

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**



## National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

  X   New Submission                                 Amended Submission

### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Asian Americans in Los Angeles, 1850-1980

### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

- Chinese Americans in Los Angeles, 1850-1970
- Japanese Americans in Los Angeles, 1869-1970
- Korean Americans in Los Angeles, 1882-1980
- Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, 1903-1980
- Thai Americans in Los Angeles, 1950-1980

### C. Form Prepared by:

name/title	Consultants: Katie Horak, Principal, Architectural Resources Group with sub-consultants Historic Resources Group, Pasadena (Sian Winship Christine Lazzaretto, Kari Fowler), Page & Turnbull, Los Angeles (Flora Chou), and Rosalind Sagara City Staff: Janet Hansen and Sara Delgadillo Cruz, Office of Historic Resources.		
organization	City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources		
street & number	221 N. Figueroa St, Suite 1350		
city or town	Los Angeles	state	CA                      zip code 90012
e-mail	<a href="mailto:janet.hansen@lacity.org">janet.hansen@lacity.org</a>		
telephone	(213) 978-1191	date	March 2018; Revised June 2018

### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Signature of certifying official	Title	Date
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\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
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**E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS**

**Preface**

In the 1960s, the United States underwent significant social and cultural upheaval as many communities of color and other marginalized groups fought for civil rights and were involved in national and international movements for liberation. Grassroots organizing and landmark legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, and Immigration Act of 1965 reshaped the collective consciousness of communities of color. During this era, the Watts Riots in 1965 and the East Los Angeles Walkout (or Chicano Blowouts) in 1968 helped empower communities of color in Los Angeles, and across the nation.

By the late 1960s, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino Americans formed a movement of their own—an Asian American movement. It was with the Black Liberation Movement, the Anti-War Movement against the Vietnam War, and Third World Liberation Front movement that the concept of Asian American was formed as a political identity. Young Asian Americans mobilized in their communities across the nation and in Los Angeles to fight U.S. imperialism and the unequal treatment of Asian Americans. In 1968, students of color across California organized and held strikes as part of the Third World Liberation Front. This movement was instrumental in creating and establishing Ethnic Studies as an academic discipline—and subsequent Asian American, African American, Chicano American, and Native American Studies—on college and university campuses. It was as part of this larger movement that the Asian American Studies Center at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) was established in 1969<sup>1</sup> and Asian American community-based organizations were developed and strengthened to serve the community.

As community leaders, scholars, and leaders reflect on the past, it is fitting that the City of Los Angeles honor the historic and cultural contributions of Asian Americans. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have long and dynamic histories in shaping and continuing to shape the city. From the 1880s pioneering Chinese American settlements, to more recent recognitions of historic and cultural ethnic neighborhoods like Historic Filipinotown and Thai Town, tourists and residents alike often pose questions about these places, their signs, and the importance of Asian Americans in the building of Los Angeles.

**Asian Americans in Los Angeles Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This *Asian Americans in Los Angeles* Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) establishes a framework to guide the identification and designation of places significant to Los Angeles' Asian American communities. Geographically, the contexts cover the history and development of five Los Angeles neighborhoods that have been designated as Preserve America communities— Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Historic Filipinotown, and Thai Town—and also focus on other areas of the city in which these groups settled over time.

<sup>1</sup> Steve Louie and Glenn Omatsu, eds., *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment* (Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles Asian American Studies Center Press, 2001).

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Topics covered by the contexts focus on extant resources associated with important individuals, organizations, businesses, industries, and movements. Themes addressed include commerce, religion and spirituality, health and medicine, deed restriction and segregation, community organizations, military history, media, cultural landscape, architecture.

While these five Asian American groups were the focus on this project, it is important to recognize the diversity within Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI). There are many other AAPI ethnic groups that have contributed and continue to contribute to the rich diversity of Los Angeles, including Pacific Islanders, South Asians, and Southeast Asians. This MPDF provides an opportunity to engage with City officials, community leaders, preservationists, scholars, and others to continue identifying and designating places that are important in telling both AAPI stories and all of the city's stories.

### **Asian Americans in Los Angeles**

Each of the MPDF's five contexts discusses the dynamic waves of immigration and settlement patterns of Asian Americans in Los Angeles. Within each group, the power of place resonates as Asian Americans find places of residence, work, and community as Angelenos. With a long history of discrimination, displacement, and associated demolition of property, Asian Americans resisted and struggled to maintain a sense of identity, as well as their homes, businesses, and cultural institutions. Ethnic neighborhoods in Los Angeles like Old Chinatown and Little Tokyo were established in the early twentieth century while others including Koreatown, Historic Filipinotown, and Thai Town were formed as subsequent waves of immigrants and their families settled and laid roots in the city.

These settlements were never formed in isolation. Many Asian American settlements were shaped alongside other Asian Americans and communities of color, often due to discriminatory policies and practices that limited where they lived, worked, and sought a sense of community. Places important to Asian Americans in Los Angeles were often rendered in the margins to other Angelenos, and were nonetheless significant for finding a place to call home, be it a single-room occupancy hotel in Little Manila or Little Tokyo, an employment agency in Chinatown, or a church in Koreatown. As Asian immigrants or seasonal migrants came to Los Angeles, they sought out familiar places for economic opportunities, a place to stay, and places that reminded them of their homelands.

As subsequent generations of Asian Americans in Los Angeles grew in size, alongside continuous waves of new immigrants, the landscape of Los Angeles also evolved. The power of place for these groups in the city helped forge a growing sense of identity as Asian Americans. By the 1960s, the population of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino Americans in the city grew beyond the early ethnic neighborhoods and into the suburbs. During this pivotal time, cultural and community institutions began to broaden their focus of serving new immigrants to include services for families, older adults, and youth. Other immigrants from across Asia and the Pacific followed in significant waves, reuniting families and drawing in new immigrants, carving out their own sense of place in this booming and diverse city.

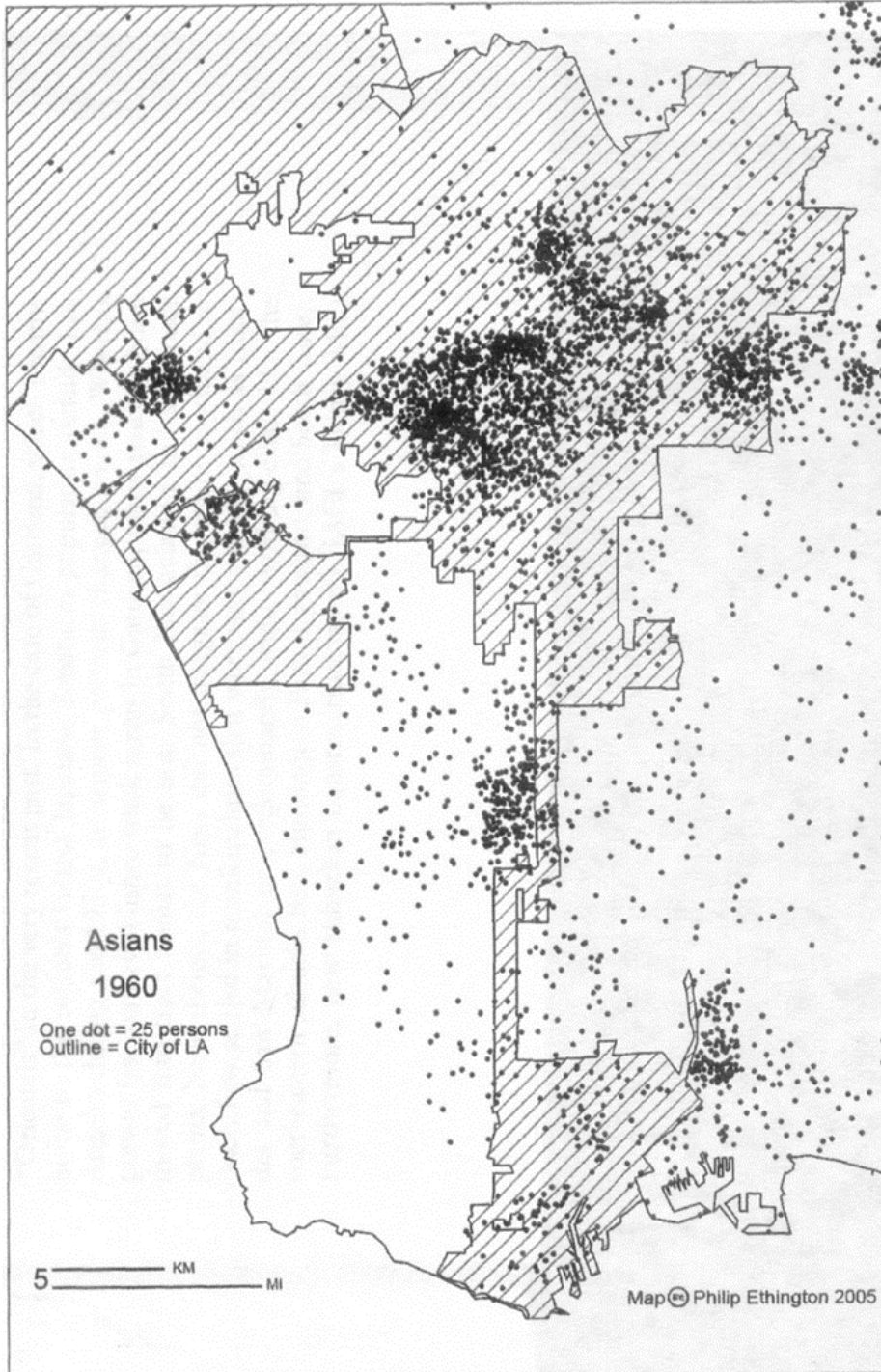
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*Dispersion of Asian Americans in Los Angeles, 1960 (Philip Ethington, USC, 2005)*



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**The Legacy of the Asian American Movement in Los Angeles**

The term Asian American is a political construct born in the 1960s as Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino Americans (and other Asian ethnic groups) fought collectively for civil rights. In 1969, the Asian American Studies Center was established at UCLA in Campbell Hall. Community members, students, staff, and faculty sought to develop a center to bridge campus and community around the theme of liberative education and social justice. The Asian American Studies Center worked alongside three other ethnic studies research centers: the American Indian Studies Center, the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies (formerly Center for Afro-American Studies), and the Chicano Studies Research Center.

UCLA served as an active site for the development of Asian American Studies as a field of study. *Amerasia Journal* (established at Yale by Don Nakanishi and Lowell Chun-Hoon, moved to UCLA shortly after its start in 1971) became a leading journal for the field. The Center also saw the importance of fostering student projects like *Gidra*, founded in 1969 and “created alongside the rise of radical third world grassroots student coalitions, in addition to the Black Power movement and Civil Rights Movement. After being denied official recognition by the university, the students started publishing *Gidra* independently, using the university’s Asian American Studies Center as its headquarters.”<sup>2</sup> Following its inception as a student newspaper, it moved to the Crenshaw area to be housed closer to L.A.’s Asian American community.<sup>3</sup> One of the first Asian American Studies conferences was held in Los Angeles in 1971 with opening remarks by Congresswoman Patsy Mink, the first woman of color elected to Congress.<sup>4</sup>

The Center was also created to work closely with Asian American community organizations in Los Angeles. East West Players was founded in 1965 by Asian American artists Mako, Rae Creevey, Beulah Quo, Soon-Tek Oh, James Hong, Pat Li, June Kim, Guy Lee, and Yet Lock in the Pilgrim Church in Silver Lake. It was supported in its early stages at UCLA. East West Players is the nation’s longest-running professional theater of color and the largest producing organization of Asian American artistic work. Visual Communications is another Asian American cultural institution. Visual Communications was founded in 1970 by UCLA students Duane Kubo, Robert Nakamura, Alan Ohashi, and Eddie Wong to support Asian American film and media.<sup>5</sup> It was initially housed and supported by the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Both Visual Communications and East West Players have since moved to Little Tokyo in the historic Union Center for the Arts (formerly Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles).

<sup>2</sup> Haivan V. Hoang, *Writing Against Racial Injury: The Politics of Asian American Student Rhetoric* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 56–76.

<sup>3</sup> Mike Murase, “Toward Barefoot Journalism,” *Gidra*, 6 (April 1974):1, 34–46.

<sup>4</sup> Conference Proceedings of the First National Conference on Asian American Studies, Los Angeles, CA, April 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Karen L. Ishizuka, *Serve the People: Making Asian America in the Long Sixties* (Verso Books, 2016), 159-160.

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*Chinese Americans in Los Angeles*

Chinese Americans first settled in Los Angeles in the 1850s with its first permanent settlement centered near Los Angeles Plaza (El Pueblo de Los Angeles) and later referred to as Old Chinatown due to a series of subsequent settlements developed near or around downtown Los Angeles. The Chinese Americans in Los Angeles context discusses the settlement patterns of Chinese Americans while noting key contributions to the city's built environment and burgeoning economy. Chinatown, as it is known, has been studied as being shaped by economic and social dynamics of race, space, and power.<sup>6</sup>

One site of historic and cultural significance for Chinese Americans in Los Angeles is the Castelar Street School. Since 1969, the Asian Education Project (AEP), later known as the Asian American Tutorial Project (AATP)—with Asian American college students from UCLA, University of Southern California (USC), and Occidental College—has served Castellar Street School in Chinatown by tutoring low-income, immigrant, limited English proficiency elementary school students. Castelar Street School was the first school in the Los Angeles Unified School District to provide tri-lingual instruction in English, Spanish, and Chinese. It also housed the Chinatown branch library of the Los Angeles Public Library from 1977 to 2003.

*Japanese Americans in Los Angeles*

The history of Japanese Americans in Los Angeles dates back to 1869. Since then, shifting migratory, settlement, and development patterns have continued to be shaped by outside forces including discriminatory policies, redevelopment, and displacement as well as forces within, through cultural institutions, and small businesses. Little Tokyo is one of three remaining historic Japantowns (*Nihonmachi*s) in California that survived the forced evacuation and incarceration of Japanese Americans in concentration camps during World War II and the demolition that occurred during urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s. Japanese American institutions and services including community halls, language schools, Buddhist temples, Christian churches, markets, nurseries, and other nonprofit/cultural institutions have shaped Little Tokyo and other Japanese American settlements in Los Angeles.

The Union Center for the Arts, formerly known as the Japanese Union Church of Los Angeles, was established in 1918 as it merged three congregations: the Los Angeles Presbyterian Church (established in 1905), the Los Angeles Congregational Church (established in 1908), and the Japanese Bethlehem Congregational Church of Los Angeles (established by 1911). During World War II, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, just a little more than two months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Shortly after, a series of Civilian Exclusion Orders were publicly posted all along the West Coast of the United States, notifying persons of Japanese ancestry of their impending forced removal. "Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry" were the infamous words seen at the top of the posters. The Union Church was listed as a designated reporting location for Japanese Americans in 1942; many were able to store their belongings in the building during their incarceration.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Lin, "Los Angeles Chinatown: Tourism, Gentrification, and the Rise of an Ethnic Growth Machine," *Amerasia Journal* 34, no. 3, (2008): 110-125, doi:10.17953/amer.34.3.v545v63lpj1535p7.

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Union Church has evolved from a place of worship to a center for Asian Americans arts and culture as home to East West Players and Visual Communications (established in 1970). The Union Center for the Arts is listed as part of the Little Tokyo Historic District, a National Historic Landmark.

***Korean Americans in Los Angeles***

Los Angeles has one of the largest Korean populations outside of the Korean peninsula with a notable Koreatown, home to hundreds of Korean- and Korean American-owned small businesses, churches, and community institutions. Although large-scale migration and settlement occurred in the aftermath of the 1965 Immigration Act, a historic and important Korean American community dates to the turn of the twentieth century when laborers arrived in Hawai'i in 1903. Soon after, migration continued to the continental United States, especially to California where Korean Americans worked as migrant farm labor and some became small business owners.<sup>7</sup>

The greater Los Angeles area has served as one of the hubs of Korean America for over a century. Koreatown experienced notable growth after World War II and the years that followed 1965. The 1992 Civil Unrest/Uprising/Riots marks a turbulent coming of age experience for the Korean American community. Layered beneath the contemporary and continually expanding borders of Koreatown are historic sites that have played a significant role in community life. One such site, located near USC, houses both the Korean Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles and the Korean National Association (KNA) building that share the same campus. The church dates to 1906, and is among the oldest Korean American congregations in the nation. The KNA building dedicated in 1938 serves as a testament to the independence movement that animated the struggles and hopes of the early Korean American community.

***Filipino Americans in Los Angeles***

The Filipino Americans in Los Angeles context traces the history of Filipino immigrants and subsequent generations in the city from 1903 to 1980. It spans from the arrival of the first known Filipino Americans in Los Angeles to subsequent movement of Filipino Americans in the city as shaped by immigration policies and discriminatory policies as well as community institutions. The context focuses on historical themes based on residential settlement patterns, economic activity, and the growth of cultural institutions including cultural centers, small businesses, service agencies, and churches.

What is known as Historic Filipinotown is influenced by earlier settlements of Filipino Americans in the Downtown area.<sup>8</sup> From Little Manila to Bunker Hill to Temple-Beaudry, these were places that immigrants and seasonal migrants knew to go to for services, culture, and a sense of community. Royal "Uncle Roy" Morales can trace his family's roots to the Filipino Christian Church as his father immigrated to Los Angeles from the Philippines as a *pensionado* (scholar) and Christian missionary. Uncle Roy's father, Silvestre Morales, helped establish the Filipino Christian Fellowship on First and

<sup>7</sup> Bong Youn Choy, *Koreans in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979). For general background on Korean American history.

<sup>8</sup> Michelle G. Magalong, "The Search for Filipino American Place(s) in Los Angeles," *UCLA Critical Planning Journal* 10 (2003):13–23.



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San Pedro Streets in 1928, then Filipino Christian Church (the first in the nation) in 1933.<sup>9</sup> The church was first established in the Bunker Hill area of Downtown and later moved to 301 North Union Street. The Filipino Christian Church, under the leadership of Uncle Roy, served as a cultural hub as it incubated other community institutions like Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, Pilipino American Reading Room and Library, and Filipino Cultural School.

*Thai Americans in Los Angeles*

From the first known arrival of Thai Americans to Los Angeles in the 1950s to the designation of Thai Town in East Hollywood in 1999, this community has been shaped by the city's growth and development in key areas like the entertainment industry and the culinary industry. Thai American community settlement patterns are traced through commercial development and foodways, notably with Thai restaurants that date to the 1970s.<sup>10</sup> When Thais arrived in Los Angeles, they reinvented and repackaged Thai food in various ways to meet the rising popularity of Thai cuisine in urban and suburban areas.<sup>11</sup> Thai immigration and settlement patterns, identities, and community structure has changed in a relatively short period of time in Los Angeles. This is seen in the city's built environment and through the establishment of Thai American culinary tourism and community identity. Institutions like Thai Community Development Center and Wat Thai were developed to meet the needs of the growing Thai American communities in Los Angeles.<sup>12</sup>

Bangkok Market opened its doors in 1971 in East Hollywood, established by Thai immigrant Pramorte "Pat" Tilakamonkul as the first Thai and Southeast Asian market in the United States. It provided Thai ingredients to a growing population of Thai Americans in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 70s. Before the existence of Bangkok Market, it was difficult to find Thai ingredients in the U.S. due to strict import policies. Tilamonkul and his business partners brokered deals with import/export companies to allow Thai ingredients to be imported in the country.<sup>13</sup> Bangkok Market also served as a de facto community center for Thai immigrants in Los Angeles.

<sup>9</sup> Royal F. Morales, *Makibaka: The Pilipino American Struggle* (Los Angeles: Mountainview Publishers, 1974).

<sup>10</sup> In this document, foodways refers to eating habits and culinary practices as it relates to Asian Americans in Los Angeles.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Padoongpatt, *Flavors of Empire: Food and the Making of Thai America* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Chanchanit Martorell, *Images of America: Thais in Los Angeles* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Padoongpatt, *Flavors of Empire*.

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**Preserving Los Angeles' Asian America**

This MPDF documents five Asian American ethnic groups that have shaped the built environment and cultural landscape of Los Angeles. While little to date is documented or designated as historic landmarks or monuments under city, state, or federal programs, the MPDF provides an overview of the historic and cultural contributions of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Thai Americans in Los Angeles.

Each of the five contexts provides great encouragement on reflection of the fifty years since the birth of "Asian America" and the subsequent efforts by these Los Angeles communities to create, preserve, and sustain historic and cultural roots. The MPDF serves as a platform through which communities can continue identifying, documenting, and preserving places, histories, and stories, within the five communities covered by this document, and across other AAPI ethnic groups that form part of Los Angeles' vast and diverse landscape.

Michelle G. Magalong, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation

David K. Yoo, Ph.D.  
Vice Provost, Institute of American Cultures  
Professor of Asian American Studies & History  
University of California, Los Angeles

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This document uses the term Asian to refer to persons of Asian descent rather than Oriental as was more commonly used in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Resources referenced throughout the contexts below are considered extant unless otherwise noted.

**Chinese Americans in Los Angeles, 1850-1970**

**Introduction**

This context examines the migration, settlement, and development patterns of Chinese Americans in Los Angeles between 1850, the start of Chinese immigration to Los Angeles, to 1980, by which time the city's Chinese American population had dispersed while Chinatown's population increased by two-thirds as a result of new waves of immigration.

Los Angeles' first settlement of Chinese centered around Los Angeles Plaza, the original city settlement. Virtually nothing remains of Old Chinatown due to the construction of Los Angeles Union Station in the 1930s and later the 101 freeway. A second settlement south of Downtown in the area historically called City Market developed in response to Chinese entrepreneurship in truck farming and development of the wholesale produce industry. Almost nothing remains of this enclave due to demolitions over the years including demolition of the entire City Market. Development of the later Chinatown began in the 1930s. This context reveals that many important resources are located in Chinatown and are primarily associated with commercial and institutional development. Other important resources scattered throughout the city represent more recent periods of history.

**Terms and Definitions**

With respect to proper names, transliterations into American English have evolved over time. For example, Guangdong, the south China province, was traditionally romanized as Kwangtung or Canton, while the provincial capital of Guangzhou was commonly known as Canton. Similarly, given names of individuals have been transliterated in various ways. For example, the name of Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek—who himself used various names throughout his life—has been variously romanized as Chiang Chieh-shih and Chiang Chungcheng. During periods of strong anti-Asian sentiment, newly immigrated Chinese often took on American or Americanized names to emphasize their place in their new country, such as Lee Jun-fan who adopted the professional name Bruce Lee. With these factors in mind, this historic context attempts to use preferred terminology and modern spellings wherever possible.

**Chinese Immigration to California, 1850-1870**

The California Gold Rush of 1848 prompted the earliest large-scale immigration of Chinese to the state. Although very few Chinese were living in California prior to 1850, by 1851 an estimated 25,000

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Chinese had immigrated to California, engaged primarily in mining or merchandising.<sup>14</sup> The Gold Rush attracted Chinese like others around the world. The majority of these early immigrants were from Guangdong<sup>15</sup> Province in southeast China.<sup>16</sup> Guangzhou, the province's capital city, was a main port for international commerce, taking part in the complex network of international exchanges between China and Europe, the Middle East, and other Asian countries.<sup>17</sup> Rural villages in Guangdong included farmers, doctors, clerks, merchants, carpenters, tailors, teachers, and salespersons.<sup>18</sup> On the Pearl River delta and nearby coast, many subsisted as fishermen and boatmen.<sup>19</sup>

Between 1787 and 1850, the population of Guangdong grew from 16 million to 28 million. Communities were increasingly stratified with large disparities between wealthy and poor. Between three and five percent of the population controlled 50 to 60 percent of cultivated land. After the Opium War with Great Britain of 1839-1840, China was also a semi-colonized country subject to Western influence in politics, economics, and culture. The unequal treaties that followed allowed imperialist powers to control international trade in coastal cities, establishing foreign settlements of international banks, commercial firms, and factories in Chinese urban centers, particularly Guangzhou. The opening of Western trade led to cash crop agriculture in place of subsistence farming,<sup>20</sup> as many farmers began growing tea, which could be sold at a good profit. The gradual inability of government to cope with increasing foreign intrusions, and the disruption of a centuries-old economic society, led to increasing economic and political instability among the peoples of the Pearl River delta and surrounding areas, which in turn led to dramatic fluctuations in family fortunes and growing fears for the future.<sup>21</sup> The Taiping Rebellion, a massive civil war lasting from 1850 to 1864, disrupted agricultural production, adding to the economic dislocation.<sup>22</sup>

For many Chinese, immigration to the western United States became a rational choice based on economic survival for the family, influenced by both domestic and international factors in the region. This recruiting system provided willing labor for the hardest jobs for grand American projects such as building railroads. Many Chinese immigrants during this period were from the lower middle or middle classes, who could afford the cost of passage across the ocean. Many of these immigrants likely had functional reading and writing ability, due to the rural public school system in China.<sup>23</sup> In many cases, Chinese immigrants practiced chain migration, where more established individuals exchanged

<sup>14</sup> There is documentation that Chinese fishermen and laborers were in western Mexico as early as 1571 and were building ships in Baja California from 1746 to 1781. Documents indicate that a Chinese male settled in what became Los Angeles as early as 1781. Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>15</sup> Also transliterated as *Kwangtung* or *Canton*.

<sup>16</sup> Wen-Hui Chung Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns of the Chinese Community in Los Angeles," University of Southern California Ph.D. diss., 1952, 29.

<sup>17</sup> Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America* (New York: Penguin Group, 2003), 26, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Haiming Liu, *The Transnational History of a Chinese Family* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 14.

<sup>19</sup> Information provided by Munson Kwok, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>20</sup> Liu, *Transnational History*, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Information provided by Munson Kwok, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>22</sup> Liu, *Transnational History*, 14.

<sup>23</sup> Chang, *The Chinese in America*, 28.

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information and experiences and provided initial accommodation and assistance to new arrivals.<sup>24</sup> Using this supportive system of immigration, a significant ratio of Chinese immigrants were also from lower economic classes, illiterate, and borrowed money or purchased transportation tickets on credit.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, many Cantonese mercantile companies sought to expand their businesses by establishing stores in the United States. Often funded by relatives in Guangdong, young men immigrated to the western states to open outposts of established Chinese businesses, stocking them with products from their native county. Chinese workers were also actively solicited by Chinese labor companies, and by established American companies. Chinese were often encouraged to go abroad so they could then donate to the welfare of their clan<sup>25</sup> or county, especially to help fund western educational institutions, land expansion projects, and modernization projects.<sup>26</sup>

Attracted by employment opportunities in mining and railroad construction throughout California, waves of Chinese immigrants settled throughout California in the late nineteenth century. After gold was discovered in Coloma in 1848, thousands of Chinese arrived to seek work in the burgeoning mining industry. Between 1850 and 1870, approximately 8,000 Chinese arrived in the state yearly,<sup>27</sup> with the majority settling near established mining camps in Calaveras, El Dorado, and Amador counties in northern California. Most Chinese worked either as independent miners or for established Chinese-owned mining companies. Some worked for non-Chinese owned companies, and others contributed indirectly to the mining industry as merchants and suppliers of goods and services.<sup>28</sup>

By 1855, 20,000 of the 120,000 miners in California were Chinese. The 1860 Federal census showed that Chinese in California outnumbered immigrants from any other foreign country.<sup>29</sup> As the California Gold Rush waned, Chinese continued to represent a substantial majority of miners in the state. Of the fewer than 30,000 miners that remained in 1873, approximately 60 percent were Chinese.<sup>30</sup>

Chinese workers were also vital to building railroads, crucial to economic development in California. In 1863, work began on the first transcontinental railroad in the country, working eastward from Sacramento. In 1867, construction of the transcontinental railroad employed some 14,000 workers, approximately 12,000 of whom were Chinese.<sup>31</sup> Railroad construction was particularly important for the Chinese settling in Southern California. In the 1870s, the Southern Pacific Railroad began building lines

<sup>24</sup> Liu, *Transnational History*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Clan refers to a group of Chinese people with a shared surname derived from a common ancestor. In many cases, people from the same clan also shared a common ancestral home and/or spoken Chinese dialect. Clan ties tend to be particularly strong in southern China.

<sup>26</sup> Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>27</sup> "Chinese Laborers in the West," Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, accessed July 2013, <http://apa.si.edu/ongoldmountain/gallery2/gallery2.html> (site discontinued).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> The U.S. Census in these early decades often undercounted or did not count Chinese women for a variety of reasons. While the overwhelming majority of Chinese immigrants at this time were men, overall estimates of the Chinese population in California during this period may not be accurate.

<sup>30</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 33.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 31.

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that would eventually connect Los Angeles to points north, including San Francisco, and points east, including Tucson, El Paso, and New Orleans.

Circa 1881, knowing that the *Chinese Exclusion Act* was about to be approved, Southern Pacific's Charles Crocker wrote to Collis P. Huntington to inform him that they were bringing in 8,000 Chinese from Guangdong to work on the Tehachapi extension.<sup>32</sup> Between 1869 and 1900, Chinese also built many intrastate and interstate lines, including narrow gauge railroads that facilitated the shipping of produce and wood products.<sup>33</sup> Chinese workers were often given the most dangerous jobs, including dynamiting tunnels in mountains, and thousands lost their lives.

When the railroads were completed, scores of unemployed Chinese laborers migrated to California towns and cities looking for new employment. Many turned to entrepreneurial opportunities in industries less desirable to white Americans. Due in part to the perception that Chinese labor was easily exploited, an attitude promoted through railroad company advertisements and newspaper articles, American companies began actively recruiting workers in China for other industries.<sup>34</sup> The Chinese played a significant role in the industrialization of agriculture in California. Chinese laborers worked on reclaiming swampland by building levees, digging irrigation ditches, and building dikes. They were also employed in seasonal agricultural work, particularly during plowing and harvest seasons, and were prominent in the planting, distribution, and sale of produce. Orchards in northern California employed approximately 2,500 Chinese, typically working under the leadership of a Chinese organizer.<sup>35</sup> Chinese were also employed in fishing and manufacturing, particularly prior to the rise of labor organizing and unions in the state, and opened laundries or worked as domestic servants.

By the 1870s and 1880s, labor competition and the visible presence of large numbers of Chinese in California led to anti-Chinese movements. Chinese workers served as scapegoats to unify nascent labor movements in California. Beginning in 1870s, unions grew rapidly in California, often organizing around anti-Chinese slogans. As a result, Chinese began to congregate in ethnic enclaves in urban areas as protection from discrimination and violence from white residents. These Chinatowns allowed Chinese immigrants to support each other through common language and shared cultural experiences, while also allowing them to open businesses that created job opportunities without competing with white trade unions.<sup>36</sup> By the 1890s, the threat of violence, coupled with a declining Chinese population due to strict immigration laws, effectively reduced conflict between white and Chinese workers.<sup>37</sup>

Many early Chinese immigrants lived out their working lives in the United States, not returning to China until their retirement. Approximately 47 percent of Chinese immigrants to the United States returned to China between 1850 and 1882, comparable to the return rate for European immigrants of the same

<sup>32</sup> The *Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882* was the first legislation in the history of the United States to restrict immigration based on race or ethnicity.

<sup>33</sup> Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>34</sup> Chang, *The Chinese in America*, 24, 125.

<sup>35</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 33-34.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>37</sup> Chang, *The Chinese in America*, 126.

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period.<sup>38</sup> This trend was due in part to the expense of traveling across the Pacific. While ocean liners were making regularly scheduled trips between Hong Kong and San Francisco by the late nineteenth century,<sup>39</sup> frequent return trips were out of reach for most due to limited personal wealth. Other barriers included the uncertainty of return migration due to the passage of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* in 1882, which placed restrictions on re-entry of Chinese who left the United States, including limits on the time one could be abroad. Thus, even with the increasing ease of trans-Pacific transportation, the majority of Chinese opted to remain in the United States.<sup>40</sup>

Chinese were first recorded in Los Angeles in Federal census records from 1850.<sup>41</sup> Two Chinese were noted as living at the residence of Robert and Mary E. Haley: Alluce (18 years old) and Ah Fong (28 years old), apparently employed in domestic service.<sup>42</sup> The 1860 census records list at least two Chinese men, one employed as a domestic servant and the other in another occupation.<sup>43</sup> Over the next two decades, a small number of Chinese men came to Los Angeles—most of them relocating from San Francisco—and were employed as domestic servants, agricultural hands, and railroad workers.<sup>44</sup> Immigration by Chinese women was extremely rare during this period, so much so that the arrival of the first Chinese woman in Los Angeles in 1859 received the attention of the *Los Angeles Star*.<sup>45</sup>

### **Early Settlement: Los Angeles' First Chinatown, 1870-1933**

The earliest enclave of Chinese in Los Angeles centered around Los Angeles Plaza (*El Pueblo de Los Angeles*), the original settlement of the City of Los Angeles, bounded by North Spring Street, Cesar Chavez Avenue, Alameda Street, and Arcadia Street.<sup>46</sup> Much of this acreage was originally owned by the Apablaza family and used as agricultural land planted with orchards and vineyards. Even as the land was subdivided and leased, its use remained agricultural.<sup>47</sup> The Apablaza family became the main lessors to the Chinese community for several decades.

The earliest permanent Chinese settlement was concentrated along Calle de los Negros, a block-long, 50-foot wide alley between the Plaza and Arcadia Street to the south, roughly parallel to and just east of

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>39</sup> Liu, *Transnational History*, 32.

<sup>40</sup> Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>41</sup> William Mason, *The Chinese in Los Angeles*, 1976 Chinese Chamber of Commerce Souvenir Book (Los Angeles: Chinese Chamber of Commerce, 1976), 7.

<sup>42</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 51.

<sup>43</sup> Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>44</sup> Leonard and Dale Pitt, *Los Angeles A to Z: An Encyclopedia of the City and County* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 90.

<sup>45</sup> Asian American Studies Center; University of California, Los Angeles; and the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. *Linking Our Lives: Chinese American Women of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, 1984), 1.

<sup>46</sup> Los Angeles Plaza is City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 64 as Los Angeles Plaza Park, and California Historical Landmark No. 156 as Los Angeles Plaza. The area is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District.

<sup>47</sup> Roberta S. Greenwood, *Down by the Station: Los Angeles Chinatown 1880-1933* (Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996), 5.

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North Los Angeles Street. Within 30 years, the enclave expanded to about 20 blocks. Referred to as Old Chinatown, the area became the center of the Chinese community in Los Angeles, and included living quarters, places of employment, religious institutions, and meeting halls for community organizations. Although almost nothing remains of Old Chinatown, its history is important to understanding later settlements.

By 1870, nearly 200 Chinese were living in Alley Chinatown, along with various other ethnic groups, including French and Italian immigrants, as well as Mexicans and Native Americans that predated California’s admission to the United States in 1850.<sup>48</sup> Anglo American officials allowed prostitution, opium use, and gambling to cluster in Chinatown and adjacent streets, in part to keep these vices out of other neighborhoods.<sup>49</sup> Establishments that accommodated these activities were patronized by people of various ethnicities, which increased ethnic tensions while also giving the area an eclectic appearance.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the relatively small numbers of Chinese living in Los Angeles at this time, anti-Chinese sentiment was growing in Los Angeles and across the western United States. Amid these long-standing racial tensions, on October 24, 1871, a mob of some 500 Anglos, Europeans, and Mexicans entered Chinatown and began rioting, looting, and setting fire to the area. During the riot, seventeen Chinese residents were tortured and hanged, making it the largest mass lynching in American history. Known as *The Chinese Massacre*, the riot was allegedly incited by the killing of Robert Thompson, who was caught in crossfire between two Chinese companies over the abduction of a Chinese woman, Yut Ho.<sup>51</sup> Of the ten rioters brought to trial, eight were convicted, only to have their sentences overturned on legal technicalities. While the press and public officials attempted to characterize the mob as unruly thugs and hoodlums, evidence suggests that police and prominent Los Angeles residents either ignored the violence or participated in the lynching.

Despite violence and discrimination perpetrated against them, Chinese continued to settle and prosper in Los Angeles. By 1880, the Chinese population totaled more than 500, and Chinese were the largest ethnic minority group in the city.<sup>52</sup> Over time, Chinatown expanded to encompass the Plaza, extending north to Macy Street (later Cesar Chavez Avenue), south to Arcadia and Aliso Streets, west to North Main Street, and across Alameda Street on the east, where Union Station was built. The community’s primary commercial streets were Marchessault and Apablasa Streets (no longer extant), home to numerous neighborhood businesses, generally owned by and catering to the Chinese community.

<sup>48</sup> Chen, “Changing Social-Cultural Patterns,” 75.

<sup>49</sup> Sanborn maps of the period show the clustering of these activities beyond Old Chinatown, extending southward along Alameda. Official agreements between locals and law enforcement included the payment of fees and the arrangement of mutually agreed upon raids to uphold the appearance of police vigilance. Information provided by Munson Kwok, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>50</sup> Mark Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 16.

<sup>51</sup> Chinese companies were a type of club or gang that offered support to the Chinese in America. During this period, some companies were tied to criminal activity. John Johnson, Jr., “How Los Angeles Covered Up the Massacre of 17 Chinese,” *L.A. Weekly*, March 10, 2011. Scott Zesch, *The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>52</sup> Chen, “Changing Social-Cultural Patterns,” 78.



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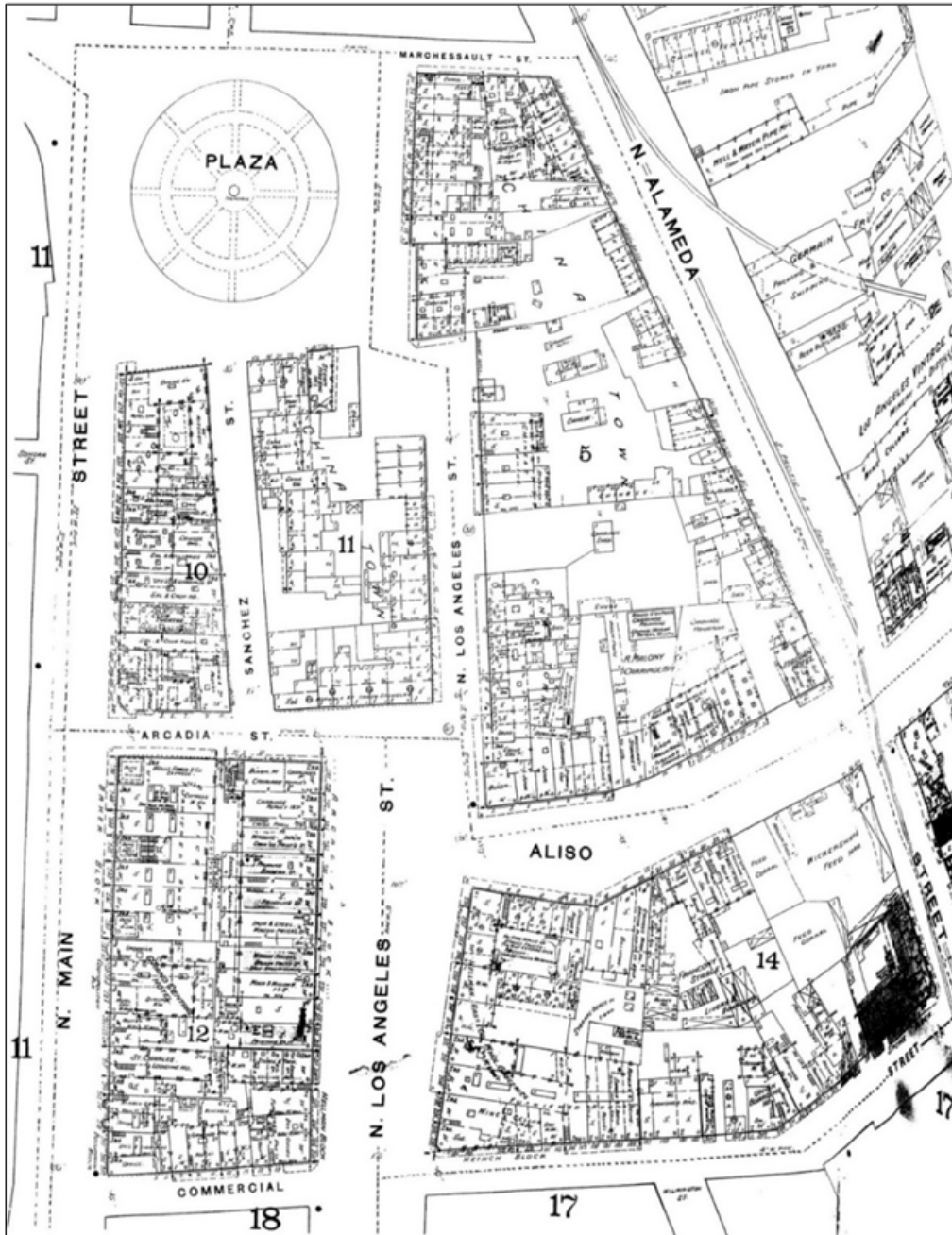
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Businesses included markets, restaurants, laundries, herbalists, dry good shops, and theaters.<sup>53</sup>

*Los Angeles' Chinatown, 1888. (Environmental Data Resources, Inc., Sanborn Digital Maps).*



<sup>53</sup> Suellen Cheng and Munson Kwok, "The Golden Years of Los Angeles Chinatown: The Beginning," *Los Angeles Chinatown 50<sup>th</sup> Year Guidebook* (Los Angeles: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, June 1988, 39), accessed July 2013, [www.oldchinatownla.com/history.html](http://www.oldchinatownla.com/history.html).

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A network of narrow streets and dense, two-story buildings were constructed to serve residential and commercial uses.<sup>54</sup> Most buildings were constructed of unreinforced masonry with wood balconies on primary façades, and designed in styles typical of the era's commercial landscape. The majority of residents were Chinese men, working as launderers, truck farmers, and vegetable peddlers.<sup>55</sup> These occupations were popular among newly arrived Chinese immigrants because they required relatively little capital to establish, and allowed Chinese to act as entrepreneurs rather than employees. Scattered in rural areas, the Chinese farmers did not seem to threaten the Anglo-American community as much as the Chinese in densely populated urban areas and the much needed produce contribution was welcomed by the majority population.<sup>56</sup> The earliest market garden farmers led to the first produce market of Chinese vegetable peddlers gathered around the Plaza by 1900.<sup>57</sup>

After fire consumed the majority of buildings on Negro Alley in 1887, Chinatown gradually shifted east of Alameda Street. Situated along the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, this land was relatively undeveloped and not considered very valuable due to nearby gas works and periodic flooding of the Los Angeles River. By 1890, an area that had previously been primarily industrial housed over 1,000 residents, with nearly 200 buildings on fifteen streets. Of 1,781 Chinese living in Los Angeles, 1,261 lived in Ward 8, encompassing Chinatown.<sup>58</sup> Non-Chinese residents also continued to live in Chinatown, including Irish, German, and Mexican immigrants.<sup>59</sup>

As Chinese put down roots in Los Angeles, they continued to practice many of their cultural traditions, and foremost among these was the practice of herbal medicine. Herbal medicine was both familiar and likely the only medical treatment available to early immigrants, as Chinese were often denied access to public medical facilities.<sup>60</sup> It was also a rare example of a profession that allowed Chinese immigrants to make a long-term living using an ethnic skill.<sup>61</sup> By the 1860s and 1870s, trained Chinese physicians began coming to California to treat Chinese patients. Most practitioners were trained herbalists, having studied under master herbalists in China, and many were descended from long lines of herbal doctors.<sup>62</sup>

Chinese living in the rugged mining settlements of northern California adapted their medical knowledge to native California species in order to supplement their limited supplies.<sup>63</sup> In the 1870s and 1880s, as Chinese began to settle in Los Angeles' Old Chinatown, grocery stores catering to Chinese customers frequently stocked medicines on the shelves for self-treatment or for filling prescriptions from herbal

<sup>54</sup> Cecil Smith, "Old Chinatown Prepares to Die," *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1949.

<sup>55</sup> Cheng and Kwok, "The Golden Years," 39.

<sup>56</sup> Cecilia M. Tsu, *Garden of the World: Asian Immigrants and the Making of Agriculture in California's Santa Clara Valley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>57</sup> Information provided by Munson Kwok, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>58</sup> A ward is an area of a city or county as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Before the development of the later census geography, city voting wards were used as census divisions.

<sup>59</sup> Greenwood, *Down by the Station*, 13, 20.

<sup>60</sup> William M. Bowen, "The Five Eras of Chinese Medicine in California," in *The Chinese in America: A History from Gold Mountain to the New Millennium*, ed. Susie Lan Cassel (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), 174.

<sup>61</sup> Liu, *Transnational History*, 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>63</sup> Bowen, "The Five Eras," 176.

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doctors. Successful entrepreneurs established import networks and set up mail order businesses to ensure a steady supply of medicines from China. Legislation that prevented Chinese herbal doctors from becoming licensed physicians left them vulnerable to lawsuits and arrests. As a result, Chinese herbal doctors often promoted their businesses as merchants selling herbs, rather than as medical professionals.<sup>64</sup> Even in Chinatown, practitioners kept a low profile, often occupying nondescript storefronts or operating out of residences.

Early Chinese immigrants in Los Angeles also established their own burial customs based on traditional Chinese practices. Public health laws prohibited Chinese from burying their dead in most of the city's cemeteries. To accommodate the burial needs of the Chinese community, in 1870 a small section of a cemetery at nearby Fort Moore Hill (not extant) was set aside for use by Chinese residents.<sup>65</sup> By the late 1880s, an additional Chinese cemetery called Potter's Field was opened in the nine-acre City-owned (southwestern) section of Evergreen Cemetery (204 N. Evergreen Avenue), east of Chinatown in the Boyle Heights neighborhood. For reasons of public health, this cemetery was located at what was then the eastern edge of the city. In 1888, Chinese residents financed and constructed a cemetery shrine in the cemetery (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 486). The shrine included an altar platform, twelve-foot kilns, and memorial stones used for funeral ceremonies and seasonal rites and festivals.<sup>66</sup>

Many early Chinese immigrants maintained their religious traditions, primarily Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.<sup>67</sup> These traditions have extensive roots in Chinese society and were brought to Los Angeles by newly arrived immigrants and sustained in homes, businesses, and houses of worship throughout Chinatown.<sup>68</sup> The earliest locations of religious practice were small shrines set up in boarding houses or commercial buildings. By 1875, Chinese residents had established at least one temple in Chinatown, located on Negro Alley, and incorporating aspects of Daoist, Buddhist, Confucian, and other beliefs from their home provinces.<sup>69</sup> By 1894, there were two temples in Los Angeles located

<sup>64</sup> Liu, *Transnational History*, 50.

<sup>65</sup> The cemetery at Fort Moore Hill was located approximately at the intersection of North Hill Street and Cesar Chavez Avenue. The Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial (1957) is located at 451 N. Hill Street.

<sup>66</sup> As at most cemeteries of the period, there was segregation in death. Between 1877 and 1924, indigents were buried at Evergreen Cemetery at no cost, and the Chinese had to pay \$10 per burial to be placed in the pauper's section. In 1917, the City sold the nine acres of cemetery land to the County of Los Angeles. In 1923, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association established a new Chinese Cemetery on East First Street and Eastern Avenue in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The County then requested that all Chinese bodies (approximately 902) be moved to the new cemetery. In 2006, during extension of the Gold Line rail system, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (who then owned the land) excavators found an additional 108 Chinese skeletons that apparently had not been moved to the new site in the 1920s. Sue Fawn Chung, "An Ocean Apart: Chinese American Burial Practices," in *Till Death Do Us Part: American Ethnic Cemeteries and Borders Uncrossed*, Kami Fletcher and Allan Amanik, eds. (Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 2017).

<sup>67</sup> The Chinese have combined the three teachings of Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism since the Song Dynasty (960-1279). In an attempt to appeal to a wider segment of the Chinese population, temples seldom catered to just one of the beliefs. Information provided by Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>68</sup> Michael E. Engh, *Frontier Faiths: Church, Temple and Synagogue in Los Angeles, 1846-1888* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992).

<sup>69</sup> Temples in California's Chinatowns were often called joss houses in English-language newspapers. Joss has its origins in

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at 217½ Ferguson Alley and 430½ North Los Angeles Street (both demolished). Around the turn of the twentieth century—as Anglo Americans increasingly began to view Old Chinatown as a tourist destination—public temples declined in religious function for Chinese residents and became geared toward tourists.<sup>70</sup>

Christian churches were also developing in Chinatown at this time. Christian missionaries began proselytizing to Chinese immigrants nearly as soon as they arrived in California. Evangelizing typically began as English language classes combined with religious instruction. Los Angeles First Methodist Church and the First Baptist Church of Los Angeles were among the first congregations to develop Sunday schools and language ministries in Chinatown for instruction of Chinese residents in Christian doctrine.<sup>71</sup> For some, conversion to Christianity was viewed as a means to counteract xenophobia and discrimination. Churches also served an important community function providing youth and social welfare programs. As the Chinese community became more established in Los Angeles, Chinese Americans demanded increasing autonomy for their own Christian congregations, and served as clergy and lay leaders in their communities.

The Garnier Building (409-424 North Los Angeles Street) is the oldest surviving building associated with Old Chinatown and the Chinese population in Southern California.<sup>72</sup> Built by French-Basque immigrant Philippe Garnier in 1890, the building functioned as an unofficial city hall for Chinatown. The first floor and mezzanine level housed commercial uses, such as the Sun Wing Wo Company herbal store, and the second floor housed a variety of social, fraternal, religious, and civic organizations over the years. Garnier began leasing the building to Chinese merchants even before its construction was complete, and it remained occupied exclusively by Chinese tenants until its closure in 1954. The building is home to the Chinese American Museum (CAM), and includes a re-creation of the Sun Wing Wo herbal store. The Garnier Building is a contributor to the National Register-listed Los Angeles Plaza Historic District.<sup>73</sup>

Of particular importance to the establishment of California's Chinatowns were the various community organizations that provided a support network for Chinese immigrants who lacked both police protection and political representation. Appearing as early as the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese American associations traditionally called *tongs* were based on shared family kinships or geographical origins.<sup>74</sup> The first immigrant organizations to form in California were district associations, or *huiguan*, with

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the Portuguese *deus*, or *god*, and was not the term used by Chinese residents to describe their places of worship.

<sup>70</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 283-284.

<sup>71</sup> George H. Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization, Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1979).

<sup>72</sup> The southern portion of the Garnier Building was demolished in the 1950s for construction of the Hollywood (101) Freeway.

<sup>73</sup> The Garnier Building is not individually designated for its association with Chinese Americans.

<sup>74</sup> *Tong* means meeting hall or association. Some *tongs* are secret societies or fraternal organizations that do not require birthplace or name as a qualification for membership. A *tong* member was not necessarily from the lower class. *Tongs* often provided protection and welfare benefits. Special *tongs* had had the job of buying cemetery property and arranging for burials, exhumation, and reburials in one's birthplace (for men; for women in their husband's birthplace).

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memberships composed of individuals with shared regional origins in China.<sup>75</sup> Often called companies by white observers, most of these associations first formed in San Francisco—including the Sam Yup Company, Sze Yup Company, Ning Yung Company, Young Wo Company, and Sun On Company—all formed branches in Los Angeles' Chinatown in the late nineteenth century. The most notorious organizations in Chinatowns were the *tong* (literally “meeting hall” or “association”) groups often, not always connected with secret societies or brotherhoods that had no birthplace or family name requirements. *Tongs* offered benefits that included protection, and health and funerary benefits, and recreational activities like opium dens, gambling halls, and prostitution facilities, which bolstered their treasury. Sometimes men joined when they were excluded from the other associations. Some transferred their hostilities to another group based on rivalries originating in China. The *tong* wars made news and were usually limited to within the Chinese community although occasionally the fighting spilled over to include non-Chinese.

District and family associations served as banks, employment centers, and de facto governments. They offered loans, helped new arrivals find jobs, mediated disputes, and even policed illicit activities. Associations also provided for community welfare through medical and hospitalization services, educational programs, transmitting news to the Chinese community, and fighting against anti-Chinese legislation. One of the most important functions was the establishment of subsidiary funerary associations that handled the purchase of Chinese-only cemetery plots, the sponsorship of funerals and burial rituals, the exhumation of the deceased after three to seven years for reburial in one's home village/town, and the expenses involved in the shipping and reburial of the bones.<sup>76</sup>

By the early twentieth century, as the Chinese American community became more established, associations began playing a more philanthropic role within the community, and functioned more like benevolent associations. Modelled after San Francisco's Chinese organizations in the 1850s, several of the established regional and family associations integrated to form the Los Angeles branch of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) in 1889.<sup>77</sup> CCBA, housed in the Garnier Building, served as a major resettlement agency to assist Chinese immigrants in adjusting to new life in Los Angeles.<sup>78</sup>

In Chinatown, benevolent associations occupied buildings along major commercial streets, often sharing space with shops and boarding houses. The associations even built their own jail to house those who had committed crimes or instigated *tong* wars. Over time, more established associations constructed their own buildings, which typically contained meeting halls and shrines on the first and second floors, with boarding rooms for members above. The Los Angeles branch of the Kong Chow Benevolent Association was founded in 1889 in a small two-story building on Ferguson Alley in Old Chinatown

<sup>75</sup> Peter Kwong and Dusanka Miscevic, *Chinese America: The Untold Story of America's Oldest New Community* (New York, NY: The New York Press, 2005), 83.

<sup>76</sup> Chung, “An Ocean Apart.”

<sup>77</sup> Kwong and Miscevic, *Chinese America*, 87.

<sup>78</sup> Icy Smith, *The Lonely Queue: The Forgotten History of the Courageous Chinese Americans in Los Angeles* (Gardena, CA: East West Discovery Press, 2001), 25.

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(not extant). The first floor served as the association hall and meeting space, while the second floor was reserved for a Buddhist temple run by the association.

The primary rival in community power to the benevolent association in the early decades was the Chee Kong Tong (*Zhigongtang*), or Chinese Free Masons, a brotherhood dedicated at first to the overthrow of the Manchu government and then, in 1911, to the support of the Republic of China under Sun Yat-sen. A splinter group, the Bing Kong Tong (*Binggongtang*), also calling itself the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chinese Free Masons since the rituals both stemmed from the western/British Free Masons, was more interested in gambling, opium, and prostitution and therefore was wealthier. Both had their local headquarters in Chinatown. In the early twentieth century, the Chee Kong Tong was located on Alhambra Street while the Bing Kong Tong was on North Broadway (neither extant).<sup>79</sup>

Other organizations established in Chinatown during this period include those whose mission focused on political causes, business interests, and recreational programs. The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (Alliance) was founded in San Francisco in 1895, with the Los Angeles branch established in the Garnier Building in 1912.<sup>80</sup> Because membership in the Alliance was limited to U.S. citizens—American-born Chinese or American citizens of Chinese descent—the Alliance had significant influence in American politics and worked against discriminatory legislation, particularly related to restrictions on voting rights.<sup>81</sup> They worked against discriminatory legislation, including the loss of citizenship of Chinese American-born women who married Chinese aliens, immigration regulations, and restrictions on voting rights.

By the late 1880s, non-Chinese Americans became increasingly drawn to Chinatown's unique commercial identity. An 1887 *Los Angeles Times* article stated, "Los Angeles' Chinatown is a magnet which claims almost every tourist in southern California," perceiving the area as "a facsimile of Canton."<sup>82</sup> By the 1890s, new Chinese-owned businesses catering to people outside of the Chinatown community—such as gift shops and restaurants serving uniquely Americanized entrees like chop suey—opened alongside existing shops serving Chinese residents.<sup>83</sup>

Entertainment and performance were important parts of community life for Los Angeles' Chinese community. Chinatown included a theater that hired performers from China and hosted vaudeville shows featuring Chinese entertainers. Some Chinese performers found employment in the burgeoning movie industry. By 1915, the local film industry was coalescing into a major economic force, and the proximity of Chinatown to Hollywood movie studios created opportunities for Chinese and Chinese

<sup>79</sup> Sue Fawn Chung, "The Zhigongtang in the United States, 1860-1949," in *Empire, National, and Beyond: Chinese History in Later Imperial and Modern Times*, Wen-hsin Yeh and Joseph Eshrick, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 231-249.

<sup>80</sup> Chinese American Citizens Alliance, accessed July 2013, <http://www.cacanational.org/history> (site discontinued).

<sup>81</sup> Kwong and Miscevic, *Chinese America*, 125.

<sup>82</sup> "What They Eat," *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 1887, 14.

<sup>83</sup> "In Our Cathay: Sketches and Snap-shots in Chinatown," *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1898, 6; Yong Chen, *Chop Suey, USA: The Story of Chinese Food in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

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American actors, directors, and producers. Some of the earliest silent films featured Chinese acrobats and opera singers as curiosities.

Early narrative films relied heavily on racial stereotypes, and Chinese characters were frequently depicted as mysterious, exotic, and possibly dangerous.<sup>84</sup> The availability of roles for Chinese actors was extremely limited, as Asian characters in lead roles were typically given to white actors playing in yellowface.<sup>85</sup> Actor Willie Fung was one of the most prolific Chinese American actors of the silent era, with 128 film credits, yet he played almost exclusively unnamed characters or stereotypical laundrymen and servants.<sup>86</sup> In addition to employing residents of Chinatown, Chinese culture was appropriated broadly to convey a sense of foreignness or exoticism without dialogue. Vaguely Asian sets and costumes often drew indiscriminately from Chinese and Japanese sources. For larger productions, filmmakers shot on location in Chinatown itself, hiring local residents to play background characters.

In the 1920s and 1930s, screen images of Chinese were typically demonized, ridiculed, or over-sexualized, reflecting the anxieties of white audiences rather than any reality of Chinese American culture. Chinese Americans pushed back against Hollywood's racist portrayals of Chinese by demanding better roles, directing and producing their own films, and establishing talent agencies. As early as the 1910s, Chinese Americans were producing their own films. In 1917, Chinese American director Marion Wong created *The Curse of Quon Gwon*, the earliest known Chinese American feature film and one of the earliest films directed by a woman. By the 1930s, Chinese Americans had established their own film production company, Grandview Films in San Francisco, which produced more than one hundred feature films using Chinese actors and directors.

Pioneering Chinese American director Esther Eng worked frequently with Grandview Films in the 1930s and 1940s, and became the first female director to direct Chinese-language films in the United States. She completed ten feature films between the ages of 21 and 35, five in the United States and five in Hong Kong. Her film *Golden Gate Girl* (1941) featured a young Bruce Lee in one of his first roles. Working behind the camera, James Wong Howe established himself as one of the most successful and influential cinematographers in Hollywood. Starting in the photography department at the Famous Players-Lasky Studios, he was recruited to work as a camera assistant for Cecil B. DeMille.<sup>87</sup> Learning the trade on set, Howe became known as a master of shadow and deep focus, earning ten Academy Awards nominations, and winning twice.

Anna May Wong was one of the best-known Chinese American actors of her generation. Born in Old Chinatown in 1905, Wong played the lead role in *The Toll of the Sea* (1922), which launched her career as the first Chinese American movie star. Outspoken about her frustration with the roles she was offered by Hollywood studios, she alternated between Europe and Los Angeles, acting and advocating for better

<sup>84</sup> Benson Tong, *The Chinese Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 201.

<sup>85</sup> Yellowface has been in use since the 1950s to describe the casting of white actors in lead Asian and Asian American roles, typically with the use of heavy makeup to simulate an Asian appearance.

<sup>86</sup> Krystyn Moon, *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s-1920s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

<sup>87</sup> Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

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depictions of Chinese in film. In 1926, she starred in *The Silk Bouquet*, a film financed by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and produced for Chinese American audiences. In 1952, she starred in the television series *The Gallery of Madame Liu-Tsong*, making it the first television program with an Asian American lead.<sup>88</sup> She also established her own short-lived production company in Los Angeles, Anna May Wong Productions, to produce films with realistic and positive images of Chinese Americans. Other notable Chinese Americans working in Los Angeles' entertainment industry during this period include casting agent and actress Jane Beverly Chung; actor Benson Fong; vaudeville performer, actor, and singer Lee Tung Foo; casting director and talent agent Bessie Loo; actor Richard Loo; actor and artist Keye Luke; and actor Victor Sen Yung. Chinese American actors also formed their own groups within the film industry workers' unions, such as the Chinese Group of the Screen Actors Guild.

Over time, the relationship between Los Angeles' Chinese American community and the entertainment industry became a mutually beneficial one. As the entertainment industry became more established, Chinese American-owned restaurants and night clubs in Chinatown and elsewhere in Los Angeles became popular destinations for Hollywood actors, directors, and producers. The well-known Dragon's Den restaurant was in the basement of the F. Suie One Company, an Asian antique store. The building at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Los Angeles Street (not extant) featured murals by Tyrus Wong, a Chinese American artist and illustrator who created animations for Disney and Warner Bros. and designed Christmas cards for Hallmark, as well as other artistic endeavors.<sup>89</sup>

Despite Chinatown's vibrant character and increasing popularity among tourists, the neighborhood also faced a number of challenges that escalated in the 1890s.<sup>90</sup> Due to its location in flatlands near the Los Angeles River, Chinatown frequently flooded, a problem exacerbated by the area's unpaved streets.<sup>91</sup> Chinatown also had a public image problem. Descriptions of the area as "a scene of bloody race riots and tong wars" were not uncommon during this period.<sup>92</sup> While numerous Chinese American organizations served positive roles in the community, notably the many benevolent associations, secret societies and their violent altercations often received more publicity. This adversely affected perceptions of Chinatown among non-Chinese Americans, contributing to a decline in tourism.<sup>93</sup>

According the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Los Angeles had 2,111 Chinese residents, the fourth largest Chinese community in the United States.<sup>94</sup> Despite its density, few public services were available in

<sup>88</sup> Robert G. Lee, *Orientalists*.

<sup>89</sup> Pamela Tom, director "Tyrus: A Biography," PBS 2017. Chinese American artists Milton Quon and Cy Young also worked for Walt Disney Studios. See the exhibition brochure by Sonia Mak, *Round the Clock: Chinese American Artists Working in Los Angeles* (Monterey Park, CA: Vincent Price Art Museum and East Los Angeles College, 2012) published in conjunction with a 2012 exhibition of the same name at the Vincent Price Art Museum. Presented as part of the exhibition series "Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A.: 1945-1980."

<sup>90</sup> "The Chinese Vendetta: A War-cloud Hovering Over Chinatown," *Los Angeles Times*, May 22, 1890, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Cheng and Kwok, "The Golden Years," 34.

<sup>92</sup> Carroll O'Meara, "Chinatown," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1931.

<sup>93</sup> Stanford Morris Lyman, *Chinatown and Little Tokyo: Power, Conflict, and Community Among Chinese and Japanese Immigrants in America* (Milwood, NY: Associated Faculty Press, Inc., 1986), 134.

<sup>94</sup> Liu, *Transnational*, 34.



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Chinatown. As late as 1922, only two of the area's fifteen streets were paved.<sup>95</sup> Additional factors, such as the lack of a sewage system, contributed to deteriorating health and housing conditions in Chinatown. In 1916, the State Commission of Immigration found that 878 of 1,572 households in the area were completely dark and windowless.<sup>96</sup> By refusing to provide public services, City officials were able to argue that Chinatown's filth and disease posed health threat, thereby making the area a target for land clearance.

Legislation such as the *California Alien Land Law of 1913* prohibited Chinese from owning property in the state, which put the Chinatown community in the precarious position of being lessees to large landholders. Without the stability provided by land ownership, the threat of relocation was always present. As early as 1913, the area encompassing Chinatown was proposed for conversion into a warehouse and industrial district with a new railway terminal.<sup>97</sup> Public opinion of proposals to demolish Chinatown for a new station was generally positive throughout the city, due in part to anti-Chinese sentiment, as well as the perception of Chinatown as a dangerous and undesirable area. As described in a 1926 *Los Angeles Times* editorial advocating for the development of what would become Union Station, "the station will form the north side of the magnificent main quadrangle of the new Civic Center...The Civic Center will forever do away with Chinatown and its environs."<sup>98</sup>

From the mid-1910s until the early 1930s, Chinese civic leaders and investors struggled to acquire property in Chinatown to protect the community. Sensing the inevitable, many Chinese residents and businesses relocated to secondary Chinese neighborhoods that began to develop in the early 1900s. Although the proposal for the new railway terminal was embroiled in legal disputes for many years, the California Supreme Court upheld the approval of land condemnations for Chinatown in 1931. Within two years, much of Chinatown was demolished, and by 1934, the construction of Union Station was underway.<sup>99</sup> This displacement came at a time when there were close to 3,000 Chinese and Chinese Americans living in Los Angeles, the fourth largest Chinese community in the United States.<sup>100</sup> A few Old Chinatown buildings were spared at the time, but most of these were ultimately demolished in the early 1950s to make way for the extension of the Hollywood (101) Freeway.

### **Agriculture and Farming, 1870-1950**

As early as the 1850s, Chinese in California began to cultivate and sell produce. They established themselves as independent owner-operators of farms ranging from one to twenty acres and traveled substantial distances to provide fresh produce to the large numbers of miners concentrated in northern California. As increasing numbers of Chinese left the mining industry and began migrating south, Los

<sup>95</sup> Greenwood, *Down by the Station*, 17.

<sup>96</sup> *Linking Our Lives*, 14-15.

<sup>97</sup> Cheng and Kwok, "The Golden Years," 40.

<sup>98</sup> "Fabrications vs. Facts," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1926.

<sup>99</sup> Cheng and Kwok, "The Golden Years," 40.

<sup>100</sup> Los Angeles Conservancy, "Exploring Chinatown Past and Present" (booklet produced in conjunction with a tour held on April 17, 2016), 3, 8.

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Angeles became a hub for entrepreneurial Chinese vegetable peddlers and truck farmers.<sup>101</sup> By the 1880s, Chinese had achieved prominence in these areas, making up almost 90 percent of the truck and market farmers in the Los Angeles County.<sup>102</sup> These entrepreneurs served an important function in the local food supply chain by bringing produce cultivated in suburban farms to neighborhoods in Downtown Los Angeles. Early Chinese farmers sold their produce to their own community directly, often through house-to-house sales, as well as to local restaurants.

