beliefs, culture, and aspirations that survived the mistreatment experienced by Blacks in Oakwood are just as important to document as the physical spaces that were created.

This paper is not intended to “reframe” the narrative of Oakwood, but to give context to its story and what is already known about it, and to focus the proverbial lens on the important

\(^{244}\) Hunt, *Black Los Angeles*, 90.
\(^{245}\) Author interviews with the Tabor, Reese, and Powell families (April/June 2013).
characters and their accomplishments that make up the diverse history of Venice but have all too often been obscured amidst struggles and/or issues of the elite. Preservationists have started to see past the formalities that have long prevented them from recognizing diverse histories. Now is the time to go farther than mere recognition and tackle the policy structures which impede assessing value to the stories we all need to hear.

Governmental barriers existed through de facto (which was indirectly de jure) policies that created the initial barrier to the development of neighborhoods of color. Early Oakwood residents in the “Black section” used this as an opportunity to create customs and traditions. Today, the gentrification is not only creating a change in the character of Venice/Oakwood, but preservation policy and city politics are allowing the erasure of the historic culture and heritage of the Black pioneers of Oakwood. “The policies that cause cities to gentrify are crafted in the offices of real estate moguls and in the halls of city government,” Moskowitz writes in How to Kill A City.246

The City of Los Angeles can do a better job at making sure that the Oakwood narrative is interwoven into the community plan of Venice, more than an honorary mention or highlighted in a news article. This research seeks to weave one of the many Black narratives into the broader context of American history because it has been neglected or relegated to a certain level of importance instead of integrated into the fabric of the founding and successful operation of American society. Despite the racing of space and the constant mechanism that regulated their success and freedom, Blacks – like those in Oakwood – were able to cultivate places of their own. Those places are in danger of being lost.

Because of the legacy of institutional racism, we must look at informal networks as a source of information in the Black community. Preservation is about gathering knowledge. We must do it in a way that is most effective for each culture. In communities of color, searching for information is found in more informal networks – churches, social organizations, patterns of development, etc. We must consider the preservation of these networks as vital as the preservation of traditional architectural aesthetics and mechanisms. In order to allow for different stories to be shared, we must allow a mechanism by which they can be preserved. One size does

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not fit all. Archaeology teaches us that ordinary objects can carry as much vital information as objects that are often spotlighted and are void of ethnic diversity. Thus far, the Oakwood neighborhood has enjoyed honorary status with no real protections, revealing a weak community plan. Language needs to be clear regarding the contributions of the Black pioneers of Venice. Their contributions should be protected as much as the iconic architecture of Frank Gehry is protected (and lauded). We must first get to a place where their contributions are seen as important enough to protect from erasure and significant enough to designate as resources.

Further Research

The Oakwood neighborhood is one of many ethnic enclaves getting attention because of our nation coming to terms with systemic racial injustices perpetrated against communities of color. The community’s cry for racial equality has finally been heard and has led to the re-evaluation of whether structures like the First Baptist Church of Venice are worthy of designation. Perhaps what the city of Venice in Florida did in their Comprehensive Community Plan could be used as a model for a meaningful and sensitive neighborhood conservation plan here in Venice.247 One area of research to be explored is the relationships between the various immigrant groups and Blacks. Research revealed stories of the Jewish community helping Oakwood’s Black population to secure places to live within Venice. Without their help, there may not have been a “Black section” at all. Research has also revealed a barter system between Blacks and other ethnicities, resulting in life-long friendships that ignored the racing of space. Oakwood may in fact be a mixture of an immigrant enclave (Jewish and Mexican) and a Black ethnic enclave. The extensive survey work done in Oakwood by SurveyLA has yet to be connected to the early Black residents. Perhaps this becomes a task of the updated survey. This information is vital to flushing out the ethnic enclave context statement and allowing more resources associated with the early Black residents to be designated and protected, as much as private owners’ rights and the designation process allows. This research in not an in-depth look at the Oakwood area and leaves more to be discovered as the community, the city, and preservationists seek to tell the full story of Venice and its unique neighborhoods.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

AREA DESCRIPTION

Security Map of Los Angeles County

1. POPULATION: a. Increasing
   b. Class and Occupation
      i. Colored, WPA workers & housekeepers
      ii. Brick & stone
   c. Foreign Families
      i. Nationalities: Italians, Moroccon & Japanese
      ii. Number: 0
   d. Skilling or Inflammation
      i. Subversive racial groups increasing

2. BUILDINGS
   a. Type and Size
      i. 4 & 5 rooms
   b. Construction
      i. Frame & shingles
   c. Average Age
      i. 25 years
   d. Repair
      i. Poor to fair
   e. Occupancy
      i. 97%
   f. Over-occupied
      i. 2%
   g. 1935 Price Bracket
      i. $1600-$2400
   h. 1937 Price Bracket
      i. $1800-$2600
   i. 1939 Price Bracket
      i. $1800-$2400
   j. Sales Demand
      i. Poor
   k. Predicted Price Trend
      i. Downward
   l. 1935 Rent Bracket
      i. $18-$25
   m. 1937 Rent Bracket
      i. $18-$25
   n. 1939 Rent Bracket
      i. $18-$25
   o. Rental Demand
      i. Fair
   p. Predicted Rent Trend
      i. Stationary