The earliest farms were small plots surrounding Chinatown. As Chinatown developed into a populous residential and commercial center, Chinese entrepreneurs moved to farms outside of the urban center, migrating westward toward Santa Monica Bay, and southward to South Los Angeles and the communities of Watts, Wilmington, and San Pedro. Small Chinese farms also appeared in areas outside the city of Los Angeles, such as Lynwood and Compton to the south, and El Monte and La Puente to the east. Later, with the coming of water, Chinese also farmed in the San Fernando Valley. Farmers produced a wide range of crops including potatoes, sweet corn, hay, alfalfa, sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkin, watermelon, cabbage, cauliflower, asparagus, and especially Chinese vegetables.

Chinese farmers were a visible and important part of the Los Angeles economy through the twentieth century and established themselves as a powerful political group. As anti-Chinese sentiment grew throughout California in the 1880s, local political figures promoting racist immigration and hiring policies called for a citywide boycott on Chinese-owned businesses and Chinese workers in 1886. In response, Chinese truck farmers organized a counter boycott of related businesses, which quickly put an end to the initial boycott.<sup>103</sup> The ability of the Chinese immigrant community to uphold such a boycott speaks to the extensive network of supportive social institutions that had been established in Old Chinatown.

In the 1920s, many Chinese entered asparagus farming in areas from the areas of Chatsworth to North Hollywood in the San Fernando Valley. Asparagus was a profitable wholesale commercial crop that Chinese had been farming since 1892.<sup>104</sup> With a labor-intensive harvest between March and September, Chinese farm managers hired Chinese, Mexican, Filipino, German, Italian, and Japanese workers as agricultural hands.<sup>105</sup> By the late 1920s, Chinese famers were growing approximately 80 percent of all local asparagus.<sup>106</sup> Sam Chang, whose father first began growing asparagus in the town of Lankershim (later North Hollywood) in the early decades of the twentieth century, purchased an existing asparagus farm in the town of Sepulveda (later North Hills) in the 1920s. Upon his retirement some sixty years later, Chang sold his farm, and kept the original farmhouse at 8854 Hayvenhurst Avenue (not extant).<sup>107</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Immigrant truck farms, which cultivated garden vegetables for sale in markets, were often called gardens because they were smaller than typical American farms.

<sup>102</sup> Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>103</sup> Wild, *Street Meeting*, 18.

<sup>104</sup> Liu, *Transnational History*, 100.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>107</sup> Calisphere, University of Southern California, text accompanying a photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Chang of North Hollywood, California, 1950, accessed June 2017, <https://calisphere.org/item/3797c4a38024d65af68074d5597bc7d7/>.

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One of the few known remaining agricultural properties associated with Chinese American farming is the Jue Joe Ranch at 16608 Vanowen Boulevard in Van Nuys (later Lake Balboa). This appears to be one of the last remnants of agricultural property anywhere in the San Fernando Valley. The ranch, which once stretched some 100 acres and included numerous residential and work buildings, supplied asparagus to the produce markets in Downtown Los Angeles. Joe was also one of the directors of the San Fernando Valley Asparagus Marketing Association, and by 1925 was considered one of best-known Chinese growers in the Valley. A small piece of this land remains, containing a small barn and what appears to be an asparagus packing shed. A residence and swimming pool, constructed by Jue Joe's son after his father's death in 1941, is also extant.<sup>108</sup>

Chinese American farmers were hard hit by the Great Depression, coupled with intense competition by Japanese American farmers who, by the 1930s, were farming 15 percent of the agricultural land in Los Angeles County and producing the majority of the county's vegetables.<sup>109</sup> This trend reversed abruptly in 1942, with the passage of *Executive Order 9066*, ordering the internment of persons of Japanese ancestry. Many Japanese American-owned farms, wholesale businesses, and produce brokerage firms were divided and sold for far below market value. Non-Japanese entrepreneurs in the produce business, including Chinese Americans, bought and operated these businesses for the duration of World War II. In the decades after the war, lands available for agricultural uses declined sharply as farmland was subdivided and developed as suburban residential tracts. Thus, farming among Chinese Americans gradually diminished.

***City Market and Market Chinatown, 1900-1950***

In the first decade of the twentieth century, a second Chinese settlement developed to the south of Downtown Los Angeles around East 9<sup>th</sup> and South San Pedro Streets, the result of Chinese farmers transitioning from truck farming to wholesale produce businesses. Truck farmers initially peddled produce door-to-door for a diverse range of customers both in and out of Chinatown. As the population of Los Angeles increased, they frequently competed with Japanese and European immigrant truck farmers in an informal and crowded produce market at the Los Angeles Plaza. To address the congestion at the Plaza, in 1906 the City Council approved an ordinance that increased licensing fees for produce peddlers and restricted where produce could be sold.<sup>110</sup> In response, wholesale produce markets were established to accommodate increased demand for sale and distribution of fruits and vegetables.<sup>111</sup> Thus, many Chinese farmers moved from direct sale of produce through peddling to wholesale through produce markets during this period. Chinese owned and operated farms increased in acreage. The English-speaking children of first generation Chinese immigrants were able to compete with the Anglo-

<sup>108</sup> Kevin Roderick, "Jue Joe Ranch in the middle of the Valley," *LA Observed*, posted May 31, 2015, accessed June 2017, [http://www.laobserved.com/archive/2015/05/jue\\_joe\\_ranch\\_in\\_the\\_midd.php](http://www.laobserved.com/archive/2015/05/jue_joe_ranch_in_the_midd.php).

<sup>109</sup> Tara Fickle, "A History of the Los Angeles City Market: 1930-1950." *Gum Saan Journal* 32, no. 1, 2010.

<sup>110</sup> "Peddlers' Fight: Produce Exchange and Market Company Favor Fruit Hucksters in Contest with Grocers," *Los Angeles Times*, January 17, 1906.

<sup>111</sup> Fickle, "City Market."

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owned produce markets of the period. Of the 155 produce companies located in Los Angeles in 1910, 17 were owned by Chinese.<sup>112</sup>

Among the earliest wholesale produce markets was Hewes Market (not extant), established in 1901 at the intersection of South Los Angeles and East 9<sup>th</sup> Streets.<sup>113</sup> In 1904, Los Angeles Market Company built a larger facility (not extant) at the intersection of South Central Avenue and East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.<sup>114</sup> The Los Angeles Market Company later constructed additional markets at 1601 East Olympic Boulevard (all buildings have been replaced to serve the existing Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market) and 746 Market Court (mostly demolished, later called Alameda Produce Market). While Chinese Americans worked at each of these markets, the City Market of Los Angeles at 1057 South San Pedro Street was of particular importance to the Chinese American community. City Market was a consortium of Chinese, Japanese, and Anglo farmers who incorporated in 1909. Construction of the market began soon thereafter. The market occupied over six acres and was designed in the Mission Revival style by Los Angeles architects firm Morgan and Walls (demolished 2013). Chinese investors provided 41 percent of the initial capital required to build the market and Chinese stakeholders invested \$81,850 of a total \$200,000 in contributions.<sup>115</sup> Additional funds were raised by Anglo and Japanese investors to create a uniquely diverse ownership structure.

As Chinese merchants and workers moved into the neighborhood surrounding City Market, the area became known as Market Chinatown. Merchants in Market Chinatown included immigrants from a variety of countries including Japan, Italy, and Russia; the majority were Chinese Americans.<sup>116</sup> Initial uses immediately surrounding City Market were primarily industrial. Various residential building types began to appear in the vicinity, including boarding houses, residential hotels, and apartment buildings. Given the intensive work and long hours required of City Market workers, it was not uncommon for workers—primarily single men at first—to live in these residential buildings. Properties included the Continental Hotel at 800-810 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street (1912), the Market Hotel at 964-968 South San Pedro Street (1915), and the New Union Hotel (1924/altered) at 701-711 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>117</sup> As Chinese immigrants established families, many also lived in residential areas surrounding the market, particularly on Crocker Street and Towne Avenue between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets. These early residences have since been replaced with commercial and industrial buildings.

As the Chinese resident population grew, businesses that catered to Chinese customers—such as grocery stores, a pharmacy, and professional service offices including insurance, law and accounting offices—soon followed, lining the commercial streets around City Market. The Hong Kong Noodle Company at 950 South San Pedro Street provided fresh and dry Chinese noodles, won ton skins, and other pasta

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. Some sources cite the market name as Hughes Market.

<sup>114</sup> “Will Build Fine Market House,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1904.

<sup>115</sup> Tara Fickle, “City Market”; “Six-acre Paved Area in New Market; Two Plants Going Up, One Soon Open,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 1909.

<sup>116</sup> Jan Jin, *The Power of Urban Ethnic Places: Cultural Heritage and Community Life* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 175.

<sup>117</sup> Carson Anderson, *Eastside Industrial Area Architectural and Historical Resources Survey for the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles*, September 1992, 1-5.

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products to Chinese American markets and restaurants in the areas. It is also popularly regarded as the birthplace of the fortune cookie in 1918, when its founder David Jung began distributing cookies with inspirational messages to unemployed men gathered on the street outside.<sup>118</sup> Institutions, such as churches and benevolent associations, also began to appear at this time.<sup>119</sup> The Chinese Congregational Church at 734 East 9<sup>th</sup> Place (1924/altered), chose to establish their first permanent location here, rather than in Chinatown. This multi-ethnic area also included Italian, Greek, Mexican, Japanese, African American, and Jewish residents, most of whom were also employed in the wholesale produce businesses.<sup>120</sup> As residents vacated Chinatown in advance of the construction of Union Station in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Market Chinatown became increasingly significant to the Chinese American community in Los Angeles.<sup>121</sup>

With the development of New Chinatown north of Downtown Los Angeles in 1938, Market Chinatown began to decline as the city's primary Chinese district. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, many Chinese living in the Market Chinatown area relocated to New Chinatown, re-establishing their business and occupying nearby residential areas. It is estimated that by 1950, just 25 Chinese families remained in Market Chinatown, and most of them were engaged in the produce businesses.<sup>122</sup> Although little remains of Market Chinatown, the area is still home to a handful of Chinese American businesses and organizations, including the Bow On Benevolent Association at 1010 South San Pedro Street (1968), which serves the neighborhood's diverse population. In the same building is Paul's Kitchen, a Chinese restaurant that opened in 1946 and has been in continuous operation since 1968.<sup>123</sup> Also remaining in the area just outside of the demolished City Market is an industrial building used by the Jue Joe Company (1105 South San Pedro Street) from 1932 to at least 1956. The company likely marketed wholesale produce from Jue Joe's ranch in the San Fernando Valley.

***East Adams Boulevard, 1920-1965***

As the residential area of Market Chinatown became more densely populated, Chinese residents moved south to residential neighborhoods around East Adams Boulevard and San Pedro Street. Chinese occupancy of this neighborhood began in the 1920s and was concentrated in an area bounded by Washington Boulevard, South Main Street, East Adams Boulevard, and South Central Avenue.<sup>124</sup> The neighborhood was particularly convenient for those employed in farming in South Los Angeles and surrounding communities. The area was and remains primarily residential, with some Chinese-owned small businesses patronized by the Chinese community, including Kwong Hing Lung market (not extant), and CFO gas station (not extant). Around 1940, the First Chinese Presbyterian Church established a congregation in an existing Presbyterian church at 631 East Adams Boulevard (1905-06,

<sup>118</sup> Hong Kong Noodle Company is one of three Asian food companies that claim to have invented the fortune cookie in the early twentieth century.

<sup>119</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 88.

<sup>120</sup> Garding Lui, *Inside Los Angeles Chinatown* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1948), 42.

<sup>121</sup> Lui, 44.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>123</sup> The former area of City Market/Market Chinatown became mostly associated with Los Angeles' wholesale fashion industry. City Market is being redeveloped as a large-scale mixed-use project.

<sup>124</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 83.

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extant/altered) with a school for local children. The Chinese Herb Co. opened a South Los Angeles branch which operated at 4925 South Broadway from 1936 to 1942 (not extant). Following World War II, residents were generally first generation immigrants, as wealthier Chinese Americans were more likely to have moved into middle class neighborhoods as far west as Arlington Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard. In 1950, more than 100 Chinese families were living in the multi-ethnic neighborhood.<sup>125</sup>

**New Chinatown and China City, 1938-1950**

The Chinatown neighborhood north of Downtown Los Angeles, which became known as New Chinatown, emerged in the late 1930s, following the demolition of the Chinese American community's original commercial and residential area to make way for the development of Union Station.<sup>126</sup> New Chinatown was initially anchored by two master-planned developments, both of which opened in 1938: the *New Chinatown* development (also known as Chinatown Central Plaza) to the north, and *China City* to the south.

In response to the displacement of the occupants of Old Chinatown, businessman and community leader Peter Soo Hoo, Sr. joined with other Chinese business owners to create the Los Angeles Chinatown Project Association (later renamed the Los Angeles Chinatown Corporation) in 1937.<sup>127</sup> The association gathered their own personal finances to purchase land for a new Chinatown. Acting on behalf of the association, Soo Hoo worked with Santa Fe Railway land agent Hebert Lapham to purchase a plot of land north of Old Chinatown, between Buena Vista Avenue (later North Broadway) and Hill Street, from the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway.

The New Chinatown development was conceptualized by Chinese American civic leaders who sought to counter common perceptions of Chinatowns as dangerous neighborhoods of unpaved, crime-filled alleyways by incorporating romantic stereotypes associated with China. The development was unique in that Chinese Americans controlled and distributed these images to visitors with the goal of establishing New Chinatown as a mixed-use development that would also be an important tourist destination and integral economic force in the City of Los Angeles. To this end, the association engaged noted architects Erle Webster and Adrian Wilson to create a master plan for a pedestrian village that would serve as a central hub for commerce and tourism. Webster & Wilson drafted a plan for a low-scale commercial center aligned to a system of interior pedestrian streets and a central plaza.<sup>128</sup> Streets were given names meaningful to the Los Angeles Chinese population of the 1930s, including Gin Ling Way for the famous Street of Golden Treasures in Old Beijing; Sun Mun Way for Dr. Sun Yat-sen, first president of the

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 70, 83. Additional research may identify some residential properties associated with the Chinese American population from this time.

<sup>126</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century the area later occupied by New Chinatown was a multi-ethnic neighborhood populated by various immigrant groups—including Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and French—as well as Anglo Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans. Los Angeles' Little Italy spanned a large area north of Downtown, including portions of the Plaza, Sonoratown, Dogtown (became the north industrial district), Solano Canyon, Elysian Park, Lincoln Heights, and later Chinatown.

<sup>127</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 86.

<sup>128</sup> Central Plaza is also known as Peter Soo Hoo Square.

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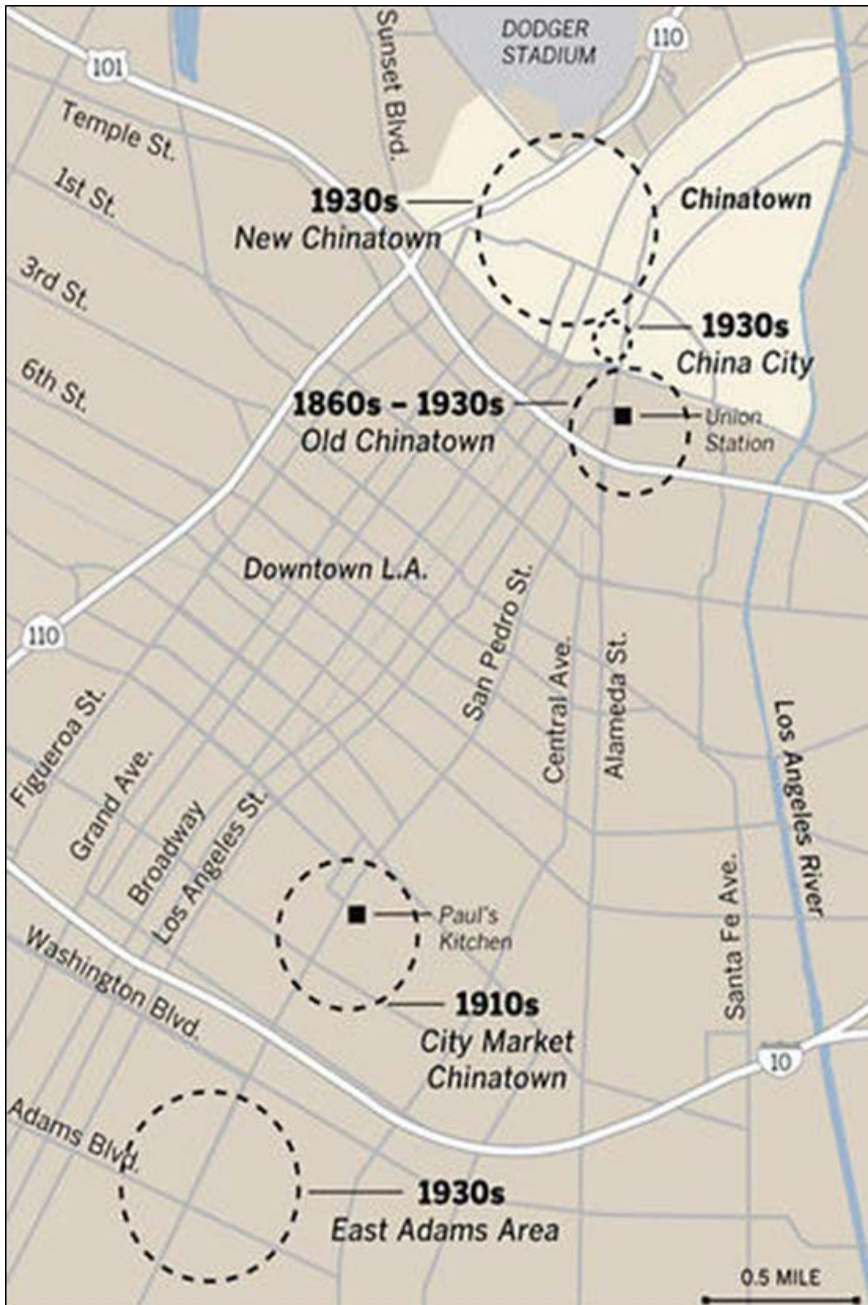
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Republic of China; Jung Jing Rd, referencing one of the honorific titles of Chiang Kai-shek; and Mei Ling Way for Chiang Kai-shek's wife.

*Los Angeles Times, November 18, 2013*



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Webster & Wilson designed some of the most elaborate buildings on the plaza, enthusiastically embracing many of the architectural details of Asian architecture. Building designs incorporated complex, sweeping rooflines with flared eaves and upturned rafter tails, decoratively carved brackets, and roof beams. Buildings were painted in bright colors and topped with clay tile roofs. Within a year of construction, neon accents were added to highlight these features. Two *pailou* (gateways) at Hill Street (West Gate) and Broadway (East Gate) were erected in 1938 and 1939, respectively, to anchor the entrances to the development and establish its overall aesthetic (West Gate and East Gate are City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments No. 825 and 826, respectively.) Other features of the development included ornamental streetlights, hanging lanterns, decorative metal balustrades, a wishing well near West Gate designed by Prof. Henry K. Liu to resemble the sacred Seven Star Cavern in Guangdong Province, a landscaped fish pool near East Gate designed by Louie Hong Kay, and two smaller gates at either end of Lei Min Way. In 1941, renowned Chinese American artist Tyrus Wong completed a painted mural entitled *Chinese Celestial Dragon* at 951 North Broadway. The Hong Building on the Central Plaza is particularly notable for its association with You Chung Hong, the first Chinese American to pass the California State Bar and practice law in Los Angeles. Hong became a prominent immigration lawyer as well as a major property owner in New Chinatown, and ran his law practice from the second floor of the Hong Building at 445 Gin Ling Way, overlooking Central Plaza.

Chinese-owned businesses began moving into the New Chinatown development in 1937, even before construction was completed. It opened to the public on June 25, 1938 as Los Angeles Chinatown, with businesses, many family-owned, catering both to the local Chinese community as well as to tourists. Unlike the previous centers of Chinese entrepreneurship in Los Angeles, this development would be owned by Chinese businessmen, making it the first Chinese commercial enclave to be owned and developed by Chinese Americans. A number of the development's earliest tenants were established businesses and organizations relocating after having been displaced from Old Chinatown. Man Jen Low restaurant, originally established in Old Chinatown in 1878, was reopened in 1938 by the children of the restaurant's founder, Woo Fong Hoy Lee. Renamed General Lee's Restaurant in 1954 in an effort to appeal to non-Chinese, it emerged as one of the city's most popular Chinese restaurants, hosting celebrities and international dignitaries before closing in 1985 (475 Gin Ling Way).<sup>129</sup>

Also relocating from Old Chinatown were the Hop Sing Tong Benevolent Association, one of the oldest Chinese fraternal organizations in Los Angeles (428 Gin Ling Way) and the Los Angeles branch of the Kong Chow Benevolent Association (931 North Broadway).<sup>130</sup> K.G. Louie Company, an art and gift store, moved to New Chinatown from Downtown Los Angeles in 1938 (432 Gin Ling Way). Other long-time establishments in New Chinatown include The Golden Pagoda Restaurant (later Hop Louie), which

<sup>129</sup> Other early New Chinatown businesses that no longer exist include Tuey Far Low restaurant (436 Gin Ling Way); Forbidden Palace restaurant (449 Gin Ling Way); Chinese Jade Café (454 Gin Ling Way); Chew Yuen & Co. gift shop (459 Gin Ling Way); Dun Sow Hong Co. herbal shop (463 Gin Ling Way); Joy Joy Woo restaurant (483 Gin Ling Way); Hop Key Co. (487 Gin Ling Way); Tin Hing Co. jewelers (491 Gin Ling Way); Yee Hung Guey restaurant (495 Gin Ling Way); and Grandview Gardens restaurant (951 Mei Ling Way). "Old Chinatown Restaurants in Los Angeles," *L.A. Weekly*, January 27, 2017.

<sup>130</sup> The Kong Chow Benevolent Association building was designed by Gilbert Leong in 1960. It includes the Kwan Gung Temple, a Buddhist shrine relocated from their earlier headquarters in Old Chinatown.



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has occupied the iconic five-tiered pagoda since 1941 (950 Mei Ling Way); Ginling Gifts (441 Gin Ling Way); Sincere Imports (483 Gin Ling Way); and the Grand Star Restaurant (later the Grand Star Jazz Club), owned and managed by the Quon family since 1946 (943 Sun Mun Way).<sup>131</sup>

Just as Old Chinatown had been used as an outdoor film set in previous decades, New Chinatown was a popular filming location from its inception. After World War II, the continued American presence in the Pacific Rim and the expansion of the Cold War increased opportunities for Hollywood to explore Asian cultures through film. In the 1950s, films set in the Pacific Islands allowed indigenous actors to play supporting roles, and a growing white American awareness of Asian cultures created demand for films set in Asian countries. Although yellowface portrayals continued, Chinese American actors and directors increased their representation in the film industry. Among the earliest films produced on site in New Chinatown were the early film noir *The Shanghai Gesture* (1941), and *Dragon Seed* (1944), starring Katharine Hepburn in yellowface.<sup>132</sup> In the 1940s and 1950s, New Chinatown restaurants such as Grandview Gardens (951 Mei Ling Way, not extant) and General Lee's attracted some of Hollywood's biggest celebrities, including Bob Hope, Clark Gable, Gary Cooper, Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, and Spencer Tracy.

In contrast to New Chinatown—constructed, funded, and managed by Chinese Americans—China City was developed by Anglo civic leaders. The project was spearheaded by Christine Sterling, who previously had organized efforts to rehabilitate nearby Olvera Street as a romanticized tourist-centered, Mexican-themed marketplace.<sup>133</sup> Sterling's vision for China City was a similar destination that capitalized on Americans' growing fascination with East Asia and other cultures, largely instigated through the rise of Asian-themed films in the motion picture industry. Located just north of Olvera Street—bounded on the east and west by North Spring and North Main Streets, and on the north and south by Ord and Macy Streets—China City was a walled shopping arcade designed in the Asian Eclectic architectural style.<sup>134</sup> Features included a temple, a lotus pond, constantly burning incense,

<sup>131</sup> In 1982-1983, the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) commissioned a survey of the Chinatown Redevelopment Project Area to identify resources eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the Section 106 review process. This survey identified two National Register-eligible commercial historic districts: the East of Hill Street Chinatown District (New Chinatown) and the West of Hill Street Chinatown Historic District (Greater Chinatown). A 1986 letter of concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) identifies these districts as "exceptionally significant under [National Register] Criterion [*sic*] A and C as the predominant, remaining Los Angeles area examples of commercial districts developed, owned, and operated by Chinese Californians." Both of these districts are included in the State Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) with California Register of Historical Resources Status Codes of 2S2 (determined eligible for listing on the National Register by consensus through Section 106 process; listed on the California Register).

<sup>132</sup> "Made in L.A. Chinatown," Film Chinatown, accessed July 2013, <http://www.filmchinatown.com/made-in-chinatown.html>. The use of Chinatown as a filming location continues. One of the most successful Hollywood films shot there was *Rush House* (1998), starring Hong Kong actor and martial artist Jackie Chan.

<sup>133</sup> Jenny Cho and the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, *Chinatown and China City in Los Angeles* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 37.

<sup>134</sup> For purposes of this National Register MPDF and consistent with National Register terminology, the architectural style is categorized as Other: Asian Eclectic and Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Period Revival: Eclectic Period Revival. For SurveyLA, the City has used the term Asian Eclectic to categorize this style. As the name implies, the Asian Eclectic style is a fusion of architectural influences from various Asian countries, particularly China and Japan, often assembled in fanciful

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Chinese instrumental music, and interactive attractions such as rickshaw rides, fortunetellers, and theatrical performances.<sup>135</sup> The Chinese Cultural Society, founded by Sterling and Raymond Cannon, played a large role in organizing events in China City, including public festivals for the Chinese New Year.<sup>136</sup> Although the development received much press when it first opened in 1938, it had limited commercial success. China City was destroyed by fire in 1949.<sup>137</sup>

## World War II

During the Second World War, construction in New Chinatown, as in most areas of Los Angeles, came to a near halt. Transformative changes were underway for the Chinese American community throughout the United States. The patriotism of thousands of Chinese Americans who served overseas, along with those who supported the war effort at home, paved the way for the repeal of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* in 1943. The make-up of the Chinese American community began to change in the 1940s as immigration from China increased. Congress enacted laws allowing Chinese to enter the United States under a quota system. Although only 383 Chinese were admitted to the United States under this system between 1944 and 1949,<sup>138</sup> this shift in immigration policy opened the doors for increased immigration in the second half of the twentieth century. Congress also enacted the 1945 *War Brides Act* and 1946 *Fiancées Act*, which allowed entry of alien spouses and alien minor children of citizen members of the armed forces. Thus, Chinese Americans that had served honorably during the war were eligible for family reunification. Of the 5,687 Chinese admitted under these Acts, 5,099 were women, five were men, and 583 were children.<sup>139</sup>

The impact of these reforms was felt particularly strongly in California, where more than half of the nation's Chinese were living at the time.<sup>140</sup> Changes in immigration policies greatly reduced the imbalance in the ratio of men to women in the Chinese American community, which meant fewer single men and more families living in New Chinatown. These demographic changes determined how New Chinatown continued to develop and evolve in the decades after the war.<sup>141</sup> Chinese American community organizations also responded to hardships created by World War II and by the Second Sino-

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combinations to create an atmosphere of exoticism or opulence. In pre-World War II Los Angeles, the style was typically interpreted by white architects for a white audience. Perhaps Los Angeles' best known example is Grauman's Chinese Theater at 6925 Hollywood Boulevard (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 55), which opened in 1927. In the postwar period, Chinese American architects also began to interpret the style, primarily in and around Chinatown, for both Chinese and non-Chinese audiences.

<sup>135</sup> Cho, *China City*, 63.

<sup>136</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 85.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.; *Angels Walk LA Self-Guided Historic Trails* Chinatown guidebook, City of Los Angeles, 2003. The last building from China City was demolished in the late 1990s.

<sup>138</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 40.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 48. In 1940, approximately 51 percent of the Chinese in the United States were living in California.

<sup>141</sup> The immigration of women from China, and the establishment or re-establishment of families after WWII, is a trend that continued with the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. By 1970, the ratio of Chinese men to women was almost 1:1, where historically the imbalance had been as much as 300:1 in some places. Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

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Japanese War during the same period.<sup>142</sup> Established benevolent associations reserved portions of their membership dues to contribute to the war effort. Numerous organizations also formed to provide relief for the duration of the wars. Women's organizations were particularly influential in this movement and were widely acknowledged for their contributions and achievements.<sup>143</sup> Chinese Americans in Los Angeles alone contributed \$215,000 to war relief between 1943 and 1945.<sup>144</sup> The 1943 visit by the First Lady of the Republic of China, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, to Los Angeles influenced the participation of women in public community organizations, and mobilized cross-cultural groups and public figures such as celebrities, movie moguls, politicians, dignitaries, and Chinese American community groups to support China during World War II.

Organizations formed during this period included the influential women's social and athletic Mei Wah Club, established in 1931, that developed the Chung Wah Drum and Bugle Corp—later called the Imperial Dragon Drum and Bugle Corp patterned after the 1963 Sacramento Group of the same name. Also formed was the Women's New Life Movement Association, a patriotic group founded in 1938 as an extension of the Chinese Kuomintang government's New Life Movement that promoted the progression of Chinese women in international affairs, educational achievement, and Chinese American communities. The New Life Movement Association met at the Chinese Presbyterian Church at 631 Adams Boulevard.<sup>145</sup> The St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Center was established in 1940 at 510 Cottage Home Street at the north end of New Chinatown, with a church, Chinese-language school, and recreational hall.<sup>146</sup>

Second and third generation Chinese Americans were coming of age and established clubs like the Sino-American Baseball Team that took advantage of the experience acquired at the first playground in Old Chinatown. The Los Angeles Woodcraft Rangers started a Chinatown branch at Castelar School under the leadership of Walter Chung. The group provided young boys with training in crafts, camping, and other activities in the 1940s. The Kwan Ying Girls Club was established in 1942 to provide aid during World War II. Mabel Hong, an important community leader and wife of lawyer You Chung Hong, was active in this group whose activity ceased in the mid-1950s. The Los Angeles Chinese Women's Club was founded in 1944 by Lily Ho Quon to unite war relief efforts between Chinese American and Anglo American women, with most of its members coming from the Chinese middle- and upper-classes.<sup>147</sup> In 1947, this group joined the California Federation of Women's Clubs and, in 1953, created a junior component.<sup>148</sup> Returning Chinese American soldiers also established veterans organizations, including the Los Angeles Chinese American Legion Post 628 at 1014 South San Pedro Street (not extant).

<sup>142</sup> The Second Sino-Japanese War was a military conflict fought primarily between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan from 1937 to 1945.

<sup>143</sup> *Linking Our Lives*, 24-25.

<sup>144</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 244.

<sup>145</sup> *Linking Our Lives*, 103-104.

<sup>146</sup> St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Church, accessed July 2017, <https://home.stbridgetccc.com/>.

<sup>147</sup> *Linking Our Lives*, 24.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

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**Greater Chinatown and Postwar Growth & Expansion, 1945-1965**

After the war ended, development boomed in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles, including in the city's new Chinatown. Hoping to recreate the success of the New Chinatown development, in 1947 the Los Angeles Chinatown Project Association sought to expand across Hill Street with a new mixed-use development called Greater Chinatown. Utilizing a similar development structure, Chinese American civic leaders and business owners collaborated with the Chinese Development Company to develop a plan for a pedestrian commercial center to be occupied by Chinese American merchants and their families.<sup>149</sup> The development is composed of nine two-story buildings containing fifty-five units total. Each unit spans both stories, with a commercial storefront on the ground story and residential above. Some units feature projecting balconies overlooking the pedestrian streets below. The development is centered on a paved central plaza, known as Chungking Plaza or West Plaza, anchored by a landscaped water feature. The plaza was the first portion of the development to be completed, intended to commemorate China's struggle during the war. Stylistically, Greater Chinatown references the Asian Eclectic vocabulary of New Chinatown, in a more simplified and restrained manner with sweeping rooflines with clay tiles, flared eaves with carved brackets, upturned rafter tails, and decorative window surrounds. The interior streets—Chung King Road and Chung King Court—are named for the southwestern Chinese city, likely due to its important role in World War II.<sup>150</sup>

The Greater Chinatown development was completed in 1950, and was soon occupied by a range of neighborhood-serving businesses, many of them family owned, reflecting the increase in the number of second and third generation families. A number of business and organizations displaced from Old Chinatown and China City made the move to the new development and remain in operation. Notable among these is the F. See On Company at 507 Chung King Court. The business was established by Fong See in Sacramento in 1872, gradually transitioning from silk undergarments to antiques. The family moved to Los Angeles in 1897, locating their shop in Old Chinatown. Still operated by the Fong family, it has been at its location in Greater Chinatown since 1947, making it one of the oldest family-owned Asian art stores in Los Angeles.<sup>151</sup> In 1952, Fong See's nephew, Gim Fong, opened Fong's Oriental Works of Art at 943 Chung King Road, after the original shop burned down in the China City fire.<sup>152</sup> The Jade Tree at 957 Chung King Road has been family owned and operated since 1943, and is one of the last true antique galleries remaining in Chinatown.<sup>153</sup> The interest in quality Chinese art goods was promoted with the establishment of Quon and Quon, a national import-export company founded in 1929 in Peking (Beijing) that moved its headquarters to Los Angeles in 1937 under the leadership of Albert T. Quon.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 87.

<sup>150</sup> Chung King is a transliteration of *Chongquin*, a major city in southwest China. In some instances, Greater Chinatown's Chung King Road is referred to as Chiang Kai-shek Road, while Chung King Court is called Chung King Road.

<sup>151</sup> The history of the Fong family is recounted by Fong See's great-granddaughter Lisa See in her 1995 memoir, *On Gold Mountain: The One-Hundred Year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family*.

<sup>152</sup> *Angels Walk LA*.

<sup>153</sup> Historically, there were three prominent Chinese antique stores that introduced the American public to high quality Chinese goods like paintings, furniture, porcelain, silk, and jewelry: F. See On, F. Suie One, and The Jade Tree. F. Suie One relocated to Pasadena in 1979. Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Advisory Committee Project member.

<sup>154</sup> Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

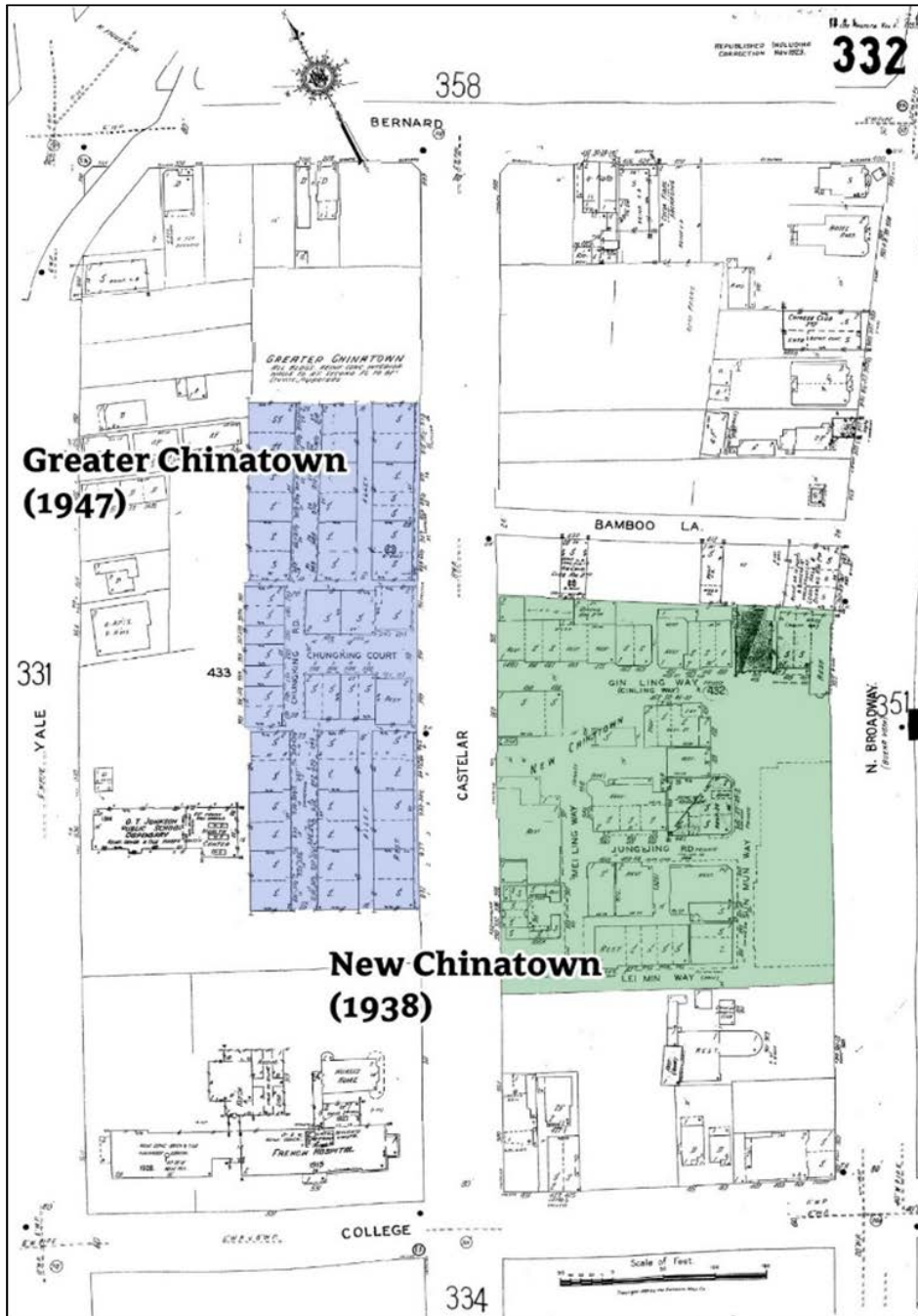
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*New Chinatown and Greater Chinatown developments, 1951. Environmental Data Resources, Inc., Sanborn Digital Maps.*



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While Chinatown continued to have a diverse ethnic population, by the 1940s the area was increasingly Chinese. With the establishment of the New Chinatown and Greater Chinatown commercial centers, much of the surrounding area developed organically, with retail buildings constructed primarily along North Broadway and North Hill streets.<sup>155</sup>

Commercial development expanded dramatically in the decades after World War II, and several of these businesses remain in operation in the New Chinatown neighborhood. Jin Hing Jewelry Co. (originally established in 1933) is one of oldest continuously operating Chinese jewelry stores in Los Angeles. It moved to 412 Bamboo Lane in 1950. Phoenix Bakery was founded by Fung Chow Chan in 1938 at 951 North Broadway, using family recipes to produce traditional Chinese pastries and cookies not found locally. The bakery's logo—a boy hiding a pastry box behind his back—was created by Chinese American artist Tyrus Wong in the 1940s.<sup>156</sup> Due to their success, the business moved to 969 North Broadway in 1977. Still owned and operated by the Chan family, with daughter Kathy Chan as CEO, Phoenix Bakery is the largest and oldest bakery in Chinatown.<sup>157</sup>

Fung Chow Chan was also instrumental in establishing Cathay Bank, the first bank operated by Chinese Americans to open in Los Angeles, and the first Chinese American commercial bank in California.<sup>158</sup> The impetus for the bank was Chan's inability to obtain a home loan from existing institutions, despite being one of New Chinatown's most successful business owners. Concluding that the local Chinese community needed its own financial services to ensure better access to capital and credit, Chan spent a decade organizing backers to apply for a bank charter, eventually resulting in the establishment of Cathay Bank at 777 North Broadway. Cathay Bank has served as an important economic anchor for New Chinatown since its completion in 1962. The bank was instrumental in financing apartments in Chinatown in the years following the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, tutored local Chinese business owners on how to use bank services, and instructed Chinatown workers on obtaining installment loans, often without collateral. Over time, Cathay Bank became the largest domestically owned Asian institution in the U.S., expanding to fifty branches in seven states, with one overseas branch in Hong Kong and two overseas offices.<sup>159</sup> Cathay Bank remained the only Chinese American bank in Los Angeles until East West Federal Savings & Loan Association opened in 1972, followed by the Far East Bank in 1974.<sup>160</sup> Cathay Bank is the oldest Chinese American bank in Southern California.

<sup>155</sup> A notable exception to this development pattern of Chinese-owned businesses was the Far East Café. Originally opened in 1896, it moved to 347 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Little Tokyo in 1935. Owned by four Chinese immigrant cousins, it flourished by serving American Chinese cuisine to Los Angeles' Japanese immigrants. Over time, the restaurant became an important gathering place for the Japanese American community, particularly upon their return following the incarceration of persons of Japanese descent during World War II. The neon Chop Suey signage remains among the most recognizable features of Little Tokyo.

<sup>156</sup> Los Angeles Conservancy, "Exploring Chinatown," 10.

<sup>157</sup> *Angels Walk LA*.

<sup>158</sup> Los Angeles Conservancy, "Exploring Chinatown," 5.

<sup>159</sup> *Los Angeles Business Journal*, August 17, 1987.

<sup>160</sup> Wei Li, Gary Dymski, Yu Zhou, Maria Chee, and Carolyn Aldana, "Chinese-American Banking and Community Development in Los Angeles County," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, December 2002, 777-796; *Angels Walk LA*. East West Bank was the first federally chartered savings and loan to cater to foreign-born and American-born Chinese. Originally established on the ground floor of the Kong Chow Benevolent Association building in 1995 it moved to its own building at 942 North Broadway.

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Cathay Bank was designed by Chinese American architect Eugene Choy. Choy along with Gilbert Lester Leong were among the noted Chinese American architects of the period designing commercial, institutional, and residential buildings. Both architects are noted for blending elements of Mid-Century Modern architecture with Asian Eclectic style features.

Born in China in 1912, Choy earned his architecture degree from USC in 1939, and became just the second Chinese American to join the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and the first in California. He began his practice in 1947 and Cathay Bank is among his most prominent Los Angeles projects. Choy's commercial designs also included the Jin Hing Jewelry Co. at 412 Bamboo Lane (1950).

Born in Los Angeles in 1911, Gilbert Lester Leong studied sculpture and painting at the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles before earning his degree in architecture from the University of Southern California in 1936, becoming the first Chinese American to graduate from USC's architecture program. After working in the offices of noted Los Angeles architects Paul R. Williams and Harwell Hamilton Harris, in 1950 Leong and a partner opened one of the nation's first Chinese American architecture firms. In 1954, he established his own practice.<sup>161</sup>

Other notable commercial enterprises from this period include Chun Wong, Inc., a pioneer in frozen food manufacturing.<sup>162</sup> Chun Wong was established in 1948 by Douglas "Doc" Wong, who was a partner with his brother Norman in the Grandview Gardens restaurant in the New Chinatown development. Initially, Doc Wong used the restaurant as a test kitchen, trying out his frozen food recipes, then doing much of the cooking and freezing there as well. As the business grew, processing and packaging was moved to a brick building at 905 Yale Street on the edge of Chinatown.<sup>163</sup> In 1963, shortly after moving from their Chinatown location to a complex in Compton designed by Eugene Choy, Wong sold his business to the national canned food company Chun King Foods.<sup>164</sup> Globe Paper Company, founded by Walter Chung at 718 East 9<sup>th</sup> Street in the City Market area, was a major paper product supplier to Chinese restaurants, laundries, grocery stores, meat markets, associations, and general merchandise stores throughout Los Angeles, also selling specialty items to non-Asian companies

<sup>161</sup> Leong was also a founding member of East West Bank in 1972, a savings institution focused on serving the local Chinese American community. Leong retired and closed his architectural practice in 1987. Chinese American Museum, *Breaking Ground: Chinese American Architects in Los Angeles, 1945-1980* (Los Angeles: Chinese American Museum, 2012) an exhibition at the Chinese American Museum from January to June 2012 as a part of the Pacific Standard Time initiative; Karen Wada, "Chinese American architects were vital to Los Angeles' growth," *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 2012; "Gilbert Lester Leong, Architect, Founder of East West Bank," *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1996; Gordon Chang, Mark Dean Johnson, Paul Karlstrom, and Sharon Spain, *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2008), 374-375.

<sup>162</sup> Chun was the maiden name of Doc Wong's wife, hence the name *Chun Wong*.

<sup>163</sup> This building was later occupied by Morgan Garment & Linen Service.

<sup>164</sup> Eugene Moy, "Historic Building/Site Report, Grandview Gardens Restaurant," September 25, 1992. Additional information provided by Carole Sutherland Wong, daughter of Doc Wong, as conveyed by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member. Sources differ as to whether Chun Wong was the first Chinese frozen food processing factory in the United States.

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such as May Company department stores, Sarno’s Bakery, and See’s Candies. The company later moved to larger facilities at 127 West 39<sup>th</sup> Street, south of Downtown Los Angeles.<sup>165</sup>

Quon Yick Noodle Company was founded in 1956 by Chinese immigrant Shew San Leong. Started as a small noodle company on Sunset Boulevard, around 1966 the company moved to a larger building at 2730 North Main Street in Lincoln Heights. Quon Yick became known for its dry noodles, pasta skins for won tons, and fortune cookies, competing with the older Hong Kong Noodle Company.<sup>166</sup> Bicycle Lee’s, a flat rice noodle factory established in the 1940s, operated out of the first floor of the Gin/Yan Family Association building at 612 West College Street. Selling this specialty product to the general public, restaurants, and grocery stores, Mr. Lee made his deliveries to regular customers by bicycle.<sup>167</sup> Additional longtime businesses from this period include the G.W. Market at 672 North Spring Street (1958), the Moytel motel at 946 Yale Street (1960; Gilbert Leong), and the King Hing Theater at 649 North Spring Street (1962; Gilbert Leong).

After World War II, many benevolent associations established new permanent headquarters in the New Chinatown neighborhood, often engaging Chinese American architects like Eugene Choy or Gilbert Leong. While some associations chose to build prominent structures in the Asian Eclectic style—employing elements like tile roofing, flared eaves, and upturned rafter tails—other groups opted for more restrained Modern-style buildings.

*Opening of the Lung Kong Tin Yee Association building, 1949.  
Los Angeles Public Library, Shades of L.A. Collections.*



<sup>165</sup> Information provided by Joaquin Chung, as conveyed by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>166</sup> Quon Yick has since relocated to El Monte, where it is run by Leong’s wife and sons. Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>167</sup> Information provided by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.



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Association headquarters established during this period include the Lung Kong Tin Yee Association at 989 North Broadway (1949; A. Godfrey Bailey); the Soo Yuen Fraternal Association at 993 North Broadway (1965; Curry-Higley); the Bing Kong Tong Association at 963 North Broadway (1949); the Ying On Benevolent Association at 424 West Bernard Street (1949; Eugene Choy); the Wong Kong Har Wu Sun Association at 744 North Broadway (1950; Eugene Choy); the Gee How Oak Tin Association at 421 Bernard Street (1949; Eugene Choy); the Hoy Ping Benevolent Association at 411 Bamboo Lane (1950); the Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association (Los Angeles chapter) at 972 Chung King Road (1950);<sup>168</sup> the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association at 925 North Broadway (Eugene Choy (1952); the Kow Kong Benevolent Association at 510 Bernard Street (1956; Gilbert Leong); the Lee On Dong Association at 964 North Hill Street (1959); the Kong Chow Benevolent Association at 931 North Broadway (1960; Gilbert Leong); the Jan Ying Benevolent Association at 736 Yale Street (1965; Gilbert Leong); and the Gin Family Association at 612 West College Street (1976).<sup>169</sup>

Additional community and business organizations constructed new buildings in New Chinatown during this period, including the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (Los Angeles Lodge) at 415 Bamboo Lane, (1955, Eugene Choy). Also in 1955, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles was formed to promote and encourage Chinese American business throughout the city.<sup>170</sup> The *New Kwong Tai Press*, Los Angeles' first Chinese ethnic newspaper, was founded in 1961 in the basement of 940 Chung King Road in the Greater Chinatown development. It was one of the city's oldest Chinese newspapers when it ceased operations.<sup>171</sup> French Hospital (later known as the Pacific Alliance Medical Center) at 531 W College Street originally served a primarily French population in Los Angeles. As the Chinese population in the area increased, the Chinese population the hospital served also increased. The French Hospital became the primary source of medical care for the majority of New Chinatown residents.<sup>172</sup>

Religious institutions continued to play an important role in Chinese community life after the war. As with the benevolent associations, many religious congregations sought to establish their presence in the New Chinatown neighborhood with new buildings. By this time, religious services were typically bilingual and included supplemental community programs, such as Sunday schools, choirs, and potlucks. While many second- and third-generation Chinese Americans practiced Christianity, local

<sup>168</sup> Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association was originally established in San Francisco in 1892. It is unclear when the Los Angeles chapter was founded, and it has been located at 972 Chung King Road since 1950.

<sup>169</sup> Benevolent associations typically predate their buildings, often by many decades. In some instances, these organizations were originally established in San Francisco in the late nineteenth century, with a Los Angeles branch formed in the early twentieth century in Old Chinatown, and later relocated to Chinatown. The original founding dates of these benevolent associations could not always be determined. Dates and architect names indicated are taken from original building permits and/or certificates of occupancy where available.

<sup>170</sup> Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, accessed July 2013, <http://www.lachinesechamber.org/>. The Chamber occupies a space in the Far East National Bank Building at 977 North Broadway (1983).

<sup>171</sup> Him Mark Lai, "The Ups and Down of Chinese Press in North America," n.d., Him Mark Lai digital archive, accessed July 2017, <https://himmarklai.org/>. It is unclear when the *New Kwong Tai Press* shut down. According to Lai, after the press adopted more modern printing methods for the newspaper, it continued to hand set type for wedding invitations and other fine printing.

<sup>172</sup> Frank Shyong, "After 157 years in Chinatown, Los Angeles' oldest hospital shuts its doors," *Los Angeles Times*, December 18, 2017.

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benevolent associations and social clubs also served religious or spiritual functions for those who continued traditional practices of Daoism or Buddhism. Benevolent association meeting halls frequently included shrines on the second floor, and were also used for the instruction of children in religious practices. Institutions that established facilities in New Chinatown during this period include the Chinese United Methodist Church at 825 North Hill Street (1947) and the First Chinese Baptist Church at 984 Yale Street (1957), both designed by Gilbert Leong.<sup>173</sup> Alpine Playground was established in 1951 to encourage sports activities in New Chinatown. The playground gave rise to the Chinese basketball team, which established a league in 1962.<sup>174</sup>

### **Residential Integration, 1945-1965**

In the years following World War II, the population of Chinese in the United States grew dramatically. U.S. policy encouraged Chinese students to complete their studies in the United States by offering financial grants through the U.S. State Department. By the end of the war, more than 2,000 Chinese students had been admitted to the United States, and by 1949, more Chinese students were enrolled in American colleges and universities than at any earlier period.<sup>175</sup> In addition to students, many Chinese immigrants during this period were refugees from the newly formed People's Republic of China, and tended to be wealthier than earlier immigrants.<sup>176</sup> In Los Angeles, the Chinese community ballooned from a population of approximately 8,000 in 1950 to approximately 20,000 in 1960.<sup>177</sup>

Beginning in the late 1940s, the New Chinatown residential district continued to expand northward toward Elysian Park, while the multi-ethnic enclave around East Adams Boulevard retained a substantial Chinese American population. Also during this period, there was the expansion of the Chinese American population into previously white-only neighborhoods for the first time. In the previous decade, many Chinese Americans were denied federal housing assistance through programs of the Public Works Administration available only to American citizens.<sup>178</sup> Chinese Americans were also excluded from the Federal Housing Administration's home loan programs. Exclusion of Asian Americans from these programs prevented them from accessing new, entitlement-based benefits of citizenship expanded through New Deal programs, reinforcing Los Angeles' existing housing segregation. At the same time, racial restrictive covenants prevented Chinese Americans from moving into certain neighborhoods. By the 1940s, white homeowners in areas bordering neighborhoods with restrictive covenants began selling

<sup>173</sup> The address used by the church is 942 Yale Street.

<sup>174</sup> George and Elsie Yee, "The 1927 Chinese Baseball team," in *Bridging the Centuries: History of Chinese Americans in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, 2001), 158-162; Sherman Louie, "The Chinese Basketball Story," in op. cit., 163-164.

<sup>175</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 45. These students were from all parts of China and Asia, especially Taiwan. As the Cold War continued, elite students from outside the Peoples' Republic of China were marooned in America, settled, and contributed significantly to its productive life. Because many became academics or technology professionals, notably in aerospace or computers, they and their families moved into the upper-middle-class suburbs of Los Angeles near the places of their professions. Information provided by Munson Kwok, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>176</sup> Chen, "Changing Social-Cultural Patterns," 45.

<sup>177</sup> *Linking Our Lives*, 20.

<sup>178</sup> Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 72, 75.

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to non-white buyers. The massive postwar growth of the city's non-white population created ethnically mixed neighborhoods, particularly in West and South Los Angeles, where non-white professionals were willing to pay a premium for improved housing.<sup>179</sup>

In the years immediately following the war, residents of various ethnic backgrounds pursued legal action to overturn racial restrictive covenants across Los Angeles. While the case involving black residents of Los Angeles in the Sugar Hill neighborhood in West Adams is perhaps best known, Chinese Americans also pursued civil rights cases to gain access to housing throughout the City. In 1946, Chinese American Thomas Amer purchased a house at 127 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street in a South Los Angeles housing tract with deed restrictions. Amer's white neighbors filed an injunction against him, attempting to prevent him from taking possession of the house. Amer pursued the case to the United States Supreme Court in 1947, where it received national attention as one of seven cases from California on the issue of enforcing racial restrictive covenants. While the Supreme Court ultimately decided to rule only on cases involving African American homeowners as representative of all people facing restrictive covenants in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, Amer's case was viewed as an important civil rights victory for Chinese Americans.<sup>180</sup> In the years following the decision, middle-class Chinese American families began moving into formerly white-only suburbs throughout Los Angeles, creating a more diffuse Chinese population.

One of the most significant factors in the early movement of Chinese Americans out of Chinatown was the rise of Chinese American architects designing houses for the growing number of Chinese American middle class homeowners. Eugene Choy and Gilbert Leong are both noted for their Mid-Century Modern homes designed in Los Angeles with a concentration in the Silver Lake neighborhood. Choy himself was the subject of racial discrimination when, in 1949, he sought to purchase a narrow hillside lot on Castle Street overlooking the Silver Lake Reservoir to build a residence for his family. Confronted with deed restrictions that would prevent him from purchasing property in the area, Choy went door to door soliciting the support of his would-be neighbors and eventually winning them over.<sup>181</sup> Choy's completed residence (3027 Castle Street) received national attention, praised in architecture magazines and photographed by Julius Shulman.<sup>182</sup> Choy's success initiated a trend of affluent Chinese Americans building homes in Silver Lake. Additional residences designed by Choy include the Chew Residence at 3893 Franklin Avenue (1953), the Kawaguchi Residence at 3022 Windsor Avenue (1956), the residence at 3028 Windsor Avenue (1949), and the apartment building at 2356 Duane Street (1957).

Gilbert Leong also designed a number of residences in the Silver Lake neighborhood: the Judge Delbert E. and Dolores Wong Residence at 2416 West Silver Lake Drive (1954), the Edwin Kwoh & Beulah Quo Residence at 1906 Redcliff Street (1956), the Dr. Edward Lee Residence at 2410 West Silver Lake Drive (1957), and the Tirado-Lion-Peligri Residence at 2925 Waverly Drive (1959).<sup>183</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Brooks, *Alien Neighbors*, 176.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 178-186.

<sup>181</sup> Chinese American Museum, *Breaking Ground*, 36. The exhibition described how Choy, Gilbert L. Leong, Helen Liu Fong and Gin D. Wong helped to shape Los Angeles' postwar landscape.

<sup>182</sup> Chinese American Museum, *Breaking Ground*, 30.

<sup>183</sup> Information provided by the UCLA Chinese American Oral History project (unpublished), Suellen Cheng, and Dr. Sue Fawn Chung, as conveyed by Dr. Chung, Project Advisory Committee member.

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**Chinatown and Chinese Dispersion and Upward Mobility Since 1965**

By the 1960s, Asian Americans in Los Angeles were more likely to own their own homes than Mexican Americans or African Americans, a reversal of the trends of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>184</sup> This residential mobility gave middle-class Chinese Americans access to parts of Southern California experiencing the greatest postwar economic growth, making them less dependent on manufacturing jobs that were beginning to leave Los Angeles. As Chinese American families relocated to residential suburbs, their children gained access to better-funded public schools. All of these factors contributed to the relative prosperity of the Chinese American community in the decades following the World War II.

The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 had a substantial impact on the Chinese American community in Los Angeles. The legislation abolished national origins quotas that favored immigrants from western and northern Europe, instead giving each country an identical quota. This policy shift resulted in a substantial increase in the number of ethnic Chinese admitted to the United States annually, not only from China but also from Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The Act also revised policies allowing political refugees into the United States. In addition to the thousands of Chinese admitted under standard immigration policies, 15,000 Chinese refugees were permitted into the United States in the mid-1960s.<sup>185</sup>

During the late 1960s, West Coast universities began offering Asian American Studies programs after protestors at the University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco State University demanded that the history of people of color be included in what was then a Eurocentric history curriculum. In 1969, the Asian American Studies Center was established at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Community members, students, staff, and faculty sought to develop a center to bridge campus and community around the theme of liberative education and social justice. UCLA began to serve as an active site for the development of Asian American Studies as a field of study just as the Chinese American population in Los Angeles reached approximately 40,000.

Beginning in the 1970s, affluent Chinese Americans began moving outside the City of Los Angeles, primarily east to the San Gabriel Valley. During this period, many Chinese Americans relocated to the City of Monterey Park, purchasing homes and establishing what has been termed an ethnoburb, a suburban residential and commercial center with a substantial concentration of a particular ethnic minority population.<sup>186</sup> Monterey Park was marketed as the Chinese Beverly Hills by real estate agent Frederic Hsieh, who compared the area's geography to Taipei, Taiwan.<sup>187</sup> Businesses and institutions

<sup>184</sup> Brooks, *Alien Neighbors*, 227.

<sup>185</sup> *Linking Our Lives*, 11.

<sup>186</sup> Wei Li, "Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement: The Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles," *Urban Studies*, March 1, 1998, 482.

<sup>187</sup> "Frederic Hsieh," *New York Times*, August 21, 1999. SFGate, accessed July 2013, <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Frederic-Hsieh-2913678.php>. Many of the Chinese immigrants that have settled in the San Gabriel Valley are Mandarin-speaking Chinese from China and Taiwan. Information provided by Munson Kwok, Project Advisory Committee member.

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catering to the Chinese American community either moved with the residential population or were newly established in this area. This demographic shift has been reinforced as many newly arrived Chinese immigrants often bypass Los Angeles' Chinatown, immediately settling in these Chinese American enclaves in the San Gabriel Valley.<sup>188</sup> This is in stark contrast to the pattern of earlier Chinese immigrants, almost all of whom initially lived in Chinatown.

With the diffusion and diversification of the region's Chinese American population during this period, more Chinese businesses and institutions begin to appear in other areas of the city. East West Players, one of the country's first Asian American theater organizations, was founded in 1965 in the basement of Pilgrim Church at 1629 Griffith Park Boulevard in Silver Lake.<sup>189</sup> Located in Little Tokyo at the Union Center for the Arts at 120 North Judge Aiso Street,<sup>190</sup> East West Players has premiered more than one hundred plays and musicals featuring Asian American experiences and history, serving as an important training ground for Asian Americans pursuing careers in theater, film, and television. An important Chinese institution, the Yu Acupuncture Clinic has been in operation at 1807 Beverly Boulevard in Westlake since 1977. The large influx of immigrants of Chinese descent after 1965 sparked a resurgence in traditional Chinese medicine in Los Angeles, including Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture. Dr. Moses Yu came to the United States at this time, hoping to continue the practice acupuncture that has been in his family for 21 generations. When he found he could not get licensed, he set up a makeshift office in Chinatown, and became instrumental in getting the practice of acupuncture legalized in California in 1976. The Moses Yu Family Acupuncture and Chiropractic Clinic was formally established the following year, and includes Yu's wife and three children among its staff.<sup>191</sup>

It was also during this period that the area known as Spring Street Chinatown began to thrive. Functionally a part of a much-expanded Chinatown, Spring Street developed organically beginning in the 1950s in response to needs of the Chinese American community who sought places to shop, dine out, and enjoy entertainment away from the more tourist-centered developments further north.<sup>192</sup> An important reminder of this postwar development is the King Hing Theater at 649 North Spring Street. Established in 1962 as the Sing Lee Theater, it was part of a nationwide network of theaters that distributed Chinese-language films, particularly those from Hong Kong.<sup>193</sup> Over the years, theater owner Sik Wah Lew accumulated a substantial collection of 35mm films from what is considered the Golden Age of the Hong Kong movie industry of the 1970s and 1980s, many of which have since been donated to the UCLA Film and TV Archive.<sup>194</sup> During its tenure, the Sing Lee Theater also hosted Chinese opera performances and community events.

<sup>188</sup> An exception to this trend is Chinese-speaking refugees, who often arrive with few economic resources. For many in this group, Los Angeles' Chinatown remains the first destination. Information provided by Munson Kwok, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>189</sup> East West Players, accessed July 2017, <http://www.eastwestplayers.org>.

<sup>190</sup> This property is City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 312 for its association with Los Angeles' Japanese American community.

<sup>191</sup> Yu Family Acupuncture, accessed July 2017, <http://www.yufamilyclinic.com/>.

<sup>192</sup> *Angels Walk LA*.

<sup>193</sup> Victor Fan, "New York Chinatown Theaters under the Hong Kong Circuit System," *Film History*, March 2010, accessed July 2017 via Project Muse, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/376116>.

<sup>194</sup> Information provided by Warren Hong, Project Advisory Committee member.

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Despite changes in the settlement patterns of area Chinese and Chinese Americans, Chinatown continued to be the commercial and cultural heart of the Chinese American community in Los Angeles. On November 12, 1966, a monument to Chinese revolutionary leader and first president of the Republic of China Sun Yat-sen was dedicated at the Broadway Street entrance to the New Chinatown development. Commissioned by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association to commemorate the centenary of his birth, the 5-foot-tall statue was executed in Taiwan and placed atop a white marble pedestal designed by artist Robert John Lee. Flowers are placed in front of the monument by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association on the anniversaries of Sun's birth and death.

When Bruce Lee arrived in Los Angeles in 1966 to star in *The Green Hornet* television show, he established a martial arts studio at 628 West College Street. Between 1971 and 1973, he starred in four feature-length films, popularizing the traditional Hong Kong martial arts film, sparking a surge of interest in Chinese martial arts in the West, and helping to change the way Asians were presented in American films. Lee also became a familiar face in Chinatown, working out at the Alpine Recreation Center and jogging around the neighborhood. In 2013, a seven-foot-tall bronze statue of Lee was unveiled in the New Chinatown development's Central Plaza, commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, as well as the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction of New Chinatown.<sup>195</sup>

In addition to the Sing Lee Theater on Spring Street, two more Chinese-language theaters were established in Chinatown during this period. The Cinemaland Theater (Royal Pagoda Theatre) opened at 410 Cottage Home Street in the early 1960s. In the late 1960s, the Alpine Theater, a 1926 vaudeville theater at 718 North Figueroa Street,<sup>196</sup> was reopened as the Kim Sing Theater. In the 1970s and 1980s, these venues were perhaps best known for screening the latest kung fu films from Hong Kong, including those of Bruce Lee, Jet Li, Chow Yun Fat, and Jackie Chan, as well as the films of the Shaw Brothers Studio.<sup>197</sup> It was also at this time that Chinatown got its first major national bank. Following the success of Cathay Bank, Bank of America opened a branch at 850 North Broadway in 1971. Designed by Gilbert Leong and Richard Layne Tom, the Modern building incorporates classical Chinese elements, including a jade green tile roof with upturned ridgelines over extended wood beams.<sup>198</sup>

Chinatown experienced a resurgence in tourism during this period, due in large part to two popular rock music venues, both located in the New Chinatown development. In 1970, restaurateur Esther Wong opened Madame Wong's, along with her sister Cathy Wong Yee. Located at 949 Sun Mun Way (extant), Madame Wong's played a pivotal role in the Los Angeles new wave music scene in the 1970s and 1980s, showcasing bands like The Police, The Motels, The Bangles, Oingo Boingo, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and The Ramones. After a fire, Madame Wong's closed in 1985. In 1979, the Hong Kong Café opened just across the courtyard at 425 Gin Ling Way, upstairs from the Hong Kong Low restaurant. Leaning more toward punk music, this short-lived venue hosted shows from cutting-edge

<sup>195</sup> "Bruce Lee Statue unveiled in L.A.'s Chinatown," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 2013.

<sup>196</sup> The Alpine Theater is also considered to be the flashpoint of the Zoot Suit Riots in June 1943.

<sup>197</sup> Kim Sing Theater, accessed July 2017, <http://www.kimsingtheatre.com/history>. Additional information provided by Warren Hong, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>198</sup> Los Angeles Conservancy, "Exploring Chinatown," 5; Chinese American Museum, *Breaking Ground*, 18.

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bands the Bags, the Weirdos, and the Germs, as well as rising acts like X, the Go-Go's, and Black Flag before they were famous. Hong Kong Café was also featured in Penelope Spheeris' 1980 documentary film about the Los Angeles punk rock scene, *The Decline of Western Civilization*. Hong Kong Café closed in 1981.<sup>199</sup>

In the 1970s, the residential population of Chinatown increased by almost two thirds, from 5,839 in 1970 to 8,652 by 1980.<sup>200</sup> Area demographics also shifted in terms of age and country of origin, as Chinatown evolved to include older, primarily Cantonese-speaking Chinese, along with substantial numbers of working-class Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, and Filipino immigrants of Chinese descent. By the mid-1980s, nearly half of all businesses in Chinatown were owned by Vietnamese Chinese.<sup>201</sup> In response to this population growth, two new commercial centers were developed. In 1972, Mandarin Plaza opened at 978 North Broadway. Designed by architect Hai C. Tan, it was the first substantial commercial development in Chinatown since the 1950s.<sup>202</sup> In 1978, Far East Plaza opened just down the street at 727 North Broadway, considered by many to be the first modern ethnic shopping mall in America.<sup>203</sup> Distinguishing Far East Plaza from other commercial developments was the fact that every storefront was zoned for restaurant use.<sup>204</sup> The local cuisine also evolved in order to cater to different ethnic groups. Chinatown restaurants increasing served dishes from various Asian countries alongside traditional Chinese cuisine such as dim sum, shifting away from the more Americanized Chinese dishes like chop suey and egg foo young commonly served in Chinatown restaurants in earlier decades.

This rapid influx of residents often led to substandard housing conditions, strained social services, and overcrowding. In an effort to better serve the needs of the area's immigrant community, a number of community service organizations and educational centers were established. The Chinatown Service Center opened in 1971, as a branch of the United Way (later located at 767 North Hill Street).<sup>205</sup> In 1976, the Chinatown Senior Citizens Service Center was founded by the Chinese Committee on Aging (later located at 600 North Broadway). In 1980, the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) established the Chinatown Redevelopment Project Area and oversaw the construction of several affordable housing projects.<sup>206</sup>

To meet the demands of this growing and diversifying community, Castelar Street Elementary School was substantially expanded in the 1970s, including a large addition designed by Eugene Choy.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>199</sup> Information provided by Warren Hong, Project Advisory Committee member.

<sup>200</sup> Karen Lew, "Chinatown: The Present," in commemorative booklet *Chinatown Los Angeles: The Golden Years 1938-1988* (Los Angeles: Chinese Chamber of Commerce, 1988), 59.

<sup>201</sup> Him Mark Lai and Russell Jeung, "Guild, Unions, and Garment Factories: Notes on Chinese in the Apparel Industry," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 2008, 7. Him Mark Lai digital archive, accessed July 2017, <https://himmarklai.org/digitized-articles/2006-201/01-5/>.

<sup>202</sup> *Angels Walk LA*.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> Katherine Spiers, "Chinatown's Far East Plaza is a Dining Destination Thanks for George Yu," *LA Weekly*, May 3, 2017.

<sup>205</sup> Lew, "Chinatown," 59.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 63. Seven low-income housing projects were constructed in the neighborhood during this period, including Cathay Manor, a 270-unit apartment complex at 600 North Broadway (1985) to house senior citizens.

<sup>207</sup> Los Angeles Conservancy, "Exploring Chinatown," 6.

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Located at 840 Yale Street, Castelar School is the second oldest continuously operating elementary school in the Los Angeles Unified School District, dating back to 1882. It also became the first school in the district to offer trilingual instruction (English, Chinese, and Spanish), with faculty and staff who speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Toisanese, Hakka, Chiu Chow, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Spanish.<sup>208</sup> Reflecting this diversity, in 1976 children's book author and illustrator Leo Politi created a painted wall mural at the school's entrance depicting a multi-ethnic group of students playing *Ring Around the Rosie*.<sup>209</sup> In 1977, the school became the founding location of the Chinatown public library.<sup>210</sup>

In the 1980s, public art in Los Angeles got a boost through the Community Redevelopment Agency's Percent for Art program, which required that one percent of the cost of large-scale development projects be designated to fund the creation and installation of public art. With the establishment of Chinatown as a redevelopment area, public art became a stronger presence and an increasingly important component of the area's urban design. Chinatown is home to numerous public art works, many of which were designed by noted Chinese American artists.<sup>211</sup>

Persons of Chinese descent make up one of the largest ethnic groups in Los Angeles. While the influence of Chinese and Chinese Americans is evident in neighborhoods throughout the city, Chinatown continues to serve as the cultural heart of the community. The New Chinatown development, in particular, stands as a monument to the collective achievements of Los Angeles' Chinese American community.<sup>212</sup> Its Central Plaza remains the epicenter for many cultural activities, from Chinese New Year festivities to the mid-autumn Moon Festival, bringing together ethnic Chinese from throughout the region in celebration of shared beliefs, values, and traditions.

<sup>208</sup> *Angels Walk LA*.

<sup>209</sup> Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles, accessed July 2017, <http://www.muralconservancy.org/murals/untitled-35>; *Angels Walk LA*.

<sup>210</sup> The Chinatown Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library opened at North Hill and Ord Streets in 2003.

<sup>211</sup> Commissioned public art in Chinatown includes *The Party at Lan T'ing* mural at 536 West College Street (Shiyan Zhang, 1991), the *Listening for the Trains to Come* sculpture at 946 Adobe Street (May Sun, 1992), the *Water Lens Tower* sculpture at 755 West College Street (Carl Cheng, 1992), the Chinatown Gateway, spanning North Broadway north of Cesar Chavez Boulevard (Rupert Mok, 2001); and the *Shades of Chinatown* mural at 421 West College Street.

<sup>212</sup> Los Angeles Conservancy, "Exploring Chinatown," 9.



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**Japanese Americans in Los Angeles, 1869-1970**

**Introduction**

This historic context examines the migration, settlement, and development patterns of Japanese Americans in Los Angeles between 1869, the start of immigration of Japanese to Los Angeles, to 1970, the date of the adoption of the Little Tokyo Redevelopment Area by the City of Los Angeles, substantially changing the physical composition of the community. The history of Japanese Americans in Los Angeles is traced chronologically. It begins with Early Japanese Immigration to Southern California, 1869-1910, and is followed by Japanese Settlement in Southern California, 1911-1924; Japanese Stabilization and Community Development, 1925-1940; Japanese Forced Removal and Incarceration, 1941-1944; Japanese Resettlement, 1945-1959; and Japanese Diaspora and Upward Mobility, 1960-1970. The context closes with a brief discussion of Japanese redress in the 1980s.

Japanese Americans have contributed significantly to the transformation of Los Angeles from pueblo town to vibrant suburban metropolis. Since 1910, the city has been home to the largest population of Japanese Americans on the mainland. The Issei (first generation immigrants) shaped the agriculture, fishing and canning, and gardening industries, and simultaneously created Little Tokyo, the largest *nihonmachi* (Japantown) in America. Despite decades of racial discrimination, Los Angeles' Japanese Americans created a rich network of social, cultural, and religious institutions only to have them obliterated by wartime hysteria and incarceration during World War II. Issei and Nisei (second generation) returned to Los Angeles after the war to rebuild their lives and businesses and participate in the postwar American dream, while overcoming racial exclusion and anti-Japanese sentiment. They reinvented themselves and built new social, cultural, and religious institutions for future generations. As such, Japanese Americans played an important role in the multi-cultural identity of Los Angeles.

**Terms and Definitions**

The following outlines some important aspects of the approach to terminology for the Japanese American context:

- As often as possible, both the English and Japanese terms are included in this context. Japanese terms appear in italics alongside their common English translation.
- Generational terms are important for the reader to understand as they are commonplace in Japanese American history and sociology:
  - The first-generation immigrants are known as *Issei*. They came to the U.S. between 1890 and 1924 and were steeped in Japanese culture and tradition. Few attended American schools, except for those who came specifically to pursue a college education. English proficiency varied among this generation.
  - The children of Issei are the *Nisei*, or second generation. Nisei were born in the United States, primarily between 1910 and 1940. They grew up during the Great Depression and were teenagers during World War II. They attended Los Angeles public schools and many attended Japanese language schools (*gakuen*).

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- The third generation is the *Sansei*, or members of the post-World War II baby boom. Many Sansei have American first names. Most Sansei came of age at the height of the student protest movement of the 1960s. Many attended college and became working professionals.
- The fourth generation is the *Yonsei*. They were born in the mid-1960s, came of age in the post-Watergate years, and have the highest rates of interracial marriage of any Japanese American generation.
- *Nikkei* refers generally to individuals of Japanese ancestry born in the United States, regardless of generation.
- *Kibei Nisei* includes Japanese Americans who were born in America, and raised and partially educated in Japan.
- With respect to given names of individuals, it is worth noting that during periods of excessive prejudice against the Japanese, many took on American names to emphasize their place in America. Practically speaking, this means that some members of the Japanese American community may have two first names, which can be confusing and difficult for researchers. Whenever known, both names are included here.
- Over time, the preferred vocabulary for describing events relating to World War II and the Japanese Americans has evolved to reflect a more accurate and authentic terminology. As such, the terms forced removal, incarceration, temporary detention center, incarceration camp, and illegal detention center are used to describe events and actions that may appear in previous historic documentation as internment, evacuation, and relocation.

### **Early Japanese Immigration to Los Angeles, 1869-1910**

Between 1869 and 1910, Los Angeles rose to prominence as a destination for Japanese immigrants, becoming home to the largest Issei population in the United States by 1910. The city's expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, combined with its fertile rural environs, made the city attractive to a diverse range of immigrants. The San Francisco earthquake also played a pivotal role in Los Angeles' ultimate dominance over northern California as home to the state's Japanese population. On the other hand, isolationist political leanings, immigration laws, and restrictive residential policies aimed at Asians challenged Los Angeles' Issei.

According to scholar Donna Graves, "California has played a defining role in Japanese American history since the summer of 1869 when a small group of settlers arrived from Japan intending to establish an agricultural settlement."<sup>213</sup> This was the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony in El Dorado County. The 1870 Census reported 55 Japanese in the U.S., with 33 in California: 22 at the Wakamatsu Colony, and just eleven outside El Dorado County.<sup>214</sup> The first official accounts of Japanese residents in Los Angeles County date back to 1869-70, when two Japanese-born servants appear in the

<sup>213</sup> Donna Graves, Draft National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Japanese American Heritage and The Quest for Civil Rights in Riverside, California, 1890s-1970s," 5, accessed April 18, 2018  
[www.riversideca.gov/historic/pdf/Japanese-American-Context-Statement.pdf](http://www.riversideca.gov/historic/pdf/Japanese-American-Context-Statement.pdf).

<sup>214</sup> These statistics are countered by Yamato Ishihashi's statistics on Japanese immigration for the period that accounts for 218 Japanese immigrants before 1870.

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household of Judge Edward J.C. Kewin at the El Molino Viejo (Old Mill) in San Marino. The two young men, Ta Komo and E. Noska, aged 18 and 13 respectively, left Kewin's employ by 1880.<sup>215</sup> It is unknown if they stayed in the area or migrated elsewhere.

Japanese immigration was officially restricted until 1884 when an agreement between the Japanese and Hawaiian sugar plantations was reached. As a result, many Japanese came to the U.S. mainland via Hawaii. Most Japanese immigrants entered the United States through San Francisco, although other significant ports of entry included Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle. At this time, the majority of newly arrived Japanese residents settled in northern California. In 1884, approximately 25 Japanese were lured from San Francisco to Los Angeles—likely due to the construction of the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Needs were further exacerbated by the ensuing rate war with the Southern Pacific.

In 1885, Japan legalized the emigration of labor and Japanese were recruited to the United States to fill railroad jobs previously held by Chinese immigrants since barred by the Restriction Law of 1882, or Chinese Exclusion Act. In 1903, newly unionized Mexican employees for the Pacific Electric Railway went on strike and still more Japanese were recruited from San Francisco to fill the open positions.

In addition to filling the gap created by the lack of Chinese laborers, the demand for labor in Southern California increased due to rapid industrial expansion. As a result, not all Japanese took positions with the railroad. By 1888, there were about 70 Japanese in the Los Angeles area. By 1900, there were approximately 200, and by 1904, the number had jumped to an estimated 2,800 in Los Angeles due largely to the Pacific Electric's recruitment of the Japanese.<sup>216</sup>

In 1905, a number of Okinawans were recruited to work in the coal mines of Mexico. Working in substandard conditions, one young man, Kamado Ota, escaped to California and others followed. Once in Los Angeles, the Okinawans generally turned to agricultural pursuits.<sup>217</sup>

According to author Yamato Ichihashi in his 1915 book *Japanese Immigration: Its Status in California*, early immigration statistics show that the majority of Issei were laborers. In 1900, the mix of immigrant occupations changed significantly to include merchants, fishermen, farmers, and artisans.<sup>218</sup> Many others started their own businesses, including Charles Kame (likely Shigeta Hamonsouke, the first Japanese independent businessman in Los Angeles)<sup>219</sup>, Akita Sanshichi, and George Izawa.<sup>220</sup>

Restaurants were the most prevalent Japanese commercial activity in Los Angeles before 1900, creating

<sup>215</sup> The two young men were listed in the census with the Kewin last name, similar to the listing of African Americans in previous periods.

<sup>216</sup> William M. Mason and John A. McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Museum of Natural History, 1969), 12.

<sup>217</sup> The Okinawa Club of America, *History of the Okinawans in North America* (Los Angeles: Asian American Studies Center, University of California, Los Angeles, 1988), 22.

<sup>218</sup> Yamato Ichihashi, *Japanese Immigration, Its Status in California* (San Francisco: The Marshall Press, 1915), 8.

<sup>219</sup> Kame/Hamonsouke opened a restaurant at 340 E. 1st Street circa 1886 (not extant).

<sup>220</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 2. Birth and death dates were not found in Ancestry.com.

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what has been called “the restaurant era” of the Los Angeles Japanese.<sup>221</sup> Between 1893 and 1896, the number of Japanese-operated restaurants in Downtown Los Angeles increased from two or three to sixteen. They did not cater exclusively to Japanese; they served chicken dinners, beef stew, and other American fare with pie or ice cream for dessert for 10-15 cents per meal. Their clientele were the workmen who lived in the First Street district. Other smaller commercial activities for Japanese at this time included bamboo furniture stores and barbers. Early Japanese merchants included Sanshichi Akita (c. 1857-1920), Inosuke Inose (1856-1939),<sup>222</sup> Harry T. Tomio (1881-1971), and Benjamin Bungoro Mori (1869-1964).

In 1902, Japanese students began immigrating in large numbers, growing from 1,200 in 1902 to 2,972 in 1907.<sup>223</sup> During this period, a small number of *kugakusei* (student-boys or student laborers) were living in Los Angeles and attending universities. They performed live-in domestic help while studying English. By 1907, some young Issei who had spent a few years in local secondary schools began enrolling at the University of Southern California (USC) and matriculating. As early as 1908 there were ten students at USC and two at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.<sup>224</sup>

Regardless of occupation, the early Issei immigrants were overwhelmingly male. The intention was to come to America for the economic opportunity, work hard, and then return to Japan. It was not until 1905 that the percentage of female Japanese immigrants to California reached double digits for the first time.<sup>225</sup> The presence of women significantly changed the community from predominantly migratory laborers to a more stable population of farmers or businessmen.<sup>226</sup>

The year 1903 marked the debut of the local Japanese newspaper, the *Rafu Shimpō*, as a mimeographed sheet distributed twice weekly. In 1904, with the acquisition of a movable type machine, the paper began daily publication. The English section commenced in 1917. Circulation rose with population growth and the newspaper became an important force and voice in the development of the Japanese American community in Los Angeles. By 1910, there were two other papers serving the Japanese community: the *Rafu Mainichi* and *Rafu Ashai*. The *Rafu Shimpō* was the intellectual paper of the community, whereas the *Rafu Mainichi* was written in an easy to understand style for farmers and laborers.<sup>227</sup>

A significant factor in the growth of the Japanese population in Los Angeles was the great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906. In the wake of the destruction, many Japanese who had settled in San Francisco moved south to Los Angeles. Anti-Japanese sentiment in San Francisco surged after the

<sup>221</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 3.

<sup>222</sup> Inosuke Inose started the Sunrise Restaurant on East 1st Street in 1895.

<sup>223</sup> Ichihashi, *Japanese Immigration*, 8.

<sup>224</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 25.

<sup>225</sup> Ichihashi, *Japanese Immigration*, 8.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>227</sup> There are no extant associated resources from the papers' early years.

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disaster as well. It is estimated that between 2,000 and 3,000 of San Francisco's Japanese population moved to Los Angeles after the earthquake.<sup>228</sup> Among them were dozens of Okinawans.<sup>229</sup>

Although Japanese were initially recruited to the U.S. to fill railroad jobs, they quickly began to turn to agricultural pursuits given the fertile ground and favorable climate of Southern California. They drew from years of family experience; two-thirds of Issei men and women reported that their parents were farmers in Japan.<sup>230</sup> By 1909, two-thirds of California's Japanese population was working on farms.<sup>231</sup>

The Issei specialized in relatively perishable crops not favored by corporate growers. The former city of Tropico (portions of which were annexed into what is became the Atwater Village neighborhood of Los Angeles and the City of Glendale)<sup>232</sup> was the first recorded place in Los Angeles where the Japanese worked on farms. The first Japanese laborers came to work the land in 1899, and soon there were Japanese bosses calling others to work.<sup>233</sup> In 1901, a Japanese boss leased one of the ranches, marking the beginning of Japanese leasing and farming in Los Angeles County.<sup>234</sup> By 1904, 24 Japanese tenants were leasing 155 acres devoted to strawberry cultivation. After the frost of 1907, many Japanese farmers turned to growing vegetables. Japanese are known to have worked farms in the Wilmington, Harbor City, Venice, and Los Feliz areas.<sup>235</sup> As Donna Graves describes the system, it graduated Japanese farmers from labor for hire, to a contract system, the share system, and the lease system under which farmers took full responsibility for crop yield and rent paid to a landowner.<sup>236</sup> The ultimate goal was to save enough money to purchase land.

In 1906, Japanese farmers began to lease land and grow vegetables in the West Adams area of Los Angeles.<sup>237</sup> By 1909, they were leasing 132 acres there. Between 1900 and 1910, Issei began working the agriculture fields south of Pico Boulevard in the western side of Los Angeles.<sup>238</sup> The 1910 Census documents over 60 Japanese farmers working the lands along Ballona Creek near Venice. In 1905, there were 23 Japanese living in the City of San Fernando in the East Valley.<sup>239</sup> By 1910, the City of San

<sup>228</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 16.

<sup>229</sup> The Okinawa Club of America, *History of the Okinawans in North America*, 22.

<sup>230</sup> Gene N. Levine, *Japanese American Research Project (JARP): A Three Generation Study, 1890-1966*. (Los Angeles: University of California, Institute for Social Science Research, 1997), 28.

<sup>231</sup> Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History* 38 (1978), 206.

<sup>232</sup> Glendale incorporated in 1909.

<sup>233</sup> U.S. Government Printing Office, "Immigrants in Industries, Part 25 Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast, 1911," 387, accessed April 18, 2018,

[https://books.google.com/books?id=R2ITAAAYAAJ&pg=PA387&lpg=PA387&dq=Japanese+Tropico+Strawberries&source=bl&ots=ONsExOXVmS&sig=9WhSE-KgRIARpCcERyEw\\_-fc2nY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwix3a6epdbPAhWiwVOKHYsiBY4Q6AEIHJAA#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=R2ITAAAYAAJ&pg=PA387&lpg=PA387&dq=Japanese+Tropico+Strawberries&source=bl&ots=ONsExOXVmS&sig=9WhSE-KgRIARpCcERyEw_-fc2nY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwix3a6epdbPAhWiwVOKHYsiBY4Q6AEIHJAA#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> At the time, Wilmington and Venice were separate municipalities and not part of the City of Los Angeles.

<sup>236</sup> Graves, Draft National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 8.

<sup>237</sup> U.S. Government Printing Office, *Immigrants in Industries*, 390.

<sup>238</sup> Colleen Patricia Horn, "Sawtelle Reexamined: A Preservation Study for a Historic California Japantown," (master's thesis, University of Southern California, August 2013), 26.

<sup>239</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 16.

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Fernando was home to 43 farmers, mostly single men. Others lived just beyond the San Fernando boundary into Los Angeles. Farmers often constructed their own small, vernacular-style shelters on the land they farmed.<sup>240</sup> Extant examples of ranch houses associated with Japanese Americans may be identified with further research.

In addition to the cultivation of vegetables, the Japanese were early influencers in the development of the wholesale and retail floral industry. Large-scale flower cultivation of significant acreage began in the 1910s, in the areas previously mentioned above as well as in what became West Los Angeles, South Los Angeles, and in the City of Long Beach, and soon more organized sales operations replaced what had been an informal system of markets. In 1912, 54 Issei flower growers started the Southern California Flower Market. The market, known as the Japanese Market, opened at 421 S. Los Angeles Street in 1913. During the 1910s and 1920s, the Market had several locations, and primarily stayed within a few blocks along Wall Street. Japanese men also formed the Southern California Floral Industry Association (not extant) in the 1910s to recruit growers from around Southern California.

Despite the rural pursuits of many Japanese Americans, an area around First Street became the heart of the early Issei community in Downtown Los Angeles. The first known mapping of the Japanese community in Los Angeles is the 1898 charting of residences and businesses undertaken by William M. Mason and Dr. John A. McKinstry.<sup>241</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, settlement in Los Angeles was expanding southward down Broadway and Spring Streets. While a small number of Japanese are shown in the area around the Plaza de Los Angeles and in the East First Street neighborhood, twice as many residences and businesses are shown in the West Sixth Street district—effectively polarizing the Japanese community into two major districts just as a new wave of immigration brought significant numbers of Japanese to the city.<sup>242</sup> At this time, East First Street contained a significant presence of German merchants, earning the area the nickname Little Berlin.

The Japanese population around West Sixth Street grew largely due to the presence of several employment agencies that brokered Japanese immigrants as day laborers. Some agencies even provided housing in boarding houses in the neighborhood, none of which appear to be extant. By 1902, and again in 1905, both the East First Street and West Sixth Street neighborhoods had increased in density. A pronounced increase in the concentration of Japanese residents in the East First Street district was taking shape. By 1906, the area was becoming known as Sho Tokyo or Little Tokyo (as opposed to Little Berlin), and had significantly increased in density with a high concentration of Japanese businesses and residences east of Alameda Street. A portion of Little Tokyo roughly bounded by 301-349 East First Street, 110-120 Judge John Aiso Street, and 119 Central Avenue was designated the Little Tokyo Historic District, a National Historic Landmark, in 1995.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>240</sup> As the farmers prospered, additions and amenities were added. As described in oral histories at Cal State Northridge, some were later absorbed into houses.

<sup>241</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 41-42.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>243</sup> Some properties within the Little Tokyo district are individually designated or eligible for designation. SurveyLA did not resurvey designated resources.

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*L: 1898 map of Japanese residences and businesses in Downtown Los Angeles (The Japanese of Los Angeles). R: 1905 map of Japanese residences and businesses in Downtown Los Angeles. Mason and McKinstry (The Japanese of Los Angeles).*



With the local Japanese population growing, the xenophobic and isolationist racism of the Yellow Peril previously associated with Chinese immigrants was extended to the Japanese. A 1905 *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* article reported the views of Rev. P.J. Stockman of the Catholic Diocese of Los Angeles:

The Japanese invasion of America during the next few years is one of the most serious problems that will confront the people of this country and especially in coast cities. Japan is overcrowded and it will not be many years before her subjects are coming to this country in much greater numbers than the present... They will come here and go into business and will become a factor within the Americans (sic) must reckon... Within the next fifteen or twenty years, one store in five in the coast cities will be conducted by Japanese.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>244</sup> "Yellow Peril is a Grim Reality," *Los Angeles Herald*, June 26, 1905.

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Such rhetoric fueled racism against the Issei. The Asian Exclusion League was the primary advocacy organization charging Japanese immigrants with unfair competition. Their efforts culminated in the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-08, an effort by President Theodore Roosevelt to ease tension over the immigration of Japanese workers. After the San Francisco Board of Education ordered the segregation of Asian children into separate public schools—a move clearly targeted at Japanese children because Chinese children were already segregated into their own schools—the issue of Japanese immigration received national attention. President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Elihu Root made it clear that stopping “all immigration of Japanese laboring men” was the “only way to prevent constant friction.”<sup>245</sup> The Japanese agreed to stop issuing passports to laborers bound for the continental United States. Passports might be issued to returning laborers and the “parents, wives and children of laborers already resident there.” Because this was an executive agreement based on correspondence between the two governments, it required no congressional ratification. In 1907, in anticipation of the Gentlemen's Agreement, nearly 10,000 Japanese arrived in the U.S. After 1907, only wives and children were allowed to enter, ushering in an era of Japanese immigration known as “the picture brides” period.<sup>246</sup>

Table 1: Japanese Immigration to the US between 1861 and 1914<sup>247</sup>

Decade	Japanese Immigrants	Total Number of US Immigrants
1861-1870	218	2,314,000
1871-1880	149	2,812,000
1881-1890	2,270	5,426,000
1891-1900	27,982	3,687,000
1901-1910	54,834	8,785,000
1911-1914	24,873	4,131,000
Total	110,326	27,155,000

Demand for Japanese workers experienced a temporary setback during the Financial Panic of 1907 (also known as the Bankers' Panic or Knickerbocker Crisis) when the stock market dipped sharply and the country entered a recession. It became increasingly difficult for the Nisei to find work and charitable agencies became an important safety net during this period.

By 1910, the city of Los Angeles was home to 7,938 Issei—the largest Japanese population of any city in California. Another 3,000 Issei resided in Los Angeles County.<sup>248</sup> At this time, Los Angeles' East First Street and West Sixth Street districts still served as the primary residential and commercial neighborhoods, in addition to providing transitional services for new immigrants. Alongside the

<sup>245</sup> Shiho Imai, “Gentlemen's Agreement,” in *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed January 4, 2017, [http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Gentlemen%27s\\_Agreement/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Gentlemen%27s_Agreement/).

<sup>246</sup> Picture bride refers to the practice of immigrant workers who married women on the recommendation of a matchmaker who exchanged photographs between the prospective bride and groom.

<sup>247</sup> As presented in Ichihashi's, *Japanese Immigration*.

<sup>248</sup> Ichihashi, *Japanese Immigration*, 19.



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employment agencies for new arrivals, the neighborhoods contained a number of Japanese rooming houses for single male laborers, a few single-family residences rented out to Japanese families, and a growing number of commercial stores, service establishments, and social/cultural centers that served Issei communities throughout Southern California. Early Japanese-operated businesses included the Asia Company (the largest Japanese-owned business by the 1920s, not extant), Fugetsu-do, the first Japanese confectionery (extant, relocated to 325 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street),<sup>249</sup> S. Shiaki Seed Company (not extant), the Umeya Co. (extant, relocated to 414 Crocker Street),<sup>250</sup> and many others.

Table 2: Japanese California City Populations in 1910<sup>251</sup>

City	Population
Los Angeles	7,938
San Francisco	6,988
Sacramento	2,452
Oakland	1,845

With the increased migration of Japanese laborers during the first decade of the twentieth century, there was a growing clientele for things uniquely Japanese. Pool halls, restaurants, bookstores, bathhouses, and barbershops were opened with the Japanese laborers in mind.<sup>252</sup> One of the most common businesses was the surge in *nomiya* (drinking places) after 1906. They tripled in one year from 21 to 62.<sup>253</sup> More than just bars, in *nomiya*, waitresses also played the samisen and sang. *Sushi ya* (sushi bars) also flourished. The first known sushi bar was opened by Gentario Isoyaya on Weller Street.<sup>254</sup> These early buildings were virtually all lost to urban renewal projects later in the century.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the influence of Japanese garden designs at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco (1915) and the Panama-California Exhibition in San Diego (1915) inspired interest in and the construction of Japanese tea gardens in a number of Los Angeles parks including Eastlake Park (later Lincoln Park).<sup>255</sup> As described in the *Los Angeles Times*, “by the early part of the century, a Japanese garden had become a sign of sophistication for the social elite.”<sup>256</sup> An example of the popularity of Japanese gardens among wealthy Los Angelenos predating the Exhibition was to be found in Hollywood, when in 1911 Adolph Bernheimer and his brother Eugene hired Franklin Small to design a reproduction of a Japanese Villa surrounded by 12 acres of Japanese Gardens on

<sup>249</sup> It is within the Little Tokyo Historic District.

<sup>250</sup> Yasuo Hamano formed what became the Umeya Co., or Umeya Rice Cake Company. In the 1970s, due to increasing demand, the company moved to a new facility at 414 Crocker Street.

<sup>251</sup> As presented in Ichihashi’s *Japanese Immigration*.

<sup>252</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 10.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>255</sup> “To Improve Parks,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1925, 13.

<sup>256</sup> “A Tourist Mecca That Geology Helped Obliterate,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 2000.

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Sycamore Avenue in Hollywood.<sup>257</sup> Portions of the gardens remain as the grounds of the Yamashiro Restaurant at 1999 N. Sycamore Avenue.<sup>258</sup>

Los Angeles' economic boom of the late nineteenth century provided opportunity for a significant number of Issei immigrants who established farms, restaurants, and small businesses in and around Los Angeles. This close-knit, male-dominated population cultivated residential and occupational networks that enabled their success. The coming decade brought changes in social structure that impacted community development.

### Japanese Settlement in Los Angeles, 1911-1924

With the immigration of women, the Los Angeles Japanese community was transformed largely from a group of single male laborers living communally into households and families. This significantly impacted migration patterns in Los Angeles and the development of local social and cultural institutions. Suburban migration patterns also fueled another wave of anti-Japanese sentiment, resulting in the enactment of dehumanizing citizenship laws and residential restrictions. As Graves summarizes, "Race, class and immigration status restricted Nikkei access to certain neighborhoods and areas within cities and towns just as they did for other groups, most notably for African Americans, Chinese Americans and Mexican Americans."<sup>259</sup> Groups such as the YWCA's International Institute, established in 1914, offered classes in "Americanization to help newly arrived immigrants adjust to life in Los Angeles (435 S. Boyle Ave.)"<sup>260</sup> Even Hollywood helped fuel anti-Japanese sentiment with the release of *The Cheat* (Famous Players Lasky, 1915) in which one of the few Japanese actors in the film violently assaults his Caucasian female costar.

Picture brides were so called because parents, matchmakers or go-betweens in Japan arranged marriages based on photographs. Having never met, many Japanese only knew their brides from photographs. Japanese women often emigrated using their married names before they were actually married.<sup>261</sup> The majority of Issei women came to Los Angeles between 1915 and 1920 via the port of San Francisco.<sup>262</sup> In 1920, the *Rafu Shimpo* estimated the number of local picture brides at 20,000.<sup>263</sup> With the influx of women and new marriages, many Issei began to have children.

<sup>257</sup> In 1924, Bernheimer embarked on the building of a new Bernheimer estate with Japanese-style gardens atop a bluff in Pacific Palisades. It has since been razed.

<sup>258</sup> The property endured many years of disrepair and much of its Japanese character was hidden during and after World War II, when anti-Japanese sentiment was at its height. National Register-listed Yamashiro is City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 921.

<sup>259</sup> Graves, Draft National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 11.

<sup>260</sup> "Good Citizens Made of Aliens," *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1926, B3.

<sup>261</sup> Naomi Hirahara, ed. *Greenmakers: Japanese Gardeners in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Southern California Gardeners Federation, 2000), 154.

<sup>262</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 16.

<sup>263</sup> *Rafu Shimpo, Through the Pages of the Rafu Shimpo* (Los Angeles: Rafu Shimpo, 2003), 62.

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Table 3: Japanese Population of the City of Los Angeles<sup>264</sup>

Decade	Los Angeles City	Los Angeles County
1910	4,238	8,461
1920	11,618	19,911
1930	21,081	35,390
1940	23,321	36,866
1950	25,502	36,761
1960	51,468 <sup>265</sup>	77,314 <sup>266</sup>
1970	54,878 <sup>267</sup>	N/A <sup>268</sup>

The growing population of Japanese meant the expansion of the area known as Little Tokyo. European American owners leased space to Japanese residential and commercial tenants. Extant examples include the mixed-use building at 606 E 1<sup>st</sup> Street (1913; architects Morgan & Walls). The building housed the Nankaiya Hotel on its second story for at least 20 years, providing furnished rooms to Japanese American single male lodgers as well as family households. The buildings’ first floor storefronts contained retail operations predominantly run by Japanese Americans, and its occupants between 1913 and 1940 included barbershops, restaurants, a secondhand goods store, a plumbing business, a grocery store, and a liquor store. Another notable example is 620 E 1<sup>st</sup> Street (1911; architect J.E. Lacey). Originally constructed as a one-story store building, in 1913, owner Charles German had a residential second story (designed by E.B. Hogan Jr.) added. The building’s second story provided furnished rooms to Japanese Americans and its first story had Japanese-run businesses including a noodle manufacturer, barbershops, a tailor, a beverage shop, and a restaurant.

Population growth during the period also resulted in the growth of religious institutions. In his 1927 survey, USC graduate student Koyoshi Uono identifies nineteen Japanese churches in Los Angeles. By far the largest membership bases were in the Buddhist and Shinto churches. The Koyasan Buddhist Temple (Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin) in Little Tokyo dates to 1912 and has remained one of the oldest continually operating Buddhist sects in Los Angeles (building at 842 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street dates to 1940).<sup>269</sup> One of the largest Japanese Christian churches was the Japanese Union Church. It formed as a result of the consolidation of the Congregational, Presbyterian, and Bethlehem Churches in 1918. Rev. Giichi Tanaka

<sup>264</sup> The 1910 population number differs slightly from that presented by Ichihashi, as it was calculated by the author Nishi according to census records in 1958.

<sup>265</sup> 1960 US Census, Characteristics of the Population, for Standard, Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Urban Places of 10,000 or More, accessed February 11, 2017, <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/12533879v1p6ch03.pdf>.

<sup>266</sup> Los Angeles Almanac, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.laalmanac.com/population/po20.htm>.

<sup>267</sup> 1970 Census of Population, accessed February 10, 2017, [https://books.google.com/books?id=RZtzxp5-XvoC&pg=RA4-PA55&lpg=RA4-PA55&dq=%22City+of+Los+Angeles%22+Japanese+population+1970&source=bl&ots=l-ou\\_Vxm5N&sig=CZJ348jAqq14\\_IJbkwTNq31aRMM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiIiu-u7obSAhUK84MKHRbpD50Q6AEITzAI#v=onepage&q=%22City%20of%20Los%20Angeles%22%20Japanese%20population%201970&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=RZtzxp5-XvoC&pg=RA4-PA55&lpg=RA4-PA55&dq=%22City+of+Los+Angeles%22+Japanese+population+1970&source=bl&ots=l-ou_Vxm5N&sig=CZJ348jAqq14_IJbkwTNq31aRMM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiIiu-u7obSAhUK84MKHRbpD50Q6AEITzAI#v=onepage&q=%22City%20of%20Los%20Angeles%22%20Japanese%20population%201970&f=false).

<sup>268</sup> 1970 data reflective of “Asian Pacific Islander” with no specific breakdown for the Japanese population. Estimate is 129,220 Asian Pacific Islanders in Los Angeles County.

<sup>269</sup> The Aoyama Tree, City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 920, is at the site of the Central Avenue location of the temple.

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was appointed the first pastor of the church. On March 25, 1923 the new church building at 120 N. San Pedro Street (later 120 Judge John Aiso) was dedicated.<sup>270</sup> In 1979, a new split-face concrete block building was designed by architect Mark Horie for the church at 401 E. Third Street and continues to house the congregation. The 1927 Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple located at 109-119 N. Central Avenue is part of the Japanese American National Museum.<sup>271</sup>

The birth of Japanese American children created the need for *sanba* or midwives. Rooted in the Japanese health care movement of the early twentieth century—that sought to professionalize and license the practice of midwifery to maintain the health of women and babies—*sanba* attended women in childbirth, were involved in prenatal and postnatal care, and provided infant care for newborns. In 1903, Mrs. Tsuneko Okazaki became the first Japanese state-licensed midwife.<sup>272</sup> By 1912, there were at least 18 Japanese midwives with significant practices in the city of Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, the Japanese dominated midwifery and by the 1920s, they constituted about 70 percent of the midwives in the state of California.<sup>273</sup> In 1925, the California Bureau of Child Hygiene began licensing maternity hospitals and maternity homes, many of which were run by Japanese midwives. Some of these facilities took as few as two or three patients at a time. One such facility, Turner Street Hospital, opened in 1915 at 635 Turner and Alameda Streets in Little Tokyo (not extant). Mary Akita (1898-1998), one of the first Japanese nurses to practice in Los Angeles, is said to have been influential in opening the hospital.<sup>274</sup> Census records indicate she resided at 513 N. Virgil Street in Madison/J Flats (altered).<sup>275</sup> In 1925, Dr. Frances C. Rothert, an official with the U.S. Children's Bureau, described California's Japanese midwives as "the best midwives in the country."<sup>276</sup>

Japanese excellence in midwifery was a cultural custom, and a necessity. According to historians Michael Okamura and Kristen Hayashi of the Little Tokyo Historical Society:

Recent immigrants and residents of ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles were often denied access to health care at mainstream hospitals and clinics in the early 1900s as a result of discriminatory practices. Although County General Hospital intended to provide care to the poor and working class, admittance was not based solely on socioeconomic status. Hospital administrators and public health officials used race as a factor to determine how to administer public health programs.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>270</sup> The church became the Union Center for the Arts and the home of East West Players.

<sup>271</sup> The temple is City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 313. Homba Honwanji moved to 815 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

<sup>272</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 9. This source refers to Okazaki as "the first state-licensed midwife"; it is presumed she was the first licensed midwife of Japanese ethnicity, and the source is unclear.

<sup>273</sup> Susan L. Smith, *Japanese American Midwives: Culture, Community and Health Politics, 1880-1950* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 51.

<sup>274</sup> Kristen Hayashi, "Japanese Hospital City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument Nomination," written statements A and B, 2016, 10.

<sup>275</sup> According to the Historic-Cultural Monument nomination for the Japanese Hospital, Akita turned her home into a maternity ward in the 1920s.

<sup>276</sup> Smith, *Japanese American Midwives*, 57.

<sup>277</sup> Hayashi, 7.

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In her book *Fit to Be Citizens: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939*, author Natalia Molina suggests that race shaped the city's public health policies and determined the accessibility of health services to various communities. Public health officials often associated disease with immigrants and offered sensationalized reports that suggested diseases originated with immigrant populations. Public health officials deemed Chinese and Japanese as the least assimilable of the foreigners, which became the justification for denying Japanese public health services.<sup>278</sup>

As a result, the Japanese community had to take care of their own. In 1908, Japanese immigrant doctors in Los Angeles included Dr. K. Ikeuchi (c. 1873-unknown) and Dr. Tagaki (dates unknown).<sup>279</sup> By 1917, the number had grown to 13.<sup>280</sup> To address the need for Japanese doctors, they were allowed to take the medical examination with the help of a translator. In 1918, Turner Street Hospital became known as the Southern California Japanese Hospital. Other institutions such as Fukui Mortuary (established in 1918; moved to 707 E. Temple Street) served generations of community members.<sup>281</sup>

Between 1910 and 1915, the Japanese community began to expand into small enclaves outside of Downtown Los Angeles: Terminal Island, Boyle Heights, Uptown, Hollywood/Madison/J. Flats, Venice, and Pacoima/Sun Valley.<sup>282</sup> As the Japanese married and started families, they sought less urban neighborhoods than Little Tokyo in which to raise their children. Most Issei rented existing bungalows in established neighborhoods open to non-whites.

The largest suburban enclave outside of Little Tokyo was Terminal Island/*Higashi* (East) in San Pedro. The presence of Japanese fisherman in the area also known as Fish Harbor<sup>283</sup> can be traced to the early 1910s. They appear to have been drawn to the area as workers for the Southern Pacific Railroad in San Pedro before turning to abalone fishing. By 1912, there were enough Japanese fishermen to form a Japanese Camp on Timm's Point.<sup>284</sup>

Not long afterward, the Japanese single-handedly created California's tuna fishing industry. Albacore tuna had never been caught commercially in California prior to the introduction of the hook-and-line method that Japanese fishermen began employing in 1912-13. Italian fishermen used nets that were fine

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 8. Birth and death dates unknown.

<sup>280</sup> Smith, *Japanese American Midwives*, 50.

<sup>281</sup> The Fukui Mortuary was located on Turner Street in 1939. Date of relocation to Temple Street not known. Building permits indicate a 1968 remodel/addition to the mortuary chapel by Japanese American architect Kazumi Adachi and a 1982 addition.

<sup>282</sup> Some of these communities were outside of the incorporated City of Los Angeles at this time.

<sup>283</sup> Engineer E.P. Goodrich developed a plan for transforming Fish Harbor into an efficient industrial area. Goodrich's idea was to separate the fishing industry from the shipping industry so the residue of the packing industry would be carried seaward on the prevailing breezes. As a result, Goodrich built a large wharf, dredged and landfilled to reclaim 65 acres of land and 45 acres of anchorage to accommodate boats. Canneries were aligned along Wharf Street facing the ocean to receive incoming boats full of fish.

<sup>284</sup> Naomi Hirahara and Geraldine Knaz, *Terminal Island: The Communities of Los Angeles Harbor* (Los Angeles: Angel City Press, 2015), 125. The site of Timm's Point is California State Historical Landmark No. 384 and City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 171.

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for small sardines; tuna thrashed around in the nets creating blood spots on their flesh. In contrast, Japanese fishermen introduced the technique of chumming where live bait was dumped into the water luring schools of tuna to the boat. During the feeding frenzy, Japanese fishermen used barbless hooks on short bamboo poles to catch the tuna. Once they had a bite, the pole was snapped back tossing the tuna onto the deck. With these techniques, Japanese fishermen quickly “dominated the albacore industry.”<sup>285</sup>

According to author Naomi Hirahara, “3,000 Japanese lived at Terminal Island or Fish Island in some 330 houses almost identical in size and appearance except for long houses designed for multiple occupants.”<sup>286</sup> Differences in class were represented through interior decoration rather than exterior. The residences were typically two-bedrooms with a porch and a small fenced-in yard, and rented for \$6 per month. Bungalows were located along Tuna Street and Terminal Way. The fishing village also included a school, churches, and community meeting centers for social and sporting events. Residents had their own dialect known as *Taminaru-ben* (Terminal Island dialect), a blend of Japanese, English, and fishing terms. In 1916, the village saw a boost in population when Japanese relocated from the Santa Monica fishing village destroyed in a fire.

Terminal Island boasted the second largest commercial district of Japanese businesses in the city of Los Angeles. Tuna Street was the main commercial street, with businesses lining both the east and west sides of the street beginning in the 1910s.<sup>287</sup> Cannery Street also housed a couple of cafes, a bait shop, and a few other stores.<sup>288</sup> Another small cluster of businesses was located at the western end of Terminal Way at Seaside Drive. In many cases, the merchants lived at the stores. Only a couple of commercial buildings are extant at Fish Harbor as reminders of this once active community.<sup>289</sup>

The area included a thriving industrial core. Canneries started moving to Fish Harbor in 1918. The first cannery established there in 1918 was the California Fish Company.<sup>290</sup> Others followed including: Van Camp Seafood Company, the International Packing Company, Seacoast Cannery, American Tuna Company, French Sardine Company (which became Starkist), Franco-Italian Cannery, California Seafood Company, and White Star Canning Company (which first trademarked the phrase “Chicken of the Sea”). Cannery workers were typically Filipino men and the Japanese women who came to the village as picture brides. None of the canneries remain.

Although most Japanese commercial businesses were concentrated on Terminal Island, a few businesses were scattered throughout downtown San Pedro. They included markets, barbers, cafes, and pool halls. A few of the buildings that housed these businesses, particularly, Japanese-operated markets remain such as the 1930s Garden Basket No. 2 at 1231 S. Pacific (later San Pedro Ballet School).

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>287</sup> Nearly all buildings on Terminal Island were razed after incarceration. Only a couple of commercial buildings remain at 700-702 Tuna Street and have been altered.

<sup>288</sup> California Japantowns’ website, Terminal Island, accessed December 9, 2016, [www.californiajapantowns.org](http://www.californiajapantowns.org).

<sup>289</sup> In 2002, the Terminal Island Japanese Fishing Village Memorial was dedicated at 1124 S. Seaside Avenue in San Pedro.

<sup>290</sup> Originally founded on February 25, 1893 as the Southern California Fish Company.

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San Pedro was also home to the premier resort for Southern California's Japanese population: White Point Hot Springs Hotel (not extant).<sup>291</sup> White Point Hot Springs was built by brothers Tojuro and Tajimi Tagami during the mid-teens on land previously leased to twelve Japanese American fishermen by Ramon Sepulveda. Discovery of a sulfur hot spring made the property attractive for its curative properties. The resort included a 50-room hotel, outdoor dance floor, restaurant, salt-water swimming pool, and boating area.

Aside from Terminal Island, Boyle Heights, east of Downtown, was one of the city's largest early Japanese American residential communities outside of Little Tokyo.<sup>292</sup> The catalyst for Japanese settlement in Boyle Heights was the 1911 relocation of the Buddhist Temple to Savannah Street and a desire for a less urban environment in which to raise young families. The area also offered "the best selection of single-family housing untouched by restrictive covenants anywhere in the city."<sup>293</sup> A significant number of Japanese families moved to the area beginning in 1920.<sup>294</sup> An important early remaining resource is the Magnolia House at 2516 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, which opened in 1922 as a boarding house for girls of European and Japanese descent.<sup>295</sup>

Due to the proximity of Boyle Heights to Little Tokyo, Japanese commercial development was relatively sparse in this neighborhood. By 1927, USC graduate student Koyoshi Uono mapped the presence of only two Japanese businesses in the area, both of which were groceries. One was on the east side of Mott Street, later the site of the Buddhist Church, and one was on the north side of E. First Street between N. Savannah Street and N. Evergreen Avenue (not extant).<sup>296</sup>

Another early Japanese enclave was Uptown (*Uemachi* or *Uwamachi*), in what became Koreatown. The area generally was bordered by San Marino Street on the north, W. Pico Boulevard on the south, Vermont Avenue on the east and Western Avenue on the west. The genesis of the enclave was around Fedora Avenue, and gradually spread first to the east on El Morino and Dewey Avenues between W. 10th and W. 11th Streets, then to the west with another pocket of residences along Hobart and Harvard Avenues between Pico Blvd. and W. Tenth Street. According to Uono, around the year 1900 several Japanese residents were living in rooming houses in the area such as the one at 1130 Fedora Street.<sup>297</sup> The people in the district were mainly day laborers and gardeners."<sup>298</sup>

<sup>291</sup> The hotel was located at S. Western Avenue and West Paseo del Mar. An extant fountain is assumed to have been associated with the hotel.

<sup>292</sup> Koyoshi Uono. "The Factors Affecting the Geographical Aggregation and Dispersion of the Japanese Residents in the City of Los Angeles" (master's thesis, University of Southern California, July 30, 1927), 133.

<sup>293</sup> Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multi-Ethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 42.

<sup>294</sup> Uono, "The Factors Affecting the Geographical Aggregation and Dispersion," 132.

<sup>295</sup> The Queen Anne style residence was built for Los Angeles City Councilman E.L. Blanchard and is also a significant example of an intact late nineteenth century residence in Boyle Heights.

<sup>296</sup> Uono, "The Factors Affecting the Geographical Aggregation and Dispersion," 133.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

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Map of the Japanese community in the Uptown area, 1927 (Koyoshi Uono, 130)





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Beginning in 1920, however, the population started to increase significantly, with roughly 80 percent of the nearly 200 Japanese residences in 1927 having been established there during the previous seven years.<sup>299</sup> By that time, the Japanese population of Uptown was living in five- to seven-room wood frame cottages. A few large rooming houses remained and “bungalow courts and flats were few.”<sup>300</sup> Uono also noted the presence of a few professionals and merchants in the area, and that the residents were still predominantly gardeners.<sup>301</sup> A rare remaining institutional building from this period is the 1930 Rafu Daini Gakuen (constructed as the Young Men’s Meeting House and later housing a Japanese language school) at 1035 Fedora Street.

In the fall of 1919, white owners from the Uptown neighborhood formed the Electric Home Protective Association to try to exclude the Japanese from the enclave. Some owners raised rents and others evicted the Japanese tenants. These restrictive efforts were only partially successful, and the area remained a Japanese enclave until the Japanese incarceration during World War II. In 1931, St. Mary’s Japanese Episcopal Church was built at 961 S. Mariposa Avenue (architects Allison and Allison) to serve the community. By the 1940 Census, neighborhood residents included retail workers, shopkeepers, florists, produce retailers, and maintenance gardeners.<sup>302</sup>

According to *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, Japanese Americans began moving to the Hollywood/Madison/J. Flats area in 1905-06. The area was generally bordered by Melrose Avenue on the north, the Hollywood Freeway on the south, Virgil Avenue on the east, and Vermont Avenue to the west. In 1905, there were 37 Japanese in Hollywood, a number that grew into the hundreds. Most of the Japanese residents in Hollywood worked as maintenance gardeners or domestic servants.<sup>303</sup> As such, they typically lived in the homes of their employers rather than on their own.<sup>304</sup>

Japanese Americans did create two distinct communities in the greater Hollywood area. One was more centrally located near Sunset Boulevard and Cahuenga Avenue. The other, referred to here as the Madison/J Flats enclave was concentrated along Madison, Westmoreland, and Virgil Avenues at Clinton Street. Although the Hollywood and Madison/J. Flats communities were not contiguous, they shared similar patterns of residential development. Intact boarding houses for Japanese men from the pre WWII period are extant in the Madison/J Flats area at 560 (Joyce Boarding House) and 564 N. Virgil Avenue. The latter was also listed as the Obayashi Employment Agency in the *1939 Sun Year Book*. Other resources may be identified along Virgil Avenue with further research.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>302</sup> 1940 U.S. Census.

<sup>303</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 3.

<sup>304</sup> Uono, “The Factors Affecting the Geographical Aggregation and Dispersion,” 139.

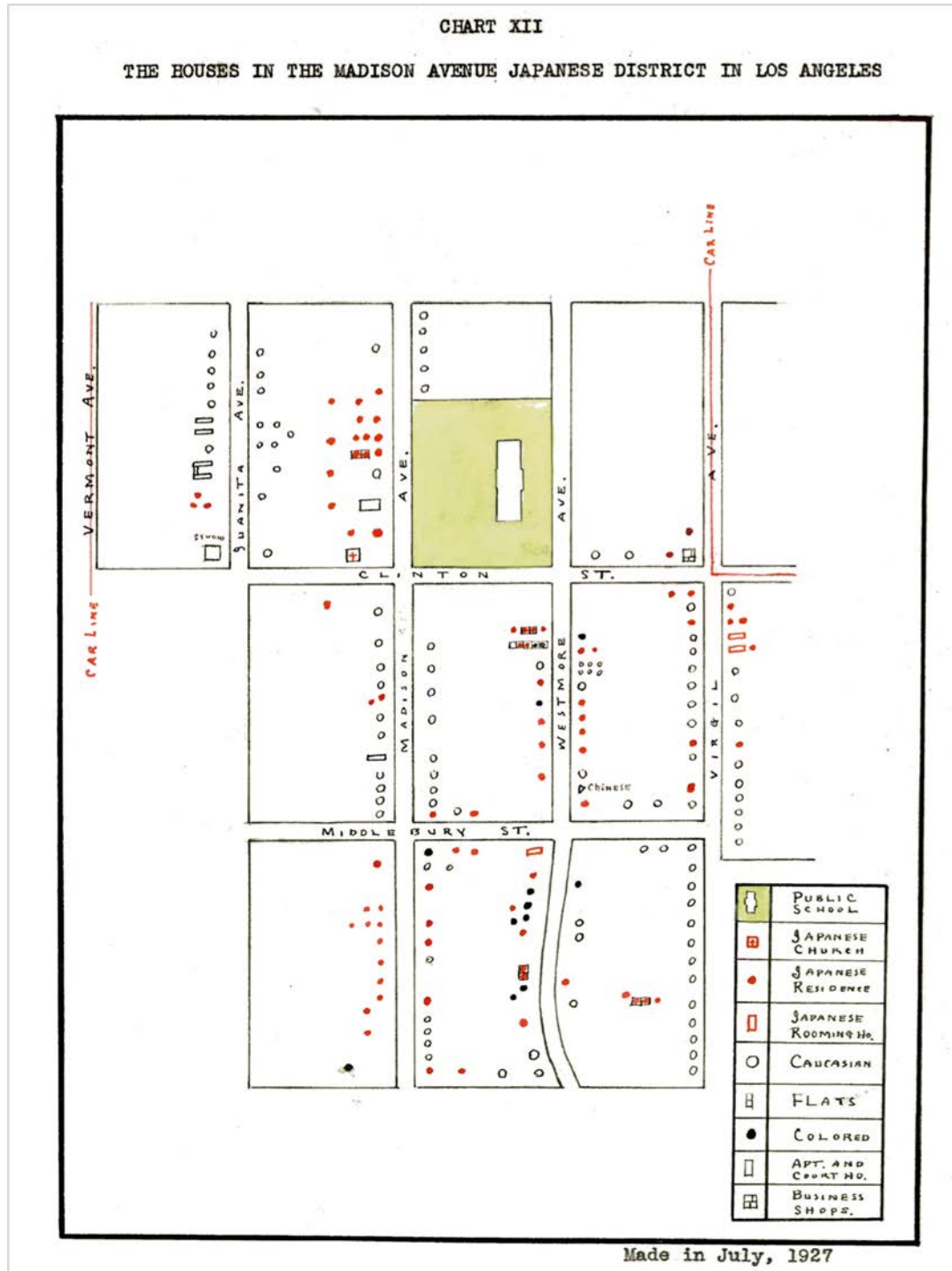
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1927 map of the Japanese community in the Madison area (Koyoshi Uono, 139)



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In the Hollywood enclave, Japanese residences tended to cluster along Cahuenga Avenue between Lexington and Selma Streets, while other small groups lived on Tamarind and Gordon Streets. The Tamarind Street grouping dates back to 1910 when the Japanese purchased about ten lots in a new tract located near the 1400 block.<sup>305</sup> The residences in the tract were modest wood-frame buildings constructed between 1911 and 1914.<sup>306</sup> In 1916, all four of the Japanese residents on Tamarind listed in the City Directory were gardeners (Frank T. Aiso, M. Iiyama, H. Suzuki, and S. Yamamoto, who also ran a nursery at 1343 Bronson Avenue).<sup>307</sup> Frank T. Aiso's residence at 1406 Tamarind Avenue remains standing.

Japanese businesses in Hollywood were scattered around the community. The earliest report of Japanese retail ventures in the area included "a small Japanese business district in the 1500 block of N. Cahuenga Boulevard around 1910 when Hollywood was consolidated with the city of Los Angeles."<sup>308</sup> By 1927, at least one of these stores remained, as Uono documents a Japanese grocery store in Cahuenga Boulevard between Sunset Boulevard and Selma Avenue (not extant). There was also a Japanese restaurant between Selma Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard (not extant).

In spring of 1923, white residents known as the Hollywood Protective Association rallied to oust the "yellow menace" from Hollywood.<sup>309</sup> Large banners reading "Japs Keep Moving—This is a White Man's Neighborhood" were hung across the porch of the home of Mrs. B.G. Miller at 1452 Tamarind Avenue (not extant). The protesters focused on the five lots (including the church) owned by the Japanese and a large nursery facility on Tamarind a block south of Sunset Boulevard where "five to ten Japanese families" were living.<sup>310</sup> Although the agitators convinced the City Council to condemn the Japanese properties, reparations for the value were to be made by the neighbors who would not pay. The church moved away from the area in 1927.<sup>311</sup>

The Pacoima/Sun Valley Japanese American community had its roots in agriculture, as many Japanese Americans came to the area as agricultural laborers and truck farmers for flowers and vegetables. The Issei were drawn to the northeastern San Fernando Valley by the agricultural opportunities afforded by the open land and Big Tujunga Creek. During the teens, the Issei began cultivating the area later known as Pacoima in earnest alongside a mix of other immigrant populations including a substantial number of Latinos and Italians.

By the 1920 Census, 137 Japanese were farming in the area. Mostly family affairs, these truck farms were interspersed throughout the area with concentrations along Branford, Beachy, Arleta, Osborne, and Pierce Streets. A large boarding house for about 15 farm laborers was located on San Fernando Road

<sup>305</sup> Prior to the passage of 1913's Alien Land Law, which prohibited the purchase of any kind of land by the Japanese, the Issei could purchase land not associated with agriculture. Few Japanese had the means to do so. The economic circumstances that allowed these men to purchase their lots is unknown.

<sup>306</sup> Uono, "The Factors Affecting the Geographical Aggregation and Dispersion," 139-140.

<sup>307</sup> 1916 Los Angeles City Directory.

<sup>308</sup> Mason and McKinstry, *The Japanese of Los Angeles*, 20.

<sup>309</sup> "Banners Aimed at Jap Church," *Los Angeles Examiner*, May 18, 1923, n.p.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Uono, "The Factors Affecting the Geographical Aggregation and Dispersion," 140.

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and Astoria Street.<sup>312</sup> By 1930, the number of Japanese farming in the area had increased 50 percent, to more than 165.<sup>313</sup> Japanese farms appear to have been clustered in two general areas: in Pacoima north of Glenoaks Boulevard west of Osborne Street; and in Arleta in an area bordered by Laurel Canyon Boulevard to the north, Canterbury Avenue to the south, Branford Street to the east, and Terra Bella Street to the west.<sup>314</sup> Japanese farms/residences were common along Beachy, Canterbury, Osborne, Arleta, Montague, and Branford Streets. By 1942, Japanese farmers operated 115 ranches in the Tujunga Valley.<sup>315</sup> Little evidence of these farms or residences remains. Japanese Americans lived side by side with African Americans and a large Latino population. During this period, the area had little commercial activity by and for the Japanese community, as most sought goods and services in Little Tokyo.

Like Pacoima/Sun Valley, the Venice Japanese American enclave was established as a farming community. During the 1910s, approximately 50 Japanese farming families made their way to the then-rural areas of eastern Venice along the Ballona Creek near Culver Drive. Many of them lived with the Japanese hired men they used to help cultivate the land. The presence of so many Japanese families spurred the early establishment of the Venice Japanese language school (Venice Gakuen) in 1925.<sup>316</sup> The area was nearly void of commercial enterprises until after World War II.

Japanese farmers from these more rural enclaves continued to sell their goods at Downtown markets. A large number of Japanese farmers became involved in the cut flower industry. In 1922, the Southern California Flower Market moved to 753-755 Wall Street (1922 building demolished). A distinct Flower District began forming during the 1920s using previously constructed single-story warehouses, garages, and retail shops. Japanese farmers also sold their goods at the six-acre City Market of Los Angeles at the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and San Pedro Streets, built in 1909 (demolished),<sup>317</sup> and at the Los Angeles Union Terminal at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Avenue, completed in 1918 (extant).<sup>318</sup> Many of the market workers, including a substantial number of Japanese community members, resided in nearby boarding houses, many of which no longer remain.

California's passage of the Alien Land Law of 1913 had a profound impact on the Japanese community. In response to anti-Japanese sentiment, the law prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning land or holding long-term leases. In 1920, California took land laws a step further by passing an amendment to the law prohibiting short-term leases to aliens ineligible for citizenship, and prohibiting "stock companies owned by aliens ineligible for citizenship from acquiring agricultural lands."<sup>319</sup>

<sup>312</sup> Given the rural nature of these areas, 1910 Census takers did not list addresses.

<sup>313</sup> Based on a mapping of Japanese in the Enumeration District, 19-607 in the 1930 Census.

<sup>314</sup> The area around Big Tujunga Creek was also known as Roscoe.

<sup>315</sup> Laura R. Barraclough, *Making the San Fernando Valley: Rural Landscape, Urban Development and White Privilege* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 130.

<sup>316</sup> The school became the Venice Japanese Community Center, located at 12448 Braddock Drive.

<sup>317</sup> Although the 1909 buildings have been demolished, there were ancillary extant buildings in the adjacent area historically owned by City Market.

<sup>318</sup> By 1940, City Market had grown to be one of the largest wholesale produce facilities in the country. Union Terminal is listed on the California Register of Historical Resources and has been formally determined eligible for the National Register through the Section 106 review process.

<sup>319</sup> Cherstin M. Lyon, "Alien Land Laws," in *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed January 5, 2017,

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Although the community developed workarounds, including placing land in the names of their small Nisei children who had U.S. citizenship, the laws repressed economic development within the community.

The laws also resulted in a shift in agricultural employment patterns. During this period, niche markets of employment included Japanese nurseries, maintenance gardening, wholesale/retail flower sales, and wholesale/retail produce. These occupations required little capital funding and did not depend on land ownership. The laws also encouraged the urbanization of the Nikkei population and increased migration from rural counties in California to Los Angeles where economic opportunity was the highest.<sup>320</sup> As a result, Japanese began to dominate the retail produce business throughout the city—either with their own retail stores/stands, or in the produce departments of grocery stores. Although Japanese manufacturing entities were rare, the few that existed had strong ties to agriculture. These included the Los Angeles Basket Co. (produced strawberry baskets, not extant), Yano Crate Co. (not extant), and Three Star Box and Crate Co. (not extant), all of which were located in Little Tokyo.<sup>321</sup>

For the early Japanese immigrants, the capital required to start businesses often had to come from their savings, as they were unable to obtain loans from mainstream banks in the United States. The community responded by developing its own financial infrastructure: in the early 1910s, a number of *tanomoshi* (community-based rotating credit associations) were established to provide the capital needed to form businesses.

By the mid-1910s, several Japanese branch banks had opened in greater Little Tokyo. The first Tokyo-owned bank was the Yokohama Specie, Ltd.; the second was Sumitomo Bank, Ltd. These were followed by *Neichbei Ginko* (Japanese American Bank), and the *Kimmon Ginko* (Golden Gate Bank). After the 1908 depression in Japan, the latter two banks collapsed and many Japanese on both sides of the Pacific lost their savings. With no way to obtain loans from the homeland, the *tanomoshi* became even more important. By the 1920s, in recognition of the potential for expanded Japanese-American trade, new Japanese branch banks were established in Los Angeles. None of the buildings that housed these institutions are extant.

In the early twentieth century, the number of *kugakusei* (student-boys or student laborers) continued to grow. By 1912, there were 28 such students. USC was known to have one of the largest populations of Japanese students of any university in the country.<sup>322</sup> Students studied liberal arts, engineering, law, dentistry, theology, sociology, philosophy, and education. George F. Bovard, President of USC, placed special emphasis on the development of an “Oriental Department” with the intent to “counteract the influence of Yellow Journalism.”<sup>323</sup> That same year the Japanese Student Association was formed at USC. Because many of these students were engaged as servants, they lived with wealthy families around

[http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Alien\\_land\\_laws/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Alien_land_laws/).

<sup>320</sup> Gretchen Tuthill, “A Study of the Japanese in the City of Los Angeles,” (master’s thesis, University of Southern California, 1924), 11.

<sup>321</sup> *Rafu Shimpō Yearbook*, 1938-39, (Los Angeles, CA: Rafu Shimpō, 1939), 39.

<sup>322</sup> *Japanese El Rodeo* 1, June 15, 1912, 1.

<sup>323</sup> Japanese Student Association, University of Southern California, *Japanese El Rodeo*, (Los Angeles, 1919), 2.

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the city; others appear to have resided in boarding houses.<sup>324</sup> By 1919, USC enrollment included two female Japanese students. Japanese American graduates from USC include Seiji Shibuya (1882-1949) and Masaharu Yamaguchi (1878-1931), the founding editors of the *Rafu Shimpo*; Nagisa Mizushima (1887-1983), an early dental school graduate; and Sei Fujii (1882-1952), lawyer and land rights activist.

During the mid-1920s, additional legal restrictions on Japanese immigrants were put in place. In 1922, The Cable Act decreed anyone marrying an alien ineligible for citizenship would lose their citizenship. This discouraged marriage between Nisei and Issei generations. The same year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Ozawa v. United States* that Japanese people were not white; therefore, they could not become naturalized citizens. The final blow came with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the Johnson-Reid Act). The Immigration Act of 1924 was aimed at curtailing emigration of Jews, Italians, Slavs, and Greeks, and it targeted Japanese whose entry was previously regulated through non-legislative means including the Gentlemen's Agreement.

In summary, the Japanese community in Los Angeles thrived during the early 1920s despite increasing anti-Japanese sentiment and dehumanizing racial policies. Young families moved into residential neighborhoods. They established institutions to take care of their community, both in Little Tokyo and in the suburbs. They revolutionized industries including fishing, agriculture, and floriculture, and prepared themselves to grow and prosper in a rapidly expanding Los Angeles.

### **Japanese Stabilization and Community Development, 1925-1940**

Despite restrictive immigration and landownership laws, the Japanese community in Los Angeles flourished during the remaining years before World War II—largely due to the Nisei. Most Nisei were born between 1910 and 1930 and this led to the development of many Japanese American cultural institutions. It also set the stage for a clearly defined age and cultural gap between the Issei and Nisei.

Expanding families fueled the suburbanization of the Japanese American community in Los Angeles. The city of Los Angeles' Japanese American population grew during the 1920s and 1930s at a rate of approximately 10 percent per decade (**Table 3**). Migration to Seinan/Southwest/West Jefferson, Sawtelle, Uptown, and Boyle Heights continued while Little Tokyo remained the commercial, social, and entertainment center for Japanese Americans throughout the region.

In Boyle Heights, construction of significant schools, churches, and temples continued into the late 1920s and 1930s. These include the Tenrikyo Junior Church of America at 2727 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street (1937-39), the Konko Church at 2924 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street (1937-38), and the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple (1926-27), all designed by Yos Hirose, and the Japanese Baptist Church at 2923 E. 2nd Street (1926, extant/alterd) built by the Los Angeles City Baptist Missionary Society in 1926-29.<sup>325</sup>

<sup>324</sup> USC Japanese Studies Special Collection: Japanese Issei Students Research Guide, accessed November 15, 2016, <http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=234962&p=1561943>.

<sup>325</sup> The Tenrikyo Church complex occupies several lots at the southwest corner of E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Saratoga Street with additions and new construction over the years. This church and the Konko Church remain in operation. A new Higashi Honganji Church was constructed in 1976 at 505 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street; the Rissho Kosei-Kai Buddhist Temple occupies the old

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The 1929 Japanese Hospital, located at 101 S. Fickett in Boyle Heights (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1131), was formed to provide health care to Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans and other minority groups who were continually discriminated against and denied treatment at public health care facilities. Three years earlier a group of Japanese doctors, (Kikuwo Tashiro, Daishiro Kuroiwa, Fusataro Nayaka, Toru Ozasa, and Matsuta Takahashi) combined their savings to lease land to build a hospital. The effort received overwhelming support and funding from the Japanese community. When the group went to incorporate the hospital formally, California Secretary of State Frank C. Jordan barred the incorporation. In his decision, Jordan cited the 1911 Treaty of Commerce that established the rights of Japanese nationals living in the United States, claiming that Japanese nationals were not allowed to incorporate and to lease land.