3. NEW CONSTRUCTION (per yr.) No. 3
   a. Type
      i. 4 & 5 room
   b. Price
      i. $1800-$2500
   c. How Selling
      i. Owner-built

4. OVERHANG OF HOME PROPERTIES: a. HOLC
   b. Institutions

5. SALE OF HOME PROPERTIES (3 yr.) a. HOLC
   b. Institutions

6. MORTGAGE FUNDS: Limited

7. TOTAL TAX RATE PER $1000 1939
   a. $64.20

8. DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AREA:
   Terrain: Level, sandy in western part and inclined to be swampy. No
   construction hazards. Land improved 40%. An old area inclined to be "shabby" with
   nondescript population in western part. Eastern part is also old but of slightly better
   grade. Subversive population scattered throughout. Proximity to oil wells is detrimental
   influence. Schools, churches, trading centers, recreational areas and transportation
   all available. Included in this area is the old Venice summer resort and it is
   said that promoters are seeking to revive and popularize it, but failure is
   predicted. Land values are around $7500 per front foot.

9. LOCATION: South Venice
   SECURITY GRADE: 4th
   AREA NO. 2-26
   DATE: 3/3/39

Appendix E

Potential Historic Resources in Oakwood as Surveyed by SurveyLA

*Associated with the Black Pioneers of Oakwood

*Oakwood Planning District Historic District

"The Oakwood Planning District is a residential neighborhood located in the northwestern portion of Venice. The district contains approximately 1,800 parcels. It is bounded by Dewey Street to the northwest, Lincoln Boulevard to the northeast, California Avenue to the southeast, Electric Avenue to the southwest, and Hampton Drive to the west. The district occupies flat terrain less than a mile from the Pacific Ocean. Streets throughout the district exhibit a rectilinear pattern and are arranged in an orthogonal grid. Lots in the district are modest in size, with most parcels less than 0.15 acres. Development in the district is primarily residential, with some institutional properties, primarily churches, scattered throughout. Additionally, there are some commercial manufacturing uses located in the northwestern portion of the district, as well as neighborhood commercial developments along Rose Avenue and Hampton Drive. Original buildings were constructed primarily from 1905 through the 1920s, with a secondary wave of development during the 1940s and 1950s. Today, these early buildings share the block with more recent construction. District features include uniform setbacks, concrete curbs and sidewalks, and landscaped parkways."

1. *Bethel Tabernacle Church of God in Christ Historic Resource

"Rare example of 1920s institutional development in the Oakwood neighborhood, an early African-American enclave in Venice. This Pentecostal church may have an important association with the African-American community that historically resided in this area of Venice; however, this association could not be confirmed. More research needed to complete the evaluation. The building appeared to be vacant at the time of the survey."

2. *New Bethel Baptist Church Historic Resource

"Rare example of 1920s institutional development in the Oakwood neighborhood, an early African-American enclave in Venice. This Baptist church may have an important association with the African-American community that historically resided in this area of Venice; however, this association could not be confirmed. More research needed to complete the evaluation."
Potential Historic Resources in Oakwood as Surveyed by SurveyLA

*Associated with the Black Pioneers of Oakwood

3. *Friendship Baptist Church Historic Resource
   "Rare example of 1920s institutional development in the Oakwood neighborhood. This Pentecostal church may have an important association with the African-American community that historically resided in this area of Venice; however, this association could not be confirmed. More research needed to complete the evaluation. The building appeared to be vacant at the time of the survey."

4. *537-541 Westminster Ave Bungalow Court Historic District
   "Bungalow court composed of three one-story residential buildings containing five units, and a detached garage building, oriented around a central landscaped courtyard; designed in the American Colonial Revival style."

5. *605-607 Westminster Avenue Historic District
   "Located at 605-607 Westminster Avenue, this property spans two parcels, and contains a one-story main residence and four smaller guest houses behind, forming a residential courtyard. The property is not fully visible from the public right of way."

   The property meets the criteria for HCM designation because it embodies the "distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction," as an example of Craftsman architecture. Initially constructed as a Mission Revival clubhouse in 1906, the property was extensively remodeled into a Craftsman residence in 1915. The Period of Significance reflects this major transformation.