The group of physicians hired attorney Jacob Marion Wright, a trusted ally of the Japanese community and an advocate for civil rights, to represent them in their appeal to the California Supreme Court. In the case *Tashiro v. Jordan*, they argued that the 1911 Treaty of Commerce was broadly ambiguous and that a precedent had already been established since many Japanese were already allowed to lease land for their stores. The California State Supreme Court agreed with the arguments and overturned Jordan’s denial of the hospital’s incorporation. Jordan went on to appeal the decision to the United States Supreme Court. In 1928, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lower court’s decision. In 1929, after many years of struggle, the hospital incorporated and began construction. Architect Yos Hirose designed the hospital in the Streamline Moderne style. The Japanese Hospital and the Turner Street Hospital in Little Tokyo operated separately from 1929 until 1935, when Turner Street merged with the Japanese Hospital.<sup>326</sup>

During the late 1920s, Seinan/Southwest/West Jefferson overtook Boyle Heights as the second largest concentration of Japanese Americans outside of Little Tokyo and Terminal Island. The Seinan/Southwest/West Jefferson enclave started out as the 36<sup>th</sup> Street/37<sup>th</sup> Street enclave in the 1920s between Western and Budlong Avenues then gradually expanded east to the neighborhoods bordering the University of Southern California and west to Arlington Avenue by the end of the 1930s.

Table 4: Estimated Japanese Population of Major Enclaves in the City of Los Angeles c. 1927<sup>327</sup>

Little Tokyo	2,500
Terminal Island	2,200
Boyle Heights	1,400
Seinan/36 <sup>th</sup> Street	1,200
Uptown/10 <sup>th</sup> Street	800
Venice	750
Sawtelle	400
Other	N/A

location. The Japanese Baptist Church has been significantly altered.

<sup>326</sup> Hayashi, 10.

<sup>327</sup> Based on estimates from Uono’s thesis maps and 1930 Census data.

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Prior to World War I, the area was primarily white. The modest single-family wood-frame California Bungalow residences were converted to rentals during the 1920s and 1930s and populated by African Americans and Japanese. Early Japanese residents were mostly maintenance gardeners who sought to live in a more central, less urban location than Little Tokyo so they could be nearer to their clients.<sup>328</sup> Japanese residents were interspersed with African Americans throughout the area, and concentrations included 35<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup> Streets/Place between Western Avenue and Vermont Avenue, as well as the area north of Jefferson Boulevard, south of 28<sup>th</sup> Place, to Western Avenue on the east and Arlington Avenue on the west.<sup>329</sup> Many bungalows from this period remain in these neighborhoods as well as rooming houses for Japanese American men working as gardeners and in other occupations such as those located at 1507 and 1511 W. 37<sup>th</sup> Place.

During the mid-1930s as the population expanded westward, the area then known as the Crestmore Tract became a flash point for racism. Racial restrictions preventing the rental of the properties to people of color were put to the test and two hundred property owners west of Cimarron Street launched a 1933 campaign to "...drive out all Mongolians and Negroes from their homes" on West 30<sup>th</sup> and West 31st Streets.<sup>330</sup> Mrs. Tsurue Kuranaga (1884-1958) refused to move and was forcibly ousted from her rented home. In 1940, a committee to uphold restrictive covenants dislodged Nisei homeowners and Nikkei tenants from the Crestmore Tract. Based on the *Rafu City Residence Directory of 1940-1941* more than 700 Japanese households existed in the neighborhood. Many of the homes from this period still dot the area.

Seinan/Southwest/West Jefferson was also home to several Japanese-operated businesses. An early commercial/industrial institution was the New Fashion Cleaners and Dye Works on Western Avenue. After an explosion in 1924, New Fashion Cleaners and Dye Works was rebuilt. The commercial district of Japanese stores was concentrated on the west side of Normandie Avenue south of 35<sup>th</sup> Street to just south of 36<sup>th</sup> Place. As of 1940, businesses here included the Fujisaka Drug Store, Kadoya Ice Cream and Candy Shop, a market, a dental office, dry cleaners and barbershop. They all served the convergence of Nikkei residents.<sup>331</sup>

Sawtelle was the westernmost Japanese American enclave in Los Angeles, pre-dating Sawtelle's consolidation to the City of Los Angeles in 1922. The Japanese initially came to the area to work in the agriculture fields south of Pico Boulevard or at the nearby Soldier's Home. Mapping Japanese surnames from the 1930 U.S. Census reveals that there were concentrated clusters of Japanese residents along Sawtelle Boulevard, and Beloit, Cotner, and Pontius Avenues, including a substantial number of residents south of Olympic Boulevard. In the late 1920s, Riichi Ishioka moved from Hollywood to Sawtelle where he established the Kobayakawa Boarding House (not extant) on Sawtelle Boulevard. He quickly expanded to six rental units housing up to 60 tenants.<sup>332</sup>

<sup>328</sup> Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 59.

<sup>329</sup> Based on the mapping of the *Rafu City Residence Directory of 1940-1* in the book *Seinan*, 230-232.

<sup>330</sup> Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 60.

<sup>331</sup> Ansho Mas Uchima and Minoru Shinmoto. *Seinan: Southwest Los Angeles* (Fullerton, CA: Nikkei Writers Guild Division of Japanese American Living Legacy, 2010), 145.

<sup>332</sup> Hirahara, *Greenmakers*, 45.



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Ishioka provided apprentice training and established gardening routes for his tenants, resulting in the boarding house becoming known as an unofficial gardeners' college.<sup>333</sup> The boarding house continued to serve primarily as housing for maintenance gardeners into the mid-1970s.<sup>334</sup> Nearly all of the residents were involved either in the nursery trade or as gardeners in private homes. The area appears to have been populated primarily with single-family residences, although some large boarding houses were scattered throughout the enclave. Given the number of residents enumerated on Sawtelle Boulevard itself, it appears that in addition to residing in the boarding house, some Japanese lived in or at the rear of their stores. Many of the single-family residences in the area were razed for freeway construction in later years.

During the 1930s, Japanese businesses started to spring up along S. Sawtelle Boulevard in support of the nursery district and surrounding residential enclave.<sup>335</sup> Sanborn maps of S. Sawtelle Boulevard show the area was still primarily residential and nurseries as late as 1928. At the time, there were six grocery stores, six gas stations, and four flower shops in addition to the 13 nurseries.<sup>336</sup> Notably the area had a Chop Suey house, and no other restaurants before the war.<sup>337</sup> By 1940, there were eight gas stations and garages, three grocery stores, five shops, four barbers, and one beauty salon.<sup>338</sup> In the same year, 310 households or approximately 1,300 people lived in the Sawtelle enclave.<sup>339</sup> To accommodate the growing population, it was common to add residential units to existing commercial and residential buildings. Many Japanese also built a residential unit at the rear of the property and used it for rental income.<sup>340</sup> In the mid-1930s, the West Los Angeles Community Methodist Church located to 1913 Purdue Street.

<sup>333</sup> "Sawtelle," California Japantowns, accessed March 2017, <http://www.californiajapantowns.org/sawtelle.html>.

<sup>334</sup> "Home for Gardeners Has Lawns of Cement," *Los Angeles Times*, January 19, 1975, 24.

<sup>335</sup> Horn, "Sawtelle Reexamined," 31.

<sup>336</sup> Hirahara, *Greenmakers*, 45.

<sup>337</sup> Horn, "Sawtelle Reexamined," 31.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 32

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

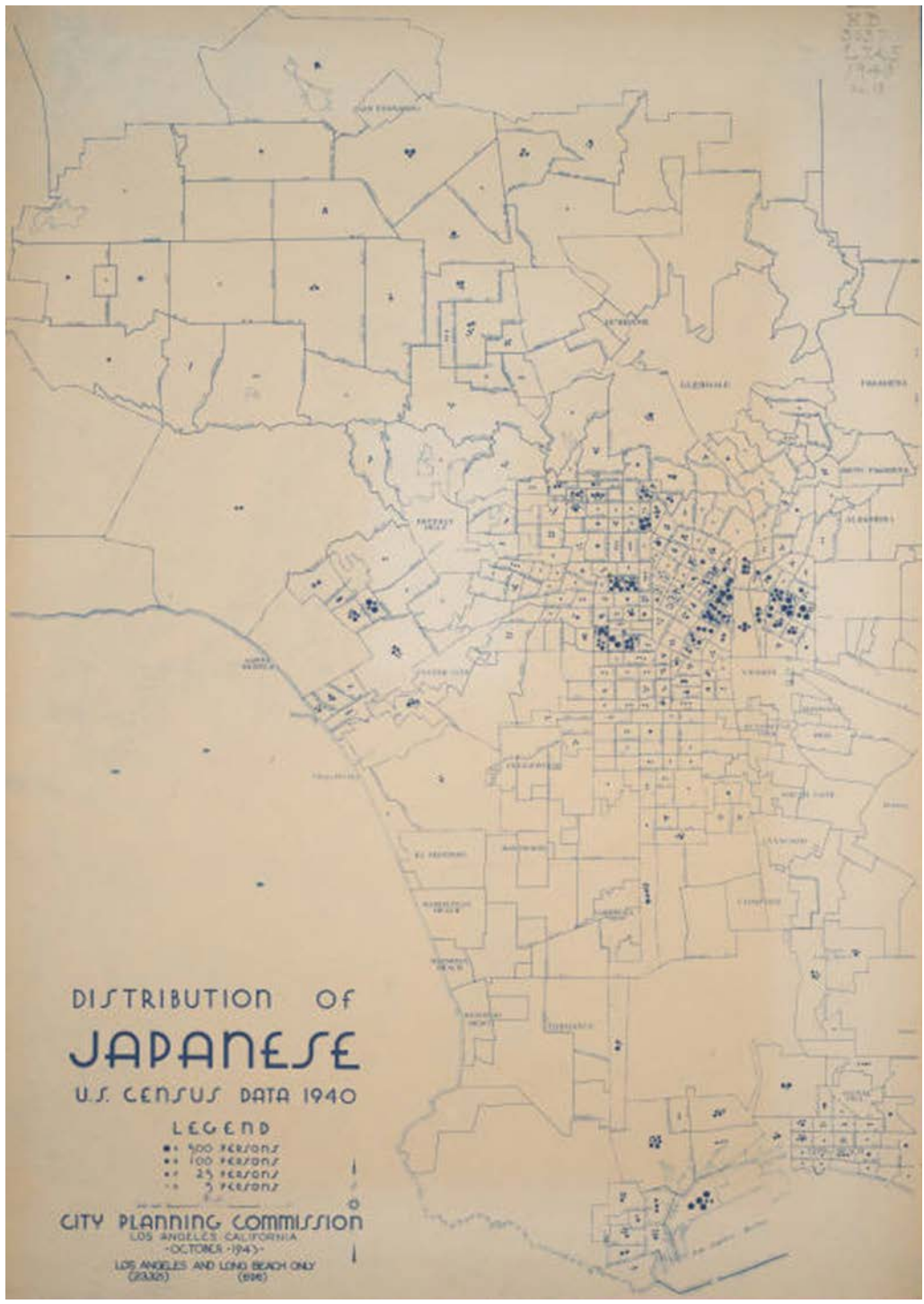
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*LA City Planning Map of 1940 showing key Japanese American enclaves (Special Collections, UCLA)*



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The San Fernando Valley was also home to a relatively large number of Japanese before the war. By some estimates, as many as 3,200 Japanese were living in the area prior to their forced removal and incarceration. Most of these were farming families.<sup>341</sup> Although distant neighborhoods like Sawtelle developed commercial districts to serve their neighborhoods, Little Tokyo continued to serve as the social, commercial, and entertainment hub of the valley's Japanese American community.

In Japanese communities throughout Los Angeles and the region, the Nikkei were supported by Japanese social, religious, cultural, and political institutions. These institutions often served multiple functions within the community. Christian churches, Buddhist temples, Japanese language schools (*gakuen*), community service organizations, boys' and girls' clubs, and sports leagues all flourished during this period. The presence of so many Japanese language schools in the region necessitated the formation of the Southern California Japanese Language School Association in 1927. Several of the buildings housing Japanese language schools remain standing in neighborhoods around Los Angeles and include the Sawtelle Gakuen (1220 Corinth Ave.) and Soshi Jiku (464 N. Westmoreland Avenue.).

Ongoing discrimination against the Japanese meant that first and second generations were often barred from participating in mainstream social clubs and organizations. Localized Nikkei clubs, schools, and sports leagues provided the dual purpose of building neighborhood communities and knitting together the increasingly suburban population through frequent interaction. Still other clubs and organizations were focused on Little Tokyo where participants were drawn widely from throughout the Southern California region. While most organizations were established by the Japanese themselves, some were founded by non-Japanese as part of local Christian missions. Saint Francis Xavier Church and School (constructed between 1921 and 1939) at 222. S. Hewitt Street played a significant role as the first Catholic Mission dedicated to the Japanese in America. The building's service to the Japanese community is reflected in its Asian Eclectic architecture.<sup>342</sup>

One of the key vehicles for Nisei girls' synthesis of models of femininity was the segregated Japanese YWCA.<sup>343</sup> Another one of the important organizations was the Oliver Club, founded in 1917 by Nellie Grace Oliver (1861-1947). Despite the concentration of clubs in Little Tokyo, few resources associated with these groups remain.

Some of these institutions focused on the preservation of traditional cultural practices (language schools, kendo dojos, and sumo clubs). Others provided a hybrid of more American activities (baseball leagues, Sunday schools) for young Nisei. *Kodomo no tame ni* (For the sake of the children) was a common principle among Issei parents of the time.<sup>344</sup> The cultural dichotomy, however, between Japanese and American traditions fueled a generation gap between Issei and Nisei. By the 1930s, the Nisei had established a broad network of organizations within their communities.

<sup>341</sup> "Telling Our Stories: Japanese Americans in the San Fernando Valley, 19102-1970s," Discover Nikkei, accessed November 16, 2016 <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/nikkeialbum/albums/241/>.

<sup>342</sup> The school may have an extant grotto constructed by Ryozo Kado, a significant Issei landscape architect.

<sup>343</sup> Valerie J. Matsumoto, *City Girls: The Nisei Social World in Los Angeles, 1920-1950* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 25.

<sup>344</sup> Graves, Draft National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 12.

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The generation gap became institutionalized with the establishment of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) in Washington and Los Angeles in 1929—the largest Japanese civil rights organization in the U.S. Open only to Nisei, local chapters initially held meetings to discuss common Nisei issues, raise Nisei political awareness, encourage voter registration, and support advocacy efforts.<sup>345</sup>

Organized amateur sports were segregated for many decades of the twentieth century, and as with African Americans, the Japanese community developed its own network of organized leagues. In his book “*More Than a Game: Sports in the Japanese American Community*,” editor Brian Niiya reinforces the idea that local sports leagues and organizations of all types were important within early Japanese American communities. Later, sporting leagues helped unify the Issei and the American-born Nisei, providing common ground when generational identities did not.

Baseball was introduced to Japan at the same time it was introduced in the U.S. and it became a popular sport in both countries. On the U.S. mainland, Chiura Obata (1885-1975) founded the first organized Issei baseball team in San Francisco in 1903. Japanese American baseball teams began forming in earnest between 1915 and 1917.<sup>346</sup> Baseball fields began to sprout in every rural Japanese American settlement. Eventually wood grandstands, bleachers, dugouts, and concession stands were erected.<sup>347</sup> In densely populated urban environments, community ballparks were often used.

In 1926, the *Rafu Shimpō* reported that a dozen Nisei baseball teams with 120-130 players were playing baseball every Sunday in the Los Angeles area.<sup>348</sup> Teams were organized geographically or by profession. Teams included the San Pedro Skippers, headquartered at Terminal Island; the San Fernando Aces based in the Valley; the Diamonds, a team composed primarily of Uptown gardeners; a team of produce workers from Downtown’s Grand Central Market; and two teams based in Hollywood.

During the 1920s, the Diamonds merged with a team fielded by the Oliver Club and became the Los Angeles Nippons. Known as “the pride of Lil’ Tokio,”<sup>349</sup> the Nippons were a semi-professional club that played against Caucasian and African American semi-pro clubs, Nisei teams from other areas, and the Chicago Cubs rookie team on Catalina. The Nippons also toured Japan. In 1929, the Little Tokyo World Series was held at the Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM) ballpark in Culver City attracting 2,000 spectators. In 1930, the Japanese Athletic Union was founded. The golden age of Nisei baseball continued until World War II. There are no known extant resources associated with Nisei baseball in Los Angeles.

<sup>345</sup> The JACL Pacific Southwest District is located in the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center at 244 S. San Pedro Street.

<sup>346</sup> Kerry Yo Nakagawa, *Japanese American Baseball in California: A History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014), 210.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>348</sup> Yoichi Nagata, “The Los Angeles Nippons,” in *More Than a Game: Sport in the Japanese American Community*, ed. Brian Niiya (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 2000), 100.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

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In addition to baseball, traditional Japanese sports were popular in the community including *sumo*, the national sport of Japan. In sumo, the religious and ceremonial aspects dissipated in the Japanese American version of the sport and it became more of a team vs. individual competition. Sumo tournaments were important vehicles for building ties between Japanese American communities.<sup>350</sup> The first organized Kendo activity in Los Angeles emerged in 1914, and by the end of the 1920s, the majority of participants were Nisei.<sup>351</sup> Both sports became popular with both Issei and Nisei. Judo clubs also became common in Southern California and tournaments were held regularly in Little Tokyo. Dojos, training facilities for Japanese martial arts, began to appear in several Los Angeles Japanese American communities.<sup>352</sup>

The 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles were also a source of community building for the city's Japanese American population. The Empire of Japan competed in the games and Los Angeles' large Issei and Nisei populations took great pride in welcoming the athletes and cheering for their success. The local community created a slogan and logo for the Games: *nihon wo kataseyo* (make Japan win). Large Japanese crowds appeared at practice sites and it was estimated that Olympic ticket sales topped \$100,000 among the Japanese community.<sup>353</sup> Japan dominated in track and field and swimming, with athletes Chuhei Nambu, Miyazaki Tatsugo, and Kawaishi Tatsugo all winning gold medals. Japan also thrived in equestrian and field hockey, securing gold and silver medals, respectively. There are no known extant resources associated with Japanese Americans and the 1932 Olympic Games.

The pride in the local Japanese American Community was also in evidence in the establishment of the first Nisei Week celebration in 1934. As described by Togo Tanaka, former radio broadcaster and *Rafu Shimpo* reporter:

Exuberant Nisei came up with the idea of Nisei Week to lift the gray cloud of the Great Depression. They urged the Issei to cater more to Nisei patronage both in hiring and retail practice. That done, they would bring the customers. The JACLers sold the idea to leading Little Tokyo Issei merchants. Enough Issei merchants believed them to help fund the early effort. The Nisei went to work. They organized. It was a milestone in Little Tokyo community cooperation.<sup>354</sup>

Original Nisei Week organizers included Clarence Arima (1904-1980), Nisei manager of the Issei-owned Union Paper Supply Co. His co-chairman was Keiichi "Kay" Sugahara (1909-1988), owner of Universal Foreign Service, a customs brokerage firm. As Tanaka described, "the Nisei organizers planned their attractions around the best they could offer in ondo dancing, Japanese floral arrangements,

<sup>350</sup> Brian Niiya, *More Than A Game: Sports in the Japanese American Community* (Los Angeles: Japanese American National Museum, 2000), 19.

<sup>351</sup> Little Tokyo Historical Society, *Los Angeles' Little Tokyo* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 96.

<sup>352</sup> "Tenrikyo Church," Los Angeles Conservancy, accessed January 9, 2018

<https://www.laconservancy.org/locations/tenrikyo-church>.

<sup>353</sup> Eric Yamamoto, "Memories of the 1932 Olympics," in *More Than A Game: Sport in the Japanese American Community*, 93.

<sup>354</sup> Togo Tanaka, History of Issei Week, From the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet as published on [www.niseiweek.org](http://www.niseiweek.org), accessed January 9, 2017.

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tea ceremonies, martial arts, fashion shows, kimono-clad queen and attendants, calligraphy, art shows, and talent programs, in the hope that the transpacific cultural bridge would somehow flower and bloom.<sup>355</sup>

Although Nisei Week was conceived as an early community development effort, the Nikkei community's celebration of traditional festivals, or *matsuri* of Japan such as *ken jinkai* picnics, *mochitsuki*, *obon*, *hinamatsuri*, and *tango no sekku* had longstanding roots within the community. Festivals were often an organizing mechanism for the community's clubs and social groups.

At this time, Southern California boasted a busy Japanese American art scene. Toyo Miyatake (1895-1979), an Issei photographer with a studio in Little Tokyo (364 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, not extant), documented many residents and his art photography was recognized in international salons. J.T. Sata (1896-1975) was a member of the Japanese Camera Pictorialists of California, a Little Tokyo-based group of photographers "dedicated to exploring the artistic potential of the medium."<sup>356</sup> Other local art photographers included Hiromu Kira (1898-1991), and Shinsaku Izumi (1880-1941).<sup>357</sup>

Local fine artists included Hideo Date (1907-2005), Benji Okubo (1904-1975), and Taro Yashima (1908-1994). Hideo Date and his fellow artists "were influenced by Orient across the Pacific just as N.Y. was influenced by Europe across the Atlantic." He was part of the so-called "Independents," a group of L.A.-based artists who rejected modernism and described their work as "linear-composition."<sup>358</sup> Nisei men involved in art and architecture also formed a group call the Ateliers.<sup>359</sup> Famous local dancers/ choreographers included Michio Ito (1892-1961) who had a studio in Little Tokyo, Thelma Shizuko Okajima (1901-unknown), and Teru Izumida (1906-1963). Because so many of these artists were located in Little Tokyo, studios or other buildings associated with them are rare.

The prewar Japanese American architects' community was small and focused primarily on serving Japanese clients. Given restrictions on landownership, opportunities for architects to build were limited. Completed projects were primarily institutional rather than commercial or residential. Japanese architects did not join established trade organizations such as the American Institute of Architects, whose members were nearly all Caucasian. One of the most prolific Japanese American architects of the period was Yos Hirose (1882-1963) who designed several early community churches and schools. His best known works include the Japanese Hospital (101 Fickett Street); the Japanese influenced Higashi Honganji Buddhist Church (2707 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street) and the Rafu Chuo Gakuen Japanese Language School (204 N. Saratoga Street).<sup>360</sup> The 1938-39 Japanese phone book also lists a number of active Japanese American builders including Mieki Hayano, Saburo Muraoka, and Ray Tsukamoto.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Little Tokyo Historical Society, *Los Angeles's Little Tokyo*, 119.

<sup>357</sup> "Reviving Images of Local History," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1982, 90.

<sup>358</sup> Outstanding Alumni: Hideo Date," Otis College of Art and Design, accessed April 18, 2018, <https://www.otis.edu/alumni/hideo-date>.

<sup>359</sup> Correspondence to the author from Munson Kwok, Project Advisory Committee member, indicates that many Asian artists congregated at the SooChow Café in Chinatown during the early 1930s.

<sup>360</sup> The architect of the 1938 portion was Yos Hirose. Additions were made to the property in 1959 and 1965 and other alterations have occurred over time. The school remains in operation.

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During the Depression, many Japanese American women contributed to family businesses through paid or unpaid work. Nisei students continued to work their way through college, though often upon graduating could not find jobs in their chosen fields. As a result, many college-educated Nisei worked in family produce businesses or the produce departments of supermarkets.

During the late 1930s, deteriorating relations between the U.S. and Japan cast a shadow over the Japanese American community in Los Angeles. At the time, Japan was a heavily populated island short on natural resources and dependent upon trade. When the increasing nationalism and militarism of Japan erupted into full-blown war with China in 1937, the U.S. responded with economic sanctions against Japan.

Anti-Japanese sentiment once again flared. In 1935, Shigeo Takayama, President of the Roosevelt High School Japanese Club, led the construction of a Japanese Garden on the campus. It is believed that the students elected to create a Japanese garden (known as the Garden of Peace) in an attempt to soothe racial animosity against the Japanese.<sup>361</sup> As public fascination with Japanese gardens flourished in the 1920s and 1930s, many exquisite examples of such gardens had been created in Los Angeles for wealthy homeowners with the technical expertise and labor of the Nisei. According to author Kendal H. Brown, “aware of both the hostility facing them and the popularity of Japanese-style gardens, Japanese built gardens as a way of smoothing the path of acceptance in American society by emphasizing the most attractive manifestation of their culture.”<sup>362</sup> In the Sawtelle area, the Bay Cities Gardner’s Association landscaped the area around Stoner Park in the early 1930s; in 1950, the gardens were updated by Koichi Kawana, a notable landscape architect. Few examples of prewar Japanese gardens remain.<sup>363</sup>

In 1939, fueled by nationalism and militarism of its own, Germany invaded Poland, thrusting Europe into World War II. On December 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan launched a surprise attack on the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor, setting in motion a wave of anti-Japanese sentiment in America that would ultimately disrespect, incarcerate, and economically devastate Japanese American families and communities.

**Japanese Forced Removal and Incarceration, 1941-1944<sup>364</sup>**

Within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, prominent Japanese American businessmen, clergy, school teachers, and others declared by the U.S. government to be enemy aliens were rounded up in FBI sweeps and detained in jails and Department of Justice Internment Camps. Particularly targeted were those

<sup>361</sup> “Theodore Roosevelt High School Japanese Garden,” Discover Nikkei, accessed May 18, 2017, <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/nikkeialbum/albums/50/>.

<sup>362</sup> Kendall H. Brown, “Territories of Play: A Short History of Japanese-Style Gardens in North America,” in Melba Levick, *Japanese-Style Gardens of the Pacific West Coast* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1999), 12-13.

<sup>363</sup> In the wake of Pearl Harbor and World War II, many Japanese-style gardens were demolished, abandoned, defaced, or relocated.

<sup>364</sup> The National Park Service *Japanese Americans in World War II Theme Study* (August 2012) is a major source for information on associated property types.

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members of the community who had worked in the preservation and education of Japanese tradition and culture, activities framed as disloyal to America. By December 8, 1941, 736 Los Angeles area Japanese immigrants were taken into custody.<sup>365</sup> Initially they were taken to makeshift temporary detention centers. In addition to Terminal Island in the Los Angeles Harbor, one such center was created when the U.S. Department of Justice took over a vacated Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in the Tujunga area of Los Angeles and installed 12-foot-high barbed wire fences, guard posts, and floodlights. While the camp is not extant, a portion of the site has been locally designated as the Site of the Tuna Canyon Detention Center (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1039). Another detention camp was established at the CCC's Camp Riverside in Griffith Park, one mile west of Victory Boulevard on South Riverside Drive. It included two separate but adjoining compounds, with double fences capped with barbed wire, sentry stations, and floodlights (not extant).<sup>366</sup>

The Japanese community of Terminal Island was particularly hard hit, as stores were immediately shuttered and a blackout imposed. The military descended on the island and established the Terminal Island Immigration Center where many arrestees were interrogated. By December 9, 1941, 300 Japanese Americans were being held there. On February 2, 1942, FBI agents returned and rounded up 400 Japanese-born men with fishing licenses. They were taken to Union Station and sent to camps as far away as Montana. On February 27, soldiers in full uniform returned to Terminal Island and gave residents 48 hours to leave the Island.

Fear and prejudice against the Japanese community surged in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. Hundreds of Japanese American workers were fired from their jobs and ethnic businesses were boycotted and shuttered. The Union Pacific fired its Japanese American railroad workers. Japanese civil servants lost their jobs. Half of Japanese American produce workers were laid off. Local political leaders encouraged anti-Japanese racism as a form of patriotism. Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron escalated the "Japanese Problem" by commissioning a report that identified Japanese Americans working for the Department of Water and Power and publicly suggesting that the Nisei were going to sabotage the city's water supply. By the end of 1942, Bowron, State Attorney General Earl Warren, and Governor Culbert Olson stood in solidarity advocating for mass evacuation of Japanese Americans.

In late February 1942 headlines charging that Japanese had shelled oil wells in Santa Barbara set up the "Battle for Los Angeles" with air raid sirens, anti-aircraft fire, and reports of phantom Japanese planes that never materialized. As a result, 20 Japanese Americans in Los Angeles were arrested and accused of suspicious activity. Los Angeles' Japanese population were subjected to 6:00 pm curfews and their travel was restricted to a five-mile radius from home. Japanese branch banks were closed and the financial assets were seized by the U.S. Treasury Department.

On February 18, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 that authorized the Secretary of War and any military commander designated by him "to prescribe military areas...from

<sup>365</sup> Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 110.

<sup>366</sup> Griffith Park is City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 942. The CCC Camp is not extant.



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which any or all persons may be excluded.”<sup>367</sup> Although the order did not specify the exclusion of Japanese Americans, the intention was clear.

During February and March of 1942, John Tolan, chair of the House Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration (also known as “the Tolan Committee”) held hearings in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to discuss the forced removal of the Japanese. Again, Los Angeles Mayor Fletcher Bowron played a role supporting the removal of “the entire Japanese population” because he knew of “no way to separate those who say they are patriotic and are, in fact, loyal at heart, and those who say they are patriotic and, in fact, are loyal to Japan.”<sup>368</sup>

Although individuals denounced the rising tide of racism, opposition voices never really coalesced into an organized movement. One outspoken local voice was progressive restaurateur Clifford E. Clinton who wrote an open letter denouncing the racism. Tokutaro “Tokie” Nishimura Slocum (1895-1974) headed the Anti-Axis Committee for the JACL (Slocum’s residence in 1939 was a bungalow court located at 2161 ½ W. 31<sup>st</sup> Place). Shortly after the Tolan Committee hearings, Togo Tanaka (1916-2009) attempted to mobilize the Japanese American community under the United Citizens Federation. The JACL’s philosophy was that cooperation would prove the loyalty of the community, and they therefore withdrew from the Federation. As a result, opposition efforts quickly collapsed and wartime membership in the JACL plummeted.

On March 18, 1942, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) was established by Executive Order 9102 and created to administer the internment camps and Executive Order 9066. Between 1942 and 1945, approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans (including some 37,000 from Los Angeles County) were incarcerated in ten remote concentration camps.<sup>369</sup> To comply with the incarceration mandate, many Japanese Americans were forced to sell their businesses or property for pennies on the dollar. Particularly hard hit were farmers whose buildings were located on land leased from white property owners. Others were able to turn to trusted non-Japanese friends or religious organizations to store their possessions and look after their property. A key player in this effort was the Reverend Julius Goldwater. Goldwater, was given power of attorney and safeguarded the homes and possessions of members of the Senshin Gakuin at 1336 W. 37<sup>th</sup> Place. Similarly, the Mount Hollywood Congregational Church at 1744 N. New Hampshire safeguarded possessions for the Japanese American congregation at the nearby Hollywood Independent Church. Leaders from the YWCA’s International Institute met with officials to persuade them to stop the forced removal of persons of Japanese ancestry; their efforts were unsuccessful.<sup>370</sup>

<sup>367</sup> Brian Niiya, “Executive Order 9066,” in *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed January 9, 2017, [http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Executive\\_Order\\_9066/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Executive_Order_9066/).

<sup>368</sup> Tolan Committee Hearings, Part 31, 11644.

<sup>369</sup> Greg Robinson, *After Camp, Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 60.

<sup>370</sup> Email from Kirsten Hayashi, Project Advisory Committee member, to Sara Delgadillo Cruz of the Office of Historic Resources, February 15, 2018 with information compiled by the members of the Little Tokyo Historical Society.

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Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA) civil control stations or processing centers, the first step in the incarceration process, were established in churches and other buildings throughout Los Angeles. Japanese residents first registered at one of the control stations and then reported on their designated day of travel. Extant examples include the Japanese Union Church in Little Tokyo (120 N. San Pedro Street, St. Mary's Episcopal Church (610 S. Mariposa), the Japanese Institute of Sawtelle (2210 Corinth Avenue), and buildings at 923 Venice Boulevard and 360 S. Westlake Avenue.

As an interim step on the way to their final destinations, most Nikkei were taken to WCCA assembly centers. This included 18,719 Los Angeles residents taken first to Santa Anita Race Track, while another 5,434 were temporarily housed at the Pomona Fairgrounds.<sup>371</sup> The majority of Los Angeles Japanese were then bused to WRA relocation centers including Manzanar Camp near Lone Pine, California. Other camps housing Los Angeles residents included Amache, Colorado; Gila River, Arizona; Rohwer, Arizona; and Heart Mountain, Wyoming. Many prisoners from the San Pedro Bay area were sent to Jerome, Arkansas.

In 1943, the War Department and the WRA combined forces to assess the loyalty of Japanese incarcerated at the camps by creating the loyalty questionnaire. Questions 25 through 28 asked "whether an individual's birth had been registered in Japan, if the individual had renounced his Japanese citizenship, if the individual would serve in combat duty wherever ordered, and finally if he would declare loyalty to the United States and renounce allegiance to the Emperor of Japan."<sup>372</sup> The questionnaires fomented a great deal of unrest within the Japanese community.

Unlike their mainland counterparts, Japanese residents in Hawaii were generally not incarcerated.<sup>373</sup> Many served in the armed forces as part of the highly decorated 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, commonly known as the "Go for Broke" Regimental Combat Team (RCT). Ultimately, the 442<sup>nd</sup> included 1,100 volunteers from behind the barbed wire of the prison camps. While there are no known examples of buildings or structures associated with the 442<sup>nd</sup>, a 1949 memorial to the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team is located within Evergreen Cemetery at 204 N. Evergreen Avenue in Boyle Heights.<sup>374</sup>

During incarceration, African Americans moved into Little Tokyo and it became known as Bronzeville. By 1943, it was estimated that 3,000 persons, mostly black migrants from the southern U.S. were living in the business district of Little Tokyo.<sup>375</sup> A similar process of transition happened in West Jefferson.

Between 1942 and 1944, the Japanese communities of Los Angeles and throughout California were forever changed by forced incarceration. Businesses were lost, families were separated, neighbors were dislocated, and lives were lost in combat. For the Issei and Nisei, what lay ahead of them after the war

<sup>371</sup> Japanese American National Museum, permanent exhibition.

<sup>372</sup> Cherstin M. Lyon, "Loyalty Questionnaire," in *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed January 9, 2017, [http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Loyalty\\_questionnaire/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Loyalty_questionnaire/)

<sup>373</sup> Research has revealed the existence of Honouliuli, a camp on Oahu.

<sup>374</sup> The cemetery also includes the Garden of the Pines memorial to Issei pioneers (1966) and the Go For Broke Monument and National Education Center honoring Japanese Americans in WWII (1999; 355 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street)

<sup>375</sup> Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 161.

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was uncertainty. On December 17, 1944, President Roosevelt issued Public Proclamation Number 21, which rescinded the exclusion orders.

**Japanese Resettlement, 1945-1959**

The first Nikkei to return to Los Angeles were the few who retained sufficient financial resources to keep their homes and businesses during their incarceration. As described by scholar John-Paul deGuzman, “a group of Nikkei known as the ‘scouts’ then returned to the city to explore the racial climate, assess the possibility of finding homes and employment and report their findings back to those still in the concentration camps.”<sup>376</sup> What they found was Japanese Americans returning to Los Angeles faced one of the worst housing crises in America, and few had homes from before the war to which they could return. The deficit was “unequaled in any other major city in the United States,” and in March of 1945, Mayor Fletcher Bowron announced Los Angeles needed 114,075 more housing units in the city.<sup>377</sup> During this period, some Nisei moved into tract homes to be near South Bay aviation and aerospace plants.<sup>378</sup> Many others moved out of the city of Los Angeles to Monterey Park and Gardena where restrictions were less prevalent. Despite this dispersal, Los Angeles’ Japanese American population grew 10 percent between 1940 and 1950 (**Table 3**).

Some Japanese Americans were fortunate to find temporary housing through the many religious institutions and community centers in Los Angeles. These included the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple (2707 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street), St. Mary’s Episcopal Church (610 S. Mariposa), Evergreen Hostel (506 N. Evergreen Avenue),<sup>379</sup> a multi-family property at 2122 S. Corinth in Sawtelle (next to the neighboring Sawtelle Institute), Senshin Buddhist Temple (1311 W. 37<sup>th</sup> Street),<sup>380</sup> and the West Los Angeles Community Methodist Church (1913 Purdue Street). Many of these institutions served as temporary housing until about 1947. Demand for these spaces far exceeded supply. It is estimated that some tens of thousands of Japanese Americans were relocated to trailer camps throughout California—5,000 in the three trailer camps in the San Fernando Valley alone.<sup>381</sup> Two of the camps were located in the City of Burbank at Magnolia Boulevard at Lomita Street and Winona Boulevard at Hollywood Way. The third was in Sun Valley at San Fernando Road and Olinda Street. Opened in November of 1947, the Roscoe Trailer Park (not extant) as it was known remained open until 1956 and was the longest-running trailer camp for returning Japanese in California.

<sup>376</sup> Jean-Paul deGuzman, “Japanese American Resettlement in Postwar America: The Los Angeles Experience,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, March 2016, accessed January 19, 2017, <http://americanhistory.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-270>.

<sup>377</sup> Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 166.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>379</sup> The hostel was established by Reverend Sohei Kowta, a Presbyterian pastor. Originally known as the Forsythe Memorial School for Girls, the property is listed on the National Register under the *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* MPS for its earlier association.

<sup>380</sup> Religious programs were added to the Senshin Gakuin in 1947, and in 1951, it became the Senshin Buddhist Temple with an address of 1311 W. 37<sup>th</sup> Street. The temple and classroom buildings were designed by Japanese American architect TWA/Shimozono in 1965.

<sup>381</sup> “Both Fond, Bitter Memories Post-War Trailer Park Refugees Plan Reunion,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 5, 1986, WS10.

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By all accounts, conditions in the trailer camps were substandard and bore many similarities to the conditions found at Manzanar and other incarceration facilities. Notably, when the War Relocation Authority transferred 513 Japanese to the Winona camp in Burbank, the camp lacked "...lights, sanitary facilities, and feeding facilities," and makeshift meals were provided by the county-operated Olive View Sanitarium."<sup>382</sup> Crude trailers were sold to the Japanese Americans for \$65 to \$110 each. Communal bathrooms and kitchens were provided at the camps.

Many Japanese returning to Los Angeles found that their stored stock and other business assets had been stolen or vandalized, and the storefronts were occupied by other tenants. Those who were fortunate enough to have commercial enterprises to come back to often lived in the rear of their businesses. The New Fashion Cleaners and Dye works (not extant) in Seinan was among the few local Japanese businesses to reestablish itself after the war.

Although many Japanese flower wholesalers were never able to regain their prewar prominence in the industry, California's flower cultivation was still dominated by Japanese Americans in the postwar period. Places such as the new Los Angeles Wholesale Flower Terminal building (for the Southern California Flower Market) at 755 Wall Street (built in 1962, and expanded in 1981) remained symbols in the Japanese community.<sup>383</sup> Gradually, newcomers of various ethnic backgrounds replaced the Japanese workers, suburban land for flower cultivation gave way to housing developments, and national and international growing and distribution altered trade patterns.<sup>384</sup>

While many returning veterans were enjoying the benefits of the G.I. Bill, particularly the federally guaranteed home loans that acted as a gateway to homeownership for a generation, Japanese Americans who had served in the 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment were less fortunate. Although the VA guaranteed veteran loans under the G.I. Bill, they did not fund the loans directly. Veterans still had to secure financing from financial institutions, which was practically impossible for Japanese Americans. Western Federal Savings was the first mainstream bank to loan to the Japanese Americans. Fire insurance was also nearly impossible to obtain, as insurers feared "neighbors would burn their houses down."<sup>385</sup> As a result, the practice of redlining and restrictive covenants trumped the benefits of home loans for veterans enacted by the federal government. Some enterprising Japanese American realtors in Los Angeles learned to circumnavigate the system. One example was Crenshaw realtor Kazuo K. Inouye (1922-2002), who described how he worked with clients to either loan them money directly, or coordinated with local Japanese American credit unions to help them buy homes.<sup>386</sup>

<sup>382</sup> "Housing 513 Japs Creates Problem," *Los Angeles Times*, May 13, 1946, 2.

<sup>383</sup> The 1922 building at this site was demolished. The 1960s building is proposed for demolition as part of new development, and tenants will be consolidated in the 1980s building.

<sup>384</sup> GPA Consulting, "Los Angeles Wholesale Flower Terminal, Los Angeles, California: Historic Resources Evaluation Report," March 2017, 15.

<sup>385</sup> Kazuo K. Inouye interview by Leslie Ito, Regenerations Oral History Project: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era, Los Angeles Region Volume II, December 13, 1997, accessed November 28, 2016,

<http://content.cdlib.org/view/?docId=ft358003z1;NAAN=13030&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=d0e17957&toc.depth=1&toc.id=d0e17957&brand=calisphere>.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid. Later, Inouye also served as broker/developer for postwar houses in the area along the Centinela Avenue corridor

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After the war, many Japanese returned to their old neighborhoods in Uptown, Hollywood,<sup>387</sup> West Jefferson, and Sawtelle. Density rarely reached prewar levels in these communities. Census tract maps developed by Ethington, Kooistra and De Young show that Japanese Americans also returned to Boyle Heights with Japanese residents spreading to the northeast during the 1950s to neighborhoods north of Cesar E. Chavez Avenue. Return was not without significant challenges. In October 1946, two Nikkei homes were lost due to arson and other residents were subject to harassment, vandalism, and gun violence. Undaunted, the Japanese Americans remained a presence in Boyle Heights through the 1960s.<sup>388</sup> Businesses established after WWII include the Otomisan Japanese Restaurant, in continuous operation since 1956 at 2506 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Many residences had been rented out to other tenants, many Japanese businesses were gone, and the sense of community that prevailed before the war was shattered. As a result, postwar migration patterns shifted to the resettlement of the Japanese population to new areas such as Pacoima, Crenshaw, and Venice.<sup>389</sup> As Nishi explained in 1958:

In re-establishing the general outlines of the pre-war settlement pattern, significant modifications have taken place. The main communities are less compact and their Japanese population is less concentrated. [The] Westside community is not the best Japanese residential area and its expansion is evidence of an improved economic status. The younger generations are no longer dependent on ethno-centered communities or affected by the social control once exerted by these centers.<sup>390</sup>

Japanese Americans settled in Pacoima in substantial numbers. The surge was fueled in part by the location of one of the WRA's temporary trailer camps in neighboring Sun Valley, as well as a new wave of residential development in the area. Postwar assessments of Pacoima in the *Los Angeles Times* described the area as having substandard housing conditions with little infrastructure. In late 1952, the Los Angeles Building and Safety Department began a slum clearance project. By the 1950s, the rapid suburbanization of the San Fernando Valley arrived in Pacoima, and it was transformed from a dusty farming area to a bedroom community for workers at nearby Lockheed and other defense-related companies.

Many of the postwar houses from this period can still be found throughout Pacoima. The 1959 Valley Japanese America Community Center at 12953 Branford Street (architect Kazumi Adachi) and the 1953

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near Culver Boulevard in the eastern part of Venice.

<sup>387</sup> A 1964 voter registration roll shows approximately thirty families residing on Virgil Avenue, Madison Avenue, and Westmoreland Avenue.

<sup>388</sup> During the 1970s, the percentage of Japanese residents declined as large numbers of Latinos moved into the community.

<sup>389</sup> The Venice Japanese Community Center (Venice Gakuen) constructed a new building at 12448 Braddock Drive in Venice in 1941. The center is still in operation, and substantial new construction has taken place on the campus.

<sup>390</sup> Midori Nishi, "Japanese Settlement in the Los Angeles Area," *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers* 20 (1958), 45.

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Japanese Holiness Church at 9610 Haddon Avenue (architect David O. Patterson) were constructed to serve the growing Japanese American population in the area.

After incarceration, some residents returned to the West Jefferson area. The concentration of Japanese residents was significantly smaller here than in other areas. Many Japanese relocated to the nearby Seinan/Southwest/Crenshaw neighborhoods several blocks west of Arlington Avenue. Japanese rooming houses were interspersed throughout the community with a few concentrated around Denker Avenue.<sup>391</sup>

Three postwar real estate pioneers played an important role in the migration of Japanese Americans into Crenshaw after the war: Kazuo K. Inouye of Kashu Realty, Roy Takai of Takai Realty, and Ty Saito who developed properties on Jefferson Boulevard.<sup>392</sup> As the postwar housing boom escalated, more than twenty real estate companies entered the market. As Inouye remembered, “On one block of Jefferson there used to be three Japanese real estate offices—Seinan Realty, Asia Realty—you name it.”<sup>393</sup> Developers sometimes advertised in ethnic newspapers like *Rafu Shimpo* and the *Pacific Citizen*, promising neighborhoods that welcomed *nihonjin* homeowners.<sup>394</sup> Some buildings and signage associated with these real estate pioneers can still be found in the area.

The Crenshaw enclave proved particularly attractive for Japanese Americans. Although most of the homes sold to Japanese Americans in the Crenshaw district were existing homes, in 1956 Westview Construction built a series of new Minimal Traditional/Minimal Ranch-style homes with Asian Eclectic architectural details on S. Bronson and S. Norton Avenues<sup>395</sup> clearly targeted at Japanese American buyers.<sup>396</sup> In addition to the Asian Eclectic architecture, the homes were often surrounded by Japanese garden landscapes featuring common plants used in Japanese gardens such as trimmed juniper and black pine trees. By the end of 1947, the *Rafu Shimpo* reported that 25 Japanese American families were moving into the area each month.<sup>397</sup>

A number of buildings that housed Japanese American businesses are extant in the area. These include the Kokisai Theater (3016 S. Crenshaw, altered), which showed independent films from Japan; the Bank of Toyko of California (3501 W. Jefferson), built by Japanese owned architecture firm of O’Leary and Terasawa (1965); Grace Bakery and Pastry (3514 W. Jefferson), which opened in 1960 by the Uzumi family; and Wade & Asato Insurance Agency (3220 W. Jefferson Blvd.).

Construction of the San Diego freeway in the mid-1950s bifurcated the Sawtelle area, and scores of homes were razed in the process. In newly cleared areas, single-family residences east of the San Diego

<sup>391</sup> Uono, “The Factors Affecting the Geographical Aggregation and Dispersion,” 139.

<sup>392</sup> The Kashu Realty pole sign is extant at 3112 W. Jefferson Blvd.

<sup>393</sup> Kazuo K. Inoye, interview by Leslie Ito on December 13, 1997.

<sup>394</sup> Ryan Reft, “Redefining Asian America: Japanese Americans, Gardena, and the Making of a Transnational Suburb,” *Tropics of Meta*, May 7, 2015, accessed November 28, 2016, <https://tropicsofmeta.wordpress.com/2015/05/07/redefining-asian-america-japanese-americans-gardena-and-the-making-of-a-transnational-suburb/>.

<sup>395</sup> This district was identified as the Crenshaw Seinan Historic District in SurveyLA.

<sup>396</sup> In his book, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, author and historian Scott Kurashige identifies the developers of the apartments and houses along Norton and Bronson as a group of Nisei.

<sup>397</sup> Matsumoto, *City Girls*, 190.

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Freeway were rezoned for light industrial use. The phenomenon repeated itself during the extension of the Santa Monica Freeway at the southern end of the enclave. Homes south of Olympic were again replaced with light industrial buildings. As a result, the Sawtelle residential community consolidated west of the San Diego Freeway and north of Olympic Boulevard.

A concentration of long-running Japanese American businesses from the postwar period remain in the Sawtelle area along the 1800 to 2000 block of Sawtelle Boulevard including the Tempura House and Jo-Mi Plumbing, as well as a number of nurseries such as Harada Nursery, Hashimoto Nursery (originally O.K. Nursery), Tabachi Nursery, and Yamagachi Bonsai Nursery. In the surrounding area of West Los Angeles to the south of Sawtelle, associated gardening-related businesses include Baba's Lawnmower Shop and M.G. Lawnmower Shop at 4554 and 4569 S. Centinela Avenue, respectively.

In the Harbor Gateway area of southeast Los Angeles, the Chacksfield tract appears to have been popular with Japanese residents. It is distinguished by its Japanese-style gardens including pruned Japanese black pine trees, Sago palms, "Nana" juniper plants, pruned dwarf eugenias, Pringles or junipers, mondo grass, Japanese stone or cast concrete lanterns, large stones, raked gravel, polished black river rocks, round concrete stepping stones embedded with polished river rocks, and cast concrete posts that mimic logs. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the development was known as Merit Homes and developed in 1956 by George Chacksfield, builder-developer. Although tract marketing materials and newspaper articles make no overt mention of marketing these homes to Japanese Americans, Chacksfield's projects included homes and town homes in the city of Gardena in the late 1950s and early 1960s where there was a significant popular of postwar Japanese and the firm's headquarters was located.<sup>398</sup>

Upon the Japanese return from incarceration, it was feared that there would be race riots in Little Tokyo, which had become known as Bronzeville during the war, and those fears did not materialize.<sup>399</sup> Multi-racial political organizations were launched in the area to promote unity, including the Los Angeles Coordinating Committee for Resettlement formed by William Carr, Clifford Clinton, and Garcia Booth.

The merchant Kiichi Uyeda (1904-1993) was reportedly the first merchant to move back to Little Tokyo, and in 1945 quickly established S.K. Uyeda Department Store at 230 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, a retail operation to help returning Japanese residents replace all of the essential possessions that had been taken from them during incarceration.<sup>400</sup> Slowly, Japanese returned to the enclave, and Little Tokyo changed from a place where people lived and worked, to primarily a place of business. During this period, Little Tokyo also began to shrink in geographic footprint. First, the extension of the Los Angeles civic center complex just to the west eliminated the quadrant of the San Pedro-First Street intersection, historically part of Little Tokyo. Second, in the early 1950s, the 100 block of N. Los Angeles Street was reclaimed for the building of Parker Center (Los Angeles Police Department headquarters 1954-2009), which

<sup>398</sup> The City of Gardena is directly west of the Harbor Gateway area of Los Angeles.

<sup>399</sup> Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 170.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, 169. The store closed in 2016.

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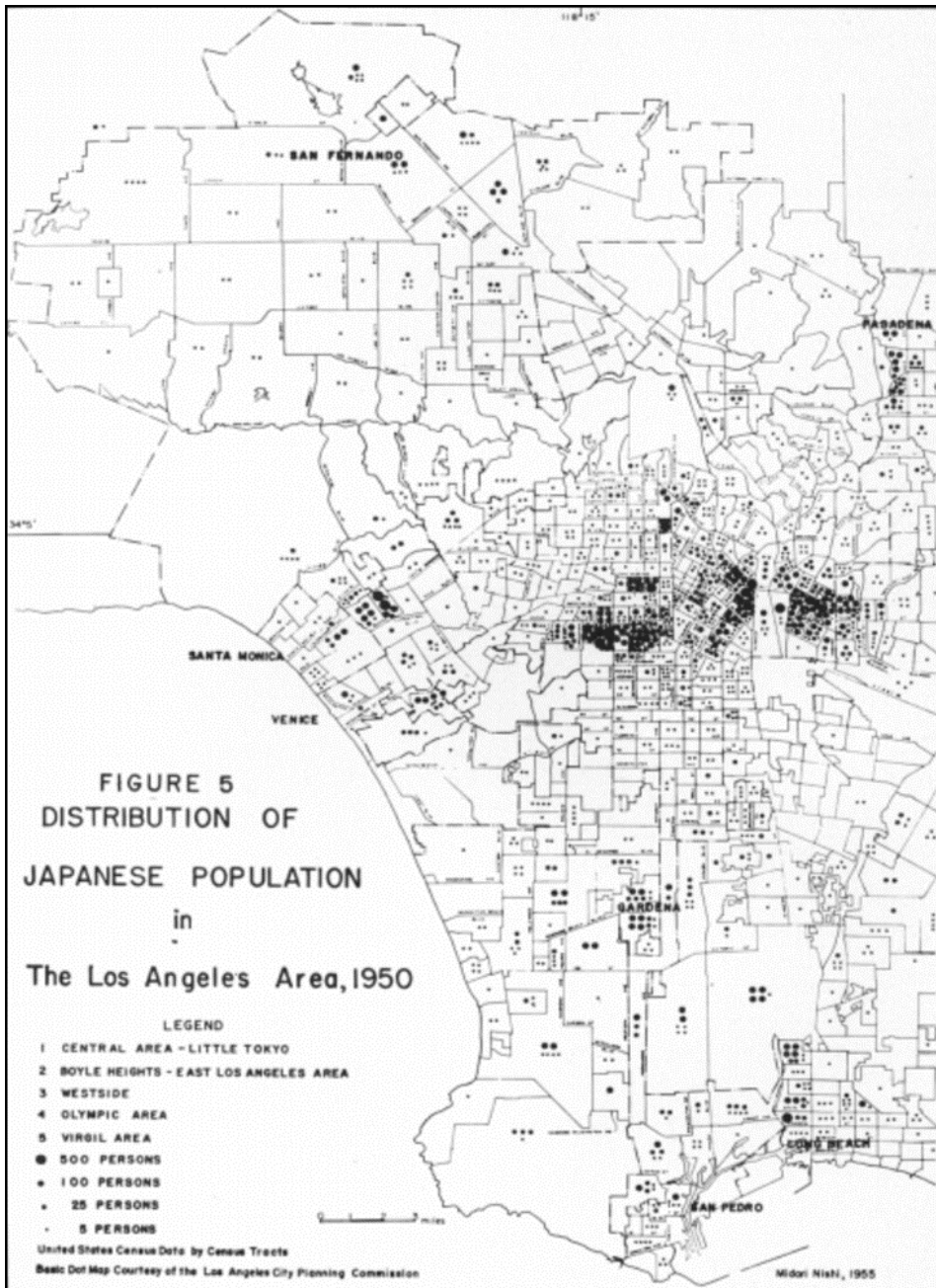
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razed an entire city block of Little Tokyo. In total, more than a quarter of the prewar Little Tokyo disappeared.<sup>401</sup>

*Map of the Japanese Population in the City of Los Angeles, 1950. Midori Nishi ("Japanese Settlement in the Los Angeles Area," Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers Vol. 20, 1958)*



<sup>401</sup> "Little Tokyo Renewal Starts as Work on New Hotel Begins," *Los Angeles Times*, September 30, 1974, C1.



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For many Japanese Americans, resettlement also meant rebuilding financially. With many having lost their assets, businesses, and the opportunity to work during incarceration, the Nikkei were forced to start over. Anti-Japanese sentiment remained high in the U.S. immediately after the war, and aging Issei and Nisei were effectively barred from professional and white-collar employment. A 1943 *Los Angeles Times* poll found that 91 percent of survey respondents still preferred the exclusion of all Japanese Americans from the West Coast.<sup>402</sup>

As a result, there was a shift in occupational trends within the Nikkei community. The number of small independent businesses declined. The prewar leadership of the Japanese in wholesale and retail marketing of truck produce was lost, and a large number of Japanese turned instead to the marketing of horticultural and floricultural products. The family enterprise system of Japanese-operated farms all but disappeared along with the available open land. Many turned again to maintenance gardening as a key occupation; capital investment was low and Los Angeles was building homes at a record pace with yards that needed maintenance. More nurseries sprang up in areas like Sawtelle, where Japanese moved into small homes with big yards and transformed their properties into small nursery businesses.<sup>403</sup> Nursery businesses were also buoyed by a resurgence in popularity of Japanese landscape design which complimented popular new Mid-Century Modern residential designs of the postwar period. Women needed to contribute financially as well and the rapidly expanding garment industry hired a large number of Japanese workers.<sup>404</sup>

Japanese community service organizations helped ease the transition. For example, the prewar *shonien*, or non-sectarian orphanage known as the Japanese Children's Home (New Shonien) of Southern California located in Silver Lake created an out-of-home care program for children. Plans to remodel the 1920s building gave way to the construction of a new, Mid-Century Modern style child-care facility (1955, architect Kazumi Adachi) at 1815 Redcliff Avenue.<sup>405</sup> As a result, a small Japanese American population relocated nearby after the War. The Tokio Florist at 2718 N. Hyperion Avenue is a reminder of the Japanese presence in the area.

By the mid-1950s, Japanese Americans were making strides in professional or technical employment. Whenever possible, the Nikkei sought educational opportunities that would give them the skills they needed for professional advancement. As anti-Japanese sentiment waned, this group made inroads in business, engineering, and other white-collar professions. During this period, the Japanese American population escalated due to the birth of the third generation of Japanese, the Sansei. This also resulted in a resurgence of activity in the development of social and cultural institutions such as churches and schools. Many of the postwar cultural institutions are extant and remain in use. These include the

<sup>402</sup> Brian Niiya, "Return to West Coast," in *Densho Encyclopedia*, March 3, 2015, accessed January 19, 2017, [http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Return\\_to\\_West\\_Coast/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Return_to_West_Coast/).

<sup>403</sup> Barbara Koh, Home Grown: Development," *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, 1991.

<sup>404</sup> Nishi, "Japanese Settlement in the Los Angeles Area," 45. Extant resources associated with the garment industry and other industries may be identified with further research.

<sup>405</sup> The Shonien was founded by Rokuichi Katsumoto in Downtown Los Angeles in 1914. In 1917, it moved to larger quarters on Redcliff Street in Silver Lake and was met with protest by the largely Caucasian community. The facility was entrusted to the Community Welfare Federation during incarceration.

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Japanese Presbyterian Church at 4011 Clinton Street (1955; architects D.R. Wilkinson and R.M. Crosby), West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple at 2003 Corinth Avenue (1955; architect Y. Tom Makino), West Los Angeles Japanese Methodist Church, 1913 Purdue Avenue (1956, architect Y. Tom Makino), and the San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple at 9450 Remick Avenue (1961, architect Y. Tom Makino).

Japanese American inroads into professional and technical employment equated to a growing community of Japanese American architects as well. Some young Japanese enrolled at the USC School of Architecture, including Y. Tom Makino (1907-1992) and Kazuo “Kaz” Nomura (1921-1978).<sup>406</sup> The aesthetic minimalism of Mid-Century Modern style architecture and pavilion-plan designs taught at USC were consistent with Japanese American architects’ cultural heritage. The Los Angeles-based residential and commercial work of Kazumi Adachi (1913-1992) and Daisuke Dike Nagano (1921-1965)<sup>407</sup> was featured nationally in *Arts + Architecture* magazine as exemplars of the Mid-Century Modern style. Adachi is best known for the New Shonien/Japanese Children’s Home (1957) and Kay’s (1954) garden supply store located at 3318 West Jefferson Boulevard (altered).<sup>408</sup>

As generations of American-born Japanese became economically able to own homes, more residential commissions were available to architects who served the community. Over time, the clientele of Japanese American architects widened beyond the community and many became members of the American Institute of Architects.

Organized sports remained a powerful force within the community. After World War II, the Japanese population no longer revolved around Little Tokyo, and was scattered throughout Southern California.<sup>409</sup> Sports became the social glue that kept communities connected and an important way for dispersed community members to interact. The popularity of traditional Japanese sports such as sumo, kendo, and judo fell out of favor as many downplayed their Japanese heritage.<sup>410</sup> Well-organized sports leagues sprang up wherever former internees resided. Baseball remained a significant presence in the community, with teams such as the Little Tokyo Giants and the LA Tigers flourishing. In 1964, the Tenrikyo Church and Cultural Center in Boyle Heights established a Judo program instrumental in making Japanese martial arts an Olympic sport. The dojo, housed in a port-and-beam building, boasted a long roster of national and international competitors.

A growing interest in bowling, basketball, and golf emerged in the community and became unifying forces. A network of Nisei golf clubs formed by the mid-1950s. For others, golfing was a luxury their jobs did not afford and so they turned to bowling. The American Bowling Congress (ABC) prohibited membership for people of color and the Nisei were banned from ABC tournaments, so they created

<sup>406</sup> An architect with the firm of Jones & Emmons, Nomura designed the Japanese O.M.S. Holiness Church in 1965 in the Mid-Century Modern style.

<sup>407</sup> Together, Adachi and Nagano designed the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial (1957) at 451 N. Hill Street.

<sup>408</sup> Tak’s Hardware and Garden Supplies remains a Japanese American operated business.

<sup>409</sup> Kathryn E. Horak, “Holiday Bowl and the Problem of Intangible Cultural Significance: A Historic Preservation Case Study” (master’s thesis, University of Southern California, August 2006), 18.

<sup>410</sup> While the popularity of sumo eventually rebounded, the others largely did not.

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Japanese leagues. The Holiday Bowl (1958, 3730 Crenshaw Blvd., architects Armet & Davis)<sup>411</sup> was an important center for the postwar Japanese community, hosting bowling leagues, and serving Japanese food alongside soul food in the adjoining cafe, reflecting the diversity of the community.<sup>412</sup> Bowling and softball also offered women's leagues.

This period bore witness to some of the first advances in civil rights for the Japanese American community. One of the most important cases was that of Sei Fujii (1882-1954). Fujii challenged Alien Land Laws by purchasing a lot in East Los Angeles and filing suit to clear title so that he could build a home.<sup>413</sup> With assistance from J. Marion Wright, his former law school classmate, Fujii argued that the Alien Land Act represented race-based discrimination prohibited by the Fourteenth Amendment and the United Nations Charter. After a series of appeals, the case landed in the California Supreme Court. In *Fujii v. California* and *Masaoka v. California* (a similar test case mounted by the Japanese American Citizens League), the courts struck down the Alien Land Act.

The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 formally ended the exclusion of Asians in U.S. immigration policy. More importantly, it also eliminated race as a basis for naturalization, making Japanese and other foreign-born Asians eligible to become American citizens for the first time. After many decades of waiting, more than 40,000 first-generation Japanese became U.S. citizens between 1952 and 1965.<sup>414</sup> In 1953, the U.S. Refugee Relief Act was passed, allowing immigrants who could demonstrate evidence of a job and a home the opportunity to become U.S. residents. As a result, another wave of Japanese immigration, known as the *shin-Issei*, occurred during the 1950s.<sup>415</sup>

It took well over a decade after World War II for Japanese Americans to rebuild their homes and communities. Domestic anti-Japanese sentiment waned as the U.S. and Japan became united against the outside threat of communism. Through persistence in starting new businesses, the pursuit of educational and occupational opportunities, and the progress of the civil rights movement starting in the 1950s, three generations of Japanese Americans re-established their place in American society and positioned themselves to benefit from the economic boom of postwar Los Angeles.

### **Japanese Dispersion and Upward Mobility, 1960-1970**

Although the 1948 Shelley Ruling banned restrictive housing covenants, it was not until the 1963 passage of the Fair Housing Act (also known as the Rumford Act) that decades of housing discrimination in the city began to abate. The net effect of this legislation, along with the increasing

<sup>411</sup> In his book *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, social historian Scott Kurashige attributes the design of the Holiday Bowl to Chinese architect Helen Fong who worked for Armet & Davis. Although the bowling alley has been razed, the shell of the Holiday Bowl coffee shop remains and is City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 688.

<sup>412</sup> Horak, "Holiday Bowl," 23.

<sup>413</sup> According to the Little Tokyo Historical Society, the property was located at 1099 N. Record Avenue in an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County.

<sup>414</sup> Jane Hong, "Immigration Act of 1952," in *Densho Encyclopedia*. accessed January 10, 2017, [http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Immigration\\_Act\\_of\\_1952/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Immigration_Act_of_1952/).

<sup>415</sup> According to the *Rafu Shimpo*, approximately 2,000 of these immigrants came from southern Japan.

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suburbanization of Los Angeles, was that the Japanese American population was less concentrated than ever before.

During the 1960s, the wave of urban renewal sweeping across the U.S. reached Little Tokyo. In 1963, Rev. Howard Toriumi of Union Church formed the Little Tokyo Community Development Advisory Committee (LTCDAC). The organization brought Japanese investors to the area who financed the 16-story, Modern style Sumitomo Bank and hotel/office building (New California Bank and Trust, 101 S. San Pedro) and several other projects developed by the Tokyo-based Kajima Construction Corporation. Organized community advocacy against the resulting evictions and displacement of the population had little effect on halting these developments, though these efforts set the stage for upcoming community organizing on issues of redress and reparations for incarceration during World War II. In the late 1960s, the Little Toyko Community Development Advisory Committee was formed with plans to widen East First Street through Little Tokyo's Historic Core and extend the Civic Center deeper into the area. In 1970, the Little Tokyo Redevelopment Area was adopted by the City's Community Redevelopment Agency starting a new wave of City-driven redevelopment in the area.

After the war, U.S. trade with Japan expanded significantly and Los Angeles' position as a major West Coast port played a significant role in that exchange. The Port of Los Angeles received more tonnage of Japanese goods than any other place in the world, and some Nisei became active in the import-export business, either through larger companies or as entrepreneurs.<sup>416</sup> By 1962, items moving from California to Japan included cotton, aircraft, agricultural products, machinery, scrap metal, petroleum, and lumber. During this period, Japanese products imported to the U.S. included radios, optical products, motorcycles, earthenware, and toys.<sup>417</sup>

In the late 1950s, the three major Japanese automotive manufacturers (Toyota, Datsun, and Honda) began to sell vehicles and established operations in Los Angeles County—which at that time had the largest Japanese American population of any county in the U.S. In 1960, the Japanese Business Association of Southern California was established. By the late 1960s, Japanese goods were the largest share of activity at the Los Angeles area ports and included steel, automobiles, beverages, furniture, office machinery, and radio and TV receivers.<sup>418</sup> Nippon Express U.S.A., the U.S. subsidiary of a Japanese cargo company, opened in the Los Angeles area in 1962.

In 1961, the Japanese retailer Seibu established a presence on Wilshire Boulevard's Miracle Mile. The store, located on the southeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue (extant/altered), was designed by the prominent local firm of Welton Becket & Associates. The \$6 million project was the first new department store to be built in the area since Bullock's Wilshire opened in 1929. It was three-stories in height, and housed 45 different departments. Seibu exclusively carried merchandise imported from Japan and offered an "authentic Japanese restaurant with adjacent rooftop Japanese Garden that remain[ed] open in the evenings."<sup>419</sup> The design featured white pre-cast sculptural columns rising from

<sup>416</sup> Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 201.

<sup>417</sup> "Who Says East Is East and West Is West?" *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1962, O1.

<sup>418</sup> "Japanese Imports Into Los Angeles Increased by 43 Percent During 1968," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1969, F9.

<sup>419</sup> "Huge Japanese Store Slated for Wilshire Boulevard," *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1960, F8.

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large reflecting pools, surrounded by Japanese-style landscaping. It was the first building in Los Angeles to use precast concrete columns, predating the Music Center.<sup>420</sup> Seibu closed in 1964 and Ohrbach's, Inc. purchased the building in 1967.<sup>421</sup>

With more upward mobility and less discrimination, Japanese artists were also increasingly able to contribute to the art world. Among them was painter and printmaker Matsumi Kanemitsu (1922-1992) who came to Los Angeles in 1965 after studying in New York and Paris. Kanemitsu applied the light and space of Southern California to Japanese Sumi and Hake traditions in a series of "naturescapes."<sup>422</sup> He was also a member of the famed Tamarind Lithography Workshop, a teacher at Los Angeles art schools, and helped organize a gallery of Japanese artists Downtown.

Japanese community groups also grew in number and profile during the postwar period, and creating community gardens helped restore goodwill and supported the ethnic pride movement of the 1960s. Japanese gardens also became a symbol of internationalism or multiculturalism in expanding colleges, universities and other institutions. In 1963, Shinichi Maesaki (1913-1996) donated the design for a Japanese-style garden at the VA Hospital in West Los Angeles built by the patients as part of an occupational therapy program.<sup>423</sup> In 1970, the Southern California Gardeners Federation constructed a headquarters (1970, Fred T. Hifumi) in Little Tokyo at 333 S. San Pedro Street that became a resource and gathering place for the community.

By the close of the 1960s, Japanese firms began recruiting Japanese workers from the homeland, ushering in another wave of immigration. Japanese nationals moved to the suburbs of Los Angeles and still frequented Little Tokyo. In 1969, the City of Los Angeles established dozens of goodwill trade agreements with Japanese companies encouraging them to do business within the city.<sup>424</sup>

Upward mobility of the Japanese, a reduction in anti-Japanese sentiment, and the loosening of restrictive housing covenants resulted in the continued dispersion of the Japanese population in Los Angeles. Japanese residents were able to purchase homes throughout the city rather than in concentrated areas, and the Japanese population was no longer forced into low-income neighborhoods. Japanese in Sawtelle who had been displaced by freeway construction moved elsewhere. In the Boyle Heights area, Japanese Americans maintained a presence well into the 1960s. Latinos eventually supplanted Japanese residents in the area.

A number of generational issues also contributed to the increasing dispersion of the Japanese American population. For the Nisei, the topic of wartime incarceration was completely off limits. The younger generation Sansei came of age at the height of the student movement of the 1960s and, on the heels of the black power movement, proclaimed Asian Power (also known as Yellow Power) and established efforts to publicly acknowledge and address social problems within the Japanese American

<sup>420</sup> "Construction Resembles Giant Jigsaw Puzzle," *Los Angeles Times*, August 20, 1961, I17.

<sup>421</sup> It became the Petersen Automotive Museum and the building has been completely altered.

<sup>422</sup> "Matsumi Kanemitsu: Artist Combined East With West," *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 1992, A22.

<sup>423</sup> "Lanterns Sought for Gardens at Hospital," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1963, WS10.

<sup>424</sup> "LA Trade Agreements: A Paper Bridge to Lure Japanese Business," *Los Angeles Times*, August 10, 1969, J1.

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community.<sup>425</sup> Sansei-founded activist organizations such as the Storefront in West Los Angeles,<sup>426</sup> and the Yellow Brotherhood in Crenshaw, established in the late 1960s by a half-dozen young Japanese Americans who had all been involved in drug and gang-related activity.<sup>427</sup>

During the late 1960s, West Coast universities began offering Asian American Studies programs after protestors at the University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco State University demanded that the history of people of color be included in what was then a Eurocentric history curriculum. In 1969, the Asian American Studies Center was established at UCLA. Community members, students, staff, and faculty sought to develop a center to bridge campus and community around the theme of liberative education and social justice. UCLA served as an active site for the development of Asian American Studies as a field of study. *Amerasia Journal* moved to UCLA shortly after its start in 1971, and became a leading journal for the field. The Center also saw the importance of fostering student projects like *Gidra*. Following its inception as a student newspaper, *Gidra* moved to 3108 Jefferson Boulevard in the Crenshaw.<sup>428</sup>

The Sansei generation was also the first generation of Japanese Americans to embrace interracial marriage. During the 1960s, 29.5 percent of Japanese marriages in Los Angeles County were to non-Japanese.<sup>429</sup> In the 1970s, that number grew to 39 percent. In addition, the Sansei were able to pursue professional careers and were willing to move out of Japanese American communities, and even Los Angeles, to further their career goals. Like the Issei and Nisei before them, the Nisei and Sansei found themselves with a substantial generational and cultural gap.

During this period, Japanese community leaders also oversaw the creation of a network of Japanese American Community Centers around Los Angeles. These community centers became home to athletic leagues, veterans groups, JAACL meetings, and a wide variety of cultural activities. Many of the community centers created during this period remain in use including the San Fernando Japanese American Community Center (1959, architect Kazumi Adachi) at 12953 Branford Street. The YWCA's International Institute at 435 S. Boyle Avenue (1931, architect Webber & Spaulding) also functioned as a meeting location for Japanese clubs. Retirement homes were also established by community leaders to serve the needs of the Issei, notably the conversion of the Jewish Home for the Aged in Boyle Heights (325 S. Boyle Avenue) into the *Keiro* or Japanese Home for the Aged in 1975.

As a result of decades of being barred from citizenship and rampant anti-Japanese sentiment, Japanese Americans were not well represented in public office. One of the few Japanese American public figures from this period was Thomas Tsunetomi Noguchi (b. 1927). Appointed deputy coroner for Los Angeles County in 1961, Noguchi became Chief Medical Coroner for the County in 1967. Known as the

<sup>425</sup> "LA's Japanese Americans: Breaking into the Mainstream," *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1982, C1.

<sup>426</sup> deGuzman, "Japanese American Resettlement in Postwar America."

<sup>427</sup> Ed Meagher, "Asian Americans Will Turn Spotlight on Their Problems," *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1970, B1.

<sup>428</sup> Murase, Mike (April 1974). "Toward Barefoot Journalism," *Gidra*. 6: 1, 34-46

<sup>429</sup> Judy Pasternak, "Dramatic Increase: Mixed Marriages Keep Pace with LA Diversity," *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1989, accessed February 11, 2017, [http://articles.latimes.com/1989-02-14/news/mn-2177\\_1\\_mixed-marriage](http://articles.latimes.com/1989-02-14/news/mn-2177_1_mixed-marriage).

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“coroner to the stars,” Noguchi performed the autopsies and spoke to press following the deaths of Robert F. Kennedy, Janis Joplin, and the Manson Family victims.<sup>430</sup>

The educational achievement, upward mobility, mainstream acceptance, and dispersion of Japanese Americans throughout Los Angeles during the 1960s was further evidence of the ongoing resilience of the Japanese American community. In some misguided circles, it earned the community a reputation as what many sociologists called “the model minority,” against which other ethnic groups were often unfavorably measured.<sup>431</sup>

The 1960s set the stage for two important changes in the Japanese American community. With residential dispersion, the period of strong *Nihonmachi* (Japantowns) waned, and redevelopment all but engulfed Little Tokyo during the 1970s. Social justice movements that began to gain momentum in the 1960s paved the way for redress for the incarceration of Japanese Americans in the 1980s.

The contributions of Japanese Americans to Los Angeles history and culture were varied and significant. The influence of the Nikkei in Los Angeles was felt far beyond the city’s borders, from the landmark Sei Fujii civil rights decision to the growing popularity throughout the United States of Japanese culinary arts and consumer products. In 1980, the Japanese American community was finally recognized for the unfair treatment it had received during World War II when the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) was established to explore redress. In 1988, the Civil Liberties Act was signed into law acknowledging that government action had been based on racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership as opposed to legitimate security reasons. It set the stage for more than 82,000 redress payments to Japanese Americans.

<sup>430</sup> Thomas Noguchi, *Coroner to the Stars* (London, UK: Guild Publishing, 1986), 1.

<sup>431</sup> Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*, 3.

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**Korean Americans in Los Angeles, 1882-1980**

**Introduction**

This historic context examines the migration, settlement, and development patterns of Korean Americans in Los Angeles from 1905 to 1980, spanning the time of the arrival of Koreans to Los Angeles to the early development of the area known as Koreatown.

Los Angeles is home to one of the largest concentrations of Korean people outside of the Korean peninsula, adjacent to northeast China and near Japan. It serves as a socio-cultural epicenter for the larger Korean American community. This presence is most noticeable in the Koreatown district, which covers a large geographic area in the Mid-Wilshire area of Los Angeles. This area is home to hundreds of Korean businesses and institutions that serve both new immigrants and previous generations of established Korean Americans. With continued immigration and ongoing foreign investment from Korea, Koreatown is a dynamic and expanding neighborhood that serves as a unique and defining area of Los Angeles.

Although Koreatown is the obvious contemporary epicenter of the Korean community, the population is not entirely concentrated in this one location. Korean Americans and Korean immigrants reside across the City of Los Angeles and throughout Southern California. Furthermore, the development of Koreatown as a center of Korean culture and commerce started in the late 1960s and took shape through the 1970s and 1980s. Prior to 1965 and the relaxing of U.S. immigration laws by the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, the Korean population in Los Angeles was fairly small, especially in relation to other ethnically Asian populations and enclaves that had been established in Los Angeles in the previous decades.

**Terms and Definitions**

The following outlines some important aspects of terminology for the Korean American context. It was not uncommon for immigrants and their children to anglicize or adopt a more common American name. Where possible, both the American and Korean names are given.

- Names of individuals are presented in the Western format of given name followed by family name.
- Spellings of Korean names are taken from the cited source, or the most common spelling used from various sources. Alternative spellings are noted in parentheses.
- English spelling and translations of Korean organizational names are also provided in parentheses where available.

**Beginnings, 1882-1905**

In the late nineteenth century, Korea was an isolated kingdom country facing economic and political uncertainty as the world around it was changing. Known as the Hermit Kingdom, the country's rulers sought to insulate themselves and Korea from external influences ranging from neighboring Japan and



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China with a history of conquest and the growing imperial presence of Western powers in the region. Catholic missionaries had arrived a century earlier and had an increasing presence, successfully converting parts of the population to Christianity.

After bouts of contact and conflict, the United States officially established diplomatic relations with Korea in May 1882.<sup>432</sup> American missionaries, representing the Presbyterian and Methodist faiths, arrived shortly after and continued to expand the presence of Christianity beyond the Catholic traditions. In the 1880s, a handful of students and a small group of political activists, driven out by the political turmoil following a series of internal conflicts and the rise of Chinese political influence, arrived in the United States as among the earliest immigrants.<sup>433</sup>

The first wave of Korean immigration to the United States began in 1903. Approximately 100 people, driven by the ongoing famines, political instability, and limited economic opportunities that plagued the Korean peninsula, arrived in Hawaii (then a U.S. territory) to work as laborers on sugar plantations. With the demand for cheap manual labor, and the influential role of the American Presbyterian missionary Dr. Horace Allen who had ties to the plantation ventures in Hawaii, many others made the journey over the following few years.<sup>434</sup> Approximately 7,000 Koreans, of which about 40 percent were Christian converts, landed in Hawaii between 1903 and 1905.<sup>435</sup> The vast majority of these initial immigrants were young, single men, and some women and children were among the immigrants.<sup>436</sup> In Korea, Japan effectively controlled the country by 1905, and emigration became restricted.<sup>437</sup>

### **Arrival of Earliest Korean Immigrants, 1905-1910**

By 1905, Koreans from Hawaii began arriving in California by way of the Port of San Francisco. Some made their way to the agricultural communities of the Central Valley like Dinuba and Reedley, while others went to Southern California, to cities such as Riverside and Claremont, seeking continued employment opportunities as farm laborers.<sup>438</sup> A contingent of the Korean population sought opportunities in more urban environments. By 1905, there were at least 103 Koreans in San Francisco and 70 in Riverside.<sup>439</sup> In 1906, 60 Koreans resided in Los Angeles County.<sup>440</sup> In 1907, The *Gongnip*

<sup>432</sup> Hyung-chan Kim and Wayne Patterson, *The Koreans in America, 1882-1974: A Chronology and Fact Book* (New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1974), 1

<sup>433</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 1 and Ilpyong J. Kim, "A Century of Korean Immigration to the United States: 1903-2003," in *Korean-Americans: Past, Present, and Future* ed. Ilpyong J. Kim (Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym International Corp., 2004), 18-19.

<sup>434</sup> Yong-ho Ch'oe, "History of Korean Church: A Case Study of Christ United Methodist Church, 1903-2003," in *Korean-Americans: Past, Present, and Future*, 38.

<sup>435</sup> Eun Sik Yang, "Koreans in America, 1903-1945," in *Koreans in Los Angeles: Prospects and Promises* eds. Eui-Young Yu, Earl H. Phillips, Eun Sik Yang (Los Angeles: Koryo Research Institute, Center for Korean-American and Korean Studies, California State University, Los Angeles, 1982), 5-6.

<sup>436</sup> Ch'oe, "History of Korean Church," 38 and Yang, "Koreans in America, 1903-1945," 6.

<sup>437</sup> Won Moo Hurh, *The New Americans: The Korean Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 34.

<sup>438</sup> Yang, "Koreans in America, 1903-1945," 7 and Katherine Yungmee Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 19.

<sup>439</sup> *Gongnip Sinbo*, December 21, 1905.

<sup>440</sup> Helen Lewis Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County" (master's thesis, University of Southern

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*Hyophoe*, a Korean cooperative association, reported 291 members in San Francisco and 150 in Riverside.<sup>441</sup>

Religious and secular organizations were influential in supporting the newcomers on the mainland. The Korean Friendship Association was founded in 1903 in San Francisco by political exiles and students to promote aid and offer a community for Korean migrants.<sup>442</sup> The same leaders, most notably Chang Ho Ahn, established the Korean Mutual Assistance Association in Riverside in 1905, which succeeded the Friendship Association in San Francisco; it was later reorganized as the Korean National Association.<sup>443</sup>

Missionary Florence Sherman founded the Korean Methodist Episcopal Mission in 1904 upon her return to Los Angeles after her missionary service in Korea.<sup>444</sup> The mission was at 1519 Hill Street (not extant) near 16<sup>th</sup> Street at the south end of Downtown.<sup>445</sup> Led by Pastor Hugh Cynn, the mission provided the congregation of 25, mostly students and laborers, with room and board, employment assistance, and English lessons, along with church services and Sunday school lessons. Cynn had known the Shermans in Korea, and their connection helped Cynn immigrate to Los Angeles, where he also studied at the University of Southern California (USC) before he returned to Korea in 1911.<sup>446</sup>

In 1906, a group established a Presbyterian mission with the help of the Presbyterian Missionary Extension Board.<sup>447</sup> By 1909, a Korean Mission, with W. Kondo Flower as superintendent, was located at the corner of Court and Bunker Hill Avenue on Bunker Hill where the Music Center stands.<sup>448</sup> As with other ethnic communities, the role of the churches for the early Koreans in Los Angeles was an essential socio-cultural institution that extended beyond the practice of religion to include broader support functions. The churches held community events and celebrations and provided language education, first English to the first generation, and later Korean to the second generation.

In August 1910, the Empire of Japan formally annexed the Korean Empire. Although Korea had been firmly within the Japanese sphere of influence for years, this formal annexation established the peninsula as a Japanese colony subject to strict and repressive regulations, including emigration policies. This effectively ended the first wave of Korean immigration to the United States. According to the U.S. census, there were approximately 160 Koreans living in California in 1910, including 12 listed in Los

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California, 1939), 24.

<sup>441</sup> *Gongnip Sinbo*, Jun 7, 1907. In 1907, the number of Korean residents at Riverside's Pachappa Camp could have been as high as 300 during the orange picking season if wives and children were included in the count.

<sup>442</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 4 and Yang, "Koreans in America, 1903-1945," 9.

<sup>443</sup> Yang, "Koreans in America, 1903-1945," 7, 9.

<sup>444</sup> David Yoo, *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), Chapter 4. Sherman was in Korea with her husband, Dr. Harry Sherman, from 1898 to 1900 when he fell ill. He passed away not long after their return to the United States.

<sup>445</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 15.

<sup>446</sup> David Yoo and Hyung-ju Ahn, *Faithful Witness: A Centennial History of the Los Angeles Korean United Methodist Church (1904-2004)* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Korean United Methodist Church, 2004), 37, 49.

<sup>447</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 10.

<sup>448</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1909* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles City Directory Co., Inc., 1909), 32.

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Angeles.<sup>449</sup> Although these numbers seem unusually low—some individuals may not have been counted in the census or misidentified as Japanese—the Korean community was small compared to other Asian communities in the city, and continued to be so for several decades.

### **Establishing a Community, 1911-1930**

The Japanese occupation had lasting impacts on the Korean community in Los Angeles. It fueled broader interest and participation in political organizations associated with the Korean independence movement. Although the movement has its origins earlier, the Japanese annexation was a catalyst for widespread patriotic fervor in the Korean diasporic communities.

The first Korean national organization that evolved to become the Korean National Association (KNA) was established in 1910 following the Japanese annexation.<sup>450</sup> Initially headquartered in San Francisco, the Korean National Association had a Los Angeles branch as early as 1912 at 2 Olive Court (not extant), a side street between Olive and Hill Streets and between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets on Bunker Hill. It was associated with the nearby Presbyterian mission and later called the Korean Club in subsequent city directories.<sup>451</sup>

The United States became one of the bases for the Korean independence movement in the following decades. Three of the movement's key leaders—Syngman Rhee, Chang Ho Ahn, and Yong-man Pak—spent substantial time in the United States. Chang Ho Ahn, also known by his penname, Dosan, is most associated with Los Angeles. Ahn and his wife, Helen (Heyryon) Lee, first immigrated to San Francisco in 1902 to attend university, where he became instrumental in the establishment of early Korean institutions such as the Friendship Society (1903) in San Francisco.<sup>452</sup> They moved to Riverside, California in 1904, where he worked in the orange groves and taught other Korean immigrants. He also founded the Korean Mutual Assistance Association there in 1905.

Around 1914, Ahn and his family moved to Los Angeles and settled among the emerging Korean community around Downtown. They first lived at 1411 West Fourth Street and then at 106 North Figueroa Street by 1917 (neither is extant). Ahn established the Young Korean Academy (also known as the Hungsadan) at the house dedicated to the promotion of Korean independence and Korean culture in America.<sup>453</sup> The Ahn house became a cultural focal point for the Korean community. Newly arrived Koreans frequented the house, and the family assisted them in acclimating to the city.<sup>454</sup> The Ahn family continued to be prominent figures in the Los Angeles Korean community over the following decades.

<sup>449</sup> U.S. census statistics for 1910 compiled by USC Korean Heritage Library. Provided by Ken Klein, Head, East Asian Library, USC.

<sup>450</sup> Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County," 56. It appears the KNA also succeeded the Korean Mutual Assistance Association, see Yang, 7.

<sup>451</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1912*, 44; *Los Angeles City Directory 1915*, 2176; Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 42-43.

<sup>452</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 13, 18.

<sup>453</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory, 1915*, 292; *Los Angeles City Directory, 1917*, 239; Historic Resources Group, "Dosan Ahn Change Ho Family House," City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument application, June 30, 2013; Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 8.

<sup>454</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 8.

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The Los Angeles Korean community grew slowly in the 1910s and 1920s as migrants continued to arrive from Hawaii, San Francisco, and farming communities in the Central Valley and Riverside. They appear to have remained primarily in the Downtown area, particularly Bunker Hill, approximately where the Music Center is located. The Korean Mission associated with the Presbyterians remained in the Bunker Hill area and was located at 240 North Bunker Hill Avenue (not extant) by 1914.<sup>455</sup> Some Korean-owned grocery stores appeared, though they were short-lived.<sup>456</sup> The Bunker Hill area, already considered an older part of Downtown, was without race restrictions and non-white people were able to reside in its late nineteenth century building stock. In this neighborhood, Korean residents lived side-by-side with other ethnic minorities including Mexican Americans, African Americans, and residents from other Asian countries.<sup>457</sup>

The Korean Methodist Episcopal Mission, originally at 16<sup>th</sup> and Hill Streets, is listed by 1910 at 1620 Magnolia Avenue, west of Downtown Los Angeles near Venice Boulevard and Hoover Street. The mission closed by 1912 after financial woes and the loss of its leadership.<sup>458</sup> The Methodist and Presbyterian congregations essentially merged at that point as the Korean Presbyterian Church under Reverend Chan-ho Min. Min was a Methodist minister who arrived from Hawaii in 1911 to study at USC, a university founded by Methodists.<sup>459</sup> He remained a community leader until 1919, when he went to head a new church in Hawaii.<sup>460</sup> By then, the Korean Presbyterian Church, later located at 2 Olive Court on Bunker Hill, was the main congregation for Koreans in Los Angeles, with 40 out of the 100 adult Korean residents of Los Angeles as members.<sup>461</sup>

Eventually the disagreements between the Methodists and Presbyterians, fueled by tensions within the congregation along political lines, led to a splinter group that started to worship at a separate location on Hill Street before establishing a new church in 1926.<sup>462</sup> Known as the Korean Free Church, it relocated to the area southwest of Downtown and directly west of USC where many Korean Americans lived.<sup>463</sup> The Korean Free Church joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1930, and became the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.<sup>464</sup>

<sup>455</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1914*, 38

<sup>456</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 8.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>458</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1910*, 31; Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 49-51.

<sup>459</sup> Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 51.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-66. A provisional Republic of Korea government had been established in Shanghai, China after the March 1, 1919 uprising in Korea against the Japanese government. It was led by Syngman Rhee, who had supporters and detractors in Los Angeles.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 68. The book references the address 1547 West 37<sup>th</sup> Street, and no additional documentation has been found to link this location with the Korean Free Church or the Korean Methodist Church. 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps do not show 1547 West 37<sup>th</sup> Street, only 1545 West 37<sup>th</sup> Street and 1545 West 37<sup>th</sup> Place.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

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In terms of employment, many Koreans in Los Angeles were limited to low paying jobs, including general laborers, truck drivers, and gardeners. The Korean community experienced an increase in overall wages and commercial endeavors through the 1910s and 1920s. Connections with Korean agricultural workers throughout the Southland and the Central Valley helped in establishing family-owned groceries and wholesale suppliers. The 1911 *Los Angeles City Directory* listed Benj N. Kim as a wholesale fruit and produce owner at 922-926 San Julian (not extant), in what was City Market (not extant).<sup>465</sup> City Market was a large wholesale produce market located on a two-block stretch between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets and San Pedro and San Julian Streets east of Downtown Los Angeles and near the industrial areas closer to the railroad lines along the Los Angeles River. Completed in 1909, it was owned by the City Market of Los Angeles, a cooperative of white, Japanese, and Chinese farmers. By 1940, City Market had grown to be one of the largest wholesale produce facilities in the country.<sup>466</sup> Some Korean produce wholesalers were among the businesses at City Market, including K&S Company.

K&S Company (also known as K&S Jobbers) was founded in 1925 by Youse (Yong-jeung or Young) Kim and Leo (Chull) Song.<sup>467</sup> By 1936, K&S Company was located in the City Market area at 1119 South San Pedro Street and remained there until the mid-1960s.<sup>468</sup> Since the Los Angeles Korean community was small, the company did not cater exclusively to Koreans. It benefited from connections to the network of Korean-owned and -operated farms outside of Los Angeles that the other produce wholesalers did not have. As a result, K&S Company became the local wholesaler of the Le Grand nectarine, a new variety developed by horticulturalist Fred Anderson, and grown and distributed by the Kim Brothers nursery in the Central Valley. The popularity of the variety propelled the Kim Brothers (non-related Harry Kim and Charles H. Kim) to success, along with Youse Kim and Leo Song as well.<sup>469</sup> Both Kim and Song were involved in the Los Angeles Korean community, particularly Song who became a leader of the Dong Ji Hoi (also known as Tongji-Hoe or Comrade Society), a Korean independence organization founded by Syngman Rhee, and in other cultural organizations.<sup>470</sup>

By 1926, Peter Hyun founded Oriental Food Products of California, located at 4100 South Broadway near Exposition Park (extant/altered). The food wholesaler specialized in the selling and delivery of food products used in East Asian cooking to restaurants. It also produced a consumer line of soy sauces, canned foods, and other Asian food products under the brand name Jan-U-Wine (“genuine”), later available in mainstream grocery stores for those interested in Asian cooking. Oriental Food Products

<sup>465</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1911*, 1709. Although the 1909 buildings of City Market have been demolished, there are ancillary extant buildings in the adjacent area historically owned by City Market.

<sup>466</sup> GPA Consulting, “City Market, Los Angeles, California Historic Resource Report,” April 2014, for City Market Los Angeles Project Re-Circulated Environmental Impact Report (Case No. ENV-2012-3003-EIR), prepared by Parker Environmental Consultants on behalf of the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, July 2016, 8-10.

<sup>467</sup> Alice McLean, *Asian American Food Culture* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC: 2015), 22; Harry Cline, “Song Family Quality Nectarine Tradition Continues after Six Decades,” *Western Farm Press*, August 20, 2001, accessed April 17, 2017, <http://www.westernfarmpress.com/song-family-quality-nectarine-tradition-continues-after-six-decades>.

<sup>468</sup> GPA Consulting, “City Market,” 64.

<sup>469</sup> Bong-Youn Choy, *Koreans in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hill, 1979), 131.

<sup>470</sup> “Helped Popularize Nectarines, Leo C. Song, Pioneer in L.A.’s Koreatown,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1986.

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became one of the larger businesses owned by Koreans.<sup>471</sup> It remained at 4100 South Broadway until the 1950s, when a new plant was constructed at Slauson Avenue and the Santa Ana Freeway in Bell Gardens.<sup>472</sup>

Immigration from Korea to the United States had primarily ceased in 1910, with the exception of approximately 1,100 picture brides who arrived as wives through arranged marriages for the predominately male Korean residents in America.<sup>473</sup> This practice was commonplace until the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the Exclusion Act for its discriminatory policies, which stopped virtually all immigration to the United States from Asia.<sup>474</sup>

As a result, the overall makeup of the small Korean community began to shift as the first generation started raising families. The second-generation Korean Americans born during this time were still subject to the discrimination faced by their parents, and were increasingly assimilated within American society. They also benefited from rights available to citizens, such as land ownership, denied to their immigrant parents. By 1930, there were about 8,000 Korean Americans, both first and second generations, living in the United States, of which approximately 320 lived in Los Angeles.<sup>475</sup>

It appears the center of the Korean community started to shift southwestward from Downtown to the area west of USC in the 1920s. Like Bunker Hill, this area was more lax in enforcing racial covenants and was ethnically diverse with white, Jewish, African American, Latino, and other Asian American residents.<sup>476</sup> By the time the Korean Free Church relocated to this area, it was noted as “the heart of Korean American community in Los Angeles.”<sup>477</sup> A hand-drawn map circa 1935 depicts Korean American institutions and homes in an area between Adams Boulevard to the north and Exposition Boulevard to the south, and roughly between Vermont Avenue to the east and Normandie Avenue to the west; this area overlaps with the Adams-Normandie, Exposition Park, and University Park neighborhoods.<sup>478</sup>

<sup>471</sup> Givens, “The Korean Community in Los Angeles County,” 48; Choy, *Koreans in America*, 132. Peter Hyun of Oriental Food Products is not the same Peter Hyun who was a theater actor, brother of the architect David Hyun, and accused of being a Communist in the postwar anti-community fervor.

<sup>472</sup> “New Bell Gardens Food Plant to Cost \$500,000,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 21, 1954. Bell Gardens is outside the City of Los Angeles and the plant has since been demolished.

<sup>473</sup> Hurh, *The New Americans*, 34. Koreans were considered Japanese nationals after the occupation in 1910 and subject to the so-called Gentleman’s Agreement of 1908, an informal agreement between the United States and Japan to limit immigration of Japanese laborers.

<sup>474</sup> Hurh, *The New Americans*, 34.

<sup>475</sup> U.S. census statistics for 1930 compiled by USC Korean Heritage Library. Provided by Ken Klein, Head, East Asian Library, USC.

<sup>476</sup> Architectural Resources Group, “South Los Angeles Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey Report,” prepared for SurveyLA, March 2012.

<sup>477</sup> Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 68.

<sup>478</sup> Neighborhood names and boundaries were derived from “Mapping L.A.—Los Angeles Times.” Mapping L.A., *Los Angeles Times*, accessed September 27, 2017, <http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/>.

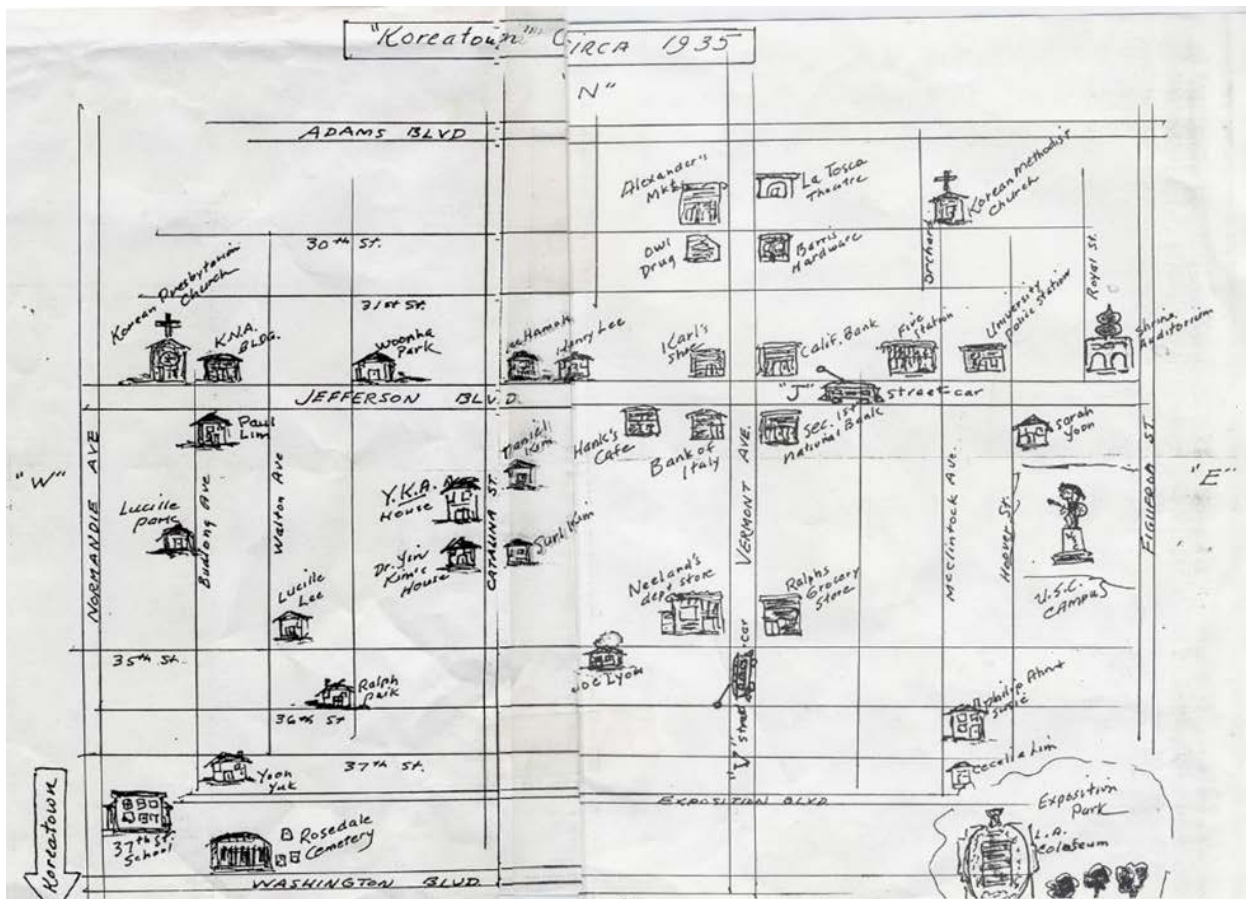
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Hand drawn map indicating Koreatown circa 1935, drawn from memory by Yin Kim and provided to Susan Ahn Cuddy in the 1990s, according to Susan's son, Flip Ahn Cuddy. Note the west or left side of the map appears to be orientated upside down for some features, such as Rosedale Cemetery and Washington Boulevard that should be north of Adams Boulevard and the Korean Presbyterian Church and Korean National Association building should be on the south side of Jefferson (Courtesy of Flip Ahn Cuddy).



A concentration of Korean American sites was located between Jefferson Boulevard to the north, West 37<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, Catalina Street to the east, and Normandie Avenue to the west. By 1929, A Korean language school, possibly the one at the Korean Free Church that became a community center, was noted as on West 37<sup>th</sup> Street, along with Korean residents Raymond Herr and his wife Esther Kim.<sup>479</sup>

Another concentration is less visible on the map; it was south of Adams Boulevard and east of Vermont Avenue around Ellendale Place, Orchard Avenue, McClintock Avenue, and 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets. On the map, it is marked by the Korean Methodist Church, though research did not find any information

<sup>479</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 30-31.

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indicating the church was located in that area in the 1930s. Nonetheless, several Korean organizations and families were in the vicinity by the late 1930s. Most notable was the Dong Ji Hoi (Comrade Society). The Dong Ji Hoi was founded by Syngman Rhee after the Republic of Korea had been established as a provisional government following the March 1, 1919 student uprising in Korea against Japanese rule. As the leader of the provisional government based in Shanghai, China, Rhee felt the goals of the KNA had been reached with the founding of the republic, and that the government-in-exile should lead the cause for an independent Korea.<sup>480</sup> He wanted to see the KNA change its name to the Korean Residents Association, which the KNA members rejected, leading to long-term factional splits in the independence movement of pro- and anti-Rhee supporters. Instead, Rhee established the Dong Ji Hoi (also spelled Tongji-hoe) first in Hawaii in the early 1920s, where he returned to support the provisional government. It later had branches in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.<sup>481</sup> It appears the Los Angeles branch was located at 2716 Ellendale Place by 1932.<sup>482</sup>

It is not exactly clear what prompted the Korean community to move west from Downtown to the area around Jefferson. It may have been related to the proximity to USC, a Methodist-affiliated school where several Korean ministers attended graduate school. It may have been related to the need for more family-friendly housing once children were part of the community and racially restrictive covenants were not as strictly enforced as in other areas. Likely due to these and other factors, the Korean presence in this neighborhood grew in the 1930s.

### **Maturing of the Community and Growth of the Second Generation, 1930-1942**

The onset of the Great Depression had similar impacts on the Korean community in Los Angeles as elsewhere in the country, albeit exacerbated by racial discrimination and limited opportunity. As the economic conditions declined in the United States, many Korean families that had experienced commercial success over the previous years were facing bankruptcy. Banks and lending companies that were not discriminatory in their lending practices were often unable to provide loans in the aftermath of the financial fallout, ending many of the Korean-owned businesses in Los Angeles.<sup>483</sup> Professional opportunities were similarly bleak, as most employers continued discriminatory hiring practices. The decline in economic standing proliferated throughout the community.

Hindered by both financial limitations and racial discrimination, the types of businesses had not diversified since the 1920s. Few first-generation Koreans were in professions such as law, medicine, education, or social work.<sup>484</sup> Although the economic conditions were especially trying and commercial development in the Korean community remained stagnant throughout the 1930s, some businesses

<sup>480</sup> Choy, *Koreans in America*, 118.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

<sup>482</sup> Building permit no. 17215, Los Angeles Building and Safety, dated October 31, 1932 lists E.K. Young as the owner and the building used as a boarding house for children less than 8 years old. Later permits identified Young as Edna Hill Young. The 1964 directory of the Korean community listed Young Chang Song as president of the Dong Ji Hoi. See Hak Sun Pak, editor, *Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964* (Hollywood: Korean Department of Oriental Heritage, Inc., 1964), 84.

<sup>483</sup> Choy, *Koreans in America*, 127-129.

<sup>484</sup> Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County," 50-51.



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continued to operate. By the end of the 1930s, an accounting of businesses owned or operated by Koreans included thirty-three fruit and vegetable stands, nine grocery stores, eight pressing and laundry shops, six trucking companies, five wholesale companies, five restaurants, three herb stores, two hat shops, one employment agency, and one rooming house.<sup>485</sup>

Most were small businesses, and the largest by this time was the Oriental Food Products of California. Another, smaller food wholesaler was the Great Eastern Industrial Company located at 4716 South Normandie Avenue (not extant) south of Vernon Avenue. The New Ilhan Company, which had its headquarters in the extant San Fernando Building at Fourth and Main Streets in Downtown Los Angeles, specialized in importing Korean novelties and clothing.<sup>486</sup>

Unlike the larger Chinese and Japanese communities, the Korean community in Los Angeles was so small that there were no predominately Korean residential or commercial enclaves. Instead, Korean-owned businesses often served other Asian, and non-Asian, populations in mixed neighborhoods. The Harvey Employment Agency, operated by Korean Harvey S. Ahn and located at 321 North Los Angeles Street (not extant) near New Chinatown, catered to Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian American communities as well Korean Americans.<sup>487</sup> Korean-owned restaurants were usually run as Chinese restaurants.<sup>488</sup>

Though not large enough to constitute a distinct enclave, the area west of the USC campus and Exposition Park increasingly drew more Koreans in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>489</sup> The Young Korean Academy moved from the Ahn house in Bunker Hill to its own address at 3421 South Catalina Avenue by 1936.<sup>490</sup>

The Ahn family moved to a house at McClintock Avenue and 34<sup>th</sup> Street near the USC campus in 1937. Chang Ho Ahn himself had returned to Asia to support the independence movement and help the provisional government based in China. He never returned to the United States before his death in 1938.<sup>491</sup> His wife, Helen, and their five children, Philip, Philson, Susan, Soorah, and Ralph, lived at the McClintock Avenue house until 1946, during which time it became a gathering place for those supporting the Korean independence movement. The house was acquired by USC in 1966 and moved to an on-campus location (809 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street) in 2004 (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1059).

The cultural center for the Korean community coalesced around Jefferson Boulevard, where two prominent buildings were constructed. After moving to a few different locations, the Korean National

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>487</sup> Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County," 49; *Los Angeles City Directory 1926*, 208.

<sup>488</sup> Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County," 48-50.

<sup>489</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 35.

<sup>490</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1936*, 1995.

<sup>491</sup> Historic Resources Group, "Dosan Ahn Change Ho Family House"; Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 37.

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Association (KNA) built a simple building at 1368 West Jefferson Boulevard in 1938.<sup>492</sup> The organization had shifted its primary headquarters from San Francisco to Los Angeles the previous year as Los Angeles' larger and growing Korean population became more prominent.<sup>493</sup> The KNA's new hall served approximately 2,000 members as the center of the Korean independence movement in the United States through political efforts to oppose the Japanese occupation of Korea and support the exiled provisional government based in China. The Korean-language newspaper *The New Korea*, with a political bent, was published on site.<sup>494</sup>

The KNA building was also home to other organizations over the years, including the *Shin Han Min Bo* newspaper, the Korean Women's Patriotic League, and the United Korean Committee. The building became the social and cultural center for the surrounding Korean community. It hosted a number of events and activities, including recreation and athletics for the younger generation, and continued to promote Korean culture and identity.<sup>495</sup> In 1991, it was designated City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 548 as the Korean Independence Memorial Building.

Immediately next door to the KNA headquarters, the Korean Presbyterian Church constructed a permanent church in 1938 at 1374 West Jefferson Boulevard.<sup>496</sup> Between 1929 and 1931, the church moved from its 2 Olive Court (not extant) location to 1626 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street or Place, that appears to have been a single-family residence also the home of the pastor, Reverend C.S. Kim.<sup>497</sup> Between 1932 and 1938, the Korean Presbyterian Church was listed at 1545 West 35<sup>th</sup> Place. The church building at that location belonged to the Westminster Presbyterian Church, a long-standing African American church. The Korean church may have rented or shared the facilities with the main church.<sup>498</sup> The lot on Jefferson was purchased in 1937 and the brick church constructed for \$20,000, part of which was raised by member donations from the community.<sup>499</sup> It featured a smaller auditorium, classrooms, offices,

<sup>492</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 46.

<sup>493</sup> Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 84.

<sup>494</sup> Koreatown Rotary Club, "Korean Independence Memorial Building," City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument Application, December 5, 1990.

<sup>495</sup> Koreatown Rotary Club, "Korean Independence Memorial Building," Kim, *Images of America*, 46, 53-54, and Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County," 41-42.

<sup>496</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 46.

<sup>497</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1929*, 1295 and *Los Angeles City Directory 1931*, 1166; note, the city directories do not specify if the church was at 35<sup>th</sup> Street or Place. See also, "Church Information: History," Korean United Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles, accessed March 10, 2018, <http://www.kupcla.com/cont/0103.php>. The house at 1626 35<sup>th</sup> Place appears relatively unaltered and few building permits are listed at the Los Angeles Building and Safety online building records. The house at 1626 35<sup>th</sup> Street appears somewhat altered, though the online building records show only a 1977 permit for unspecified work to comply with a housing notice (building permit no. 47665, Los Angeles Building and Safety, July 6, 1977).

<sup>498</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1932*, 2576; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1922, sheet 623. See also, "Church History," Westminster Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles, accessed March 10, 2018, <http://www.wpcofla.org/about-history-westminster-presbyterian-church-los-angeles/>. While extant, the church building at 1545 West 35<sup>th</sup> Place received a second-floor addition over its existing dining and Sunday school room wing as well as additions surrounding its apse. The additions were permitted in 1956 under the ownership of the Antioch Evangelical Temple Church of God in Christ (building permit no. 40122, Los Angeles Building and Safety, April 11, 1956). The Westminster Presbyterian Church moved to 2230 Jefferson Boulevard in 1949.

<sup>499</sup> Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County," 36.

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choir rooms, and a larger auditorium where services were held. Stained glass windows were installed, as was a fully operational kitchen. The grounds featured a parking lot and children's playground. With services provided in both Korean and English, the church also offered Korean language school.<sup>500</sup>

The proximity of these two prominent institutions firmly solidified Jefferson Boulevard as the social center of the Korean community in Los Angeles.<sup>501</sup> At the same time, the Korean Free Church, reorganized as the Korean Methodist Episcopal Church in 1930, had a more difficult time securing a permanent home. It moved to rented church spaces throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. It was at the University Methodist Episcopal Church near USC at 1016 West Jefferson Boulevard (not extant) in 1931, then the Finnish Congregational Church at 1416 West 37<sup>th</sup> Drive from around 1933 through at least 1936.<sup>502</sup> By 1940, the Korean Methodist Church was holding its services at the nearby Berean Seventh Day Adventist church at 1446 West 36<sup>th</sup> Place, which catered to the African American community. The Seventh Day Adventists held their services on Saturdays, which allowed the Methodists to use the church on Sundays.<sup>503</sup> By this time, the church served a congregation of approximately 125 people.<sup>504</sup> As it tried to raise funds for a permanent church, the Korean Methodist Church remained in this area, moving again to Gospel Hall at 1225 West Jefferson Boulevard (not extant) in 1942.<sup>505</sup>

The second generation of Korean Americans was also maturing during this period. Most grew up attending neighborhood elementary and high schools in Los Angeles, and went on to college at Los Angeles City College, UCLA, USC, and other local institutions.<sup>506</sup> Though faced with discrimination common to all Asian Americans, some gained particular prominence. Korean athlete Sammy Lee became the first Asian American to win a gold medal in the 1948 Olympic Games.<sup>507</sup>

Lee was born in Fresno in 1920 to Soonkey Rhee and his wife Eunkee Chun, both of whom arrived from Korea circa 1910.<sup>508</sup> The family had a truck farming business in Fresno before moving to Los Angeles, where they first opened a small grocery on Bunker Hill before eventually settling in the Highland Park neighborhood.<sup>509</sup> The family lived at 5711 and 5421 York Boulevard in the 1930s and managed a

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>501</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 9.

<sup>502</sup> Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 84-85; *Los Angeles City Directory 1932*, 2576; Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 42-43. See also Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1922, sheet 551 (University Methodist Episcopal Church) and 1922-1950, sheet 636 (Finnish Congregational Church). The Los Angeles city directories listed 1016 West Jefferson Boulevard as the address for the Korean Methodist Church from 1932 through 1939 (directories for 1940 and 1941 were not available electronically). However, the University Methodist Episcopal Church at that location was demolished in 1931 (building permit no. 20785, Los Angeles Building and Safety, October 5, 1931).

<sup>503</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 42-43; "Sunday Sermons," *Los Angeles Times*, October 26, 1940. See also Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1922-1950, sheet 636 (Berean Seventh Day Adventist Church).

<sup>504</sup> Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County," 38-39.

<sup>505</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory*, 1942, 2710.

<sup>506</sup> Givens, "The Korean Community in Los Angeles County," 44-45.

<sup>507</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 70.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid. It does not appear that there was a Korean community in the Highland Park area.

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grocery store and restaurant.<sup>510</sup> Lee did his first somersault dive while playing at a Highland Park pool in 1932.<sup>511</sup>

Lee learned to dive at Brookside Park pool in Pasadena, which had one day a week set aside for non-white swimmers before the pool was drained.<sup>512</sup> He sneaked in practice dives at the Los Angeles Swimming Stadium in Exposition Park, where he caught the attention of Jim Ryan who became his coach.<sup>513</sup> While attending Occidental College, Lee won the 1942 national championship in platform and 3-meter springboard diving. His Olympic ambitions had to wait when the games were canceled due to World War II. In the meantime, Lee joined the Army Reserves, and attended medical school at USC. He finally reached the Olympics in 1948 where he won the gold medal in platform diving. He won a second gold medal in the same event at the 1952 games and won the bronze in the 3-meter springboard.<sup>514</sup>

The Ahn siblings were also starting to make a name for themselves. The oldest, Philip Ahn, became a well-known actor in Hollywood. He first started acting in the 1930s and appeared in dozens of films through the 1940s, often playing Chinese, and later Japanese, villains. His films included *Anything Goes* (1936) with Bing Crosby, *The General Dies at Dawn* (1936) with Shirley Temple, and *Daughter of Shanghai* (1937) and *King of Chinatown* (1939) with Chinese American actress Anna May Wong.<sup>515</sup> Younger brother Philson was a member of the California National Guard in the Tiger Brigade during World War II and sister Susan was a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, the first Korean American woman in the American military. Youngest brother Ralph was also in the Navy.<sup>516</sup>

### **World War II and Its Aftermath, 1942-1950**

Immediately following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the subsequent declaration of war by the United States, the Korean community mobilized. Korean Americans of military age throughout the U.S. enlisted to serve, including Captain Young Oak Kim, a second-generation Korean American raised in Los Angeles. Captain Kim became an officer in the army and led a unit of Japanese American soldiers during the war.<sup>517</sup> Older men, unable to serve, worked in manufacturing and construction to further the war effort, Korean American women volunteered for the Red Cross, and those who spoke Japanese were invaluable to the intelligence community as

<sup>510</sup> *Los Angeles City Directory 1930*, 1392 and *Los Angeles City Directory 1934*, 1001; and Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 37.

<sup>511</sup> Valarie J. Nelson and Nathan Fenno, "Sammy Lee, Diver Who Became First Asian American to Win Olympic Medal, Dies at 96," *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 2016.

<sup>512</sup> Jerry Crowe, "Lee Never Let Racism Block His March to Diving Glory," *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 2011.

<sup>513</sup> Nelson and Fenno, "Sammy Lee."

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Hye Seung Chung, *Hollywood Asian: Philip Ahn and the Politics of Cross-ethnic Performance* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 213-214 and "Philip Ahn," Internet Movie Database, accessed August 19, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0014217/>.

<sup>516</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 56.

<sup>517</sup> Woo Sung Han, *Unsung Hero: The Story of Colonel Young Oak Kim*, translated by Edward T. Chang (Riverside, CA: Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies, University of California, Riverside, 2011), 22-38. Captain Kim was promoted to major during the Korean War and retired as a highly decorated colonel in 1972. Han, *Unsung Hero*, 315 and 358.

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translators.<sup>518</sup> In Los Angeles specifically, a Korean National Guard unit was established and incorporated into the California National Guard.<sup>519</sup> Called the Tiger Brigade (Manhokun) and drilling outside the Exposition Park Armory, the unit consisted of approximately one fifth of the entire Korean population of Los Angeles, or 109 enlistees from a community of around 500.<sup>520</sup>

While these unrestrained contributions to the war effort were undoubtedly rooted in a sense of American patriotism, particularly for second-generation Korean Americans, it is impossible to separate the influence of the Korean political organizations and support for the Korean independence movement. Many members of the community saw a long-awaited opportunity for a Korea free from Japanese occupation. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, high-ranking members of the KNA gathered at the headquarters in Los Angeles to discuss the events. A series of resolutions were issued:

1. Koreans shall promote unity during the war and act harmoniously.
2. Koreans shall work for the defense of the country where they reside and all those who are healthy should volunteer for National Guard duty. Those who are financially capable should purchase war bonds, and those who are skilled should volunteer for appropriate duties.
3. Koreans shall wear a badge identifying them as Koreans, for security purposes.<sup>521</sup>

These resolutions reflect the leading role of the Korean independence movement within the broader context of the Korean American experience, and the common misidentification with other, larger Asian ethnic groups that became problematic with the fervent anti-Japanese sentiments of the day. Although many in the Korean community were not U.S. citizens and technically subjects of the Japanese Empire, the United States government recognized that Korea was an occupied territory and issued Military Order No. 45 stating that Koreans were exempted from the enemy alien status attributed to Japanese Americans.<sup>522</sup>

On March 8, 1942, a ceremony and parade were held in Pershing Square as a Korea Day celebration. Many dressed in traditional Korean costumes participated in the event, which coincided with the sale of war bonds at the War Memorial Hall, located on the western end of the park. Other ceremonies that linked Korean independence and the wartime American experience were held, including a military parade through Downtown Los Angeles that culminated with a ceremony at City Hall honoring the Korean flag.<sup>523</sup> Hundreds of Korean Americans participated in and attended the festivities as Mayor Fletcher Brown raised the flag and the Tiger Brigade and U.S. Army bands played the national anthems of both countries.<sup>524</sup>

<sup>518</sup> Choy, *Koreans in America*, 173-174.

<sup>519</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 49.

<sup>520</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 55; Choy, *Koreans in America*, 174.

<sup>521</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 45.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*; Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 54.

<sup>524</sup> Choy, *Koreans in America*, 174.

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The increase in economic activity during World War II had resounding impacts on the Korean American community. Unprecedented demand for goods and labor, all driven by the war effort, opened new economic opportunities and financial gains that been unavailable in decades prior.<sup>525</sup> Initially, demand for agricultural production and the shortage in labor spurred the restoration of agricultural jobs for many Korean Americans in Southern California. This created wholesale commercial success for Koreans in Los Angeles, similar to that of the 1920s.<sup>526</sup> Korean-owned businesses started to experience greater success, and wages for those Korean Americans provided a new level of earning and saving power. The result was increased investment and creation of new and diversified Korean-owned businesses, as well as greater home ownership, though through the names of the American-born second generation as foreign-born, non-citizens still could not own property.<sup>527</sup>

In the years following World War II, the Korean American community of Los Angeles was still small with about 800 residents, in a much more established social and financial position than ever before.<sup>528</sup> In April 1943, the *Korean American Times* (Puk Mi Sibö), a Korean language newspaper, started publishing in Los Angeles by the Los Angeles branch of the Dong Ji Hoi, likely at their location on 2716 Ellendale Place.<sup>529</sup> The Korean Methodist Church finally purchased a permanent home, the former Swedish Lutheran Church at 1276 West 29<sup>th</sup> Street at Orchard Street, in 1945 (extant/alterd).<sup>530</sup> Though they remained at the building for only fifteen years, the church at 29<sup>th</sup> Street and Orchard marked an important milestone for the nomadic church and was a point of pride that reflected the congregation's improved circumstances.<sup>531</sup>

The aftermath of the war also had socio-political implications for the community. The long established Korean independence movement and the dozens of organizations associated with its promotion were involved in the formation of a new government in Korea. With the establishment of the Republic of Korea in 1948, led by Syngman Rhee as president, the Korean independence movement's prominence faded in the Los Angeles community. Many who had come to Los Angeles as students or religious leaders in the community moved back to Korea to participate in the founding of the new republic. Although removed from their country of origin for decades, the Korean Americans brought back both the religious and national institutions that had been fundamental cornerstones of the Korean American community. These experiences allowed many to contribute to the rebuilding of the Republic of Korea.<sup>532</sup> In 1948, a consulate for the Republic of Korea was established in Los Angeles with Whui Sik Min appointed consul general, and served as a hallmark of the new republic at the time.<sup>533</sup>

<sup>525</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

<sup>527</sup> Laws like the 1913 Alien Land Law in California prohibited immigrants from owning property in the state. Such laws were rule unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1952.

<sup>528</sup> Hak-Hoon Kim, "Residential Patterns and Mobility of Koreans in Los Angeles County," (master's thesis, California State University, Los Angeles, 1986), 8.

<sup>529</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 46.

<sup>530</sup> Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 112.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid., 112; 132-33.

<sup>532</sup> Choy, *Koreans in America*, 182.

<sup>533</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 49.

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**Korean War and the Second Wave, 1950-1965**

On June 25, 1950, the onset of the Korean War embroiled both the United States and the Korean peninsula in a renewed conflict. The clash was a tragic byproduct of World War II, one that divided the peninsula and families in an arbitrary fashion. Against the backdrop of the Cold War, the communist-backed Northern forces fought the Southern forces supported heavily by several Western countries. Though many Koreans living in Los Angeles did not take sides, there was tension between those who supported Syngman Rhee's new government in South Korea and those who supported the communist government in North Korea. Several members of the Los Angeles Korean community even made their way to North Korea by way of Czechoslovakia. The *Korean Independence News* was an anti-Rhee newspaper published in Los Angeles at 1350 West Jefferson Boulevard between 1943 and 1952 distributed to Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China.<sup>534</sup>

On July 27, 1953, the armistice between the warring parties was signed, effectively ending the Korean War.<sup>535</sup> The peninsula was devastated with the conflict unresolved. North and South solidified along the agreed upon boundaries, almost unchanged from the start of the conflict. The Korean American community across the United States funded relief efforts to ease the suffering on the peninsula. Orphan children, displaced by the conflict, became the first immigrants from Korea to the United States since the 1920s, many of whom arrived in Los Angeles. Returning U.S. servicemen from the Korean War brought Korean brides with them. These women arrived in small numbers and were often separated from the established Korean American community by circumstance.<sup>536</sup> Students from South Korea also started to make their way to the United States in the years after World War II and the Korean War.<sup>537</sup> One was architect Ki Suh Park, who arrived in 1953 to study at East Los Angeles College.<sup>538</sup> He earned his bachelor's degree at UC Berkeley in 1957 and later a graduate degree in architecture and city planning from MIT. In 1961, he was hired at the architecture firm Gruen Associates in Los Angeles, where he became a partner in 1972 and managing partner in 1981.<sup>539</sup>

Approximately 14,000 Koreans arrived in the United States between 1950 and 1965.<sup>540</sup> This second wave of immigration was aided by scaled-back immigration laws in the 1950s that allowed entire

<sup>534</sup> Vladimir Hlasny, and Jung, Byung Joon, "Political Migration of Korean Activists Through Czechoslovakia in the Post World War 2 Period," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* (June 2017): 4. Accessed September 28, 2017, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2844602>; United States Department of Justice, "Report of the Attorney General to the Congress of the United States on the Administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, As Amended for the Period from Jun 28, 1942 to December 31, 1944," June 1945, 373, accessed September 28, 2017, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.documentcloud.org/documents/325918/1942-1944-fara-report.pdf>.

<sup>535</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 50

<sup>536</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 72; "A Brief History of Korean Americans," National Association of Korean Americans, accessed March 23, 2017, <http://www.naka.org/resources/history.asp>.

<sup>537</sup> Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 135-136.

<sup>538</sup> Christine Mai-Duc, "Ki Suh Park Dies at 80; Architect Helped Rebuild L.A. after Riots," *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 2013.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid. Park later became a leader in the Korean American community and was involved with rebuilding Los Angeles in the aftermath of the 1992 riots.

<sup>540</sup> Kim, "Residential Patterns," 8.

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Korean families to claim refugee status. The arrival of refugees in Los Angeles was met by the established Korean American community with unwavering support.

In addition to the new wave of immigration, the Korean community in Los Angeles was undergoing other changes. In 1952, the Immigration and Nationality Act (also known as the McCarran-Walter Act) was passed, which relaxed the limits on immigration from certain Asian countries. Several court cases in the late 1940s and early 1950s challenged discriminatory racial covenant laws that barred Asian Americans from living in certain neighborhoods. Lawsuits brought by two Asian Americans in Los Angeles, Tommy Amer of Chinese heritage and Yin Kim of Korean heritage, were among the legal cases that helped to end housing segregation.<sup>541</sup> In 1947, Kim, a second-generation Korean American dentist, and his wife purchased a house at 1201 South Gramercy Place in Arlington Heights, a neighborhood with enforced racial covenants. The Kims quietly moved in during escrow to avoid an injunction that would have prevented them from occupying the property. Once the sale closed, they were served with the injunction to vacate, which they challenged in court; they remained in the house as the lawsuit progressed.<sup>542</sup> Although the Kim and Amer cases ultimately were not among the ones chosen by the United States Supreme Court to deliberate on the issue of racial covenants, they were accepted for review by the Court in 1947 as examples of how the restrictive covenants affected other nonwhite groups in addition to African Americans.<sup>543</sup>

This shift towards desegregation resulted in many Korean Americans moving from the previous concentration around Jefferson Boulevard between Western and Vermont Avenues (later known as Old Koreatown) to middle class neighborhoods in Los Angeles and the surrounding cities. For the most part, the nucleus of the Korean American community expanded north and west, signaling the eventual creation of the later Koreatown. Some also moved further west to the Westside and over the Hollywood Hills to the San Fernando Valley.

<sup>541</sup> Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 22-23.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, 43-51.



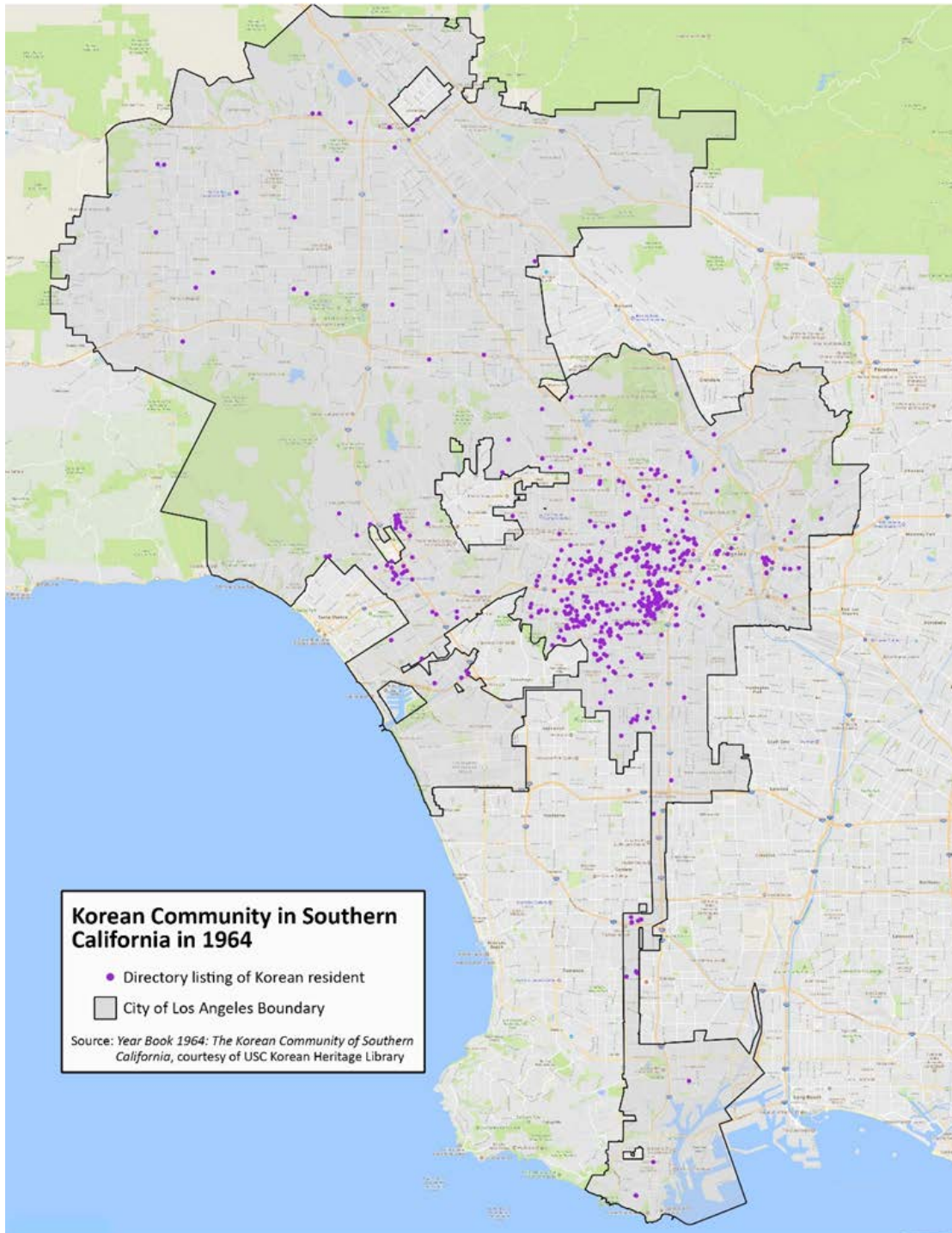
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Map showing Korean residences within the City of Los Angeles, 1964. Map is based on listings from Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964. (GIS map prepared by Office of Historic Resources).



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The emphasis of political groups within the Korean American community was also shifting. With the establishment of the Republic of Korea in South Korea in 1948, the independence political organizations and associations that had been steady fixtures in the Korean American community began to decline in significance. During the post-war years, Korean American organizations became increasingly focused on cultural, religious, and professional developments.<sup>544</sup> The Dong Ji Hoi continued to support Syngman Rhee, who had become president of Republic of Korea. When Rhee was ousted from power by a student uprising in 1960, his political party, and the Dong Ji Hoi as part of it, became virtually defunct.<sup>545</sup> It still had offices in Hawaii and in Los Angeles. Under the leadership of Leo Song, co-owner of the produce wholesaler K&S Company and considered a successor to Rhee, it reorganized with different principles.<sup>546</sup> The Mugunghwa School (also known as the Korean School of Southern California) began operating from the Dong Ji Hoi building at 2716 Ellendale Place beginning in 1973.<sup>547</sup>

Korean churches continued to be defining elements of the community. On April 5, 1957, a Baptist church was established in Los Angeles by Reverend Dong-Myong Kim and his wife Ee-Sook (Esther) Ahn.<sup>548</sup> By 1964, the Berendo Street Baptist Church was located at 1324 South Berendo Street (extant/alterd), just south of Pico Boulevard and west of Vermont Avenue.<sup>549</sup> It was the second Korean Baptist church established in the United States, and quickly grew to one of the largest Korean churches in Los Angeles.<sup>550</sup> By 1977, the church moved down the street to 975 South Berendo Street, while a different congregation, the Korean Evangelical Nah Sung Church, occupied the church at 1324 South Berendo Street (extant/alterd).<sup>551</sup>

The Korean Methodist Church, having finally established a permanent home at 1276 W. 29<sup>th</sup> Street in 1945, constructed a new, modern church at 4394 Washington Boulevard at Virginia Road in 1960.<sup>552</sup> The congregation, consisting of the increasingly older first wave immigrants and their English-speaking second-generation adult children, outgrew its space as it gained members from the second wave of Korean immigrants. At its new location, it shifted to cater more and more to immigrants.<sup>553</sup>

New institutions aimed at the preservation and proliferation of Korean culture and identity were also founded during this period. On June 30, 1958, the KNA opened a new language school at their headquarters on Jefferson Boulevard, which had afterschool and summer programs for both boys and girls over six years old.<sup>554</sup> The KNA continued to promote Korean culture in the community, as well as Korean unity, although the political leanings of the prior decades became less integral to its mission. The

<sup>544</sup> Choy, *Koreans in America*, 188-189.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>546</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>548</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 52.

<sup>549</sup> Pak, *Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964*, 83.

<sup>550</sup> "Berendo Street Baptist Church, entrance," Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection record order number 00075214, from Jeff Allen Houses of Worship Collection.

<sup>551</sup> *1977 Korean Business Directory* (Los Angeles: The Korea Times L.A., 1977), 21-22.

<sup>552</sup> Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 133.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-133, 138-139.

<sup>554</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 53.

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American Korean Civic Organization was founded by Dr. Charles Yoon in 1962 to serve the second generation that might feel excluded from established community organizations like the KNA. It was located at 4328 Don Diablo Drive at a residential property in Baldwin Hills.<sup>555</sup> In 1963, the Korean Community Center was dedicated at the former Danish Hall at 1359 West 24<sup>th</sup> Street (extant/alterd).<sup>556</sup> A group led by Leo Song (of K&S Company and the Dong Ji Hoi), (Charles) Ho Kim, Won-yong (Warren) Kim, and Hyung-soon raised funds to purchase the gathering space, which had already hosted some events for the Korean community.<sup>557</sup>

Economically, the Korean American community in Los Angeles was becoming increasingly affluent. Many second-generation members fluent in English had been educated in post-secondary institutions in the Los Angeles area and elsewhere. The professional barriers that had been in place decades before were starting to fade as more Korean Americans entered white-collar occupations. The *Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964*, published as a directory for and about the Korean community, listed one architect (David Hyun of Hyun & Whitney Architects at 2301 Hyperion Avenue),<sup>558</sup> two attorneys, three dentists (including Dr. Yin Kim who had challenged the racial covenants at his Arlington Height home), two insurance agents, and two clinical doctors.<sup>559</sup>

A notable business to start in this period was Phil Ahn's Moongate restaurant at 8632 Van Nuys Boulevard in Panorama City.<sup>560</sup> Opened in 1955 by actor Philip Ahn and his sister Soorah, the Moongate was a family business owned and operated by the children of Chang Ho Ahn and their extended family. Many family members had moved to the San Fernando Valley in the postwar years. As with earlier restaurants, the Korean-owned business served Chinese (Cantonese) food rather than Korean food, especially as it was located in a neighborhood with few Korean residents. Philip had gained enough recognition in Hollywood that including his name was an asset to the restaurant.