7. *Arthur Reese Residence Historic Resource
   "Long-time residence of Arthur Reese, the first African American to live and work in Venice."
Potential Historic Resources in Oakwood as Surveyed by SurveyLA

*Associated with the Black Pioneers of Oakwood

8. 656 E SAN JUAN AVE Historic Resource
9. Venice Branch Library Historic Resource
10. 334 S 4TH AVE Historic Resource
11. 335-337 Rennie Ave. Bungalow Court Historic District
12. 1333 S 6TH AVE Historic Resource
13. Electric Avenue Pump Plant Historic Resource
14. 1307 N ORANGE GROVE AVE Historic Resource
15. 223 S ARDEN BLVD Historic Resource
16. 706-710 Rose Avenue. Golden Star Motel Historic District
17. Chiaffarelli House Historic Resource
18. Department of Water and Power Distributing Station No. 44 Historic Resource
19. 303-307 6th Ave Stone Houses Historic District
20. Edward Horace Residence Historic Resource
21. 619 E BROOKS AVE Historic Resource
22. Advanced Chiropractic/Boxing/Art Studio Historic Resource
23. La Cabana Historic Resource
24. 333 S 5TH AVE Historic Resource
25. Charles H. Whittlesley Residence Historic Resource
26. Broadway Elementary School Historic Resource
Appendix F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Occupants</th>
<th>State of Origin</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Guaranty Building</td>
<td>Arthur Reese</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Sanitary Cleaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1236 Main St.</td>
<td>J.B. Fant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Residents/Offices cleaned &amp; renovated. Specialty windows &amp; carpets</td>
<td>Residence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1282 Main St.</td>
<td>J.C. Fant</td>
<td></td>
<td>House Cleaner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>555 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Arthur Reese</td>
<td></td>
<td>Janitor</td>
<td>Owner-built. Also built on cottage at rear for cousins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>555 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Joseph Reese</td>
<td></td>
<td>Janitor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>5515 Ocean Ave. (Santa Monica)</td>
<td>L.W. Reese</td>
<td></td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912/18</td>
<td>546 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>H.H. Rhodes &amp; (wife) May M.</td>
<td>Houston, Tx</td>
<td>1921/22 listed as Porter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912/18</td>
<td>546 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Daniel/Dan Sheffield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912/18</td>
<td>607 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>J.B. Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917/18</td>
<td>613 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Charles G. Tabor &amp; (wife) Antonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1921/22 &amp; 27 listed as Teamster, House demolished 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917/18/27/33</td>
<td>515 San Juan Ave.</td>
<td>J.B. Fant &amp; (wife) Maker (1923)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1928 worked with Venice Junk Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917/18/27</td>
<td>546 San Juan Ave.</td>
<td>Edward L. Reese &amp; (sister) Jennie Reese (1918)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1923/24/25 listed as a Printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917/18/31/24</td>
<td>550 San Juan Ave.</td>
<td>Harry J. Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918/19/25/27/33</td>
<td>600 San Juan Ave.</td>
<td>J.A. Reese &amp; (wife) Mildred</td>
<td>Mail Carrier</td>
<td>1931 lived on Belmar Pl. (S.M.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918/21/22</td>
<td>541 Santa Clara Ave.</td>
<td>Arthur L. Reese</td>
<td></td>
<td>Head Decorator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>709 Vernon Ave.</td>
<td>Jenny Tabor &amp; Alphonse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>outside &quot;black boundary,&quot; owner-built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>611 West Ave.</td>
<td>Irving &amp; Mamie Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td>no address currently exists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>613 Broadway St.</td>
<td>Alma Carson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant decorator @ Amusement Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-23</td>
<td>541 Santa Clara Ave.</td>
<td>Edward A. Reese</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary-Treasurer Venice Boot &amp; Canoe Co.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>607 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Clarence E. Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>2331 6th Ave. (OP)</td>
<td>Clifford H. Tabor &amp; (wife) Luise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>607 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Irving Tabor &amp; (wife) Gertrude</td>
<td></td>
<td>Auto Repair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-23</td>
<td>607 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Ruby Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921/22/24</td>
<td>690 Broadway St.</td>
<td>W.A. Powell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923/24</td>
<td>559 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Daniel/Dan Sheffield &amp; (wife) Martha</td>
<td></td>
<td>Painter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923/24</td>
<td>607 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>H.G. Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923/24</td>
<td>607 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Joseph Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923/24</td>
<td>613 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>C.G. Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trucking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922/22/25</td>
<td>516 1/2 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Rev. Elijah Payne</td>
<td>Lather (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>407 Broadway St.</td>
<td>John Q. Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trucking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925/28</td>
<td>605 1/2 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>All Tabor</td>
<td></td>
<td>*605 Westminster becomes vacant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925/28</td>
<td>541 Santa Clara Ave.</td>
<td>Arthur L. Reese</td>
<td></td>
<td>Decorator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>540 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>C.J. Middlebrook</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boxer @ 1918</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>546 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>H.H. Rhodes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>559 1/2 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Collins, W.M. &amp; D.B. Sheffield</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>615 Westminster Ave.</td>
<td>Francis Gilbert</td>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Tabor built for inlaws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of known Oakwood residents from original “Black boundary,” 1907 – 1933. Compiled from census data and telephone directories.