The Moongate restaurant was designed by noted Los Angeles architecture firm Armet & Davis with Mid-Century Modern and Asian Eclectic architectural elements.<sup>561</sup> This included a circular moongate feature at the front façade and a neon sign in Asian-style font. The restaurant was a success, and Philip Ahn was made the honorary mayor of Panorama in 1962.<sup>562</sup> An addition and renovations that tripled its

<sup>555</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 76; Pak, *Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964*, 84.

<sup>556</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 60 and Choy, *Koreans in America*, 188. The former Danish Hall has been occupied by the Sung Kwang Presbyterian Church since at least 1986, who removed sections of the front brick wall and replaced with stud wall in 1987 (building permit no. 3266, Los Angeles Building and Safety, August 18, 1987). It should be noted that the 1964 Year Book listed the Korean Community Center address at 2525 West Vernon Avenue with Leo C. Song as president (Pak, *Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964*, 84). No additional documentation has been found to connect this property with the Korean Community Center.

<sup>557</sup> "Korean War Orphans Will Be Fete Guests," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 1956; "Koreans to Observe Independence Day," *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1957.

<sup>558</sup> David Hyun had a previous office at 1025 N. Vermont Avenue (not extant).

<sup>559</sup> Pak, *Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964*, 6 and 86-87. Dr. Kim had his dental practice at 959 West Jefferson Boulevard (not extant).

<sup>560</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 74.

<sup>561</sup> Building permit no. 66184, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, December 23, 1953.

<sup>562</sup> Chung, *Hollywood Asian*, 23.

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size to seat 300 was completed in 1964 while still under the Ahns' ownership.<sup>563</sup> Lou and Cliff Sawyer of Palm Springs, a husband and wife interior design team, did the interior and exterior design of the addition and renovation. The Sawyers were known for their work on restaurants, including the Polynesian-themed Don the Beachcomber in Palm Springs and Pago Pago in Long Beach.<sup>564</sup> The remodel was "a blend of Chinese and South Pacific," which incorporated the circular moongate motif at the expanded front façade and added Chinese lions, or Foo dogs, at the roofline.<sup>565</sup> The renovation also altered or eliminated some of original Mid-Century Modern features. The Moongate remained open until 1990, after which the building housed other businesses. It became La Sierra, a Mexican nightclub.

Gradually, the Korean War brought greater awareness of a distinct Korean identity to the mainstream, and businesses started to embrace their Korean roots. The House of Korean Arts was a gift shop managed by Henry S.G. Song and Marie Song Lee that specialized in selling goods made and imported from Korea.<sup>566</sup> Established by 1955, the store was located at 4332 Degnan Boulevard in Leimert Park Village by 1964.<sup>567</sup> The first restaurant in Los Angeles that specifically served Korean cuisine was Korea House at 2731 West Jefferson Boulevard (extant/altered).<sup>568</sup> Opened by Francis Lew in 1965, it appears to have moved to 1540 North Cahuenga Boulevard in Hollywood in 1970.<sup>569</sup>

In 1961, the Korean Chamber of Commerce of California was organized and established in Los Angeles at 1205 West Jefferson Boulevard (not extant). It was headed by Frank Ahn, who oversaw the efforts to promote Korean American commercial interests.<sup>570</sup> By 1977, the Korean Chamber of Commerce of Southern California was located at 981 South Western Avenue near Olympic Boulevard in a commercial office building owned by the Korean Association of Southern California.<sup>571</sup>

This economic proliferation extended to further civic engagement. In 1960, Alfred Song became the first Korean American to serve on a local city council when he was elected as a councilmember for the nearby City of Monterey Park. Born in Hawaii, Song was the son of Korean plantation workers. He moved to Los Angeles to attend USC for undergraduate studies, and eventually law school, following his enlistment in the Air Force during World War II. He was one of the two attorneys listed in the 1964

<sup>563</sup> Email correspondence from Flip Ahn Cuddy, April 22, 2017 and "Panorama City Restaurant Remodeled and Enlarged," *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1964.

<sup>564</sup> "Finding Aid for the Cliff & Lou Sawyer Papers, circa 1930-circa 1979," at University of California, Santa Barbara, Online Archive of California, accessed September 28, 2017, [http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c81j992c/entire\\_text/](http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c81j992c/entire_text/).

<sup>565</sup> "Panorama City Restaurant Remodeled and Enlarged."

<sup>566</sup> "California's Gift Show Opens at Four Locations," *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1955; Aleene Barnes, "Noted Korean Novelist Visits Here to Spread Culture of Homeland," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1955.

<sup>567</sup> Pak, *Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964*, 87.

<sup>568</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 79.

<sup>569</sup> Lois Dwan, "Roundabout," *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1970.

<sup>570</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 58.

<sup>571</sup> 1977 *Korean Business Directory*, 1, and alteration permit no. 35420 for 981 South Western Avenue, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, November 8, 1976. The permit lists the Southern California League of Koreans as the owner, which may have been another name for the Korean Association of Southern California, the owner listed on later permits. The most recent permits say the owner is the Korean American United Foundation while signage on the building says, "Korean American Community Center."

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Year Book, with his law office noted as at 608 South Hill Street in Downtown. He was later elected to the State Assembly in 1962, and State Senate in 1966—the first Korean American to hold these positions.<sup>572</sup>

**Third Wave of Immigration and the Rise of Koreatown: 1965-1980**

In 1965, U.S. immigration policy underwent a substantial overhaul with the passage of the Hart-Celler Act. Formally known as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the Hart-Celler Act effectively ended the discriminatory restrictions for immigrants from select nations of origin. By removing policies that had previously favored European immigrants, a substantial influx of immigrants arrived over the following years from Latin America and Asia, including Koreans. At first, the annual number of people emigrating from Korea was a few thousand people, which already more than doubled the one to two thousand Koreans arriving each year before 1965.<sup>573</sup> By the early 1970s, the numbers increased dramatically with over 30,000 Korean immigrants entering the U.S. alone in 1976.<sup>574</sup>

Those who came to the U.S. as part of the third wave were predominantly well-educated and skilled workers, unlike the unskilled laborers of the first wave more than half a century prior. Political and economic uncertainty in South Korea created a desire for many to move to the U.S. to pursue other opportunities; little migration out of Communist North Korea occurred. Many of the new immigrants who had received higher education and professional qualifications in Korea were unable to transfer those credentials or immediately overcome the language barrier. Instead, many pursued goods- and services-based economic opportunities, such as small business ownership of grocery stores, dry cleaners, tailors, and restaurants.<sup>575</sup> Import-export trading companies and garment industry establishments also eventually became popular businesses.

As with other immigrant groups, arriving Koreans gravitated towards established ethnic communities. This was intensified in Los Angeles, where the cultural and economic institutions of the Korean American community were located in a concentrated area around Jefferson Boulevard west of USC. Property rental rates, both commercial and residential, near this area were relatively low. Postwar suburban development drew many white residents from urban Los Angeles in a white flight migration that left the city's central areas under occupied. At the same time, the opening of the Santa Monica Freeway (10 Freeway) in the mid-1960s replaced Olympic Boulevard as the main east-west connector and resulted in a decrease in traffic volume, higher vacancies, and more affordable commercial rents along the boulevard.<sup>576</sup> This combination of a pre-existing ethnic community and its supporting institutions, coupled with relative affordability in nearby areas, and the rapid influx of well-educated and

<sup>572</sup> Kim and Patterson, *The Koreans in America*, 58.

<sup>573</sup> Kim, "Residential Patterns," 10.

<sup>574</sup> Pyong Gap Min, "Korean Immigrants in Los Angeles," (paper presented at the Conference on California's Immigrants in World Perspectives, University of California, Los Angeles, April 26-27, 1990), 3.

<sup>575</sup> Nancy Yoshihara, "Koreans Find Riches, Faded Dreams in L.A." *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 1976.

<sup>576</sup> Kim, "Residential Patterns," 56-57.

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financially sound immigrants with the capital to start commercial endeavors, effectively created one of the highest concentrations of Korean peoples and institutions in the United States—Koreatown.<sup>577</sup>

The Korean community was already beginning to shift north from Jefferson Boulevard over the previous decades. The influx of third-wave immigrants, and the dispersion of the second generation following the postwar suburban boom and lifting of racial covenants, shifted the concentration of Koreans north of the 10 Freeway by 1970. At the same time in the late 1960s, the Foreign Exchange Bank of Korea opened in Los Angeles to facilitate business and trade between the United States and Korea.<sup>578</sup> A state-owned bank, the Foreign Exchange Bank of Korea was first located at the One Wilshire Building at 624 S. Grand Avenue in 1967 before moving to 1133 Wilshire Boulevard by 1977.<sup>579</sup> By then, it had changed its name to the Korean Exchange Bank.<sup>580</sup> In 1977, the Korean Exchange Bank constructed a new branch building at 3099 West Olympic Boulevard designed by architects Kuo Sang Kim and Kurt Meyer.<sup>581</sup> The presence of established Korean-oriented financial services supported the rising influence of the Korean community in the activation of commercial spaces in these previously economically depressed areas.

The catalyst for the formation of Koreatown is often attributed to the founding of the Olympic Market by Hi-Duk Lee. Opened in 1969, the Olympic Market at 3122 West Olympic Boulevard (not extant) was one of the first Korean grocery stores located along the Olympic Boulevard commercial corridor.<sup>582</sup> After the success of the Olympic Market, Hi-Duk Lee opened the VIP Palace restaurant (Young Bin Kwan) at 3014 West Olympic Boulevard in 1975.<sup>583</sup> The VIP Palace, along with the adjacent shopping center, VIP Plaza at 3030 West Olympic Boulevard also developed by Lee in 1979, incorporated Korean-style architectural elements in its building design, including 10,000 blue roof tiles Lee imported from Korea.<sup>584</sup> They were among the first buildings in Los Angeles to showcase Korean architectural elements.

<sup>577</sup> Diana Sherman, "Largest Outside Korea: Korean Town's Extent, Population Grown Daily," *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 1979.

<sup>578</sup> "Korean Bank Opens Office," *Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 1967.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*; *1977 Korean Business Directory*, 1-2.

<sup>580</sup> "Bank Seeks Name Change," *Los Angeles Times*, December 27, 1967.

<sup>581</sup> New building permit no. 41899 for 3099 West Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, January 18, 1977. Later called the Hanmi Bank.

<sup>582</sup> Junyoung Myung, "Values-Based Approach to Heritage Conservation: Identifying Cultural Heritage in Koreatown" (master's thesis, University of Southern California, 2015), 20.

<sup>583</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 82.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*

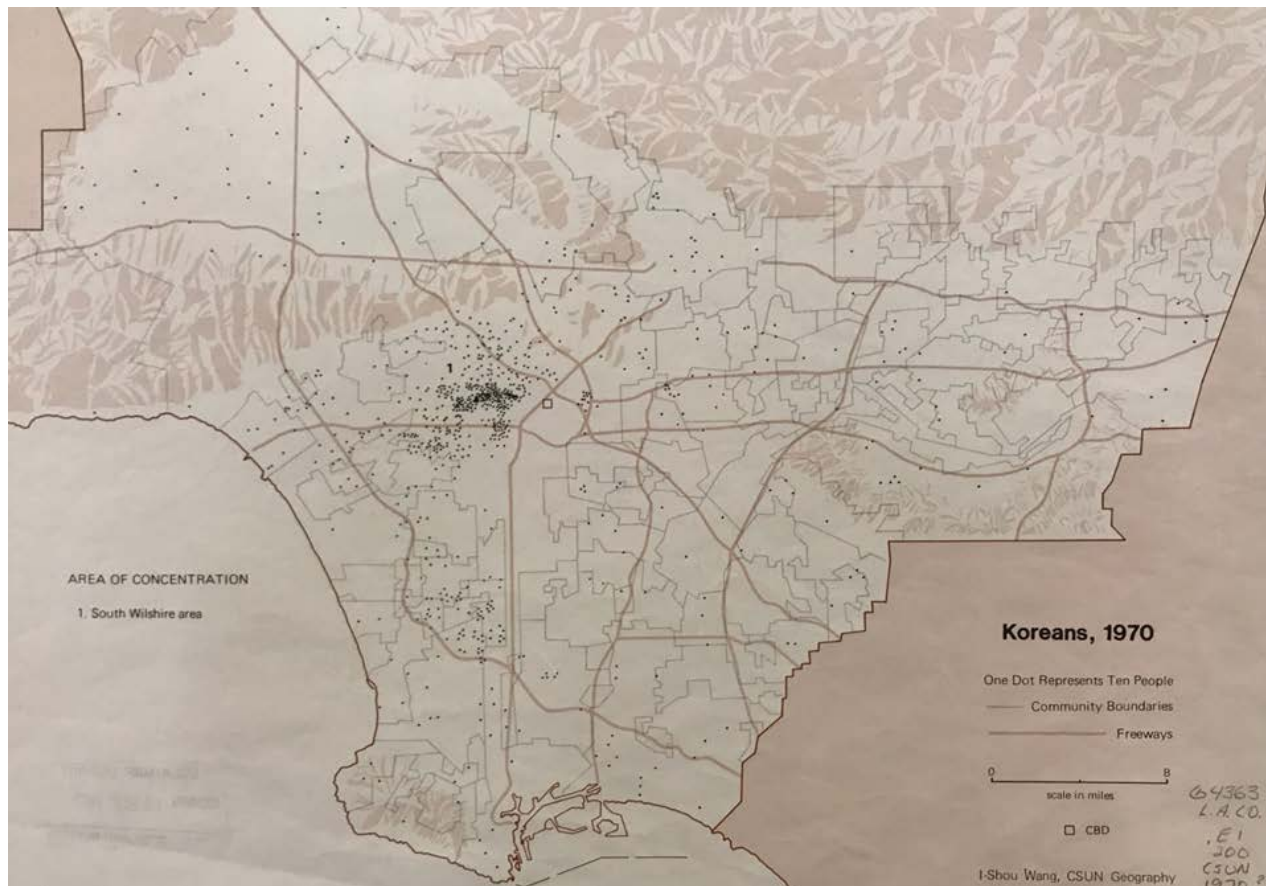
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*Distribution of Koreans in Los Angeles County, 1970. (Robert Provin and I-Shou Wang, CSUN Geography, at UCLA Libraries).*



Soon, hundreds of Korean businesses opened along Olympic Boulevard and expanded to Eight Street.<sup>585</sup> The incredible growth of the Korean business community in Los Angeles between 1965 and the mid-1970s can be seen in comparing the 1964 Year Book of the Korean community in Southern California with the 1977 directory of businesses published by the *Korea Times*. Where the 1964 Year Book had about 50 pages dedicated to residential and business listings and showed only four restaurants, the 1977 directory was dedicated solely to commercial and institutional services and was over 150 pages long with at least 50 Korean-owned restaurants listed.<sup>586</sup>

As the concentration of Korean-oriented businesses increased along Olympic Boulevard, so did the population of Koreans in the surrounding neighborhood as the high rate of immigration continued. The area bounded by Olympic Boulevard and 8<sup>th</sup> Street between Crenshaw Boulevard and Hoover Street became one of the most densely populated areas of Koreans and Korean-owned businesses; it had over

<sup>585</sup> Hyunsun Choi, "Magnetic Koreatown: Location and Growth in Transition," *Korea Observer* (Winter 2007): 593.

<sup>586</sup> Pak, *Korean Community of Southern California Year Book 1964*, 89 and *1977 Business Directory*, 72-79.

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70,000 Korean residents and 1,000 small businesses by 1976.<sup>587</sup> The area also supported five newspapers, including the *Korea Times*, the largest circulation daily Korean newspaper in the United States by 1977.<sup>588</sup> Opening its Los Angeles headquarters at 11638 Ventura Boulevard in Studio City in 1969, the newspaper moved to Koreatown in 1971 to 3418 West First Street (not extant) between Virgil and Vermont Avenues.<sup>589</sup> By 1977, it was located at 141 North Vermont Avenue (not extant).<sup>590</sup>

Other newspapers included the *Korean American Herald* (Miju Shin-Mun) at 2703 West Eighth Street; *Korean American Times* at 1543 West Olympic Boulevard; the *Korea Herald* at 1212 North Vermont Avenue; and the Dong-A Il Bo at 1035 South Crenshaw Boulevard.<sup>591</sup> The *Koreatown* weekly newspaper founded by K.W. (Kyung Won) Lee was the first Korean American newspaper printed in English. It started publishing in 1979 with its editorial offices at 1311 West Ninth Street.<sup>592</sup> According to its masthead, it was located at 1342 West Olympic by 1981, though it ceased publishing in 1984. Other media outlets listed in the 1977 business directory included the Korean Broadcasting Company at 634 South Broadway, the Palace Theatre; Korean TV Productions at 5225 Wilshire Boulevard; MBC TV at 3450 Wilshire Boulevard; Radio Korea at 141 North Vermont Avenue (not extant); and the TBC TV & Joong Ang Il Bo at 661 South Burlington Avenue.

The rapid expansion of Korean-owned businesses in the area resulted in the organization of the Koreatown Development Association (also known as the Koreatown Association), an organization of business leaders that aimed to improve and promote the business environment in the emerging Koreatown. The Koreatown Development Association, although largely business-oriented, served as a booster organization for the burgeoning Korean American community by promoting socio-cultural events as well as commerce.<sup>593</sup> It established the Korean Street Festival in 1974 that quickly grew to include over 120 participating organizations with over 45,000 attendees.<sup>594</sup> In 1978, after lobbying by the Koreatown Development Association led by Hi-Duk Lee as its president, the neighborhood received the honorary recognition as Koreatown by the City of Los Angeles.

The Koreatown Development Association was located at 981 South Western Avenue in 1977, in a four-story Modern office building purchased by the Korean Association of Southern California (KASC) in 1975.<sup>595</sup> The KASC was founded in the mid-1960s to “promote ethnic fraternity; provide informational, cultural, and educational resources to immigrants; and protect the rights and interest of the general

<sup>587</sup> Yoshihara, “Koreans Find Riches.”

<sup>588</sup> 1977 *Business Directory*, 157.

<sup>589</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles’s Koreatown*, 80, 84; advertisement in *Korea Times* in 1970.

<sup>590</sup> 1977 *Business Directory*, 157. *Korea Times* moved to 3731 Wilshire Boulevard.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>592</sup> “Koreatown Weekly Debuts,” *Koreatown: Special Korean Festival Issue*, September 1979, 1, accessed September 28, 2017, <http://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb6779p1mf/?brand=oac4>.

<sup>593</sup> Yu Eui-Young, “‘Koreatown’ Los Angeles: Emergence of a New Inner-City Ethnic Community,” *Bulletin of the Population and Development Studies Center* 14 (1985): 36

<sup>594</sup> Yoshihara, “Koreans Find Riches.”

<sup>595</sup> Victoria Kim, “Community Center Meant to Unite L.A.’s Korean Americans Has Become a Battleground,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 29, 2016. Ownership is held by the Korean American United Foundation.



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Korean immigrant community."<sup>596</sup> The KASC had ties to the South Korean government and was funded in part by the Korean Consulate General. In 1970, the KASC was listed at 5455 Wilshire Boulevard in the same office building as the Korean Consulate General.<sup>597</sup> In 1972, it moved to a storefront on Olympic Boulevard and then finally to 981 South Western Avenue, property purchased with the help of the South Korean government.<sup>598</sup> The building became the home of several organizations and businesses catering to the Korean community, including the Korean American Community Center, the Korean Chamber of Commerce, the Korean Students Association of Southern California, and the Korean Trader's Association of America.<sup>599</sup> In the mid-1980s, the KASC became known as the Korean American Federation.<sup>600</sup>

By 1979, Los Angeles had the largest population of Koreans living outside of Korea. This population, estimated at the time to be approximately 170,000, was largely concentrated in the Koreatown area. Koreatown was the commercial center, where business signage in Korean and traditional Korean design elements incorporated into some buildings identify the area as distinctly Korean.

Despite the levels of investment in the area with Korean-owned businesses and the real estate purchases by Korean investors, it was not a desirable residential neighborhood. Those living in Koreatown were predominantly immigrants from the third wave. As with the previous generations of Korean Americans in the decades prior, those who could afford to do so moved to middle-class neighborhoods in other parts of the city and the greater Southern California region.<sup>601</sup> Koreatown and its concentration of restaurants, markets, retailers, cultural centers, churches, nightlife establishments, theaters, and other amenities served the broader Korean American community, regardless of class.

The long-established community institutions also adjusted to the new wave of immigrants and the shift of the Korean community northward to the new Koreatown. The Korean Methodist Church was at the Washington Boulevard church they built in 1960 for only eight years before they outgrew the space. As the first wave immigrant generation was dying, the congregation's membership, and the focus of its activities, shifted to the second wave of student immigrants and then to the third wave of immigrants after the 1965 immigration quotas were lifted. It moved in 1968 to the church at 1068 South Robertson Boulevard to accommodate the growing congregation. There, it merge with the smaller Robertson Community Methodist Church and promised to offer at least one English service a week as part of the merger.<sup>602</sup> In 1989, the church moved from the Robertson Boulevard location, where it had been for the longest period to date, to 7400 Osage Avenue in Westchester near Los Angeles International Airport. It remains there as the Los Angeles Korean United Methodist Church in shared facilities with the La Tijera United Methodist Church.<sup>603</sup>

<sup>596</sup> Angie Y. Chung, *Legacies of Struggle: Conflict and Cooperation in Korean American Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 65. Chung lists the KASC as starting in 1962, while other sources listed 1965 or 1968.

<sup>597</sup> Chung, *Legacies of Struggle*, 65-66 and "Action Line," *Long Beach Independent*, February 23, 1970.

<sup>598</sup> Kim, "Community Center"; Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 84.

<sup>599</sup> *1977 Business Directory*, 1, 3, 5, 20, 26, 142, 145-146.

<sup>600</sup> Chung, *Legacies of Struggle*, 66.

<sup>601</sup> Sherman, "Largest Outside Korea."

<sup>602</sup> Yoo and Ahn, *Faithful Witness*, 139-140.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

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The Korean Presbyterian Church remained at its Jefferson Boulevard location, and in 1983, constructed the larger Korean United Presbyterian Church building next door to its 1938 brick church.<sup>604</sup> Joining the handful of Korean churches that had long served the community were several dozen new churches throughout Southern California.<sup>605</sup> Some of the new churches occupied existing churches and other religious buildings. This includes the Korean Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, which in 1976 purchased the former synagogue of Temple Sinai East at 407 South New Hampshire Avenue (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 91).<sup>606</sup> The Korean Church of Southern California occupied the church at 10792 West National Boulevard in Palms by 1977; the building later housed the Redeemer Baptist Church.<sup>607</sup> The two largest Korean churches by the early 1980s were Young Nak Church with over 3,000 members and Oriental Mission Church with 2,500 members.<sup>608</sup> Young Nak was first housed in a former synagogue at 1218 S. Fairfax Avenue before it outgrew the space and constructed its own church in 1989 at 1721 North Broadway in Lincoln Heights.<sup>609</sup> The Oriental Mission Church moved into a former supermarket building at 424 North Western Avenue in 1975 within Koreatown.<sup>610</sup>

While many of the second and third generation Korean Americans had moved to neighborhoods throughout the Los Angeles region, they were often instrumental in helping to settle new arrivals by offering socio-cultural, economic, and organizational support. Continuing the tradition from previous decades, Korean churches offered a number of services to immigrants, including English language lessons. By the beginning of 1974, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes were instituted in the Los Angeles school system, which began hiring teachers who could speak Korean to instruct new immigrant students. Special hotlines were established to offer on-demand help those who were struggling with the culture shock and adjustments to life in the United States. Groups like the Koreatown Youth Center (later known as the Koreatown Youth and Community Center or KYCC), established in 1975 as an afterschool program to support immigrant Korean youth, helped bridge the divide between the established Korean American community and newcomers.<sup>611</sup>

New Korean immigrants were incredibly self-reliant and established a number of socio-cultural networks. As early as 1965, alumni groups from Korean universities were founded and provided a social framework for many of the new residents; the All Korean University Alumni Association of California had an office at 1146 North Vermont Avenue in 1977.<sup>612</sup> Other social and cultural organizations offered similar communal settings, as did the ever-important religious institutions. Although political groups had been prolific in the Korean American community in previous decades, these had largely moved away

<sup>604</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 46.

<sup>605</sup> *1977 Business Directory*, 20-27.

<sup>606</sup> City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 91—Korean Philadelphia Presbyterian Church files at the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

<sup>607</sup> *1977 Business Directory*, 22.

<sup>608</sup> John Dart, "Korean Congregations, Large and Small, Find a Life in the Southland," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1983.

<sup>609</sup> John Dart, "Church Reflects Growing Korean Activity," *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1989.

<sup>610</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 86.

<sup>611</sup> "History," Koreatown Youth + Community Center, accessed September 29, 2017, <https://www.kycccla.org/about/history/>.

<sup>612</sup> *1977 Business Directory*, 1.

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from politics during this later period. Several of the Korean language newspapers continued to comment on the political climate in North and South Korea, much to the chagrin of the Korean Consulate in Los Angeles. The population had largely moved on from political organizations to embrace socio-cultural organizations.

Korean Americans from the earlier waves and their children continued to find success in their fields and gain greater visibility in mainstream American society. Actor Philip Ahn became even more well-known with his co-starring role of Master Kan on the television program *Kung Fu* from 1972-1975. A few Korean immigrant actors, such as Soon-Tek Oh and Johnny Yune, also started to appear in the television industry in the 1970s and 1980s, though the presence of Koreans in the entertainment industry and in the performing arts was still fairly rare.<sup>613</sup> Architect David Hyun, whose family settled in Hawaii as part of the first wave, developed the Japanese Village Plaza shopping center at 350 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Little Tokyo. Opened in 1978, Japanese Village Plaza was a project led by the local Japanese community in concert with the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency to revitalize Little Tokyo.<sup>614</sup> It was designed by Hyun with McClelland, Cruz and Gaylord, Kazumi Adachi and Robert E. Alexander, and with Takahashi & Takahashi as the landscape architect.<sup>615</sup>

Hyun was considered the first Korean American architect in Los Angeles and started practicing in 1947.<sup>616</sup> He practiced in partnership with Richard Whitney as Hyun & Whitney starting in 1961 and designed several Mid-Century Modern residences as well as commercial and institutional projects.<sup>617</sup> For the Japanese Village Plaza, Hyun's design used elements of traditional Asian architecture, such as blue tiled roofs, exposed wood beams, and fenestration referencing shoji patterns.<sup>618</sup> Hyun attempted to develop a Korean Village that could be a focus for the Korean community, as Little Tokyo was for the Japanese and Chinatown was for the Chinese, and the project was not executed.<sup>619</sup>

Reflecting the growing link between Los Angeles and South Korea, the Republic of Korea donated the Korean Friendship Bell to the city in 1976 to celebrate the United States' bicentennial and to honor the veterans of the Korean War.<sup>620</sup> The bell was placed in Angel's Gate Park overlooking the Pacific Ocean in San Pedro, and was designated City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 187 in 1978. The Korean Cultural Center, run by the South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, opened in 1980 at 5505 Wilshire Boulevard in a former bank building to promote the cultural heritage of Korea.<sup>621</sup>

<sup>613</sup> Chung, *Hollywood Asian*, xiii.

<sup>614</sup> Lou Desser, "Little Tokyo's Grass Roots Project," *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1977.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid., and "Japanese Village Shop Plaza Opens," *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1978.

<sup>616</sup> "Firm Opened by Architects," *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1961 and "David Hyun," Forest Lawn, accessed April 17, 2017, <http://forestlawn.tributes.com/obituary/show/David-Hyun-93744266>.

<sup>617</sup> Hyun also was almost deported after being accused of being a Communist in the 1950s. He was exonerated and continued to practice architecture. Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America*, 127-134.

<sup>618</sup> Desser, "Little Tokyo's Grass Roots Project" and "Japanese Village Shop Plaza Opens."

<sup>619</sup> Sam Kaplan, "L.A. Koreans in Search of an Identity," *Los Angeles Times*, September 20, 1979.

<sup>620</sup> "Korean Friendship Bell," Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection record order number 00063669, from Cary Moore Collection. The bell is at 3601 S Gaffney Street in Angels' Gate Park in San Pedro.

<sup>621</sup> Kim, *Images of America: Los Angeles's Koreatown*, 93.

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Starting with fewer than twenty Koreans in Los Angeles after the first decade of the twentieth century, Korean Americans became one of the major ethnic communities in the city. After 1980, Koreatown continued to grow and expand beyond Olympic Boulevard toward Wilshire Boulevard to the north and Pico Boulevard to the south, and even further beyond. Korean Americans also spread across Los Angeles outside of Koreatown, investing in businesses in the Fashion District and South Los Angeles, as well as living in the San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles. Many more social, financial, commercial, and cultural institutions were established to serve the increasingly visible and prominent Korean American community. An influx of investment from South Korea starting in the 1980s extended the immigration of both people and capital to Los Angeles as it became one of the largest concentrations of Koreans outside of Korea. Koreatown Plaza, the indoor mall at 928 South Western Avenue designed by Gruen Associates and partner Ki Suh Park and developed by Joon Nam Yang, opened in 1988 after four years' construction to be among the largest new developments in Koreatown.<sup>622</sup>

The painful events surrounding the 1992 riots, wherein many Korean businesses were targeted for looting and destruction, marked a turning point for the community, and deserve further study. Greater civic engagement and engagement with non-Korean communities since then has further tied the Korean American community to Los Angeles. David Ryu, the first Korean American to serve in the City Council, was elected in 2015. As more time passes, the contributions of Korean Americans to Los Angeles since the third wave of immigration will become more apparent.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid., 100.

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**Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, 1903-1980**

**Introduction**

This historic context examines the migration, settlement, and development patterns of Filipino Americans in Los Angeles from 1903 to 1980, spanning the arrival of the first known Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, through the eventual demise of Little Manila in the 1950s, and growth of the Filipino communities of Temple-Beverly and Wilmington in the postwar years through the 1970s.

Though Little Manila in Downtown was a major cultural center for Filipino settlers in Los Angeles from the 1920s to the 1940s, most of it was destroyed by the 1950s due to City-sponsored redevelopment programs. Residents and visitors alike gathered in Little Manila to socialize, conduct business, worship, and celebrate Filipino holidays, demonstrating shared history among the local Filipino American and broader Filipino American community in Southern California. Cultural heritage was expressed and maintained through traditions, language, and food, which reinforced collective identity. Over time, these traditions were enhanced and carried out in other areas of Los Angeles. In part because of the loss and limited physical integrity of the community's early resources, the histories that tie Filipino Americans to Los Angeles' built environment remain obscured.

Following World War II, many Filipino servicemen returned to their old neighborhoods in San Pedro and Wilmington, where they found work, housing, and a sense of belonging. In the 1940s and 1950s, Filipino-serving churches from the early period relocated to the Temple-Beverly neighborhood, helping to establish the area as a new center of Filipino life in Los Angeles for decades to come.

This context revealed that there are few extant resources associated with Filipino Americans from the period of 1903 to 1923. Most of the significant resources associated with Filipino American history in Los Angeles were found in the Temple-Beverly and Wilmington areas. These areas have been the largest and longest-continuously populated of the known Filipino American neighborhoods in Los Angeles. There are other important resources scattered throughout the city, including homes associated with the Filipino Federation of America in the West Adams area, the historic Caballeros de Dimas Alang lodge at in Boyle Heights, and Ray Buhen's Tiki-Ti bar in Hollywood.

**Terms and Definitions**

Non-English terms are in Filipino dialect and appear in italics alongside their common English translation with the exception of surnames, organization names, business names, and place names.<sup>623</sup> When referring to people and language of the Philippines, the spelling of Filipino with the letter "F" is the most commonly used by scholars. When referring to the country and islands, the spelling of Philippines with the letters "Ph" is appropriate as the country's name stems from the name Philip, the English equivalent of *Felipe* referring to Spanish King Felipe II for whom the islands were named.

<sup>623</sup>The Philippines has eight major dialects, including Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon (Ilonggo), Ilocano, Kapampangan, Pangasinan, Tagalog, and Waray. Tagalog and English are the two official languages.

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People from the Philippines refer to themselves and their national language (synonymous with Tagalog, the language widely spoken in Manila, Bulacan, Bataan, and Batangas) as Pilipino with the letter “P” as most Filipino language and dialects do not include phonetics for the letter “F.”<sup>624</sup>

**Beginnings, 1898-1903**

Unlike Chinese, Japanese, and other early immigrants from Asia, Filipino immigration to the U.S. has been greatly impacted by the reach of Western colonialism. Filipinos encountered Western influence beginning in the sixteenth century, when Ferdinand Magellan landed on the island of Cebu and claimed it for Spain in 1521. Named for King Philip II of Spain, the Philippines became a Spanish colony in 1565. It remained a territory of Spain until 1898, when Filipinos, led by Emilio Aguinaldo and U.S. troops defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War. On December 10, 1898, the Treaty of Paris ceded the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico to the U.S. for a sum of \$20 million, ushering in an era of American colonialism in the Philippines. The war was declared over by President Theodore Roosevelt on July 4, 1902, though fighting continued in some parts of the country until 1915.

During the American regime (1898-1946), English became the official language in the Philippines and an extensive public school system based on the American model was established. Historian Dawn Mabalon writes, “American colonial policymakers set themselves apart from other imperial powers by their policy of ‘benevolent assimilation,’ in which the majority of the populace could come under colonial control through public education and preparation for eventual self-rule.”<sup>625</sup> American colonization also influenced U.S. immigration policy. Under American colonial rule, through 1934, Filipinos could freely travel to and from the U.S.<sup>626</sup> This changed with the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, which reclassified Filipinos as aliens and restricted immigration into the U.S. to an annual quota of fifty persons. When the Philippines gained its independence from the U.S. in 1946, the annual immigration quota increased to 100. The liberalization of U.S. immigration policy, ushered in by the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, resulted in a dramatic increase of Filipino immigration to Southern California, and Los Angeles, in particular.

Like other Asian immigrants before and after them, Filipinos came to America in search of greater opportunities. Though there are earlier accounts of Filipinos arriving in California as early as 1587 on Spanish ships, Antonio Miranda Rodriguez, who appeared in the U.S. Census in 1783 in Santa Barbara, was one of the original founders of Los Angeles.<sup>627</sup> Filipinos arrived in Los Angeles in greater numbers beginning in the early 1920s. Since that time, Filipinos have contributed greatly to the city’s culture, economy, and history.

<sup>624</sup> “Filipino, Pilipino, Pinoy, Pilipinas, Philippines - What's the Difference?” Center for Philippine Studies, University of Hawaii, Manoa, accessed May 31, 2018, <http://www.hawaii.edu/cps/filipino.html>.

<sup>625</sup> Dawn Mabalon, *Little Manila Is in the Heart: The Making of the Filipina/o American Community in Stockton, California* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2013), 31.

<sup>626</sup> Philip Q. Yang, *Asian Immigration to the United States* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2011), 94-95.

<sup>627</sup> The founding of Los Angeles has been credited to eleven *pobladores*, though Governor Felipe de Neve of New Spain originally enlisted twelve *pobladores*, which included Filipino Antonio Miranda Rodriguez. While en route to what would become Los Angeles, Rodriguez’s daughter fell ill and he stayed behind to care for her, while the rest of the expedition continued north.

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**Early Filipino Immigration to Southern California, 1903-1923**

In the early twentieth century, Los Angeles experienced exponential population growth that transformed the city. This period saw a growing influx of Asian immigrants of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including Filipinos, coming together in an evolving urban setting.

In 1903, U.S. Congress passed the *Pensionado Act*, which provided funds for select Filipinos to study abroad in the U.S. through 1943.<sup>628</sup> The intent of the program was for students to return to the Philippines and take positions in the American colonial administration.<sup>629</sup> In addition to the *pensionados* who received government fellowships, self-supporting students also came to the U.S. during this period. In Los Angeles, Filipinos studied at Los Angeles Junior College, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), University of Southern California (USC), and other educational institutions.<sup>630</sup> Severino Corpus, a self-supporting student, and *pensionado* Benicio Catapusan were among the Filipino student population in Los Angeles. Both were graduate students who conducted important early research on the occupational, recreational, and spiritual activities of Filipinos in Los Angeles. Catapusan went on to write his dissertation on the social adjustment of Filipinos in the U.S., earning a Ph.D. in Sociology from USC. While *pensionados* were expected to return to the Philippines and assume government roles, there were some who remained in the U.S. Those who did return promoted the *pensionado* program and America, thereby encouraging continued migration to the U.S.

The vast majority of early Filipino immigrants to the U.S. and California were laborers. According to scholar Dawn Mabalon, deteriorating economies in Filipino provinces and heavy recruitment of Filipino laborers for sugar plantations in Hawaii were among the major factors in the immigration of Filipinos to Hawaii and the West Coast in the early 1900s.<sup>631</sup> U.S. immigration policies and affordable trans-Pacific steamship travel facilitated Filipino migration to America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Early Filipino immigration to Southern California was also influenced by shifting labor markets in Hawaii and California. Beginning in 1882 with the Chinese Exclusion Act and its later extensions, and finally with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, the U.S. prohibited the flow of Asian laborers. Because the Philippines was under American colonial rule from 1898 to 1946, these exclusionary immigration policies did not apply to Filipinos. As such, Filipinos were targeted to meet labor shortages in Hawaii and California.

<sup>628</sup> Yang, *Asian Immigration to the United States*, 96. *Pensionado* is a government-sponsored student. Historians have identified three periods of the *pensionado* program, from 1903 to 1914, 1918 to 1934, and 1935 to 1943.

<sup>629</sup> For more information see Sucheng Chan, ed. *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 75.

<sup>630</sup> Severino F. Corpus, "An Analysis of the Racial Adjustment Activities and Problems of the Filipino-American Christian Fellowship in Los Angeles," (master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1938), 14.

<sup>631</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila Is in the Heart*, 40.

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The Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association (HSPA) successfully recruited Filipino laborers from the Visayas and Ilocos regions of the Philippines to work in Hawaii in 1906. These laborers were called *sakadas*, named after Filipino migratory laborers from the Negros Island sugarcane plantations. The first *sakadas* from Visayas arrived in Hawaii in the 1910s. According to scholar Dean Alegado, between 1906 and 1935, approximately 120,000 Filipinos were recruited by HPSA labor agents to work on the sugar plantations in Hawaii.<sup>632</sup> A continuous flow of laborers from the Philippines arrived in Hawaii to work on the plantations in the 1920s, with the highest number registered in 1924.<sup>633</sup> While Filipino immigration to Hawaii continued through the 1920s, Filipinos also began arriving on the West Coast, in California in particular, in greater numbers during this time. According to a study of the ports of embarkation of Filipinos admitted to California, more Filipinos arrived in California from Honolulu than from Manila (**Table 5**).

Table 5: Ports of Embarkation of all Filipinos Who Were Admitted Into the State of California, Through Ports of San Francisco and Los Angeles: 1920-1929<sup>634</sup>

Years	Embarked at the Port of --						
	All ports	Manila		Honolulu		Other foreign ports	
	Number	Number	Percent total	Number	Percent total	Number	Percent total
1920	625	82	13.1	307	49.1	236	37.8
1921	685	59	8.6	408	59.6	218	31.8
1922	545	118	21.7	427	77.6	4	0.7
1923	2,426	218	9.0	2,053	84.6	155	6.4
1924	2,688	411	15.3	2,172	80.8	105	3.9
1925	2,491	850	34.1	1,608	64.6	33	1.3
1926	5,275	2,023	38.4	3,186	60.4	65	1.2
1927	5,275	1,640	29.7	2,858	51.8	1,023	18.5
1928	5,042	2,872	57.0	1,788	35.4	382	7.6
1929	5,795	2,609	45.0	2,622	45.3	564	9.7
<b>Total</b>	31,092	10,882	35.0	17,425	56.0	2,785	9.0

In 1923, the number of Filipinos who moved from Hawaii to California increased from less than 500 persons in the year prior, to over 2,000. In addition to the increased flow of Filipino laborers into the U.S. because of the imminent passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, many Filipino plantation workers also left Hawaii for the West Coast following two failed labor strikes in 1920 and 1924 led by prominent

<sup>632</sup> Dean T. Alegado, “The Filipino Community in Hawaii: Development and Change,” *Social Process in Hawaii* 33 (1991): 14.

<sup>633</sup> Benicio T. Catapusan, “Social Adjustment of Filipinos in the United States,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1940), 29.

<sup>634</sup> Data was sourced from Louis Bloch’s “Table 5: Increases or Decreases in the Numbers of Filipinos Embarking at Specified Ports for the State of California During the Ten Year of 1920 to 1929,” *Facts about Filipino Immigration into California* (California Department of Industrial Relations, 1930), 25.



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Filipino organizer Pablo Manlapit, which resulted in evictions and blacklisting of Filipino union members.<sup>635</sup>

In the 1920s, most Filipinos in the U.S. were young, male, and single. During this period, only 4.8 percent of Filipinos admitted via Los Angeles were female.<sup>636</sup> Such conditions created a predominantly bachelor and highly mobile Filipino population. Most Filipinos on the West Coast became migratory laborers, traveling throughout California and the Pacific Northwest, following harvest and canning seasons. Filipinos who settled in Los Angeles year-round found work as house servants, janitors, dishwashers, bus boys, and other jobs in the service sector.

Most domestic workers were provided room and board at their places of employment, dispersed across the city, while other service sector workers secured single room occupancy housing, primarily located in Downtown. In 1930, Scholar Marcos Berbano identified five Filipino-operated boarding houses in Los Angeles County. Of the five, only one was within city limits. He writes, "There are few Filipino rooming houses and dwellings that are lost in the big mass of American communities. There is a Filipino home lost by itself on Allison Street."<sup>637</sup> A few years later in 1934, Scholar Benicio Catapusan identified four Filipino-operated boarding houses in Los Angeles.<sup>638</sup> Though he did not disclose their exact locations, it is likely that one of them was The Filipino Center at 718 W. First Street (not extant), operated by the Filipino Christian Fellowship.

In addition to employment in California's agribusiness and the local service economy, military enlistment was a significant pathway to the U.S. for Filipinos. In 1901, President McKinley authorized the enlistment of 500 Filipinos in the U.S. Navy. According to scholar Rudy Guevarra, "With U.S. control of the Philippines, the military established the practice of recruiting Filipinos since it was more costly to recruit and ship American soldiers from the United States back to the islands."<sup>639</sup> For Filipinos, joining the U.S. armed forces was a way to escape poverty and earn a decent living.<sup>640</sup>

In 1913, San Pedro harbor was established as the U.S. Navy's first submarine base on the west coast. The U.S.S. *Alert*, a permanent submarine tender at San Pedro, had a complement of more than 500 military personnel and a submarine school in 1917.<sup>641</sup> U.S. Census records from 1920 list 38 Filipinos

<sup>635</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila Is in the Heart*, 52.

<sup>636</sup> Louis Bloch, *Facts about Filipino Immigration into California* (California Department of Industrial Relations, 1930), 33.

<sup>637</sup> Marcos Berbano, "The Status of the Filipinos in Los Angeles County," (master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1930), n.p.; Though Berbano identified Allison Street in the neighborhood west of Los Feliz Boulevard near Griffith Park, the author was unable to locate it in other maps of the period.

<sup>638</sup> Benicio T. Catapusan, "The Filipino Occupational and Recreational Activities in Los Angeles," (master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1934), 14.

<sup>639</sup> Rudy Guevarra, *Becoming Mexipino: Multiethnic Identities and Communities in San Diego* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 25.

<sup>640</sup> Scholars have observed that before World War I, the U.S. Navy allowed Filipinos to enlist in a range of occupational ratings, and after the war, the Navy restricted Filipinos to the ratings of officers' stewards and mess attendants. It was not until 1973, among charges of racism in the Navy, that Filipino enlistees were allowed to enter any occupational rating. See Yen Le Espiritu's *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2003).

<sup>641</sup> "Deployments—San Pedro," *Tendertale*, accessed July 22, 2017, <http://tendertale.com/ttd/ttd9/ttd9.html>.

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employed on the U.S.S. *Alert* with documented years of immigration to America ranging from 1908 to 1919. From 1919 to 1940, the U.S. Navy Battle Fleet's Home Port was in San Pedro. By 1922, Filipinos comprised 5.7 percent of the total number of personnel serving in the U.S. Navy.<sup>642</sup> Adding to San Pedro's military presence was Fort MacArthur, a U.S. Army installation in operation from 1914 to 1974. Its facilities were open to use by all military families, including Filipino veterans and organizations such as the United Filipino American Services Organization.<sup>643</sup>

In addition to San Pedro's military installations, the Los Angeles Harbor area was home to numerous industries, including shipping, shipbuilding, fishing, and canning. Many former Filipino servicemen found work in these industries as well as the mercantile marine. Four thousand Filipinos were estimated to have been in the American merchant marine until a 1947 federal law stipulated that ninety percent of any American commercial ship's crew had to be U.S. citizens.<sup>644</sup>

### **Filipino Settlement in Los Angeles: Establishing a Community, 1924-1945**

With the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, Filipinos quickly became the preferred source of labor for California's agribusiness. In 1926, 1,277 Filipinos were admitted into California via Los Angeles, 316 percent more than the year before.<sup>645</sup> As increasing numbers of Filipinos found jobs in Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s, anti-Filipino hate crimes, propaganda, and exclusionary public policies also increased. A study of anti-Filipino sentiment in California, conducted between 1929 and 1930, revealed twenty-one incidents against Filipinos, including five major clashes, or riots.<sup>646</sup> In 1929, the State legislature passed a resolution to limit Filipino immigration, though Filipinos' U.S. national status prevented placing immigration restrictions on Filipinos until the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934. The U.S. ultimately called for Filipino repatriation in 1935. Despite these trying times, Los Angeles had the second largest Filipino population in the country in 1930. By 1937, Los Angeles had more Filipino organizations, places of recreation, and businesses than any other city in the U.S.<sup>647</sup>

In 1924, some of the city's early Filipino settlers established a small concentration of businesses, including a restaurant, barbershop, and employment agency, in the area between Second, Commercial, Main, and Los Angeles Streets in Downtown.<sup>648</sup> This area became known as Little Manila. It grew to encompass an area bounded by San Pedro Street on the east, Figueroa Street on the west, Sunset Boulevard on the north, and Sixth Street on the south.<sup>649</sup> By 1928, 212 Filipinos were employed by

<sup>642</sup> Roland L. Guyotte and Barbara M. Posadas, "Filipinos and Filipino Americans, 1870-1940," in *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*, ed. Elliott Robert Barkan (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 348.

<sup>643</sup> Florante and Roselyn Estapa Ibanez, *Filipinos in Carson and the South Bay* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 25.

<sup>644</sup> Fred Cordova, *Filipinos, Forgotten Asian Americans: A Pictorial Essay* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1983), 198-199.

<sup>645</sup> Corpus, "An Analysis of the Racial Adjustment Activities and Problems of the Filipino-American Christian Fellowship in Los Angeles," 17.

<sup>646</sup> Catapusan, "Social Adjustment of Filipinos in the United States," 59.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>648</sup> Linda España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s-1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*

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Filipino-owned businesses, primarily barber shops, restaurants, and ethnic newspapers.<sup>650</sup> Approximately ten percent of Filipinos employed by Filipino entrepreneurs worked for Filipino newspapers, including *The Philippines Star Press*, *The Filipino Nation*, and *Philippines Review*.<sup>651</sup> Scholar Catapusan found that thirty Filipino newspapers were published in Los Angeles during the period of 1904 to 1938.<sup>652</sup> The publications appeared in various forms, including newspapers, bulletins, and newspaper-magazine combinations, and were published by Filipino fraternal orders, labor organizations, student groups, and entities without any organizational affiliation.<sup>653</sup> Among the newspapers published in Little Manila was the fraternal order Caballeros de Dimas-Alang's *Philippines Review*, printed on the first and the last Saturday of every month from its offices at 126-128 Weller Street (not extant).<sup>654</sup>

*Detail of Weller Street in Downtown's historic Little Manila as shown in a 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.*



<sup>650</sup> Catapusan, "The Filipino Occupational and Recreational Activities in Los Angeles," 17.

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>654</sup> España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 37.

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During the winters, thousands of Filipino migrant laborers descended on urban centers, especially the Little Manilas in Stockton and Los Angeles, where they could eat a meal at a Filipino restaurant, spend time with fellow countrymen, and find the next job lead. Little Manila in Los Angeles included such businesses as the Manila Restaurant at 112 E. First Street, Manila Portrait Studio at 128 Weller Street, Philippine Importing Company at 105 S. Los Angeles Street, and the Filipino Recreation Hall at 245 S. Main Street. In 1935, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce of Southern California was located at 130 S. Broadway in Downtown Los Angeles. According to then-President Pedro de Vera, the Philippine Chamber had 450 members comprised of Filipino businessmen, laborers, and labor contractors, and had the power to act as arbitrator in matters pertaining to the general welfare and labor conditions of Filipino workers.<sup>655</sup> Of these early Filipino-owned commercial establishments, only the Filipino Recreation Hall building remains (altered).

Operated by Vincent Noble, a former Filipino U.S. Navy man stationed in San Pedro in the 1920s, the Filipino Recreation Hall housed a restaurant, pool hall, and employment agency in the 1930s and 1940s. Daughter Anita Noble recalls, "Dad's employment agency provided houseboys to many of the movie stars in Hollywood...as well as employment of busboys and salad boys to the restaurant industry, bell boys for hotels, porter boys, etc."<sup>656</sup> She continues, "Across the street was a taxi [dance] hall, and many of the lovelies also ate at our eatery. Miss Lacock's recruitment of the 'boys' and the 'girls' from across the street led to many of the interracial marriages at that time, as there [were] very few Filipino women here."<sup>657</sup> The Filipino Recreation Hall and other Filipino-owned establishments provided economic opportunities for entrepreneurs and workers, and were also important nodes of Filipinos' informal and formal social networks.

Other notable Filipino entrepreneurs during this period include Pedro Flores, the first yo-yo manufacturer in the U.S. and co-owner of the yo-yo factory Flores and Stone at 1938 Hyperion Avenue (not extant); Dolores Correa, owner of the Philippine Hand Embroidery Company at 811 ½ S. Vermont Avenue; and Roque E. De La Ysla, who operated an insurance agency at 206 S. Spring Street in the 1940s, while serving as the President of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce.

In the pre-World War II period, settlement patterns of Filipinos in Los Angeles varied across the city, influenced by available employment and housing as well as economic and marital status. In 1933, Catapusan described the Filipino community's residential landscape:

Many [Filipinos] are living on Broadway and Hill Streets near First; on Fremont between Third and Fourth; on Grand and Hope; on Figueroa at First and California Streets; on California and Pavillion; on Centennial and Temple; on Santa Fe and Tenth; on Boylston Ave; on Burlingame Avenue; on Vermont at Ninth; on Western at Sixth; on Adams at Twenty-Fifth; on Maple at Fifteenth; on Brooklyn Avenue; and on Weller Street between

<sup>655</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>656</sup> Anita Noble, "Voice of Anita Noble," in *Filipino American Experience: The Making of a Historic Cultural Monument*, ed. Lorna Ignacio Dumapias (Torrance, CA: Filipino American Experience, 2010), 40.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

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San Pedro and Los Angeles Streets. A considerable number are also living in Hollywood and Westwood where they are employed.<sup>658</sup>

Boarding houses and single-room occupancy hotels in and around Little Manila included the Pacific Hotel on 121 S. San Pedro Street, Union Hotel on 507 E. Ninth Street, and the Majestic Hotel-Apartments on 700 W. First Street, (none extant).<sup>659</sup> With the exception of live-in domestic workers who were scattered across the city in the homes of their employers, the housing in and around Little Manila was the preferred and often only option available for Filipinos. Writer Manuel Buaken, who worked in a variety of jobs in the service economy, remembered being rejected at twenty rooms for rent, apartment houses, and flats. A realtor explained to him, “You were not the first one to try to rent a place here. I have other Filipinos, as well as Japanese, Chinese, and Mexicans in my office, and always I have to turn them away.”<sup>660</sup>

The California Alien Land Law of 1913, which prevented Filipinos and all other Asian immigrants from owning property, and de facto and de jure racial discrimination in real estate, practiced through the 1940s, created barriers to home ownership and restricted entry into particular neighborhoods. In 1930, northeast of Downtown (later City Terrace), white residents, led by William E. Wintermute, filed seven lawsuits against Filipinos who lived in the area.<sup>661</sup> During an era where signs that read “No Filipinos or Dogs Allowed” and “Positively No Filipinos Allowed” could be found throughout the city, housing in Little Manila and other areas where fellow countrymen could be found offered Filipinos a sense of security and community.

Prior to World War II, in addition to housing discrimination, Filipinos endured other forms of racial discrimination, as did their Asian American counterparts in Los Angeles. In 1931, despite a California appeals court ruling that Filipinos were Malays, not Mongolians, and therefore legally permitted to marry Caucasians, the Los Angeles County Clerk denied Salvador Roldan and his Caucasian bride a marriage license. In 1933, California Governor James Rolph signed two bills into law retroactively invalidating all marriages between whites and non-whites—the law specifically identified the Malay race for exclusion under section 69 of the anti-miscegenation law.<sup>662</sup> By 1937, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington also prohibited marriages between Filipinos and Whites.<sup>663</sup> Still, there were exceptions. A 1937 survey of the Filipino Married Population in Los Angeles found only thirty of ninety-five marriages were among Filipinos.<sup>664</sup> Prior to California’s repeal of the anti-miscegenation law in 1948,

<sup>658</sup> Catapusan, “The Filipino Occupational and Recreational Activities in Los Angeles,” 4-6.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.; “Community Tour of Los Angeles—Pilipino American Experience,” in *Filipinotown: Voices from Los Angeles*, eds. Carlene Sobrino Bonnavier, Gerald G. Gubatan, and Gregory Villanueva (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 92.

<sup>660</sup> Manuel Buaken, *I Have Lived with the American People* (Caldwell: ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1948), 69.

<sup>661</sup> Joseph A. Bernardo, “Little Brown Brothers” to “Forgotten Asian Americans”: Race, Space, and Empire in Filipino Los Angeles,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2014), 48.

<sup>662</sup> Alex S. Fabros, Jr., “When Hilario Met Sally: The Fight Against Anti-Miscegenation Laws,” October 2, 2013, *Positively Filipino*, accessed March 27, 2017, <http://www.positivelyfilipino.com/magazine/when-hilario-met-sally-the-fight-against-anti-miscegenation-laws>.

<sup>663</sup> H. Brett Melendy, *Asians in America: Filipinos, Koreans, and East Indians* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1981), 53.

<sup>664</sup> Corpus, “An Analysis of the Racial Adjustment Activities and Problems of the Filipino-American Christian Fellowship in

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Filipinos and non-Filipinos wishing to marry had to travel to states where interracial marriage was legal (sometimes even Mexico), or simply lived together as common law spouses. Given the legal and de jure racial segregation practices in real estate, married Filipinos may have been able to circumvent these restrictions by placing property in the name of their American-born spouses, or children.

During the 1920s to the 1940s, the largest concentration of Filipinos outside of Little Manila was found in the Los Angeles Harbor area, especially around West Long Beach, San Pedro, and Wilmington. Early Filipinos who had completed their military service settled in areas near Navy ports. By the 1920 Census, one-fourth of Filipinos in Los Angeles worked in various shipyard occupations at the Port of Los Angeles and lived in San Pedro and Wilmington. In the 1930s, Mrs. Irene San Jose's Cebu Restaurant on S. Beacon Avenue between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets in San Pedro, the Filipino Federation of America's lodge at 437½ N. Avalon Boulevard in Wilmington, and the Legionarios del Trabajo lodge at 227 N. Avalon Boulevard in Wilmington reflected the growing presence of Filipinos in the Los Angeles Harbor area. By 1935, Filipino-operated establishments expanded on Beacon Street in San Pedro. The trend continued through World War II and the postwar years as the Los Angeles port economy, including seafood canneries at Terminal Island, and other military-related industries continued to provide good jobs for discharged military personnel and others. Of these early Filipino establishments in San Pedro and Wilmington, only the Legionarios del Trabajo lodge remains.

Scholars have also traced Filipino migrant agricultural workers to the San Fernando Valley by the 1920s, where a robust citrus industry was located.<sup>665</sup> Historian Jean-Paul deGuzman found that a small and temporary community of Filipinos, comprised of migrant workers and a few families, emerged around the City of San Fernando.<sup>666</sup> Oranges were grown on expansive ranches, including the Sunshine Ranch in what became Granada Hills, a known employer of Filipino citrus pickers.<sup>667</sup> According to the 1930 Census, Marcelino Inez, a foreman of an unidentified Filipino work camp, wife Amalia, daughter Laura, and Pablo Ventura, a Filipino lodger, lived together at 16331 Rinaldi Street (not extant).<sup>668</sup> Ten Filipino agricultural workers lived together at 13229 Van Nuys Boulevard in Pacoima (not extant).<sup>669</sup> By the 1940 Census, Filipino citrus laborers, including a few with families, could still be found living on Rinaldi Street.

In 1930, Berbano conducted community surveys and oral histories to develop what he referred to as an "ecological map" that identified places in Los Angeles and cities within Los Angeles County where Filipinos were living.<sup>670</sup> To improve external validity of the results, Berbano also identified subscribers to the Filipino newspaper *Watawat*. According to Berbano's research, in addition to Downtown and Central City, Filipinos could be found in Sawtelle, Hollywood, North Hollywood, San Pedro,

Los Angeles," 49.

<sup>665</sup> España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 31; See Jean-Paul deGuzman, "'And Make the San Fernando Valley My Home': Contested Spaces, Identities, and Activism on the Edge of Los Angeles," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2014).

<sup>666</sup> deGuzman, "And Make the San Fernando Valley My Home," 36.

<sup>667</sup> Robert T. Lyans, "Old Mission Center of Citrus Industry," *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 1928.

<sup>668</sup> 1930 U.S. Census.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid.

<sup>670</sup> Marcos Berbano, "The Status of the Filipinos in Los Angeles County," n.p.

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Wilmington, and Pacoima, among other areas. Berbano's findings provide further evidence that Filipinos were dispersed throughout the city, near places of employment, and in some instances near fellow countrymen.

When the Great Depression hit, mass unemployment heightened tensions among various ethnic groups throughout Los Angeles. Pressure came from white workers who believed Filipinos presented unfair competition for jobs given their willingness to work for lower wages. Shared living accommodations were but one of the ways Filipinos pooled their limited resources to survive during these lean years. With an estimated 75 percent of Filipino laborers from Los Angeles county unemployed, Filipinos relied on the traditional practice of *utang na loob*, the cultural tradition of give-and-take.<sup>671</sup> As the Depression worsened, however, commitments through *utang na loob* could not support all those in need.<sup>672</sup>

In step with the growing needs of the Filipino community in Los Angeles, the 1920s and 1930s saw a rapid growth of Filipino organizations. One of the first Filipino organizations in Los Angeles was the Filipino Federation of America (FFA) founded by Hilario C. Moncado in 1925. Its headquarters were located in the Stack Building at 228 W. Fourth Street in Downtown Los Angeles (not extant). Within its first year, the FFA organized an annual celebration on Rizal Day to commemorate the life and contributions of Filipino national hero Jose Rizal, and its first convention in a home located at 2289 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 598), which the organization later purchased to house President Moncado and officers. In the 1940s, the Federation moved across the street to 2302 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 602), where it remains. FFA's activities included publishing the *Filipino Nation*, establishing a women's division, and organizing national conferences, and local sporting events, including golf, tennis, volleyball, baseball, and boxing.

A wide range of Filipino social organizations developed in many U.S. cities with a Filipino presence.<sup>673</sup> The Caballeros de Dimas-Alang and Legionarios del Trabajo originated in the Philippines as fraternal and Masonic orders, and first appeared in America in San Francisco in the early to mid-1920s. They were set up as not-for-profit, highly selective membership-based organizations. Membership was restricted to men, though wives and daughters of married members could organize themselves into auxiliary units, orders, or chapters. Each fraternal order eventually grew to have several lodges in California and other Western states. Among some of the benefits provided were a general fund for the economic welfare and protection of its members, mortuary funds, and perhaps more importantly, a collective voice to its local Filipino membership. Both the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang and the

<sup>671</sup> España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 42.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid.

<sup>673</sup> Mario Pagua Ave, "Characteristics of Filipino Social Organizations in Los Angeles," (master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1956), 51. In his study of Filipino social organizations in Los Angeles, Ave provides working definitions for fraternal and non-fraternal associations. While both fraternal and non-fraternal organizations may be characterized by a relatively close acquaintance, easy understanding, familiar cooperation, and friendly goodwill toward persons associated, fraternal organizations tend to have secret rituals, uniforms, ceremonies and symbols. In addition, these organizations have somewhat democratic forms of government as well as insurance protection against accidents, sickness, poverty, and death for members. Non-fraternal organizations are formed voluntarily to serve particular purposes of the groups concerned. In his study, Ave uses the terms non-fraternal and associational interchangeably.

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Legionarios del Trabajo published newspapers as well. In Los Angeles, the Legionarios del Trabajo maintained at least two known lodges in Little Manila in the 1930s and 1940s (not extant) and one in Wilmington at 227 Avalon Boulevard. The Caballeros de Dimas-Alang had lodges in Little Manila and San Pedro in the 1935, though both were demolished. In later years, the Caballeros established lodges in other parts of Los Angeles, including in Boyle Heights at 127 S. Boyle Street, which is believed to have served as the organization's local headquarters beginning in the 1950s and through the 1980s. The Pangasinan Association and other non-fraternal associations founded on the principles of co-residence and mutual aid fostered a sense of unity among Filipinos various provinces and sought to preserve and share their cultural heritage, customs, and traditions with their second-generation children.<sup>674</sup> Many of the non-fraternal associations did not establish permanent locations. As such, members often met at each other's homes, restaurants, or community halls.

Filipino newspapers in Los Angeles served to unite the diverse Filipino community. From 1928 to 1934, eleven Filipino newspapers had been published in Los Angeles, though several were short-lived.<sup>675</sup> The majority of these papers were published on a monthly basis, with some published less frequently. In addition to *Filipino Nation*, published by the Filipino Federation of America, other Filipino newspapers published in Downtown Los Angeles in the 1930s were *The Filipino Youth* and *The Filipino Observer-Spokesman*, both at 124 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

In addition to the camaraderie and social activities afforded by numerous Filipino organizations in Los Angeles, Filipinos auditioned for Hollywood movie extra roles, and regularly patronized gambling and dance halls in Downtown Los Angeles. The most popular dance halls were Danceland and the Hippodrome Dance Palace on Main Street, the Liberty Dance Hall on Third Street, and Rizal Cafe on Spring Street.<sup>676</sup> In *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s-1950s*, España-Maram posits,

The dance halls were part of the vibrant street culture of the community, along with the various restaurants, cafes, barbershops, and pool halls frequented by the Filipino residents. Many of the dance halls were within easy walking distance, sometimes even next to each other or at least along the route of the red cars, the city's public transportation system in the 1930s.<sup>677</sup>

By the 1940s, reformers and church groups succeeded in passing legislation that prohibited all Asian men from taxi dance halls.<sup>678</sup> According to España-Maram, the police commission, fire department, and

<sup>674</sup> The largest Filipino provincial association in Los Angeles, the Pangasinan Association, established a lodge at 920 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in 1955, though it is no longer extant.

<sup>675</sup> Catapusan, "The Filipino Occupational and Recreational Activities in Los Angeles," 27.

<sup>676</sup> In a study conducted in 1934, Catapusan identifies at least eight dance halls in Los Angeles frequented nightly by Filipinos: The Hippodrome, The Four Hundred One Ballroom, The Olympic, The Royal Palais, and Danceland on Main Street. Rizal Café on Spring Street; One Eleven Dance Hall and Tiffany Dance Hall on Third Street. Catapusan, "The Filipino Occupational and Recreational Activities in Los Angeles," 45; España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 111.

<sup>677</sup> España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 111.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-132.



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health department worked in concert to implement strict licensing requirements, expensive fees for infractions, and threats to suspend, or revoke business licenses.<sup>679</sup> The building that housed Roseland Roof is believed to be the last remaining dance hall associated with the Filipino community during this period.

As a counterpoint to the some of the recreational pastimes of the Filipino community, the Filipino Christian Fellowship and Filipino Catholic Club emerged to meet the religious and spiritual needs of Filipinos in Los Angeles in 1928. These religious clubs organized bible study, prayer meetings, discussion groups, and recreational activities, and were the precursors to Filipino churches in Los Angeles.<sup>680</sup>

The Christian Fellowship group, under the leadership of former missionary Mrs. Royal J. Dye (“Mother Dye”) and Silvestre Morales, a 1928 immigrant to Los Angeles and Filipino evangelistic leader, actively recruited Filipinos to attend religious gatherings at Mrs. Dye’s home located at 720 N. Kenmore Avenue (extant, altered). When her home became too small for these gatherings, Mother Dye came up with the idea of utilizing the First Christian Church at Eleventh and Hope Streets for Bible class and morning worship. With evangelization in mind, a small place on Weller Street between First and San Pedro was made available for the Filipino Christian Fellowship. In order to accommodate more people, the church group moved to a larger hall at 107 North Los Angeles Street (not extant).<sup>681</sup>

During this time, the Fellowship acquired an apartment house and four bungalows located at 718 West First Street (demolished). Called the Filipino Center, it housed fifty young Filipino men, including Rev. Morales, where they could live, study, and worship freely.<sup>682</sup> For services, the Fellowship rented a basement hall of the Majestic Hotel next door. Both properties were demolished due to City-sponsored redevelopment of Bunker Hill in later years. In 1933, when Rev. Morales decided to return to the Philippines, his ministerial duties were taken over by the recently ordained Rev. Felix Pascua at the Fellowship’s new location at 546 S. Los Angeles Street.<sup>683</sup> It was at this time that Rev. Pascua oversaw re-organization of the Filipino Christian Fellowship as a formal church. In 1936, the Filipino Christian Church moved to 306 Winston Street and then to the former Chinese Presbyterian Church in 1940, where it remained for ten years.<sup>684</sup>

<sup>679</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>680</sup> Valentin Aquino, “The Filipino Community in Los Angeles,” (master’s thesis, University of Southern California, 1952), 74.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>684</sup> Becky Guzman Hernandez, “Voice of Benny Guzman,” in *Filipino American Experience: The Making of a Historic Cultural Monument*, ed. Lorna Ignacio Dumapias (Torrance, CA: Filipino American Experience, 2010), 19-20; the Chinese Presbyterian Church was at 150 N Los Angeles Street and is no longer extant.

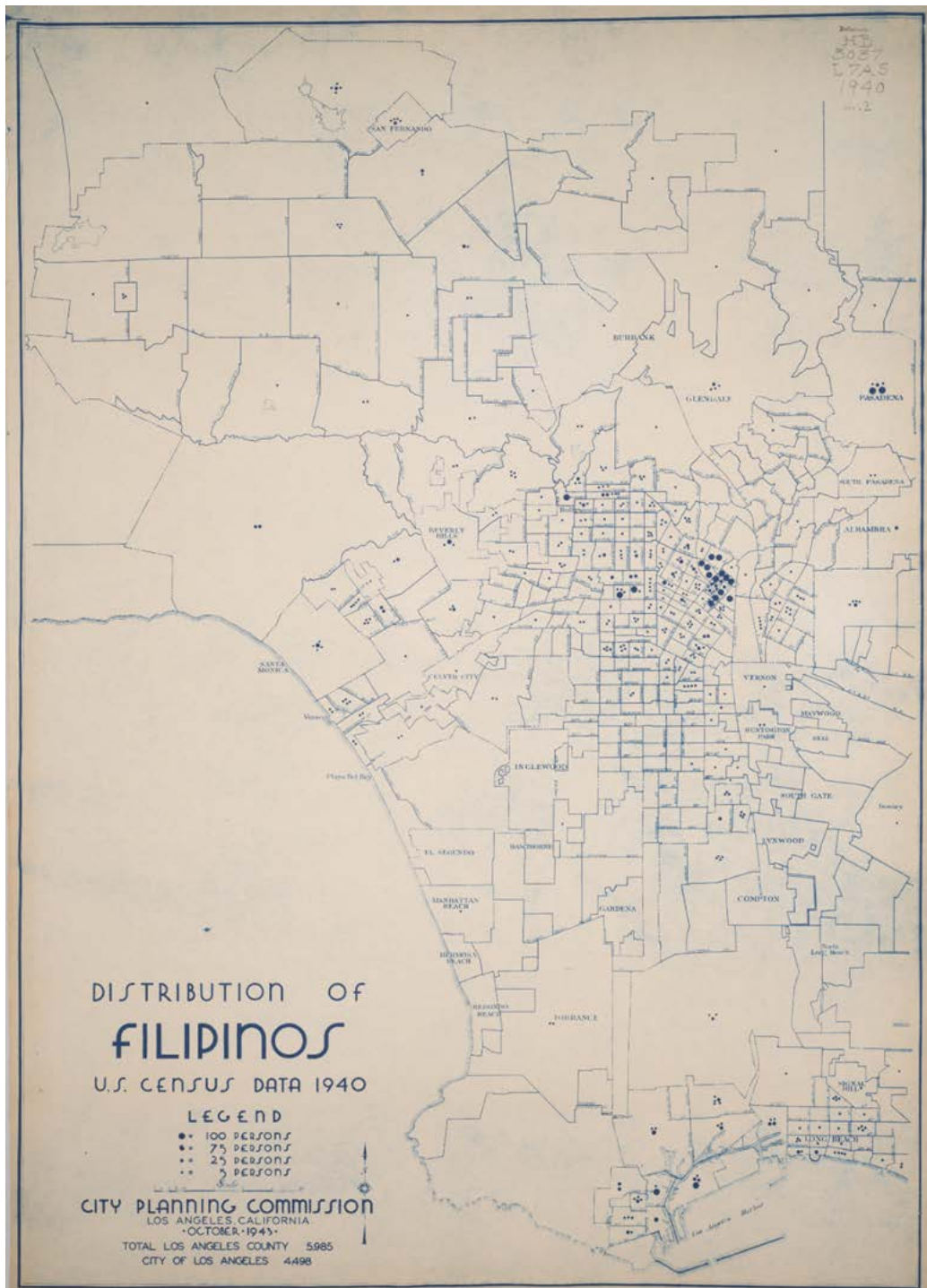
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LA City Planning Map of 1940 showing key Filipino American enclaves (Special Collections, UCLA)



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In addition to the Filipino Christian Church, there was also a Filipino Catholic Club located on Weller Street in Little Manila in 1928. The Catholic Club moved twice to other locations in the area, both of which have since been demolished. In 1941, Archbishop John Cantwell of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles asked the Society of St. Columban to administer to the spiritual needs of the growing Filipino population in Los Angeles. In 1945, a building at 1035 S. Fedora Street was leased and held Sunday Masses through 1946.<sup>685</sup>

As early as the late 1930s, some Filipinos began moving from Little Manila to Bunker Hill and to the area around Temple Street and Figueroa Street.<sup>686</sup> While Bunker Hill and its vicinity continued to house Filipinos through the 1940s, numerous Filipino businesses and headquarters of social organizations relocated from First and Main Streets to Temple Street, between Figueroa Street and Fremont Avenue during this time.<sup>687</sup> In 1945, the building at 819 Temple Street housed the union hall of the Filipino Screen Players Association, the American Legion's Manila Post #464, and Riofaco's Barber Shop, all demolished by Downtown redevelopment in later years.<sup>688</sup> The *Associated Filipino Press* and Roque de la Ysla, who served as President of the Philippines Chamber of Commerce and operated an insurance agency, had moved from their shared space in the mid-1940s at 206 S. Spring Street to separate locations at 1735 West Beverly Boulevard and 1425½ 11<sup>th</sup> Street in the mid-1950s, respectively.<sup>689</sup>

### ***World War II***

Within a day of the bombing at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Japan invaded the Philippines. At the time of Japan's invasion, the archipelago was a commonwealth under the control of the U.S. military command.<sup>690</sup> Thousands of Filipinos all over the U.S. reported to recruiting stations during the first ten days after Pearl Harbor.<sup>691</sup> Filipinos were turned down as the existing draft act barred them from service. In Los Angeles, two companies of Filipino World War I veterans were recruited to serve in the state's Civilian Defense Corps, providing logistical support for emergency-preparedness operations on the West Coast.<sup>692</sup> On January 3, 1942, the day after Manila fell to the Japanese, U.S. Congress passed legislation allowing Filipinos to serve in the armed forces as volunteers or draftees.

<sup>685</sup> This building was originally constructed in 1930 as the Japanese American Rafu Daini Gakuen (Young Men's Meeting House).

<sup>686</sup> España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 166.

<sup>687</sup> Ibid.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid., 167; "Filipino Historical Establishments in Los Angeles," (2017, photocopy, in author's possession).

<sup>689</sup> City of Los Angeles directories, 1942, 1944, 1945, 1953, 1956.

<sup>690</sup> The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 established a framework for Philippine independence and a Commonwealth government tasked with implementing a national constitution and managing the transfer of sovereignty within ten years. In July 1941, U.S. Congress ordered the Philippine Commonwealth army into the service of the U.S. military. General Douglas MacArthur was placed in command of the US Army Forces Far East (USAFFE). The Japanese invasion of the Philippines in 1941 brought the planned transfer of sovereignty to a standstill. For more information, see Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 209.

<sup>691</sup> Bienvenido Santos, "Filipinos at War," in *Letters in Exile: An Introductory Reader on the History of Pilipinos in America*, A Project of Resource Development and Publications (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1976), 93.

<sup>692</sup> Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion*, 209.

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In 1942, over 7,000 men joined the segregated First and Second Filipino Infantry Regiments of the U.S. Army, formed at Camp San Luis Obispo and Camp Cook, California, respectively.<sup>693</sup> Thousands of Filipinos continued service in the U.S. Navy.<sup>694</sup> During the war, immigration from the Philippines was suspended with the exception of those serving in the U.S. military. Filipinos in the U.S. Army designated to serve in the Philippines during the war were given the opportunity to become naturalized citizens. Mass citizenship ceremonies became common as part of their induction into the U.S. armed forces.<sup>695</sup>

Following the capture of Manila, Japan forced Filipino and American soldiers to the Bataan Peninsula. During the Battle of Bataan, which lasted three months, Filipinos and Americans fought side by side against the Japanese. The battle ended with U.S. surrender on April 9, 1942. About 600 Americans and between 5,000 and 10,000 Filipinos died of exhaustion, mistreatment, starvation, and disease, when the Japanese army forced soldiers on a 65-mile march, known as the Bataan Death March.<sup>696</sup> Following the surrender of U.S. Army Forces Far East (USAFFE) in Corregidor, Japan occupied the Philippines through 1945. General MacArthur returned to the Philippines in 1944 with the intention of overcoming Japanese forces. On September 2, 1945, General MacArthur signed the formal Japanese surrender, ending World War II. In later years, in memory and appreciation of General MacArthur, the Filipino community in Los Angeles donated toward the costs of constructing MacArthur Monument in Los Angeles' MacArthur Park.<sup>697</sup>

Filipinos in Los Angeles did much to support the war effort. The industrial demands of the war, combined with the military enlistment of millions of young men, created a domestic labor shortage. In Los Angeles, Filipinos became a visible presence in the defense industry, finding employment at airplane manufacturers such as Lockheed, Douglas, Vultee, and Boeing, and naval shipyards, including Wilmington, San Pedro, and Todd Pacific.<sup>698</sup> Filipina women joined their fellow countrymen in the workforce during World War II. Helen Summers Brown, also known as "Auntie Helen" and the founder of the Filipino American Library in later years, worked as a welder for the California Shipbuilding Corporation in Wilmington and was a member of the Boilermakers' Union Local 92 during World War II.<sup>699</sup> In addition to joining the U.S. military and the local workforce, Filipinos also purchased war bonds and supported humanitarian relief efforts in the Philippines. In 1945, the *Los Angeles Times* reported a donation of over 9000 pounds of clothing donated by the local Filipino community in one day as part of the United National Clothing Collection.<sup>700</sup>

<sup>693</sup> España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 152.

<sup>694</sup> Mel Orpilla, "Filipino American History," n.d., *Mel Orpilla*, accessed March 27, 2017, [http://www.orpilla.com/filipino\\_american\\_history](http://www.orpilla.com/filipino_american_history).

<sup>695</sup> España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 150.

<sup>696</sup> Jennifer L. Bailey, *Philippine Islands: The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II* (U.S. Army Center of Military History, n.d.), accessed August 5, 2017, <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/pi/PI.htm>.

<sup>697</sup> Mario Paguia Ave, "Characteristics of Filipino Social Organizations in Los Angeles," 51. The monument was designed in 1955 by Roger Noble Burnham. Westlake Park was renamed MacArthur Park in the early 1940s.

<sup>698</sup> Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, *A New History of Asian America* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 229; España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila*, 152.

<sup>699</sup> Ibanez and Ibanez, *Filipinos in Carson and the South Bay*, 33.

<sup>700</sup> "Clothing Drive Here Extended to May 12," *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 1945.

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In the wake of the removal and forcible incarceration of Japanese Americans on the West Coast during the war, many Filipinos were recruited to fill the labor vacuum left by Japanese agricultural workers. Scholar Shelley Sang-Hee Lee writes, "In Los Angeles, [Filipinos] made inroads into truck farming, a field previously dominated by Japanese Americans, and also purchased farmland in the San Fernando Valley and Torrance-Gardena in areas once controlled by Japanese that had been appropriated by the government."<sup>701</sup> According to Lee, the war brought attention to the unclear status of Filipinos in the U.S. "Sometimes treated as 'aliens,' and other times 'nationals' and 'citizens,' they were subject to the provisions of the Alien Registration Act of 1940, yet were classed as national and citizens with respect to the Neutrality Act and Selective Service Act."<sup>702</sup> Fomented by the widespread praise for Philippine fighters during the war and the passage of the Magnuson Act of 1943, which repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and its extensions, Filipinos in the America pushed to expand their rights in the U.S.<sup>703</sup>

***Post-World War II and Maturing of the Community, 1946-1964***

On July 2, 1946, a bill that would grant Native Americans immigration and naturalization rights, introduced by Emanuel Celler of New York in 1944, was combined with a separate naturalization bill for Filipinos brought forth by Clare Booth Luce. The Luce-Cellar Act, granting citizenship eligibility to persons of Native American and Filipino descent, was passed two days before President Harry Truman proclaimed Philippine Independence, relinquishing U.S. sovereignty that had been in place since 1898.<sup>704</sup> The transition from a commonwealth government to an independent nation had been more than ten years in the making and would once again reshape relations between the U.S. and the Philippines.

Between 1946 and 1965, nearly 40,000 Filipinos immigrated to the U.S.<sup>705</sup> After the U.S. returned full leadership to the Philippines in 1946, the immigration quota for the Philippines was raised from fifty to one hundred, the same annual immigration quota as for other Asian countries. Filipinos were no longer classified as U.S. nationals, and became eligible for U.S. citizenship through the Filipino Naturalization Act. There were other pieces of legislation, which allowed Filipino immigrants to bypass the restrictions set by the new immigration quota, most notably the War Brides Acts of 1945 and 1947, and the Veterans' Alien Fiancées Act of 1946, which allowed foreign wives, fiancées, and children of soldiers to enter the country.<sup>706</sup> In 1947, the U.S.-Philippine Military Bases Agreement permitted the U.S. Navy to continue enlisting Filipinos, who entered the country as non-quota immigrants.<sup>707</sup> According to scholar Yen Le Espiritu, "With the onset of the Korean War in the early 1950s, the U.S. Navy allowed for the enrollment of up to two thousand Filipinos per calendar year for terms of four to six years."<sup>708</sup>

<sup>701</sup> Sang-Hee Lee, *A New History of Asian America*, 229.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>705</sup> James A. Tyner, "Filipinos: The Invisible Ethnic Community," in *Contemporary Ethnic Geographies in America*, eds. Ines M. Miyares and Christopher A. Airriess (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 255.

<sup>706</sup> Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion*, 227-228.

<sup>707</sup> Barbara M. Posadas, *The Filipino Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 30.

<sup>708</sup> Yen Le Espiritu, *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley, CA:

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In the postwar years, population growth and urban renewal reshaped Los Angeles. Through the 1950s, an annual average of 1,200 Filipina women immigrated to the U.S. as war brides, transforming Filipino American communities. Adding to the numbers of Filipino women who entered the U.S. during this period were those who came as participants of the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) of the State Department, which offered foreign nursing graduates an opportunity for two-year postgraduate study and clinical training in U.S. hospitals on the condition that they return to their homeland after their training.<sup>709</sup> After completing their programs many Filipino nurses found ways to avoid returning to the Philippines, including marrying U.S. citizens, immigrating to Canada, exiting the U.S. through Canada or Mexico, and then reentering the U.S. as students, and petitioning for a waiver.<sup>710</sup>

Though there were still many live-in Filipino domestic workers scattered throughout Los Angeles, and Filipino service sector workers concentrated in Downtown and Hollywood, there was also a growing number of Filipino American families in the 1940s and 1950s transitioning into single-family homes. From 1944 to 1952, Filipino veterans took advantage of the GI Bill's home loan guaranty, which aided in the purchase of homes.

Following the war, many Filipinos returned to their old neighborhoods in San Pedro and Wilmington, where they found work, housing, and a sense of belonging. In 1945, Filipinos living in San Pedro, Wilmington, and Long Beach formed the Filipino Community of Los Angeles Harbor Area, Inc., and one year later pooled their resources to build a community hall at 323 Mar Vista Avenue in Wilmington to provide a community gathering place for Filipinos in Los Angeles for decades to come.<sup>711</sup> The Filipino Community Center attracted several Filipino families to stay, or move to Wilmington and San Pedro in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>712</sup> In the 1960s, Filipinos could also take advantage of newly built Navy housing on Western Avenue in Northwest San Pedro, which housed hundreds of enlistees and their families until the Long Beach Naval Station closed in 1995.<sup>713</sup> Several churches served as anchors for the Filipino community in the area during this time, including First United Methodist Church (928 Lagoon Avenue), Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church (515 W Opp St), and Filipino United Christian Church (not extant).

Lured by jobs in the booming defense industry and the fish cannery industry, Filipinos in the Los Angeles Harbor area found greater economic stability. Many Filipinos became welders, technicians,

University of California, 2003), 28.

<sup>709</sup> Yang, *Asian Immigration to the United States*, 103.

<sup>710</sup> Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 103.

<sup>711</sup> The organization remained very active through the 1970s, when it housed the Pilipino Youth Center (PYC), a program staffed by UCLA student volunteers. To date, the center remains in use by the local Filipino community. Ibanez and Estapa Ibanez, *Filipinos in Carson and the South Bay*, 25, 42. See also, Aquino, "The Filipino Community in Los Angeles," 84.

<sup>712</sup> Information provided by Florante Ibanez, author, active member of the Los Angeles Filipino American community, and contributor to this project.

<sup>713</sup> Donna Littlejohn, "Navy Housing Demolition Begins in San Pedro, Clearing Way for Ponte Vista Development," *Daily Breeze*, May 8, 2014, accessed on August 12, 2017, <http://www.dailybreeze.com/business/20140508/navy-housing-demolition-begins-in-san-pedro-clearing-way-for-ponte-vista-development>.

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assembly or office workers, or engineers.<sup>714</sup> Others operated businesses on S. Beacon Street between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets in San Pedro. The Filipino Social Club, Pearl Harbor Café, and Our Café were all located on South Beacon Street.<sup>715</sup> In the 1960s, many business owners on Beacon Street, between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets had moved away and the area deteriorated into “a crime-infested slum.”<sup>716</sup> In April 1969, the City of Los Angeles City Council approval of the Beacon Street Redevelopment Project gave way to the purchase of land, relocation of at least 55 Beacon Street residents, and the subsequent demolition of the area’s old buildings, including all known Filipino businesses of the 1940s. It is unknown exactly when the Filipino business owners on Beacon Street left the area. According to Ibanez, following redevelopment of Beacon Street, Filipino businesses serving the local community appeared in Wilmington as well as in the cities of Long Beach and Carson.<sup>717</sup>

In the postwar years, the City’s redevelopment efforts in the Central City spurred the disappearance of Bunker Hill—and Little Manila with it—from the Downtown landscape. Bernardo explains,

The passage of the California Community Redevelopment Law in 1945 and 1949 gave local municipalities the legal and economic foundation to eradicate areas of “urban blight.” In 1948, the Los Angeles City Council established the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and immediately coordinated the study of neighborhoods deemed as “deteriorating.” Bunker Hill became one of the prime targets because of its proximity to the downtown core.<sup>718</sup>

Adding to Downtown’s changing landscape was the 1952-1954 construction of a new Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) headquarters later named Parker Center, which broke ground on the western edge of Little Tokyo along First and Los Angeles Streets. The new headquarters resulted in the eviction of many Filipino, African American, and Japanese American residents, businesses, and organizations within the project site, including the church of the Filipino American Christian Fellowship.<sup>719</sup> A few years later, the CRA applied for and obtained federal funding for the Bunker Hill Urban Renewal Project, which eventually leveled hundreds of multi-unit apartments.<sup>720</sup> By the mid-1950s, almost all of Little Manila, Bunker Hill, and the Temple-Figueroa district had been destroyed by redevelopment and construction of the Hollywood Freeway (Highway 101) and the Harbor Freeway (Interstate 110).

<sup>714</sup> R. T. Feria, “War and the Status of Filipino Immigrants,” *Sociology and Social Research* 31, no. 2 (1946): 51.

<sup>715</sup> 1949 Los Angeles Directory Co’s San Pedro and Wilmington City Directory.

<sup>716</sup> In April 1969, the City of Los Angeles City Council approval of the Beacon Street Redevelopment Project gave way to the purchase of land, relocation of at least 55 Beacon Street residents, and the subsequent demolition of the area’s old buildings, including all known Filipino businesses of the 1940s. It is unknown exactly when the Filipino business owners on Beacon Street left the area. See Jerry Ruhlow, “Era ended: Beacon St. Looks Back and Ahead,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 28, 1976.

<sup>717</sup> Ibanez and Ibanez, *Filipinos in Carson and the South Bay*, 10.

<sup>718</sup> Bernardo, From “Little Brown Brothers” to “Forgotten Asian Americans”: Race, Space, and Empire in Filipino Los Angeles,” 228.

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>720</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

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The Hollywood Freeway sliced right through the Temple Street neighborhood and the north side of Bunker Hill, while the Harbor Freeway bisected the Hollywood Freeway and went through the Temple-Beaudry area. As early as 1945, over five hundred Filipinos and Mexicans were served eviction notices around the Temple-Figueroa area to make way for the Hollywood Freeway.<sup>721</sup>

Following the massive redevelopment of Downtown Los Angeles, the Temple-Beverly neighborhood, known as Historic Filipinotown, was among the areas where Filipinos settled and raised families.<sup>722</sup> Bounded by the 101 Freeway to the north, Beverly Boulevard to the south, Glendale Boulevard to the east, and Hoover Street to the west, the neighborhood provided available housing and two Filipino community's touchstones, the Filipino Christian Church (City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 651) and St. Columban Catholic Church.

During the postwar period, St. Columban Catholic Church and the Filipino Christian Church congregations relocated to the Temple-Beverly area. The growing local Filipino Catholic community, which had been leasing a building at 1035 S. Fedora Street to hold Sunday mass, purchased an old fire station at 125 S. Loma Drive and soon repurposed it to serve as a church. St. Columban held its first Sunday mass in the new location on January 1, 1947. In 1950, the Filipino Christian Church purchased the former Union Avenue Methodist Church building and moved the congregation from its Chinatown location to 301 N. Union Avenue, where it remains.

In the Temple-Beverly area during this period, Filipinos resided on Union Avenue, Burlington Avenue, Westlake Avenue, Court Street, Carondelet Street, and farther west on Reno Street.<sup>723</sup> Filipino-owned businesses developed primarily along Temple Street and Beverly Boulevard, including restaurants, neighborhood markets, dry cleaners, photo studios, insurance agencies, and barbershops.<sup>724</sup> Some of these businesses served as important community gathering spaces such as Jimmy's Mini Mart (also known as Jimmy's Market) at 1122 W. Temple Street (not extant), Morong Café at 1700 Beverly Boulevard (later Little Ongpin), and the original location of Travelers Café on Temple Street, between Figueroa Street and Beaudry Avenue. The first location of Travelers Café was known to be a hangout of writer Carlos Bulosan, who spent most of his writing life in Los Angeles.<sup>725</sup> In the 1960s, Travelers Café (later Tribal Café) relocated to 1651 W. Temple Street.<sup>726</sup>

<sup>721</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>722</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>723</sup> Information provided by Lorna Dumapias and Carlene Sobrino Bonnivier, both active members of the Los Angeles Filipino American community and contributors to this project.

<sup>724</sup> "Filipino Historical Establishments in Los Angeles," (2017, photocopy, in author's possession).

<sup>725</sup> Carlos Bulosan is best remembered for his 1946 semi-autobiographical novel *America is in the Heart*, published while he lived in Los Angeles. In addition to the Central Library in Downtown Los Angeles, eight residential addresses in Los Angeles have been linked to Bulosan. "Residences" from FBI redacted files in *Filipinotown: Voices from Los Angeles*, eds. Carlene Sobrino Bonnivier, Gerald G. Gubatan, and Gregory Villanueva (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 80.

<sup>726</sup> Tribal Café occupies the east side storefront.



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Some of the notable Filipino entrepreneurs during this time include Dr. Primitiva Demandante Asprin, the first Filipina physician to practice in Los Angeles, who operated a clinical laboratory at 809 N. Avalon Boulevard (extant/altered) in Wilmington in the early 1950s. Bar owner Ray Buhen, after twenty years of bartending in Los Angeles, opened his own Polynesian-themed tiki bar, Tiki-Ti, at 4427 Sunset Boulevard in 1961. Augustin Cruz operated Philippine Knitting Mill, a clothing and tailoring services at 1152 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street (not extant). G. Monty Manibog, one of the first Filipinos to pass the California State Bar exam in 1961, was the first Filipino American to be elected to public office in Southern California as Mayor of Monterey Park. Manibog opened a law practice at 1725 West Beverly Boulevard in Temple-Beverly area in the early 1960s and practiced law at the location through the 1970s.<sup>727</sup>

In the early 1950s, as part of his masters' thesis research, graduate student Valentin Aquino created a social spot map of Filipino homeowners in Los Angeles. He distributed three hundred surveys to married Filipinos who resided in Los Angeles and found a number of important facts about the study group, including dialects spoken, legal status, religious affiliation, and nationality of wives. Aquino found that Filipino homeowners were scattered throughout Los Angeles, though feelings of provincialism did play a role in clustered settlement patterns: "I bought a house here because I want to be near my townmates. My wife feels happier to be with her own kind (Filipino women) than with other nationality groups. Furthermore, many of our relatives live in this neighborhood."<sup>728</sup> To the contrary, another Filipino homeowner provided: "I did not really care where I could buy a house. Any place will suit me as long as it suits my purse."<sup>729</sup> According to Aquino's map, in the early 1950s the Filipino homeowner community was scattered throughout the city, with the densest concentrations in the Temple-Beverly and San Pedro/Wilmington areas. Filipino homeowners could also be found in Venice and West Los Angeles.

<sup>727</sup> Aquino, "The Filipino Community in Los Angeles," 65; "About Us," *Manibog Law PC*, accessed August 9, 2017, <http://manibog.com/about-us/>; "History," *Tiki-Ti*, (Jeff "Beachbum" Berry, "The Ray Buhen Story"), accessed August 9, 2017, <http://www.tiki-ti.com/pages/ray.html>.

<sup>728</sup> Aquino, "The Filipino Community in Los Angeles," 46.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

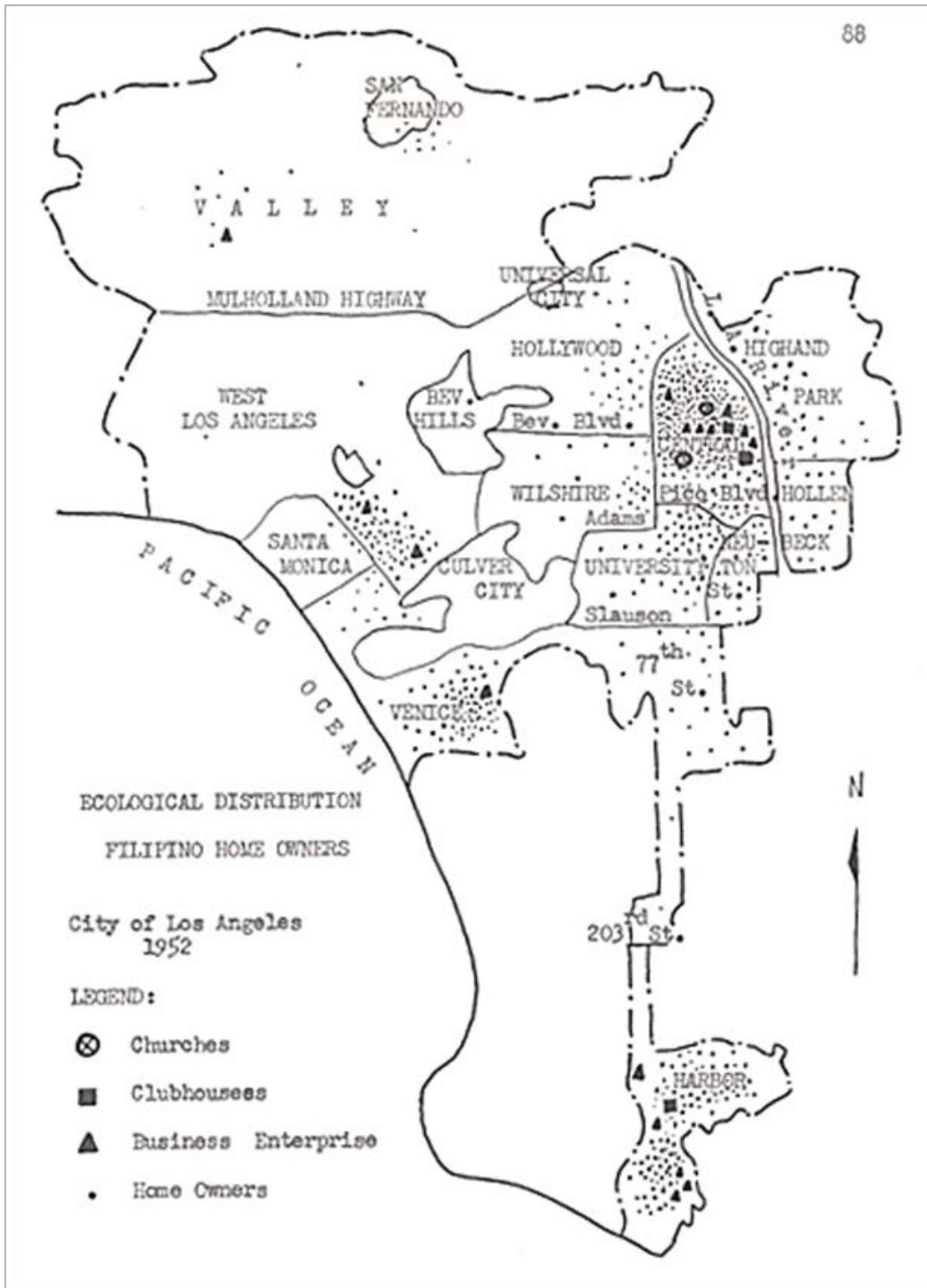
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Valentin Aquino's "Social Spot Map," showing the distribution of Filipino homeowners in Los Angeles, 1952.



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In 1965, following a period of fundraising supported by the Filipino community, the Filipino American Community of Los Angeles (FACLA)—which began as a halfway house for Filipino farmworkers who settled in Los Angeles in the late 1940s—added an annex and a social hall at 1740 West Temple Street. FACLA became a community fixture in the postwar period. Since its opening FACLA's building has been an important hub of the local Filipino community. Over the years, the building has housed events such as dances, celebrations, and community meetings, including those organized by the American Legion's Manila, Post #464.

During this period, additional churches and their attendant religious schools continued to do their part to cultivate the spiritual lives and bring Filipino Americans together. Important religious traditions, celebrations, and church-sponsored events were held throughout the city at such churches as Our Lady of Loretto Catholic Church at 250 N. Union Avenue in Temple-Beverly, Precious Blood Catholic Church at 435 South Occidental Boulevard in Westlake, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church at 4954 Santa Monica Boulevard in Hollywood, and St. John's in the Valley Methodist Church at 20600 Roscoe Boulevard (not extant). Our Lady of Loretto Elementary School at 258 N. Union Avenue in Temple-Beverly, Precious Blood Catholic School at 307 S. Occidental in Echo Park, and Saints Peter and Paul School at 706 Bay View Ave in Wilmington were known to have had Filipino students in their respective school populations.

**Filipino American Los Angeles, 1965-1980**

With the Immigration Act of 1965, the national-origins quotas were eliminated and replaced with an emphasis on family reunification. According to scholar James Tyner, changes in U.S. immigration legislation occurred during a period of profound social, economic, and political changes within the Philippines.<sup>730</sup> President Ferdinand Marcos ruled as a dictator under martial law for much of his Presidency. From 1964 to the 1970s, the number of Filipino entrants to the U.S. rose tenfold, from approximately 3,000 immigrants per year to more than 30,000.<sup>731</sup> The largest wave of Filipino immigration observed in Los Angeles was during this period (**Table 6**).

<sup>730</sup> Tyner, "Filipinos: The Invisible Ethnic Community," 255.

<sup>731</sup> Ibid., 256.

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Table 6: Filipinos in the United States, 1910-2010<sup>732</sup>

Year	Population in the U.S.
1910	160
1920	5,603
1930	45,208
1940	45,563
1950	61,636*
1960	176,310
1970	343,060
1980	774,652
1990	1,406,770
2000	2,364,815
2010	3,416,840

In addition to family-sponsored immigration, employment-based preferences were also a major path of Filipino immigration to the U.S. in the late 1960s. From 1966 to 1970, more than 4,300 Filipino engineers and scientists—including social scientists—immigrated to the U.S., plus approximately 3,000 physicians and surgeons.<sup>733</sup> Nurses from the Philippines had already become a presence in the U.S. due to the Exchange Visitor Program of the 1950s. Even more Filipino nurses and other health care professionals entered the U.S. after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, due to additional provisions made to accommodate health care professionals.<sup>734</sup> Many scholars argued that the changes to U.S. immigration policies in the 1960s caused the Philippines to experience a “brain-drain.”<sup>735</sup>

In the late 1960s, a new generation of Filipino immigrants joined first, second, and third generation Filipino Americans living in the Temple-Beverly area and Wilmington, and also settled in other parts of Los Angeles. Panorama City’s Kaiser Permanente Hospital, which opened in the early 1960s, eventually attracted Filipino nurses to the area. Many Filipino health care professionals have gravitated to residential areas near large hospitals in Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley. According to Paul Dia, the 1990s saw a decline of the Filipino population in the older, poorer enclaves such as the Temple-Beverly neighborhood.<sup>736</sup> Upwardly mobile Filipinos moved to Silver Lake and Eagle Rock by the 1980s, while others chose various cities in Los Angeles County, including West Covina, Diamond Bar, Carson, Long Beach, and Cerritos.<sup>737</sup>

<sup>732</sup> Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970-1990, For the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States*. Washington, D.C., 2002; U.S. Census Bureau with 2010 addition by author. \*This number is an estimate. In 1950, the census data on Filipinos was not published in the general census volumes although the census did include a subject report on the geographic regions with the highest Filipino population in the United States.

<sup>733</sup> Benjamin V. Cariño, James T. Fawcett, Robert W. Gardner, and Fred Arnold, *The New Filipino Immigrants to the United States: Increasing Diversity and Change* (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1990), 53.

<sup>734</sup> Barbara M. Posadas, *The Filipino Americans*, 38.

<sup>735</sup> Cariño, Fawcett, and Arnold, *The New Filipino Immigrants to the United States: Increasing Diversity and Change..*

<sup>736</sup> Paul Dia, “The Filipino Community,” (student paper, Loyola Marymount University, May 15, 2003), n.p.

<sup>737</sup> Tyner, “Filipinos: The Invisible Ethnic Community,” 49.

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In the 1970s and 1980s, FACLA continued to allow Filipino community groups to use their facility for meetings. In the early 1970s, additional social service and cultural heritage-based projects emerged in and around the Temple-Beverly neighborhood, including those facilitated by Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA), first established at 3107 W. Beverly Boulevard and then moved to 3228 W. Temple Street.<sup>738</sup> *Silayan* Dance Company, founded by Philippine dance authority Asuncion “Sonia” Capadocia, also emerged during this time.<sup>739</sup> Capadocia taught young inner city youth Filipino folk dances in a reconverted garage at her Reno Street home.<sup>740</sup> She eventually assembled a fifty-member dance group that performed pieces featuring traditional Filipino instruments and costumes in Los Angeles and throughout California.<sup>741</sup> In 1974, Sulu Unlimited, a community-based program, began offering Filipino martial arts, folk dance, visual arts, music, poetry, and history available to community members at 1689 Beverly Boulevard.<sup>742</sup> These community-based organizations and projects reflected emerging forms of Filipino American political identity and cultural development.

In addition to the community work developing in the Temple-Beverly area, the Filipino Community Center in Wilmington housed the Pilipino Youth Center (PYC), a program staffed by UCLA student volunteers in the 1970s.<sup>743</sup> Also giving voice to Filipino Americans and other Asian American in Los Angeles during this period were community-based theater arts organization East West Players, media arts organization Visual Communications, and Amerasia Bookstore, all established in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Los Angeles was one of several critical West Coast sites of Asian American struggle in the 1970s. Established in the 1969-1970 academic year, the Asian American Studies Center at UCLA played an important role in developing support for Asian American students, faculty, and community organizations in Los Angeles, and was an important hub for Filipino American and Asian American activists. UCLA is considered the premier research and teaching institution in the field of Asian American Studies, housing the nation’s largest Asian American Studies Library and Archive, which includes the rare Asian American newspapers *Gidra* (1969-1974) and *Katipunan* (1971-1991), both of which covered stories on Filipinos in Los Angeles.<sup>744</sup>

In 1971, Filipino American students and community leaders from across the country, including a three-person delegation sent by SIPA, gathered in Seattle at the Young Filipino People’s Far West Convention (later the Filipino Far West Convention) to address important issues impacting Filipinos in America. During its ten plus year run, three conventions were held in Los Angeles, at UCLA (1974 and 1978) and

<sup>738</sup> SIPA’s original location was at 3228 W. Temple Street.

<sup>739</sup> *Silayan* is a Tagalog term meaning reflection.

<sup>740</sup> Information provided by Dulce Capadocia, active member of the Los Angeles Filipino American community and contributor to this project.

<sup>741</sup> “Our History,” *Dulce Capadocia*, accessed August 9, 2017, <http://dulcecapadocia.org/our-history.html>.

<sup>742</sup> “The Filipino Community: On the Move in the Temple District,” *Gidra* 6, no. 2 (February 1974).

<sup>743</sup> Ibanez and Ibanez, *Filipinos in Carson and the South Bay*, 42.

<sup>744</sup> “Bibliographic/Information Management,” *UCLA Asian American Studies Center*, accessed August 9, 2017, <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/library/rmore.aspx#specialcollections>.

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California State University, Los Angeles (1982).<sup>745</sup> In 1973, Third World organization Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP) was established to organize Filipino Americans around an anti-imperialism and anti-racism agenda and had a chapter in Los Angeles.<sup>746</sup> The FWC was an important venue for KDP and other Filipino progressives to address important community issues.<sup>747</sup> Organizers and participants of Filipino Far West Convention from the greater Los Angeles area, and others, developed Filipino American studies curriculum, supported Filipino farmworker activism, and became active in the struggle to win citizenship and military pension and benefits for Filipino World War II veterans.

A growing appreciation of the contributions of Filipino Americans and Asian Americans in Los Angeles was evidenced in 1972 with the launch of The Day of the Lotus (later Lotus Festival), organized by the City's Department of Recreation and Parks and the Council of Oriental Organization (COO).<sup>748</sup> The festival, held at Echo Park, was created to promote awareness of the contributions by Asian Americans to the city's culture and communities, and focused on a different Asian ethnicity each year.

In addition to the social service agencies, cultural organizations, and political activism that emerged during this period, churches added to the landscape of places associated with Filipino American history in Los Angeles. In 1967, St. Columban Church grew to need a larger space and commissioned the construction of a new church building on the site of the repurposed fire station they had occupied since the 1940s in Temple-Beverly.<sup>749</sup> The church includes historic Spanish church bells from Antipolo, Philippines. Additional churches included the Congregational Christian Church at 2400 West Temple Street, Los Angeles Filipino-American United Church of Christ at 5080 Maywood Avenue, St. Bernard Catholic Church at 2500 West Avenue 33, and St. Genevieve Catholic Church at 14061 Roscoe Boulevard.

In the Temple-Beverly area, a commercial presence continued during this period on Temple Street and Beverly Boulevard, most evidenced by two shopping plazas on Temple, Filipinas Plaza (later Temple Plaza) at 2431 West Temple and Luzon Plaza at 1925 West Temple, established in the late 1970s. Augustin Cruz's Philippine Knitting Mill—relocated from Downtown to the Temple-Beverly area in the late 1960s and in operation at least through the early 1970s—is a lesser-known example located at 3114 Beverly Boulevard. Other notable commercial establishments developed in the 1970s were Burlington Nursery School and Kindergarten located at 242 N. Burlington Avenue and Bernie's Teriyaki at 318 Glendale Boulevard, believed to be the oldest, continuously operated Filipino-owned restaurant in the neighborhood.

<sup>745</sup> Florante Ibanez, "The Phenomena and the Politics of the Filipino People's Far West Convention: 1970s-1980s," (student paper, University of California, Los Angeles, December 8, 2003), 6-13.

<sup>746</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>747</sup> Helen Toribio, "We are Revolution: A Reflective History of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)," *Amerasia Journal* 24, no. 2 (1998): 162.

<sup>748</sup> Kelly, "Brief History of the Lotus Festival," July 10, 2010, *Echo Park Now*, accessed August 8, 2017, <http://www.echoparknow.com/2010/07/10/brief-history-of-the-lotus-festival/>.

<sup>749</sup> "About us," St. Columban Church Los Angeles, accessed March 1, 2018, [https://www.stcolumbanla.org/about\\_us](https://www.stcolumbanla.org/about_us).

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In 2002, after years of community effort to bring attention to the important contributions made by Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, the City Council unanimously approved the designation of a portion of the Temple-Beverly corridor as Los Angeles' Historic Filipinotown. That same year, an effort to designate a 1.3-mile stretch of Eagle Rock Boulevard as Philippine Village, recognizing the history of Filipinos in Eagle Rock, was unsuccessful, though the City Council approved a sign not far from Eagle Rock Plaza that read "Philippine Village Community Center."<sup>750</sup> Historic Filipinotown is home to such community landmarks as the Filipino World War II Veterans Memorial at 227 N. Lake in Lake Street Park and *Gintong Kasaysayan*, *Gintong Pamana* at Unidad Park, 1666 Beverly Blvd., the country's largest mural depicting Filipino and Filipino American history.<sup>751</sup> Two Iglesia Ni Cristo churches rendered in the distinct Philippine Iglesia Ni Cristo-style architecture located at 14308 Nordoff Street and 141 N. Union Avenue are other additions to the Filipino American landscape in Los Angeles. These important historic and cultural resources take their place alongside the neighborhoods, businesses, churches, and institutions that have served the Filipino American and greater Los Angeles community for nearly a century.

<sup>750</sup> Eagle Rock Plaza is also known by local Filipino Americans as the "Mall of Manila," housing several popular Philippine restaurant franchises and the grocery store Seafood City. See Anna Gorman, "A Thriving Filipino Community is Anchored by a Mall," *Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 2007.

<sup>751</sup> *Gintong Kasaysayan*, *Gintong Pamana* is the Tagalog title of Eliseo Art Silva's mural in Unidad Park in Historic Filipinotown. The English title is *A Glorious History, A Golden Legacy*.

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**Thai Americans in Los Angeles, 1950-1980**

**Introduction**

This historic context examines the migration, settlement, and development patterns of Thai Americans in Los Angeles from 1950 to 1980, spanning the arrival of the first known Thai Americans in Los Angeles, through the early commercial establishment of the community in the 1970s, and completion of the Wat Thai of Los Angeles in 1979.

Unlike the histories of Asian immigrants who arrived in Los Angeles before, or shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, the history of Thai immigration to Los Angeles is a later phenomenon. As such, the scope of this study is limited by the available literature and focuses primarily on historical themes associated with institutional development and commercial growth during the period of significance.

Future study will likely yield additional information about the experience and contributions of Thais in Los Angeles. U.S. Census records from 1950 will be available in 2020 and may reveal critical information about Thais and how they are shaping Los Angeles' built environment. Study of Thai language newspapers and media are other sources from which new information will likely be obtained.

While Thais in Los Angeles are believed to have first arrived in Los Angeles in the 1950s, it was not until the early 1960s that evidence of the community was observed via the establishment of the Thai Association of Southern California, the first known Thai community organization. As a result of U.S. Cold War intervention in Thailand and the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, Thais began to migrate in larger numbers to the U.S. and Los Angeles. In the 1970s, Thai commercial development was observed most notably in the community's diverse restaurant establishments, of which the largest concentration was in Hollywood. During this period, a Thai Chamber of Commerce was formed and examples of Thai investment began to emerge. The 1970s also saw the emergence of Thai-language newspapers in Los Angeles, though many were short-lived. By 1979, the Wat Thai of Los Angeles, the largest Thai Theravada Buddhist Temple in the U.S., was completed in North Hollywood, becoming the focal point of Thai life in Southern California.

**Terms and Definitions**

As often as possible, both English and Thai terms are used in this document. Thai terms appear in italics with the exception of surnames, organization names, business names, and place names. Thai terms are translated as needed throughout the document.

**Thai and Thai American:** Because of the relatively recent arrival of Thai immigrants to Los Angeles the terms Thai and Thai American are used interchangeably. It should be noted that there is a long history of immigrants of Chinese ethnicity in Thailand that dates back to the fifteenth century. Thailand has the largest Chinese population in Southeast Asia—the Chinese are largely assimilated, speak Thai almost exclusively, and have intermarried with Thais. According to scholar Jiemin Bao, the majority of the first wave of Thai immigrants to the U.S. were Chinese Thais (also known as Sino-Thais), though they were



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legally classified as Thais by both governments. Geographer Jacqueline Desbarats has argued that Chinese Thais were more prone than other Thais to emigrate to the U.S. during the early wave of immigration, and once granted a visa, more quickly arranged for departure, and were more likely to become American citizens after arrival.<sup>752</sup> The Chinese Thai diaspora in the U.S. generally identifies as Thai, though others make the distinction. This study concurs that the first wave of Thai immigrants in the U.S. and in Los Angeles were largely Chinese Thais. Other than this early mention, the context does not use the term Chinese Thai when referring to the Thai population in Los Angeles. Direct quotes that use the term Chinese Thai, Thai, or Thai American remain unaltered.

Wat: Thai term denoting a Buddhist monastery, or temple.

Theravada: This term denotes a branch of Buddhism mainly practiced in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Burma.

**Early Thai Settlement in Southern California, 1950-1965**

Thais living in the Los Angeles metropolitan area form the largest concentration of Thais outside of Thailand. Only a few hundred Thais are believed to have been living in Los Angeles before the 1960s. Many early Thai immigrants to the U.S. were sponsored by the Royal Thai government and expected to return upon completion of their studies. Privately funded students immigrated to the U.S. during this time as well, and many stayed on in the U.S. and Los Angeles. Following the liberalization of U.S. immigration policy in the 1960s, Thai students were joined by professionals and wives of U.S. military personnel and civilians. Despite their relatively later arrival in comparison to other Asian Americans in Los Angeles, Thais in Los Angeles have contributed significantly to Los Angeles' economy, culture, and history.

Fewer than 500 Thais registered as immigrants in the U.S. between 1951 and 1960.<sup>753</sup> Representing the largest percentage of the pioneer wave of Thai immigration to Los Angeles in the 1960s and early 1970s were "Thai students, predominantly male and from the urban ethnic-Chinese Thai population in Bangkok," writes Mark Tanachai Padoongpatt in *Thais that Bind: U.S. Empire, Food, and Community in Los Angeles, 1945-2008*.<sup>754</sup> In Los Angeles, early Thai students settled near their chosen schools, including Los Angeles City College, California State University Los Angeles, University of Southern California, and University of California, Los Angeles, and California State University, Long Beach.<sup>755</sup>

<sup>752</sup> Jacqueline Desbarats, "Thai Migration to Los Angeles," *Geographical Review* 69 (1979): 308, accessed August 10, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/214887>.

<sup>753</sup> See Jiemin Bao, *Marital Acts: Gender, Sexuality, And Identity Among The Chinese Thai Diaspora* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 175.

<sup>754</sup> Mark Tanachai Padoongpatt, "Thais that Bind: U.S. Empire, Food, and Community in Los Angeles, 1945-2008," (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2011), 36. Thailand has one of the largest overseas Chinese communities in the world, with a history of Chinese immigration to Thailand that dates over 200 years. Thai Chinese are Thai nationals with full, or partial Chinese ancestry. See Jiemin Bao, *Marital Acts: Gender, Sexuality, And Identity Among The Chinese Thai Diaspora* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 176.

<sup>755</sup> Padoongpatt, "Thais that Bind," 41; Sudurat Disayawattana, "The Craft of Ethnic Newspaper-Making: A Study of the Negotiation of Culture in the Thai-language Newspapers of Los Angeles," (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1993), 54.

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Padoongpatt argues that Thais and other immigrants benefited from the expansion of higher education in California during the postwar years. In 1960, out-of-state and international students' tuition was within financial reach for many, due to the passage of the Master Plan of Higher Education in California.<sup>756</sup>

To create a sense of community and to combat isolation and loneliness, in 1962 Thai students and some community members formed the Thai Association of Southern California, the first known Thai community organization in Los Angeles.<sup>757</sup> According to Sudurat Disayawattana, the mission of the organization was to be the center of social gathering and to organize ethnic activities. They launched a publication named *Puan Thai* (Thai fellows), which reported news from the home country.<sup>758</sup> In 1965, as part of UCLA's homecoming activities, Thai students held a dinner featuring Thai food and entertainment in the newly built UCLA International Student Center at 1023 Hilgard Avenue in Westwood.<sup>759</sup>

### **Thais in Los Angeles: Establishing a Community, 1960s-1980**

The Immigration & Nationality Act of 1965 marked a fundamental shift in U.S. immigration policy, eliminating almost all of the historical restrictions placed on Asian immigrants. Unlike other migratory patterns of Southeast Asians who fled war or political strife, Thai immigration of this period was influenced by U.S. foreign policy and militarization in Southeast Asia. U.S. military intervention in Thailand—including the establishment of a U.S. embassy, the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization headquarters in Bangkok, private businesses, educational and cultural exchange programs, organizations such as the Peace Corps and Fulbright Foundation, tourist-based infrastructure, and U.S. military bases—brought unprecedented American influence on Thai society and resulted in encouraging many Thais to immigrate to the U.S.<sup>760</sup> From 1975 to 1980, Thais with non-immigrant, F-1 student visas surpassed all other Thais arriving in Los Angeles.

In "Thai Migration to Los Angeles," geographer Desbarats noted that the Thai Consul General in Los Angeles estimated the size of the city's legal Thai residents to be 5,000 in 1975 as opposed to 10,000, which some members of the community offered.<sup>761</sup> Most of the Thais who entered the U.S. between 1969 and 2000 came during the 1980s (**Table 7**). Thais with limited skills and education who permanently settled in Los Angeles from the 1960s to 1980 found work in the service economy as food servers, cooks, parking attendants, among other low-wage occupations. In contrast, highly skilled, educated, and bilingual Thai immigrants found work as physicians, nurses, engineers, technicians, and

<sup>756</sup> Padoongpatt, "Thais that Bind," 40.

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>758</sup> Disayawattana, "The Craft of Ethnic Newspaper-Making," 55.

<sup>759</sup> "Open House Tours Homecoming Feature," *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1965; "UCLA Dedicates Seven Student Center Areas," *Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1965; The building houses the Italian Cultural Institute Los Angeles.

<sup>760</sup> Mary Yu Danico and Anthony C. Ocampo, eds., *Asian American Society: An Encyclopedia* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014), 893-894.

<sup>761</sup> Desbarats notes that the disparate responses regarding Los Angeles' Thai population in the 1970s reflect the widespread belief that Southern California, and Los Angeles, in particular, has large number of undocumented Thais. Jacqueline Desbarats, "Thai Migration to Los Angeles," *Geographical Review* 69 (1979): 313, accessed August 10, 2017: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/214887>.

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accountants. Others became small business owners, primarily opening restaurants and catering businesses.

Table 7: Immigrants Admitted from Thailand to the United States between 1969 and 2000<sup>762</sup>

YEAR	ADMISSIONS
1969-1972	10,093
1973-1976	21,039
1977-1980	14,828
1981-1984	21,127
1985-1988	33,044
1989-1993	32,733
1993-1997	21,589
1997-2000	12,362
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166,815</b>

Desbarats’ 1977 study of Thais in Los Angeles included some of the earliest known maps of Thai residential and commercial development in Los Angeles County. She found that many Thais settled in Los Angeles by the 1970s were living in neighborhoods bounded by Franklin Avenue to the north, 38<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, La Brea Avenue to the west, and Hoover Street to the east.<sup>763</sup> Residential areas corresponded well with the location of Thai businesses, where ethnic Thai goods and services could be found, as well as employment opportunities. Shifts in these residential patterns were not observed until successful Thai immigrants began to purchase homes in the suburbs of the City of Glendale and the San Fernando Valley.<sup>764</sup> Toward the end of the Vietnam War, Los Angeles experience a rise in Thai war brides who joined their U.S. military servicemen.<sup>765</sup> Their use of G.I. mortgage loans to purchase homes added to the growing community of dispersed Thai suburban homeowners.<sup>766</sup>

Prior to 1980, the densest commercial development associated with Thais in Los Angeles could be found in East Hollywood along a two-mile stretch on Hollywood Boulevard.<sup>767</sup> In East Hollywood, Thai-owned businesses included Thai-language newspapers, travel agencies, auto repair shops, gas stations, souvenir shops, tailors, and beauty parlors.<sup>768</sup> In 1971, two important community touchstones opened in the neighborhood, the Royal Thai Consulate and Bangkok Market. Bangkok Market at 4800 Melrose Avenue (extant/altered) was opened by Pramote and Marasri Tilakamonkul, and was the first Thai and Southeast Asian food grocer in the U.S. In the early days, the market provided the local Thai population

<sup>762</sup> Data repurposed from Danny Anuphong Dechartivong’s “Who, Wat, Where, and Wai: The History of Wat Thai Los Angeles,” (master’s thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 2012), 10. Sources include 1969-1975, Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and 1976-2000, Immigration and Naturalization Service Statistical Yearbooks.

<sup>763</sup> Jacqueline Desbarats, “Thai Migration to Los Angeles,” *Geographical Review* 69 (1979): 316, accessed August 10, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/214887>.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>765</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>768</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

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with Thai specialty items, and served as a “de facto community center and trading post.”<sup>769</sup> This was before they began importing items and growing their own Thai vegetables, according to Tilakamonkuls’ son, and restaurateur Jet Tila. In 1986, the Tilakamonkuls purchased a building across the street at 4757 Melrose Avenue and relocated their market to the larger building, where it remains.

Another concentration of Thai-owned businesses and community institutions in the 1970s was in the Mid-Wilshire area near the intersection of Western Avenue and Olympic Boulevard.<sup>770</sup> In 1971, the Association of Thai Merchants (later Thai Chamber of Commerce) was established to serve the growing community of Thai entrepreneurs in Los Angeles with Khun Poonsak “Paul” Sosothikul elected as its first President.<sup>771</sup> According to Disayawattana, between the years of 1975 and 1980, many Bangkok business firms and financial institutions opened branches in Los Angeles to facilitate trade and investment.<sup>772</sup> In 1979, the Thai Chamber of Commerce shared office space with the newly established Thai Trade Center in Central Plaza One at 3440 Wilshire Boulevard.<sup>773</sup> The same year marked the tenth anniversary of the Tourism Authority of Thailand’s Los Angeles branch. By 1979, reflecting its growing investment in Los Angeles, Thailand’s Bangkok Bank opened an office in Downtown Los Angeles on the twelfth floor of William L. Pereira & Associates’ Pacific Financial Center at 800 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>774</sup>

In the late 1960s through the 1970s, Thai restaurants emerged on the Los Angeles restaurant scene. By the late 1970s, Desbarats observed a predominance of food and catering businesses in Los Angeles’ Thai community, with one-third of the businesses being restaurants.<sup>775</sup> According to the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the first Thai restaurant to open in Los Angeles was Thai Kitchen at 851 S. Vermont Avenue in 1969. It was destroyed in 1992 during a nearby apartment-house fire, along with two other Thai restaurants—Arunee’s Restaurant next door, and Renoo’s Kitchen. Another early Thai restaurant was The Orient at 8303 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Many Thai restaurants were modest, family-operated businesses, with proprietors often cooking family recipes. Thai restaurants also employed other Thais as kitchen and wait staff, making the Thai restaurant industry in Los Angeles a significant employer of the community in the 1970s, a practice that continues.

The greatest concentration of Thai restaurants in Los Angeles during this period was located in the Hollywood area. Believed to have been the first of these was former tennis professional and Thai pioneer Aroon Seeboonruang’s Tepparod Thai No.1 at 4649 Melbourne Avenue. Just two doors down at 4645 Melbourne Avenue was Tepparod Tea House, run by the same family. Chow Burana took over Tepparod Thai No.1 when his parents-in-law opened Tepparod No.2 (later Kruang Tedd) at 5151 Hollywood Boulevard.<sup>776</sup> The Seeboonruang family also opened Tepparod No. 3 at 147 South Fairfax

<sup>769</sup> Mandalit Del Barco, “The Family-Run Thai Market That Feeds LA’s Eclectic Food Scene, transcript of *Morning Edition*, April 13, 2016

<sup>770</sup> Desbarats, “Thai Migration to Los Angeles,” 314.

<sup>771</sup> Chavapoj Thungsuwan “History,” (From “Association of Thai Traders to the Chamber of Commerce”), n.d., *Thai Chamber of Commerce of California*, accessed August 11, 2017, <http://thaiccccla.org/about-tccc/>.

<sup>772</sup> Disayawattana, “The Craft of Ethnic Newspaper-Making,” 57.

<sup>773</sup> The Thai American Chamber of Commerce of California moved to the city of Glendale.

<sup>774</sup> Desbarats, “Thai Migration to Los Angeles,” 316.

<sup>775</sup> Ibid.

<sup>776</sup> Lois Dwan, “Roundabout,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1972; Coleman Andrews, “Thai One On: Restaurants

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Avenue in the 1970s (not extant). Other notable restaurants in Hollywood during the 1970s were Chao Praya at 6307 W. Yucca Street, Chao Krung at 5529 Hollywood Boulevard (original owners moved to 111 N. Fairfax Avenue), Jitalda at 5233½ W. Sunset Boulevard (new owners at same location), and Siam Hollywood at 5158 Hollywood Boulevard.

During the 1970s, many Thai restaurants served as the main gathering places for Thai organizations, including Siam Hollywood, remembered by many first generation Thais as the location where community leader Punsak Sosothikul was shot and killed in 1974.<sup>777</sup> By 1977, fifty Thai restaurants were open for business throughout Los Angeles.<sup>778</sup> In addition to the concentration of restaurants in the Hollywood area, restaurants in the San Fernando Valley opened in the 1970s. Patrons of Lanna Thai at 4457 Van Nuys Boulevard, opened in 1977 in Sherman Oaks by Surapol Mekpongsatorn, recall the eight-foot deep koi pond in the center of the restaurant, a remnant of the location's previous swimming pool business.<sup>779</sup> Serving a broad clientele, including Thais transitioning to life in the San Fernando Valley, were restaurants that opened in North Hollywood and along Ventura Boulevard from Encino to Studio City. Though Little Orchids replaced the Number One Son Restaurant at 21614 W. Ventura Boulevard, the Number One Son restaurant's sign remains a visible reminder of the early period of Thai restaurant development in the area.

In addition to Thai restaurants, Thai-language newspapers played an important role in the development of the Los Angeles Thai community. According to Disayawattana, Thai-language newspapers of Los Angeles began from student newsletters in the 1960s.<sup>780</sup> It was not until 1970 that the first official Thai-language newspaper, *Thai Phon-Tale*, appeared in Los Angeles, though its run was short-lived, as its staff, mostly students, did not have enough time to work on the publication.<sup>781</sup> New financial backers tried to revive the publication, and were unsuccessful. In 1973, Kittiratna Sivayavirojana, one of the founders of *Thai Phon-Tale*, started a new tabloid-sized publication called *Sarn Thai*, the first commercial Thai-language publication with a paid staff, though it too failed in a year.<sup>782</sup> During the 1970s and 1980s several Thai-language newspapers were started, and most ceased publication because of financial loss. None of the Thai-language newspapers started in the 1970s are known to exist. For this reason, it is worth including a brief discussion of a few of the Thai-language newspapers with the largest circulation from the early 1980s.<sup>783</sup>

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Featuring the Food of Thailand are Thriving, Here's Where to Sample the Fare," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 1976.

<sup>777</sup> Author in conversation with Dr. Mark Padoongpatt, Project Advisory Committee member, April 10, 2017.

<sup>778</sup> Bobbie Justice, "Going Native: Where Foreigners Go in L.A. When They Want Home Cooking," *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1977.

<sup>779</sup> Dick Roraback, "Where Thai is Obligatory," *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1979.

<sup>780</sup> Disayawattana, "The Craft of Ethnic Newspaper-Making," 62.

<sup>781</sup> Ibid.

<sup>782</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>783</sup> According to Sudurat Disayawattana, *Siam Media* and *Sereechon* both claimed to have the largest circulation among Thai-language newspapers in the U.S. *Sereechon*'s local circulation was about 2,000 to 3,000 in the 1990s. See Disayawattana, "The Craft of Ethnic Newspaper-Making," 68.

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*Sereechon* began in 1975 as a monthly magazine-sized publication started by Chaiwat Paknilarat.<sup>784</sup> It was the first to have out-of-state subscribers and to make money from circulation as well as advertising from local Thai businesses.<sup>785</sup> New ownership and a new name came in 1985: *Sereechai*, originally located at 1901 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, later moved to 1253 N. Vine Street, where it remains.<sup>786</sup> Another notable Thai-language newspaper started in Los Angeles in the early 1980s was *Siam Media Newspaper*, located at 4032 Wilshire Boulevard, in the same office building as its owner's law office. The newspaper continues operations in Rosemead, California. In 1985, *Thai L.A. Newspaper* was established in Chinatown at 675 N. Spring Street, on the second floor of Thai-owned A.C. Supermarket.<sup>787</sup> According to Disayawattana, the paper was established as a major vehicle for advertising goods and services of the parent company, A.C. Group, Inc., then one of the largest Thai-owned food retailing and manufacturing companies in Los Angeles.<sup>788</sup>

In 1970, a small group of Thai students formed a committee to establish a *wat* to meet the spiritual needs of the growing Thai community in Los Angeles. The Theravada Buddhist Center, Inc. unofficially became the first Thai Buddhist temple in the U.S. in 1971, offering services in a suburban home in what became North Hills.<sup>789</sup> In the same year, a mission of Thai monks, led by Ven. Phra Dhammakosacharn, arrived in Los Angeles and worked together with members of the Thai community, namely Punsak Sosothikul, to raise funds to purchase 2.2 acres of private land in Sun Valley for the purposes of constructing a temple.<sup>790</sup> The property is located on the eastern block of Coldwater Canyon Avenue, between Roscoe Boulevard on the north and Cantara Street on the south, and includes parcels on Van Noord Avenue to the east. According to Dechartivong, the land had previously been the location of a garden nursery operated by a Japanese American family.<sup>791</sup>

On May 19, 1972, in a ceremony to bless the construction of the new *wat*, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand Somdej Phravanarat laid the first stone foundation into the ground.<sup>792</sup> The main assembly hall, or *sala*, where all religious functions and rituals occur, was designed by architects from the Religious Ministry Department of Thailand and features imported window frames, roof tiles, and doors from Thailand.<sup>793</sup> In May 1974, the lower level of the temple was completed at a cost of \$258,000. It consisted of two classrooms, two restrooms, a library, and a large dining room. Construction of the upper level was delayed for several years, due to lack of funding. In November 1975, a Buddhist Sunday School opened at the temple and provided free Thai-language classes, among other programs. Full

<sup>784</sup> Disayawattana, "The Craft of Ethnic Newspaper-Making," 63, 66.

<sup>785</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>786</sup> Ibid., 213; Thai Trade Center *Los Angeles Times* advertisement, September 4, 1979.

<sup>787</sup> Disayawattana, "The Craft of Ethnic Newspaper-Making," 68.

<sup>788</sup> Ibid. The newspaper operates out of the Thai-owned LAX-C at 1100 N. Main Street in Chinatown.

<sup>789</sup> Phrah Rajavaramuni, *Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World* (North Hollywood: Wat Thai of Los Angeles), 154; Padoongpatt, "Thais that Bind," 161.

<sup>790</sup> Wendy Cadge, "Theravada Buddhism in America," accessed March 26, 2017, <http://press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/089002.html>; Padoongpatt, "Thais that Bind," 161.

<sup>791</sup> Dechartivong, "Who, Wat, Where, and Wai," 27.

<sup>792</sup> This date is regarded by Thais as the birthday of the Wat Thai in Los Angeles. Dechartivong, "Who, Wat, Where, and Wai," 27-28.

<sup>793</sup> Dechartivong, "Who, Wat, Where, and Wai," 28.

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construction of the school facility was not completed until 1980. In 1976, some other small buildings on the campus were completed, including living quarters, or *kuti*, for monks and nuns living on-site. These buildings were not constructed in traditional Thai temple architecture style, and instead made compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood.<sup>794</sup>

Completed and dedicated in 1979, the Wat Thai of Los Angeles is the largest Thai Theravada Buddhist temple in the U.S. In the late 1980s through 2007, the Wat Thai operated an outdoor food court in its parking lot. In 2007, the surrounding community complained about the weekend crowds creating too much garbage and parking issues, and food selling was eventually banned.<sup>795</sup> The City of Los Angeles eased the ban on food selling at the temple in 2015 and food vendors returned. Since its opening, the Wat Thai of Los Angeles has remained the center of spiritual, social, and cultural life for the Los Angeles' Thai community, attracting thousands of Thai and non-Thai visitors each year. The temple, the surrounding purpose-built buildings, and several adjacent residential properties owned by Wat Thai of Los Angeles constitute a cultural/spiritual campus for the Los Angeles Thai community.

### **Placemaking and Strengthening Community Identity After 1980**

The construction of the Wat Thai of Los Angeles was a catalyst for growth of Thai businesses along Sherman Way in North Hollywood. This coincided with the growing acculturation to American society and economic stability reached by the pioneer generation. In the 1980s, increasing numbers of Thai residents began to disperse to nearby cities like Glendale, and also to areas of Los Angeles including North Hollywood and Eastern San Fernando Valley neighborhoods such as Van Nuys, Panorama City, Sun Valley, Arleta, and Pacoima. By 1990, more Thais lived in the San Fernando Valley than in East Hollywood.<sup>796</sup>

In addition to the Wat Thai, community members recall that the Hollywood Seventh-Day Adventist Church at 1711 N. Van Ness Avenue had Thai congregants.<sup>797</sup> Thai Christians living in Los Angeles also gathered at White Memorial Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Los Angeles to worship every Saturday between 1975 and 1985. After this period, they moved their congregation to Pomona to accommodate Thais throughout Greater Los Angeles County. According to scholar Huping Ling, less than half of one percent of Thai immigrants are Muslim.<sup>798</sup> In 1993, Majid Al-Fatiha, the first Thai mosque in the U.S., was established in the City of Azusa in the County of Los Angeles.

Many Thai immigrants faced acculturation barriers as they started their lives in Los Angeles. Beginning with the Thai Association of Southern California in the early 1960s, the local Thai community formed

<sup>794</sup> Ibid., 28-29.

<sup>795</sup> Lara Rabinovitch, "This Buddhist Temple Serves Some of the Best Thai Food Outside of Bangkok," September 3, 2015, *Munchies*, accessed March 26, 2017, [https://munchies.vice.com/en\\_us/article/this-buddhist-temple-serves-some-of-the-best-thai-food-outside-of-bangkok](https://munchies.vice.com/en_us/article/this-buddhist-temple-serves-some-of-the-best-thai-food-outside-of-bangkok).

<sup>796</sup> Padoongpatt, "Thais that Bind," 316.

<sup>797</sup> Information was provided by Thai community members at a historic context meeting held at the Wat Thai of Los Angeles on April 15, 2017.

<sup>798</sup> See Huping Ling and Austin Allan, *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2010).

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various social, service, and professional organizations. A Western Chapter of the Thai Physicians of America, originated in New York, and the Thai Nurses Association of Southern California were established in the late 1970s to bring together Thais working in the medical field in Southern California. Between 1979 and 1982, the Thai Association of Southern California and the Wat Thai of Los Angeles saw a surge in activity supporting the local Thai community. The Thai Association of Southern California helped immigrants with legal matters, filling out passport and visa applications, and with day-to-day issues, such as providing help for broken-down cars.<sup>799</sup> Since its opening, the Wat Thai remains the focal point for Thai life in Southern California. In addition to five annual religious festivals celebrated at the temple, free Thai-language lessons, classical dance, traditional music concerts, art exhibits, and other cultural events have been offered.<sup>800</sup>

In 1982, the Thai Chamber of Commerce, inactive for a few years, was reinvigorated by a group of twenty Thai entrepreneurs, including Dr. Vibul Vichit-Vadakan, Surapol Mekponsathorn, and Chow Burana.<sup>801</sup> The organization was renamed Association of Thai Businesses and Trade of California at this time and Thongchai Teepratew was elected as its new President. During this period, Dr. Vichit-Vadakan, active in the local branch of the national organization Thai Physicians of America, served as an advisor to the organization and published a regular newsletter for the Thai Chamber, *Siang Vanich* (Voice of Traders).<sup>802</sup>

As the Thai community continued to thrive in Los Angeles, its leaders and new community organizations became more involved in preserving and promoting Thai culture and arts, and giving back to the community. In 1980, Thai Smakom, a university student group, was established to increase visibility of the rich Thai and Thai-American culture at UCLA.<sup>803</sup> Aroon Seeboonruang, owner of the Tepparod restaurants, was involved in establishing the Wat Thai of Los Angeles. He later served as the President of the Thai Association of Southern California and became involved in the work of the Thai Community Development Center. He also founded the Thai Senior Citizen Club of Los Angeles and taught Thai children tennis throughout Southern California through his informal Thai Tennis Association.<sup>804</sup>

In 1991, award-winning visual artist Vibul Wonprasat created the mural *East Meets West* on an exterior wall of the Bangkok Market. The mural, since removed, was sponsored and commissioned by the Social and Public Art Resources Center (SPARC) and depicted Asian immigrants moving to Los Angeles, integrating traditional Thai motifs with contemporary life.<sup>805</sup> Wongprasat, also a painting instructor, opened Vibul School of Painting in Marina Del Rey in 1984. The studio was later moved to Venice and

<sup>799</sup> Disayawattana, "The Craft of Ethnic Newspaper-Making," 62, 56.

<sup>800</sup> Coleman Andrews, "With Satay and Tiger Prawns, Fiery Thai Food is a hit in L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1990.

<sup>801</sup> Chavapoj Thungsuwan "History," (From "Association of Thai Traders to the Chamber of Commerce"), n.d., *Thai Chamber of Commerce of California*, accessed August 11, 2017, <http://thaiccccla.org/about-tccc/>.

<sup>802</sup> Ibid.

<sup>803</sup> "Thai Smakom at UCLA," accessed August 10, 2017, <https://orgsync.com/15969/chapter>.

<sup>804</sup> Padoongpatt, "Thais that Bind," 58; Martorell and Morlan, *Images of America: Thais in Los Angeles* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 12.

<sup>805</sup> "East Meets West," *Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles*, accessed March 26, 2017, [www.muralconservancy.org/murals/east-meets-west](http://www.muralconservancy.org/murals/east-meets-west).



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is located at 11101 Ventura Boulevard (Bay #6). With Wongprasat as its founding director, the Thai Community Arts and Cultural Center (TCACC) was established in 1992 (based in Venice) to preserve Thai arts and culture in the U.S. through education and entertainment.<sup>806</sup> Beginning in 1993, the TCACC organized the Thai Cultural Day festival at the Wat Thai. The following year the festival moved to Barnsdall Art Park, where it remains a popular annual community event.

A growing appreciation of the contributions of Asian Americans in Los Angeles, including Thai Americans, was evidenced as early as 1972 with the launch of The Day of the Lotus (later Lotus Festival), organized by the City's Department of Recreation and Parks and the Council of Oriental Organization (COO).<sup>807</sup> The festival, which continues to be held at Echo Park, was created to promote awareness of the contributions by Asian Americans to the city's culture and communities, and focused on a different Asian ethnicity each year.

Though not as widely known as the destruction experienced by the Korean American community, the 1992 Los Angeles riots resulted in the destruction and looting of several Thai businesses. The riots activated a new generation of politically conscious Thais in Los Angeles. Created in 1994, the Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC) has worked to advance the social and economic well-being of low and moderate income Thais and other ethnic groups in greater Los Angeles through community development strategies, including human rights advocacy, affordable housing, healthcare access, small business promotion, neighborhood empowerment, and social enterprises.<sup>808</sup> Their work on the El Monte Thai Slavery Case in the mid-1990s placed the issue of modern-day slavery and human trafficking in the national spotlight and brought about landmark legislation in the Trafficking Victims' Protection Act (TVPA) and new initiatives to raise awareness of modern-day slavery and human trafficking.

In 1999, after a long campaign that lasted nearly five years, the Thai CDC and the Thai Town Formation Committee worked with then-Councilmember Jackie Goldberg and the City of Los Angeles to establish the nation's first Thai Town on a six-block stretch of Hollywood Boulevard. The corridor from Western to Normandie Avenues in East Hollywood is home to over 50 Thai-owned small businesses. To enhance the visual cultural amenities in Thai Town, the Thai CDC initiated a public art project in 2006 with funding from the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) in association with the Department of Public Works to mark the entrance to Thai Town. This public art installation consists of Thai angel statues, known as Aponsi, that serve as entrance gates on the east and west entrances to Thai Town. The bronze angel statues represent the mythical half-woman, half-lion creatures of the legendary Ramayana tales, believed to be protectors that safeguard against harm. In their locations on Hollywood Boulevard, they stand as the symbolic guardians of the Thai Town corridor.<sup>809</sup> In 2008, Thai Town was

<sup>806</sup> There is no known physical address as headquarters for the Thai Community Arts and Cultural Center.

<sup>807</sup> Kelly, "Brief History of the Lotus Festival," July 10, 2010, *Echo Park Now*, accessed August 8, 2017, <http://www.echoparknow.com/2010/07/10/brief-history-of-the-lotus-festival/>.

<sup>808</sup> "Our Work," *Thai Community Development Center*, accessed March 27, 2017, <http://thaicdc.org/about/what-we-do/>.

<sup>809</sup> "Art Projects: Thai Community Development Center," 2006, Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles, accessed March 5, 2018, [http://www.crala.org/internet-site/Other/Art\\_Program/artist\\_list/Thai\\_Community\\_Development\\_Center.cfm](http://www.crala.org/internet-site/Other/Art_Program/artist_list/Thai_Community_Development_Center.cfm).

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designated a Preserve America community, along with Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, and Historic Filipinotown. Since 2003, the Thai New Year's Songkran Festival is celebrated in April on Hollywood Boulevard in Thai Town, where Thais and the greater Los Angeles community come together to enjoy and appreciate Thai food, culture, and entertainment.

In 2013, the City of Los Angeles was gifted Kinnara lampposts by the government of Thailand. The gift coincided with the signing of a friendship agreement between Los Angeles, United States and Bangkok, Thailand. This agreement, presided over by then-Councilman Tom LaBonge and former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, formalized the bond between the two cities named City of Angels, and recognized Los Angeles as home to the largest population of Thais outside of Thailand.<sup>810</sup>

<sup>810</sup> "Flight of the Kinnara," Thai Community Development Center, accessed March 5, 2018, <http://thaicdc.org/flight-of-the-kinarra/>; "City of Los Angeles and Bangkok sign an agreement officially recognizing the friendship between the two cities named, City of Angels," May 27, 2013, Thai Community Development Center, accessed March 5, 2018, <http://thaicdc.org/2013/05/27/city-of-los-angeles-and-bangkok-sign-an-agreement-officially-recognizing-the-friendship-between-the-two-cities-named-city-of-angels/>.

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**F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES**

This section assists with the identification and evaluation of properties that may be significant for their association with Asian American history in Los Angeles under one of the five historic contexts of this MPDF. A wide range of property types has been identified and the different types are referenced throughout the contexts.

***National Register Criteria for Evaluation***

Properties may be eligible under Criteria A, B, C, and/or D of the National Register:

- A: that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history,
- B: that are associated with the lives of persons significant in the past,
- C: that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction,
- D: that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Certain kinds of properties are not usually considered for listing in the National Register: religious properties, moved properties, birthplaces or graves, cemeteries, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and properties achieving significance within the past fifty years. These properties can be eligible for listing, however, if they meet special requirements, called Criteria Considerations, in addition to meeting the regular requirements (that is, being eligible under one or more of the four Criteria and possessing integrity).

**Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties**

A religious property is eligible if it derives its primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.

**Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties**

A property removed from its original or historically significant location can be eligible if it is significant primarily for architectural value or it is the surviving property most importantly associated with a historic person or event.

**Criteria Consideration C: Birthplaces of Graves**

A birthplace or grave of a historical figure is eligible if the person is of outstanding importance and no other appropriate site or building exists directly associated with his or her productive life.

**Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries**

A cemetery is eligible if it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, age, distinctive design features, or association with historic events.

**Criteria Consideration E: Reconstructed Properties**

A reconstructed property is eligible when it is accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan and when no other building or structure with the same associations has survived. All three requirements must be met.

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**Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties**

A property primarily commemorative in intent can be eligible if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance.

**Criteria Consideration G: Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years**

A property achieving significance within the past fifty years is eligible if it is of *exceptional importance*.

Fifty years is a general estimate of the time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance. This consideration guards against the listing of properties of passing contemporary interest and ensures that the National Register is a list of truly historic places. Exceptional importance sufficient to satisfy Criteria Consideration G is a measure of the property’s importance within the appropriate historic context, at the local, state, or national level of significance.

Most extant resources meeting this requirement are associated with the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean populations. There are fewer resources associated with the Filipino and Thai communities. Those properties not of exceptional importance may become eligible when more time has passed. It is anticipated that this MPDF will be amended over time to include expanded periods of significance and other Asian American populations in Los Angeles, and to address additional themes and property types not yet known.

***Integrity***

Properties eligible for the National Register must also have integrity, the ability to convey their significance. Integrity is based on significance: why, where, and when a property is important. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment. It must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Only after significance is fully established can integrity be evaluated. Ultimately, the question of integrity is answered by whether or not the property retains the **identity** for which it is significant.

Historic properties either retain integrity (convey their significance) or they do not. Within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity:

- *Location* is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- *Design* is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- *Setting* is the physical environment of a historic property.
- *Materials* are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- *Workmanship* is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

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- *Feeling* is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- *Association* is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant.

Each type of property depends on certain aspects of integrity more than others to express its historic significance. Determining which aspects are most important to a particular property requires an understanding of the property's significance and its essential physical features. A property important for association with an event, historical pattern, or person(s) ideally might retain all seven aspects of integrity. Integrity of design and workmanship, however, might not be as important to the significance, and would not be relevant if the property were a site. A basic integrity test for a property associated with an important event or person is whether a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists at the time of nomination.

All properties change over time. It is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity. The essential physical features are those features that define both why a property is significant (Applicable Criteria and Areas of Significance) and when it was significant (Periods of Significance). Street-facing elevations should retain most of their major design features; some original materials may have been altered or removed. Resources should retain the overall shape and rhythm of window openings and entrances, even if storefronts have changed. Replacement of storefronts is a common alteration, and a missing storefront may not automatically exclude commercial buildings from eligibility.

If there are a number of proximate resources relatively equal in importance, or a property is of large acreage with a variety of resources, and most of those resources retain integrity, the group of resources should be evaluated as a historic district. For a district to retain integrity as a whole, the majority of the components that make up the district's historic character must possess integrity even if they are individually undistinguished. Contributors to a district may have a greater degree of acceptable alterations than properties individually eligible. Properties with reversible alterations to the exterior, such as enclosed porches and replaced windows on residential properties, should not automatically be excluded from consideration. The relationships among the district's components must be substantially unchanged since the period of significance.

Architectural and physical attributes of some properties associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be modest, and some may have been altered, compromising integrity of design, materials, and/or workmanship. Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses). Original use may have changed. Properties may still be eligible under Criteria A or B on the strength of their association with historic events or people. Retention of location, feeling, association, and sometimes

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setting, may be more important than design, workmanship, and materials. Properties eligible under Criterion C must retain those physical features that characterize the type, period, or method of construction that the property represents. Location and setting is important for those properties whose design is a reflection of their immediate environment.

In general, property types associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles that meet the registration requirements for significance and integrity can be considered rare; in some cases, there may be only one or a few eligible resources. Registration Requirements for property types were developed based on knowledge and comparative analysis of physical characteristics and/or historical associations. The integrity requirements and considerations take into account rarity of resources, knowledge of their relative integrity, and significance evaluations based primarily on eligibility under Criteria A and B.

**Registration Requirements**

All property types must date from within the period of significance for the associated context, retain most of the character defining features from their period of significance, and retain sufficient integrity to convey their significance. Properties must have been constructed or used by Asian Americans and represent an important association with the Asian American community in Los Angeles.

Properties must be eligible in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Asian, where Asian may serve as a placeholder for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and/or Thai to be specified as appropriate in the individual nomination. Nominations for properties eligible in the area of Ethnic Heritage must also identify areas of significance that closely relate to the events, activities, characteristics, or information for which the property is significant. Registration requirements and/or special integrity considerations particular to specific property types are identified as needed.

**Property Types Associated with Prominent Persons in Asian American History**

Description: Properties associated with prominent persons in Asian American History in Los Angeles are common to all contexts and comprise one of the largest groups of historic resources identified under this MPDF. They include residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, and agricultural resources and cover the full period of significance for each related context. Resources can be found citywide, with some concentrations in the geographic areas of settlement and migration as discussed in the context narratives. Architectural type, style, and detail vary widely and are generally based on the date of construction.

Significance: Properties associated with prominent Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B at the local, state, or national level. A property must be directly associated with the productive life of a significant Asian American or associated with Los Angeles residents of other cultures and ethnicities who have been instrumental in furthering opportunities for Asians Americans. Individuals may be important in a wide range of areas of significance including, and not limited to Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Agriculture, Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Communications, Entertainment/Recreation, Exploration/Settlement,

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Industry, Art, Performing Arts, Health/Medicine, Politics/Government, Military, Religion, and Social History. Individuals include important civic leaders and activists, business owners, educators, doctors, actors, writers, politicians, farmers, athletes, and artists. Residential properties and professional offices may be associated with persons significant in civil rights and issues related to deed restriction and segregation. While the associated historic context narratives identify numerous persons significant in Asian American history whose associated properties may be evaluated under this property type, more may be identified with additional research.

Registration Requirements:

- Directly associated with the productive life of a significant Asian American or associated with Los Angeles residents of other cultures and ethnicities who have been instrumental in furthering opportunities for Asians Americans
- Individual must be proven to have made an important contribution to one or more areas of significance as it relates to Asian American history
- Individual must have lived in or used the property during the period in which he or she achieved significance
- Contributions of individuals must be compared to those of others who were active, successful, prosperous, or influential in the same field
- Each property associated with someone important should be compared with other properties associated with that individual to identify those resources that are good representatives of the person’s historic contributions
- For multi-family residential properties, the apartment or room occupied by the person must be readable from the period of significance
- Properties associated with the lives of living persons *may* be eligible, if the person’s active life in their field of endeavor is over AND sufficient time has elapsed to assess both their field and their contribution in a historic perspective
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Settlement: Residential Historic Districts**

Description: Residential historic districts associated with Asian American settlement and migration patterns are primarily comprised of tracts, subdivisions, or neighborhoods of residential buildings, and may also include other property types and, in particular, commercial buildings. Enclaves exclusive to Asian Americans are not common. There are some areas of migration and settlement with mixed ethnicities whose Asian populations grew in size—particularly in the postwar period, and after racially restrictive covenants were outlawed in 1948. There are no known extant residential enclaves from the prewar period. Known enclaves associated with the postwar period are primarily associated with the growing Japanese population of Los Angeles and in the areas of Harbor Gateway, the Crenshaw District, and Jefferson Park.

While some are settlements of earlier residential neighborhoods (dating from the first half of the twentieth century), others were developed as tract housing in the late 1950s and are comprised of ranch houses. Some feature vernacular Japanese gardens and landscape features giving a distinct sense of

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place. A noteworthy residential ethnic enclave is the Crenshaw Seinan neighborhood in the Crenshaw District, which features single-family ranch houses, multi-family buildings, and commercial buildings associated with Japanese businesses. Although the postwar Seinan community was far more widespread than the boundaries of this district, this concentration of resources is significant because it was developed by and marketed to Japanese Americans and promoted for its ethnic character through visual characteristics evocative of Japanese design traditions.

Significance: Residential historic districts associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for the National Register at the local, state, or national level of significance under Criterion A and Criterion C. Areas of significance include Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Exploration/Settlement, and Social History. Other areas of significance may be identified. Only residential districts associated with settlement of the Japanese American population of Los Angeles after World War II have been identified as part of this MPDF. They evidence migration patterns throughout the city and increased ability for homeownership. Other districts may be identified over time.

Registration Requirements:

- Must have a significant association with the settlement and/or migration of Asian Americans over time
- May be associated with numerous historic personages who lived in the neighborhood for the cumulative important of those individuals to the community
- May represent issues relating to deed restriction and segregation
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Business and Commerce**

**Commercial Buildings**

Description: Commercial properties associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles housed a variety of businesses and vary widely. Although they cover the full period of significance for each related context, most date from the 1940s and later. Some businesses are still in operation. Businesses include retail stores, neighborhood theaters, and restaurants that served basic neighborhood needs as well as professional offices/services and lodging. Property types also include buildings housing organizations that supported commerce and business development. Commercial retail buildings associated with herbal medicine are discussed in the Property Types Associated with Health and Medicine.

- Restaurant/Bar/Club
- Motion Picture Theater
- Professional Office/Service
  - Mortuary/Funeral Home
  - Bank/Financial Institution
  - Employment Agency
  - Law Office
  - Barber Shop



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- Tailor
- Lodging
  - Hotel/Motel
  - Boarding House
- Retail
  - Store/Shop
  - Market/Grocery
  - Bakery
  - Nursery
  - Florist
- Chambers of Commerce and other business development/support organizations

Commercial buildings are located citywide within areas of settlement and migration as indicated in the historic context narratives. In particular, they can be found in areas including Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Sawtelle, Jefferson Park, the Crenshaw District, and the Harbor area. Buildings may or may not have been purpose built. Size, massing, form, and architectural style vary over time. Buildings types range from stand-alone buildings to small, one-story single-storefront varieties to larger, multi-story multi-storefront examples. Of the property types listed above, restaurants and markets constitute a large percentage of known commercial resources and are common to all contexts. Known mortuaries, florists, nurseries, and gardening-related business are associated with the Japanese American community. Business support organizations include the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (Chinatown), the Southern California Gardeners Federation (Little Tokyo), and the Thai Trade Center/Chamber of Commerce.

Significance: Commercial properties associated with Asian American businesses in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level. Resources may be significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Commerce, Community Planning and Development, and Social History for their association with significant Asian American businesses of various types. Hotels, motels, and boarding houses may also be significant places associated with the resettlement of Japanese after World War II and in the area of Industry for their association with Asian American labor history. Movie theaters may also be significant in the area of Entertainment/Recreation.

Significant businesses and business organizations evidence patterns of settlement, migration, and changing demographics and played an important role in the commercial growth and development of Los Angeles' Asian American populations. The importance may relate to the particular goods and services provided by businesses or to the role businesses played in local, regional, or even national commerce. Resources may be the founding location or the long-term location of a business. It is common for early businesses to have relocated over time to new locations particularly in the postwar period. As Asian Americans were excluded as customers and sometimes employees at white-owned businesses, they formed their own businesses to provide services and employment opportunities to members of their communities. Some business also served as cultural hubs and popular places to meet and socialize. The customer base for a business may have included all Asian American communities and, in some cases, reached beyond these communities to serve other populations.

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Under Criterion B, a resource may be significant for its association with an Asian American who made important individual contributions to commercial development in Los Angeles. Some commercial buildings may also be significant under Criterion C, as excellent examples of their respective styles including the Asian Eclectic style, particularly in Chinatown and Little Tokyo. Many individuals who established these businesses emerged as community leaders.

Registration Requirements:

- Strongly associated with the commercial and professional development of the Asian American community
- Associated with a business that made important contributions to commercial growth and development in Los Angeles and specifically to the Asian American community
- Founding or long-term location of a business significant to the Asian American community
- May be associated with a business/corporation that has gained regional or national importance
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, materials, and association

**Commercial Historic Districts**

Description: A significant concentration of commercial buildings associated with Asian American businesses in a defined geographic area may constitute a historic district. As discussed in the contexts, identified commercial districts within the period of significance for this MPDF include Little Tokyo (a designated National Historic Landmark district, New Chinatown (1938-1960), and Greater Chinatown (1947-1950). No commercial historic districts have been identified within the period of significance relating to the Korean, Filipino, or Thai communities.

The Chinatown districts are characterized by one and two-story attached commercial buildings, with storefronts directly on the sidewalk. While they are primarily mixed-use commercial, they also include institutional use building. The Asian Eclectic architectural style is most often employed for buildings and other design features, displaying complex rooflines with colorful tiles, flared eaves with decoratively carved roof beams, geometric window screens, and representations of various animals, including dragons, lions, and fish. The districts also include open plazas with Asian-influenced fountains, sculptures, murals, and other contributing features (such as pai-lou or gateways) designed by noted Asian American artists. Some storefronts and windows may have been altered over time and some buildings may have been constructed outside the periods of significance.

Significance: Commercial historic districts associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Identified districts are significant in areas including Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Commerce, Community Planning and Development, and Social History. Commercial districts may also be significant in the area of Architecture under Criterion C as a distinctive and cohesive collection of Asian Eclectic-designed buildings associated with noted Asian American architects and in the area of art for public art features designed master artists or for their high artistic value. Districts evidence the direct

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influence of Asian American business and civic leaders in the planning, development, and operation of key commercial centers associated with the Asian American community. They served as the hub of day-to-day commercial and social activities for Asian Americans but were also intentionally designed to evoke a sense of the exotic and attract a tourist base to contribute to the local economy.

**Registration Requirements:**

- District must include a substantial number of buildings designed by Asian American architects and/or be influenced by significant business/civic leaders in the Asian American community.
- Conveys a strong sense of overall historic environment from the period of significance
- Represents an intact grouping of commercial buildings which, as a whole, exemplify the Asian Eclectic style
- Has a strong cultural association to the community in which it is located
- May be important for its association with numerous historic personages who operated businesses or provided services for the cumulative importance of those individuals to the Asian American community
- Should retain integrity of location, design, materials, setting, and feeling

**Property Types Associated with Religion and Spirituality**

**Description:** Property types associated with religion and spirituality are common to all contexts and comprise one of the largest groups of historic resources identified under this MPDF. They include individual buildings as well as religious campuses with multiple buildings, which, in addition to churches and temples, house living quarters, schools, and community and sports activities. Campuses may be evaluated as historic districts. The oldest Asian American religious buildings in Los Angeles are primarily associated with the early settlement period of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean communities and are located in areas discussed in the contexts including Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Boyle Heights, South Jefferson, and Sawtelle. Property types also comprise cemeteries, including Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights.

Specific property types include churches that served a variety of Christian congregations (Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, and Catholic, among others). These church buildings, were often originally constructed by and for other congregations, and subsequently used as churches for Asian American congregations, while others were purposes built. It was common for congregations to move locations over time, first renting and then purchasing or constructing new buildings. For this reason, many church locations date from the postwar period although congregations may have been established much earlier. In addition, many religious campuses were expanded over time with new larger buildings replacing the earlier ones. Some church properties were founded by non-Asians as part of local Christian missions, particularly in the prewar period. An intact early example is the Saint Francis Xavier Church and School at 222. S. Hewitt Street, a rare example of a religious facility specifically constructed by the Catholic Church to serve the Japanese community (1921-1939). Later churches include the Korean Presbyterian Church (since 1938) and the Filipino Christian Church (since 1950), the oldest Filipino-serving church in the U.S. Christian churches were generally designed in architectural styles of their

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period of construction. Size, massing, and form vary over time. Most extant churches have undergone some degree of alterations over time.

Property types also include purpose built temples, mostly Buddhist. Most date from 1930s and later and are designed in the Asian Eclectic style. The Koyasan Buddhist Temple (Koyasan Beikuku Betsuin) in Little Tokyo is one of the oldest continually operating Buddhist sects in Los Angeles, dating to 1912. The temple dates to 1940. While many second- and third-generation Chinese Americans practiced Christianity, local benevolent associations also served religious or spiritual functions for those who continued traditional practices of Taoism, Buddhism, or Confucianism. Benevolent association buildings frequently included shrines on the second floor and were also used for instruction of children in religious practices. One example is the Kong Chow Temple in New Chinatown, which is located on the second floor of the Kong Chow Benevolent Association. Another example is the Chinese Confucius Temple School, established by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (1952) to provide Chinese language instruction with the tenets of Confucianism. The more recent Wat Thai temple (1979) in the San Fernando Valley is the largest Thai Theraveda Buddhist temple in the United States.

Significance: Religious properties associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Associated areas of significance include Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Religion, Community Planning and Development, and Social History.

Religious buildings and institutions provided spiritual support for Asian Americans, and served as social and cultural hubs in the community in which they were located. Many offered new immigrants basic social services as well as housing, language classes, and employment counseling. Some also featured recreational facilities, meeting rooms for clubs and other organizations, and sponsored activities such as dances and school programs for local children. They also represented springboards for community leadership, business networks, and civil rights activism. For the Japanese community, properties associated with religion and spirituality may have also played a role in safekeeping possessions during incarceration and providing assistance or temporary housing following their return until about 1947.

Many individuals associated with religion and spirituality emerged as community leaders. Under Criterion B, a resource may also be significant for its association with an individual. Some religious buildings may also be significant under Criterion C, as excellent examples of the Asian Eclectic style or other styles of their period of construction.

Registration Requirements:

- May be important for its association with numerous historic personages for the cumulative importance of those individuals to the community
- May reflect the changing demographics of a Los Angeles neighborhood
- May represent a significant event or movement in the social history of Los Angeles
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

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**Property Types Associated with Education**

Description: Properties associated with education may include colleges/universities, public high schools and grammar schools, and language schools. Parochial schools are included in the Religion and Spirituality property type. Schools may include stand-alone buildings or campuses of multiple buildings comprising historic districts. Size, massing, form, and architectural style of education-related resources vary over time. The majority of education-related resources identified are Japanese language schools dating from the pre- and postwar periods and located in various areas of settlement for Japanese Americans including Boyle Heights, Little Tokyo, Sawtelle, Venice, and the Harbor area. The earliest ones typically utilized existing buildings, whereas the postwar schools were often purpose built by Japanese Americans. Public high schools and grammar schools related to this property type are less common and typically served Asian populations in areas of Los Angeles with diverse ethnic populations. College and university-related resources date from the late 1960s and early 1970s. The most prominent is the Asian American Studies Center. Located on the campus of UCLA, it houses one of the first, and nationally recognized, academic program in Asian studies dating from 1969.

Significance: Educational resources associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Associated areas of significance may vary over time and include Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Education, and Social History. Language schools are significant for the role they played in supporting and promoting Japanese American cultural traditions and practices. The later college/university facilities are significant for their strong association with the Asian American Movement and the development of the nation's first Asian Studies academic programs. For the Japanese community, properties associated with education may have also played a role in providing assistance or temporary housing following their return after incarceration, and until about 1947.

Some individuals associated with education may have emerged as community leaders. Under Criterion B, a resource may be significant for its association with an individual. Some educational resources may be significant under Criterion C as excellent examples of the Asian Eclectic or other architectural styles of the period of construction. Historic districts may also be significant under Criterion C.

**Registration Requirements:**

- Represents an important association with the Asian American community in Los Angeles
- May be important for its association with numerous historic personages (who attended the school) for the cumulative importance of those individuals to the Asian American community
- May represent issues relating to civil rights
- May represent a significant event or movement associated with education and social history of Los Angeles
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

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**Property Types Associated with Community Organizations, Social Services, and Institutions**

Description: Property types associated with community organizations, social services, and institutions are common to all contexts and comprise one of the largest groups of historic resources identified under this MPDF. They cover a wide range of facilities serving many functions including, and not limited to, the following:

- Community and Cultural Centers
- Fraternal Lodges, Associations, and Organizations
- Benevolent Associations (Chinese context only)
- Senior Citizens Centers
- Youth Organizations
- Women’s Clubs and Organizations
- Children’s Homes/Orphanages

Known property types are located citywide within areas of settlement associated with each historic context. While they may cover the full period of significance for each context, most date from the 1940s and later. Some organizations and institutions may have been established earlier in different locations and most are no longer extant, such as those in Old Chinatown. Chinese Benevolent Associations are exclusively associated with the Chinese American context and are located in Chinatown.

Associated buildings may be purpose built or utilize existing buildings constructed for other purposes. Many associated resources may be in their original location, but have had significant new construction or renovation over time. Resources include stand-alone buildings as well as attached one and two-story mixed-use storefront examples (common in Chinatown). Size, massing, form, and architectural style vary over time.

Significance: Institutional building associated with community organizations, social services, and institutions associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Associated areas of significance include Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Social History, Politics/Government, and Community Planning and Development. These organizations served as social and cultural hubs in the communities in which they were located and played a critical role in the lives of Asian Americans of all ages. Many provided a range of services to new immigrants settling in Los Angeles to assist with housing, employment, language, and education needs. Others provided activities and services to promote Asian cultural traditions and practices as well as health, social services, and community development programs. Still others supported political activism, equality, and civil rights.

For the Japanese community, properties associated with community organizations, social services, and institutions may have played a role in providing assistance or temporary housing following their return after incarceration, and until about 1947.

Many individuals associated with Asian American community organizations, social services, and institutions may have also made significant individual contributions to their respective field and

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associated resources may be eligible under Criterion B. Some buildings may also be eligible under Criterion C as excellent examples of the Asian Eclectic style or other architectural style of their period of construction.

Registration Requirements:

- May be important for its association with numerous historic personages for the cumulative importance of those individuals to the community
- May reflect the changing demographics of a Los Angeles neighborhood
- May represent a significant event or movement in the social history of Los Angeles
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Health and Medicine**

Description: Properties associated with health and medicine primarily include institutional and commercial buildings such as hospitals, homes for the aged, medical offices, medical clinics, and herbal medicine stores. They cover the full period of significance for each related context. Most resources are associated with the Chinese and Japanese communities. The only known hospital is the Japanese hospital in Boyle Heights, which opened in 1929. The hospital was established by Japanese doctors, who were not granted staff privileges by other hospitals, but opened its doors to people of all ethnicities. Though not common, research may also reveal single-family residences or other facilities (particularly in Boyle Heights) associated with Japanese sanba, or midwives, who provided health care facilities for pregnant women in the early twentieth century. Property types also include medical offices and clinics of noted doctors and practitioners that served Asian American clientele. Of note is the Dr. Primitiva Demandante Asprin clinical laboratory in Wilmington. Dr. Asprin was the first Filipina doctor to be licensed to practice medicine in California. Also of note is the Yu Family Acupuncture Clinic. Dr. Moses Yu, well known for his acupuncture practice in China, successfully fought for legalization of acupuncture in California in 1976, and opened his clinic in a converted residence in the Westlake neighborhood soon thereafter.

Herbal medicine stores are also included in the health/medicine property types and are primarily associated with Chinese American businesses. Herbal medicine was both familiar and likely the only medical treatment available to early immigrants, and Chinese were typically denied access to public medical facilities. Herbal medicine was also a rare example of a profession that allowed Chinese immigrants to make a long-term living using an ethnic skill. Because legislation prevented Chinese herbal doctors from becoming licensed physicians, leaving them vulnerable to lawsuits and arrests, Chinese herbal doctors often promoted their businesses as merchants selling herbs. Even in Chinatown, practitioners kept a low profile, often occupying nondescript storefronts. Successful entrepreneurs established import networks and set up mail order businesses to ensure a steady supply of medicines from China. An early herbal store, Sun Wing Wo, occupied a commercial space in the Garnier Building. Later examples of long-term herbal stores were established in New Chinatown, during the 1930s, and then Greater Chinatown. These resources are generally attached one and two-story mixed-use storefronts.

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Significance: Health and medicine-related resources associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Associated areas of significance include Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Health/Medicine, and Social History. Identified resources played a significant role in supporting the health and welfare of Asian Americans against racial discrimination in medical care. They also reflect the struggle for the recognition and legalization of traditional Asian medical practices.

Some resources may also be significant under Criterion C as excellent examples of the Asian Eclectic style. Individuals associated with health and medicine may have also made significant individual contributions to the field and may be significant under Criterion B above.

Registration Requirements:

- Represents an important association with the history and practice of Asian medical traditions such Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Visual and Performing Arts**

Description: Property types associated with visual and performing arts include venues for live performances associated with drama, dance, and music, as well as artist studios, museums, galleries, and other exhibition spaces.

Buildings may be purpose built or non-purpose built. Size, massing, form, and architectural style vary over time. In some cases, more research is needed in the fields of visual, performing, and literary arts to identify significant resources. Research for the Korean context revealed that these topics have not been well documented in English. Identified resources include the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (1980, Little Tokyo)—which houses one of the largest collections of ethnic art in the nation and features a large performance theater—and East West Players, a nationally recognized Asian American theater organization established in 1965 in the basement of the Pilgrim Church in the Silver Lake neighborhood and moved to the Union Center for the Arts in Little Tokyo (old Japanese Union Church). It is anticipated that over time more associated resources will be identified.

Property types also include works of art by noted Asian American artists such as murals and sculptures. Murals and sculptures are contributing features of commercial historic districts discussed under Property Types Associated with Business and Commerce. Other works have been identified in areas of settlement associated with each context that postdate the related periods of significance. As such, no registration requirements for works of art have been developed at this time. Resources may become eligible as more time passes.

Significance: Resources associated with Asian Americans in the visual and performing arts may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Associated areas of significance include Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Performing Arts, Art, and



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Social History. Identified resources served as important venues to promote Asian American culture and traditions as well as significant actors, writers, musicians, visual artists, and others.

Many individuals associated with Asian American Visual and Performing Arts may have made significant individual contributions to their respective field and may be significant under Criterion B. Some resources may also be significant under Criterion C as excellent examples of the Asian Eclectic style or other styles of their period of construction.

Registration Requirements:

- Represents a strong association with Asian Americans in the arts, including performing, visual, and literary arts
- Primary interior spaces, especially performance spaces, should remain intact
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television**

Description: Property types associated with media include commercial buildings used by newspapers and publishing companies as well as television and radio stations. In some cases, newspapers were published in offices of Asian American organizations. The Shin Han Min Bo and The New Korea newspapers were headquartered in the Korean Independence Memorial Building. Newspapers may also have been published in residences, although no extant examples have specifically been identified as part of this MPDF. There are few newspaper-related associated resources from the period of significance for each context. Many newspapers moved locations frequently or were in print for only short periods of time. Others were in locations that are no longer extant (such as those in Old Chinatown) or that no longer retain integrity from the period of significance. Of those identified, none appear to be purpose built and were located in commercial buildings with multiple uses and tenants. For example, the New Kown Tai Press, the first ethnic Chinese newspaper, was published in the basement of mixed-use commercial building in New Chinatown. Radio and television resources dating from the period of significance for each context are sparse. Those identified are associated with the Korean American community and require additional research. All media resources associated with the Thai community date beyond the period of significance and require additional research over time.

Significance: Buildings associated Asian American media may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Associated areas of significance include Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Communications, and Social History. Newspapers and press served as the independent voice of the Asian American community in Los Angeles. Media provided general information, helped Asian Americans adjust to life In Los Angeles, and were springboards for social and political activism. Many individuals associated with Asian American media may have also made significant individual contributions to their respective field and may be significant under Criterion B.

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Registration Requirements:

- Founding or long-term location of a publication, radio, or television station significant to the Asian American community
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Sports and Recreation**

Description: Although sports played a significant role in the social and recreational life of Asian American, few resources are extant. Those identified include martial arts studios. Although martial arts may straddle the definition of a sport and discipline, for purposes of this MPDF, it is categorized as a sport. Those identified are associated primarily with the Japanese American community (called dojos). An exception is Bruce Lee's Martial Arts Studio located in Chinatown (1967). No known studios have been identified for their association with the Thai, Korean, or Filipino communities as part of the MPDF. Martial arts studios in the Japanese community were located citywide in areas of settlement by Japanese Americans in the prewar era; most were closed down during the war and some subsequently reopened.

This property type includes commercial buildings specifically housing martial arts schools and studios. Identified examples are located in modest commercial storefronts and were not purpose built. One example, Seinan Judo Dojo in South Los Angeles, is located in a single-family residence. The property type also includes churches, community centers, and other buildings that offered a wide range of services, programs, and activities as identified under Property Types Associated with Community Organizations, Social Services, and Institutions. The Tenrikyo Church in Boyle Heights established a Judo program in 1964 instrumental in making Japanese martial arts an Olympic sport. The dojo boasts a long roster of national and international competitors.

Significance: Martial arts resources associated with Asian American in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Associated areas of significance include ethnic history, social history, and entertainment/recreation. Martial arts played a central role in the Asian American community, reinforcing traditional cultural practices. Particularly important are studios that reestablished following World War II as well as those that included well-known instructors of various martial arts disciplines and contributed to the professionalism and mainstream popularity of the sport. The first organized martial arts Kendo activity in Los Angeles emerged in 1914 and by the end of the 1920s, the majority of participants were Nisei. Judo clubs also became common in Southern California and tournaments were held regularly in Little Tokyo.

Individuals associated with martial arts may have also made significant individual contributions to the field and may be significant under Criterion B above.

Registration Requirements:

- Founding or long-term location of a martial arts studio/program significant in Asian American history

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- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Military History**

Description: Property types associated with Asian Americans and the military mostly date from the World War II period. They include Wartime Civil Control Association (WCCA) civil control stations (also known as processing centers) and temporary detention centers associated with the incarceration of Japanese Americans during the war. Control stations were established throughout Los Angeles and located in existing buildings such as churches, schools, and community centers. Control stations were established throughout Los Angeles in areas including Little Tokyo, Downtown, Sawtelle, Venice, Hollywood, and South Los Angeles. Japanese residents were required to register at one of the stations and then reported on their designated day of travel. Extant locations include the Japanese Union Church in Little Tokyo, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, the Japanese Institute of Sawtelle, and buildings at 923 Venice Boulevard and 360 S. Westlake Avenue.

In addition to the control centers, temporary detention sites were established at Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) camps in Griffith Park and the Tujunga area of the San Fernando Valley. The CCC buildings are no longer extant. The center in Tujunga is locally designated as the Site of the La Tuna Canyon Detention Center.

Military property types also include commemorative war monuments and memorials associated with the Korean and Japanese American communities. Identified examples are the Japanese American 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team memorial (1949), Garden of the Pines memorial to Issei pioneers (1966), and the Go For Broke Monument and National Education Center honoring Japanese Americans in WWII (1999) all in Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights. The Korean Bell and Belfry of Friendship (1976) is dedicated to American veterans of the Korean War and located in San Pedro's Angels Gate Park.

Following the war and their return to Los Angeles after incarceration, some Japanese Americans found temporary housing at many religious institutions, schools, and community centers in Los Angeles. These are discussed above in the property types relating to education, religion and spirituality, and community organizations, social services, and institutions.

Significance: Military properties associated with Asian American in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Resources may be significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Military, and Social History. These properties represent a significant chapter in American history, specifically the treatment of Japanese Americans by the U.S. government during World War II. It was the culmination of a pattern of discriminatory treatment toward Japanese Americans reinforced through laws.

**Registration Requirements: Civil Control and Detention Centers**

- Facility used as a civil control center or temporary detention center for Japanese Americans during World War II
- Has a clear association with the Japanese American population during World War II

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- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

Registration Requirements: Commemorative War Monuments and Memorials

- A war monument/memorial specifically designed to honor or commemorate the role of Korean and Japanese Americans in the Korean War and World War II
- Should retain integrity of location, design, feeling, and association

Property Types Associated with Agriculture

Description: There are few known resources in Los Angeles relating to Asian Americans and agriculture. Property types include vernacular agricultural landscapes and ranch/farm houses.

Historic vernacular landscapes depict agricultural activity from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. They generally include at least one agricultural building that serves as a focal point of agricultural activity (e.g. a barn or stable) and adjacent agricultural land. Excellent examples will also include related structures for a full range of farming activity such as irrigation, harvesting, storage, or livestock containment. The landscape may be located on a larger lot and be visibly older than surrounding development.

The only known resource identified as part of the MPDF is the Jue Joe Ranch at 16608 Vanowen Boulevard in Van Nuys (Lake Balboa). The ranch, which once stretched some 100 acres and included numerous residential and work buildings, supplied asparagus to the produce markets in Downtown Los Angeles. Joe was also one of the directors of the San Fernando Valley Asparagus Marketing Association, and by 1925 was considered one of best-known Chinese growers in the Valley. A small piece of this land remains, containing a barn and what appears to be an asparagus packing shed. A residence and swimming pool, constructed by Jue Joe’s son after his father’s death in 1941, is also extant. Other ranch houses may be identified in the San Fernando Valley and the West Adams areas of Los Angeles, but would no longer have the historic association with a ranch. They may still be eligible as the only extant property types associated with Asian American agricultural history of Los Angeles.

There is little if any clear difference between the design of a farmhouse and a non-farm residence from the same era of development. Farmhouses are generally of wood-frame construction and reflect popular architectural style of the period of construction. They may be significant when they can visibly convey their historic use through the presence of an associated vernacular agricultural landscape. Due to their relative rarity, intact farmhouses constructed prior to 1900 may have the smallest suggestion of its former setting (a larger lot, landscaped with fruit trees and/or vegetable gardens) and still be eligible, particularly at the local level of significance. Properties from the twentieth century may require a more expansive historic landscape with some additional agricultural features, such as one or more outbuildings, related structures such as canals, standpipes, corrals, and tanks, agricultural land, or a related grove/orchard. Properties associated with agriculture may also be associated with Asian Americans who made important individual contributions to the field under Criterion B.

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Significance: Agricultural properties associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Resources may be significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Agriculture, and Social History.

Truck farming was an important part of agricultural production in Los Angeles, particularly for local markets. It provided a livelihood for thousands of small farmers in rural parts of the city, including farmers from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Their contributions when viewed in aggregate, were critical to the local economy. Furthermore, some truck farms represent a notable movement within early twentieth century residential development to provide self-sufficient acreage in a systematic way to newcomers who wanted a rural lifestyle.

Intact farmhouses are rare and may be significant remnants of a once expansive agricultural landscape within the city. They represent truck farming for the local market, once a critical component of the agricultural economy of Los Angeles. Farmhouses are the properties that are most intimately associated with the farmers themselves, and some may reflect the agricultural traditions of Asian Americans.

Vernacular agricultural landscapes may be significant remnants of a once expansive agricultural landscape within the city. They represent truck farming and/or ranching for the local market, both of which were once critical components of the agricultural economy of Los Angeles. Of all potentially eligible property types, the vernacular agricultural landscape has the strongest historical associations through the retention of several related features. This more complete and expansive property type allows for the fullest understanding of historical agricultural practice and conveys a more all-encompassing sense of place.

Registration Requirements: Vernacular Agricultural Landscape

- Agricultural property owned and/or operated by an Asian American farmer/rancher
- Open landscape with agricultural features that may include a farmhouse, farmland, orchard/grove, agricultural outbuildings and related features such as corrals, irrigation systems, standpipes, and tanks.
- May have played a significant role in agricultural development for local and/or regional/national markets
- Relationships between buildings/structures and landscape features should be retained
- Should retain integrity of location, setting, materials, and feeling

Registration Requirements: Ranch/Farm House

- Associated with a significant Asian American farmer/rancher
- Constructed as a farm/ranch house
- Wood-framed single family residence
- Often designed in prevalent architectural styles of the period
- May convey historic use through an associated historic vernacular landscape
- Because of their rarity, pre-1900 examples may have minimal associated agricultural landscape feature

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- Associated historic vernacular landscape features may include barns or stables, corrals, irrigation features, standpipes, tanks, farm land, and or a grove/orchard
- Should retain integrity of setting, materials, design, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Industry**

**Description:** Industrial properties related to Asian Americans in Los Angeles during the period of significance are very rare due to ongoing development at the Port of Los Angeles and demolition of resources associated with Terminal Island and the canning industry as well as demolition of the areas associated with the wholesale produce and flower industries. Known resources are primarily related to food processing and manufacturing and wholesalers of produce and other foods. Extant industrial buildings are generally one-story and utilitarian in design; some may have also included commercial retail space for sales of products. One of the most notable is the Oriental Food Products founded in 1923 in South Los Angeles and operated at the original location until about 1954. Although the owners were Korean, their well-known brand, Jan-U-Wine, was marketed to Asian Americans throughout Los Angeles. K&S Company was established in 1928 and became one of the most successful wholesale operations in Los Angeles' Korean Community. A more recent resource is the Kim Bang Ah (1977) rice mill and rice cake factory in Koreatown. Known properties also include a rare, remaining and intact building from City Market associated with Jue Joe Company, a significant wholesale produce company owned by San Fernando Valley Chinese American rancher Jue Joe (see above under Properties Associated with Agriculture).

Property types associated with Asian American industries also include small commercial hotels and boarding houses that provided temporary housing for workers, mostly men. Most date from the early twentieth century to the 1930s. Though not many remain, those that are extant are located citywide with a small concentration in the area east of Downtown which housed workers in the nearby produce and flower markets – mostly Chinese and Japanese Americans. The buildings are generally masonry construction and typically four stories in height. Some are mixed-use buildings with retail on the first floor operated by Asian American businesses serving the residents. Other examples outside of the Downtown urban core are in residential neighborhoods with a low-scale residential character. Examples are typically one and two stories and wood frame, such as those which housed Japanese American men working as gardeners in boarding houses on the 500 block of Virgil Avenue in the area of Madison/J Flats and in the Sawtelle area.

Although not resulting from research and outreach completed as part of this MPDF, additional research may yield resources associated with Asian American in Los Angeles' garment industry as well as labor history in areas east of Downtown.

**Significance:** Industrial properties associated with Asian Americans in Los Angeles may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local, state, or national level of significance. Resources may be significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Asian, Industry, and Social History. They are rare remnants of the contributions of Asian Americans to Los Angeles' industrial history. They evidence the types of industries Asian Americans engaged and excelled in based on skills, knowledge,

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cultural traditions brought with them to Los Angeles and, in some cases, passed on through generations. They also represent a sense of entrepreneurship that triumphed despite racial discrimination and competition with Anglo industries over the years.

Registration Requirements: Industrial Building

- A key manufacturing or processing location for a significant Asian American-owned company whose branding and/or products had a significant impact on Los Angeles industrial history
  - May have included retails sales of products
  - One or more related utilitarian buildings
- May possess branding or company logos on the building exterior
- May retain distinctive equipment or building elements that reflect a particular kind of manufacturing process
- Often designed in prevalent architectural styles of the period
- Industry may have been a large employer of Asian Americans, although company may not have been Asian American owned
- Should retain integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, and association

Registration Requirements: Hotel/Boarding House

- Rare remaining example of a hotel/boarding house that provided housing for Asian American workers during the period of significance for the associated context
- Often designed in prevalent architectural styles of the period
- Should retain integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, and association

Property Types Associated with Cultural Landscapes: Designed Historic Landscapes

Description: Designed historic landscapes associated with Asian Americans include Japanese style gardens. Other types may be identified over time. Japanese style gardens are examples of vegetation and/or hardscape material consciously laid out by a master gardener, landscape architect, architect, or horticulturalist, or an owner or other amateur using Japanese-inspired design principles, associated with a residential, commercial, civic, industrial, or institutional area, and constructed between 1946 and 1969. Extant examples of pre-World War II gardens in the Japanese style are extremely rare. Post-WWII examples of Japanese style gardens are typically constructed as public gardens, such as sister city or friendship gardens, and many have a direct association with Japanese American community organizations. Known examples of Japanese style gardens include the garden at the Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant (designed by landscape architect Koichi Kawana) in the Encino area and the garden at Stoner Park in Sawtelle.

Significance: Japanese style gardens may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C at the local, state, or national level of significance. Associated resources are significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Japanese and Landscape Architecture. They may be significant for their design quality as well as the work of a master landscape architect.

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Japanese style gardens represent the influential contributions of Japanese design traditions and Japanese American gardeners and designers on the evolution of designed landscapes in Los Angeles. Popularized during the early years of the twentieth century in Southern California, garden designs in the Japanese style influenced generations of designers. Japanese style gardens are significant as a reflection of Japanese American immigration patterns and Japanese American acculturation in Southern California. Japanese style gardens may also be significant as a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect.

The introduction of Japanese garden design to Southern California occurred in 1894, with the opening of the California Mid-Winter International Exposition in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. A Japanese Village, originally conceived as a temporary exposition exhibit, was incorporated into Golden Gate Park. Baron Makoto Hagiwara, a Japanese landscape designer, constructed the permanent version, named the Japanese Tea Garden. The Baron and his descendants occupied Golden Gate Park's Japanese Tea Garden until their eviction and relocation to an internment camp in 1942. Japanese garden pavilions at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco (1915) and the Panama-California Exhibition in San Diego (1915) inspired the construction of Japanese-inspired tea gardens in a number of Los Angeles parks, including Eastlake Park (Lincoln Park), and the Japanese influence was a popular ornamental element in residential gardens.

The fascination with Japanese arts, design traditions, and culture remained strong throughout the 1920s and 1930s and produced many exquisite examples of Japanese-inspired gardens in Los Angeles. Japanese nationals or first-generation Japanese Americans (Issei) typically provided the technical expertise, labor, and continued maintenance of Japanese style gardens. Despite the widespread popularity of Japanese-influenced design in Los Angeles, anti-Asian sentiment was high in Southern California during the first half of the twentieth century with the passage of numerous examples of discriminatory legislation. During World War II, many Japanese style gardens were demolished, abandoned, defaced, or relocated.

Following the war years, Japanese-inspired gardens quickly shed their wartime stigma. The abundance of newspaper articles in the post-World War II era regarding the care and maintenance of backyard Japanese style gardens further attest to the widespread appeal and popularity of the style. The contemplative beauty of Japanese style gardens also appealed to the economy and design principles of the Modern style that emerged in Southern California in the post-war era.

In the Postwar era, gardening and nursery work represented one of the few occupational areas available to Japanese Americans with extensive agricultural expertise. By the early 1970s, increased opportunities for Japanese Americans meant that the era of the Japanese gardener was coming to an end.

Registration Requirements:

- Uses Japanese-inspired design principles associated with a residential, commercial, civic, industrial, or institutional area
- An excellent example of the type and/or represents the work of a significant landscape architect or designer



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- Retains significant character defining features such that the visual, spatial, and contextual relationships of the property may be understood
- Use of natural materials, such as large boulders, rock, sand, and logs
- Use of borrowed views, asymmetrical configuration of design elements, attention to ground plane patterns, varied textures, and closely clipped vegetation
- May include winding paths, waterfalls, ponds, and traditional symbolism (e.g., karesansui (dry gravel gardens), horesai (decorative islands), reihaiseki or sansom (stone arrangements) or shrines representative of aesthetic values associated with Zen Buddhism
- May include examples of traditional Japanese art forms or architectural and design elements, such as lanterns, half-moon bridges, pagodas, stepping stones, koi ponds, bonsai, and statuary
- May include traditional ceremonial buildings, such as a teahouse
- May include plant species typical of Japanese and/or California environments (e.g., Japanese maple, camellias, azaleas, rhododendrons, ferns, pines, bamboo, redwoods, elms, sycamores)
- A sufficient number of original materials should be extant such that the historic fabric, character, and overall visual effect has been preserved; some plants may have been replaced in kind
- Should retain integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with the Asian Eclectic Architectural Style**

**Description:** The term Asian Eclectic was coined by SurveyLA to convey a fusion of Asian architectural styles and ornamentation, frequently assembled in fantastical combinations to appear exotic. For purposes of the National Register, the style is classified as Other: Asian Eclectic and 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Period Revival: Eclectic Period Revival. Properties associated with the Asian Eclectic style include residential, institutional, industrial, and commercial buildings and historic districts. Properties that meet the 50-year threshold for significance are generally concentrated in the Chinatown and the Little Tokyo areas of Downtown Los Angeles. Later examples are located in Koreatown and sparsely scattered citywide such as the Wat Thai temple in North Hollywood. No specific example associated with the Filipino community have been identified as part of this MPDF.

The Asian Eclectic style features both pagoda-influenced forms and simplified modern forms with oriental detailing that includes wide, overhanging upturned eaves, decorative applied ornament with oriental and geometric motifs, and brightly colored clay tile roofs. The distinctive, sweeping upturned eaves and steep roofs of early buildings gave way to decorative upturned beams and eaves supporting flat roofs, creating more linear and boxy forms.

The Asian Eclectic style in Los Angeles was primarily used for commercial and institutional buildings, beginning in the 1920s and reached its peak with the construction of New Chinatown and Greater Chinatown from the late 1930s to 1950s. These developments represent historic districts. The style represented a connection to the traditional architecture found in the homelands of recent immigrants and

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long-established Americans of Asian ancestry. Many of the buildings in this style were designed and planned by neighborhood associations that intentionally used an architecture and design language to signify identification with a specific community's heritage, and to create master planned neighborhoods with ethnic themes as tourist attractions and retail centers. Chinatown also includes significant individual examples of the style, which during the postwar period, blend Modernism with simplified Asian design references, and represented the forward-thinking postwar Chinese American architect community of the period.

Significance: Properties associated with the Asian Eclectic style may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C at the local, state, or national level. Associated resources are significant in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Asian and Architecture. Individual properties and districts reflect the distinctive qualities of the Asian Eclectic style and were designed or influenced by significant Asian Americans including noted architects and civic and business leaders.

**Individual Resources**

Registration Requirements:

- Designed by an Asian American architect and/or influenced by significant business/civic leaders in the Asian American community
- Must be an excellent example of the Asian Eclectic style and retains most of the character defining features which may include:
  - Sweeping roofs with flared gables or upturned rafter tails
  - Carved brackets and rafter tails
  - Flat roof with decorative post and beam supporting system
  - Ornamented roof ridge
  - Brightly colored tile roofs
  - Elaborate surrounds on entryways and windows
  - Decoratively distributed mullions on windows
  - Recessed entryways
  - Geometrical patterned window grilles
  - For mixed use, may have second floor balconies
  - For retail, neon signage in fonts evoking calligraphy
  - For Chinese-influenced, may be painted red and gold
  - For Chinese-influenced, ornament may include dragon or lion statuary
- Should retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association

**Historic Districts**

Registration Requirements:

- Must include a substantial number of buildings designed by Asian American architects and/or influenced by significant business/civic leaders in the Asian American community.

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- Conveys a strong sense of overall historic environment from the period of significance
- Represents an intact grouping of commercial buildings which, as a whole, exemplify the Asian Eclectic style
- May also include open spaces with Asian influenced fountains, sculptures, murals, and other features
- Has a strong cultural association to the community in which it is located
- May include some buildings, constructed outside the period of significance.
- Primarily commercial but may include some institutional, residential, or mixed-use buildings.
- District as a whole should retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association

**Property Types Associated with Important Asian American Architects**

Description: Property types designed by Asian American architects include residential, commercial, mixed-use commercial/residential, institutional, and industrial buildings. Extant works by identified architects primarily date from the 1940s through the end of the period of significance for each associated context. Geographically the resources are located citywide, but in particular, the places associated with settlement of Asian Americans as discussed in the contexts. Asian architects worked citywide with concentrations of commercial and institutional work in Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Boyle Heights, Crenshaw District, Jefferson Park, and Sawtelle. A concentration of postwar residential work, including homes architects designed for their own families, is located in Silver Lake.

There is very little scholarship on Asian American architects of Los Angeles. Some are referenced throughout the historic contexts, but others may be identified over time. Generally, the Asian American architect community was small in the prewar period; works that are known appear to be designed for Asian American clients and are mostly institutional buildings. Japanese American architect Yos Hirose is one of the earliest known Asian American architects working in Los Angeles. No early residential examples have been identified as part of this MPDF.

More is known about the postwar architect community; during this time many Asian American architects attended local universities such as USC, became members of the American Institute of Architects, worked with well-known firms, and opened their own firms. Many Asian American architects from this period worked in the Mid-Century Modern style as well as the Asian Eclectic style, often combining elements of both in their designs. The development of Chinatown in the postwar period provided many opportunities for Chinese American architects and the work of Eugene Choy and Gilbert Leong is perhaps best known. Construction dating to the 1970s and later in the area of Koreatown has been commissioned by Korean business owners and designed by Korean architects; to date little is known about these architects and their work. This study did not identify any work by Filipino American architects. The only known resource associated with Thai architects is the Theravada Temple, designed by architects from the Religious Ministry of Thailand.

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Significance: This property type is used to identify resources associated with Asian American architects considered to be masters in their field and who made important contributions to Los Angeles' architectural legacy. In particular, the type reflects buildings designed by Asian Americans whose work was influenced by Asian American culture and aesthetics and designed in the Asian Eclectic style. Properties may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C at the local, state, or national level, depending on the architect's sphere of influence. It is expected that more research on the topic will reveal rich information and that the period of significance will be expanded over time to encompass later periods of architecture in Los Angeles.

Some architects may also be significant under Criterion B for their association with struggles against and rising above racial discrimination in the architecture profession.

Registration Requirements:

- Associated with an Asian American architect/designer who made an important contribution to Los Angeles' architectural legacy
- A significant example of an architectural style or combination of styles influenced by Asian American culture and aesthetics, in particular the Asian Eclectic style
- To be eligible as the work of a master architect/designer, the property must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career or an aspect of his/her work
- Should retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association

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**G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

The geographical area covered by this Multiple Property Documentation Form is the City of Los Angeles, California.

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**H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS**

The Asian Americans in Los Angeles MPDF was developed to provide a format to identify and evaluate historic resources associated with the city’s Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Thai American histories from the period 1850 to 1980. The contexts cover all geographic areas of Los Angeles in which these groups settled, lived, and worked over time including five Preserve America communities: Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Filipinotown, and Thai Town, The MPDF was organized so that it may be expanded and revised over time, and include other Asian American communities whose history is still in its nascent stages. The MPDF will be widely available through HistoricPlacesLA.org, the city’s historic resources inventory and management system.

The MDPF was prepared using a 2016-2018 National Park Service Underrepresented Communities grant, awarded to the Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP) and specifically, the Office of Historic Resources (OHR), which served as the managing agency for this project. The DCP contracted with a local historic preservation consulting firm, Architectural Resources Group, which assembled a team of writers all meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards in Historic Preservation and with extensive experience in developing historic contexts, community outreach, and working in Los Angeles.

Prior to this MPDF, no comprehensive historic contexts had been developed relating to Asian American history of Los Angeles and few resources have been listed in the National Register for this association. These are the Garnier Building (1972, a contributing resource of the Los Angeles Plaza Historic District, not individually designated) and Little Tokyo Historic District (1986), a National Historic Landmark.

SurveyLA, the citywide historic resources survey of Los Angeles, and the associated citywide historic context statement provided the impetus for developing this MPDF. From the inception of SurveyLA in 2006, a critical focus of the project has been to identify resources associated with the city’s rich ethnic/cultural history. SurveyLA incorporated findings from previous historic resources surveys, particularly those completed by the City Redevelopment Agency. Relevant to this MPDF were the surveys of Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, and other areas of the City of Los Angeles that include resources primarily associated with the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean communities.

SurveyLA findings provided the starting point for the identification of resources associated with Asian American histories for developing this MPDF. Lists were compiled for each context to provide a foundation for understanding relevant themes, associated property types, patterns of geographical distribution, and timeframes covered. Some resources overlap more than one context.

The OHR then organized a project Advisory Committee (Committee) to work with the consultant team. The Committee and other key community members provided guidance and information that greatly enhanced the contexts. Participants included leaders in the Asian American community representing a wide range of interests, organizations, and institutions as well as professors, lecturers, scholars, and writers of Asian American history. A full list of participants is at the end of this section. The Committee and participants played a critical role in completing this MPDF. Members identified important places

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associated with each context, advised on pertinent sources of research information, and served as subject matter experts to review and comment on various context drafts.

The Committee convened two meetings during the grant period: November 2016 and January 2018. Following the first meeting of the Committee, the OHR organized a series of five community meetings in locations throughout Los Angeles. These working meetings (one for each associated context) were promoted through Committee members and a variety of venues. They gave the community the opportunity to provide input on significant places to inform the contexts and, in some cases, led to access to private photographic or other collections of individuals in attendance.

This MPDF was written by a number of authors, all of whom conducted extensive primary and secondary source research. A full list of sources consulted is listed in Section I: Major Bibliographical References. Some foundational sources of information were common to all authors and helped to supplement existing scholarship. U.S. Census data provided critical information on population numbers and settlement patterns over time. Place-based sources used to identify extant potential resources included Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, city directories, business directories, phone books, historic photographs, and historic newspapers. Team members also used City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety building permit records.

One of the challenges of research was that many sources are in the native language. In some cases, interpreter services were used, where in other cases only English language sources were used. Some topics, such as Koreans in the performing, visual, and literary arts during the period of significance have not yet been well documented in English. In addition, the body of existing scholarship differed among the contexts. The historical experiences of Thai Americans remains largely untold, primarily due to the community's arrival in the 1950s.

As a result of the research and outreach efforts, new information was uncovered on known resources and potential new resources were identified not previously known or recorded as part of SurveyLA. The project consultant team conducted reconnaissance-level surveys where needed to determine precise locations, confirm if they are extant, and/or to assess overall integrity. Not all properties identified under this MPDF have been fully evaluated for National Register eligibility.

Based on research and survey results, a wide range of themes and associated property types were identified relating to the history of Asian and Asian Americans in Los Angeles. Each of the five contexts of the MPDF has a unique period of significance based on the individual histories and periods of settlement. The number of extant resources and themes presented differ for each context, e.g., Thai American settlement in Los Angeles is relatively recent, and there are few resources dating from the MPDF's periods of significance or that are of exceptional importance.

The Preface to the Statement of Historic Contexts was written by Michelle Magalong, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHIP); and David K. Yoo, Ph.D., Vice Provost, Institute of American Cultures, and Professor of Asian American Studies &

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History at UCLA. Both are Los Angeles scholars of Asian American History and members of the advisory committee for this project.

The first property nominated under this MPS was chosen by the OHR in consultation with the project Advisory Committee. The OHR is working with the committee to identify partnership opportunities and sources of funding to complete additional nominations over time.

**Asian Americans in Los Angeles Advisory Committee and Project Participants**

In preparing this context statement, the Office of Historic Resources and the team of consultants, led by Architectural Resources Group (ARG), were advised by a diverse panel of Asian American community members, historic preservation professionals, and historians. The following is a list of project contributors and advisory committee participants.

Dennis Arguelles, Los Angeles Program Manager, National Parks Conservation Association

Joseph Bernardo, Ph.D., Office of Intercultural Affairs, Loyola Marymount University

Edward Chang, Director, Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies, University of California, Riverside

Suellen Cheng, Executive Director Emeritus of the Chinese American Museum and Museum Director and Curator of El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument

Sue Fawn Chung, Ph.D., Professor Emerita at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Department of History, and Advisor Emerita to the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Flip Ahn Cuddy, Historian, Dosan Legacy

Rey Fukuda, Project Manager and Planner, Little Tokyo Service Center

Jan Fukuhara, Board Member, Little Tokyo Historical Society

Gerald Gubatan, Senior Planning Deputy, Los Angeles City Council District 1

Kristen Hayashi, Public Historian and Collections Manager, Japanese American National Museum

Hillary Jenks, Ph.D., Graduate Writing Center Coordinator, University of California Riverside

Kenneth Klein, Head of the East Asian Library, University of Southern California Libraries

Munson Kwok, Ph.D., National Board Member of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance and Advisory Board Member for the Chinatown Business Improvement District

Michelle Magalong, Executive Director, Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation

Eugene Moy, Board Member, Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

Allyson Nakamoto, Director of Education, Japanese American National Museum

Nancy Oda, President, Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition

Mark Padoongpatt, Ph.D., Asian and Asian American Studies, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Carol Park, Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies, University of California, Riverside

Bill Watanabe, Retired Executive Director, Little Tokyo Service Center

Steve Y. Wong, Curator, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery

Michael Woo, Dean, College of Environmental Design, Cal Poly Pomona



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David K. Yoo, Ph.D., Director of the Asian American Studies Center, University of California,  
Los Angeles and Korean American Pioneer Council  
George Yu, Executive Director, Chinatown Business Improvement District

Additional input and information was received from the following community members:

Cindy Abrams  
Ralph Ahn  
Carlene Sobrino Bonnivier  
Dulce Capadocia  
Edith Wen-Chu Chen, Ph.D.  
Wendy Chung  
William Chun-Hoon  
Lorna Ignacio Dumapias  
Rick Eng  
Alex Hack  
Les Hamasaki  
Eric Harris  
Warren Hong  
Florante Ibanez  
Takashige Ikawa  
Miya Iwataki  
Rose Kato  
Katherine Kim  
Tadashi Kowta  
Christine Lee  
Laura Meyers  
Patty Nagano  
Steve Nagano  
Mike Okamura  
Juily Phun  
Ronee Reece  
Al Soo Hoo  
Donna Sugimoto and the Sugimoto Family  
Alvin Takamori  
Nancy Takayama  
Jonathan Tanaka  
Mary Tila  
Tom Williams, Ph. D.  
Dorothy Fue Wong  
Winston Wu  
Scott Yamabe

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