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“Little Bronze Tokyo”: Housing and Employment for Black & Japanese Americans in Los Angeles during World War II, (1940-1950)

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**“Little Bronze Tokyo”:**

**Housing and Employment for Black & Japanese Americans in Los Angeles  
during World War II, (1940-1950)**

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Hist 191C - “Right to The City”  
Professor Nasiali

## **Introduction**

The 1940s were an era of transformation for Los Angeles, California. The abrupt creation of the Los Angeles' neighborhood Bronzeville in the mid-1940s offers the opportunity to analyze the consequences of southern California's economic policies and social practices on the housing rights of its Black and Japanese communities—even contemporarily. The synchronous rise and fall of Bronzeville, Los Angeles, CA and Manzanar, Owens Valley, CA exemplifies how the control and exchange of resources within an urban space is what fortifies the contemporary 'city' as a monument of power, heavily dependent on the intersectional identity of its residents. The government-sanctioned creation and decimation of the neighborhoods Bronzeville and Manzanar provides contemporary scholars with the means to assess how formal and informal policies upheld institutionalized racial discrimination within the housing and labor sectors in Los Angeles during World War II.

The forced relocation of Japanese Americans to internment camps, such as Manzanar in Owens Valley, added another layer of complexity to the racialized housing and labor policies that helped shape Los Angeles' development. This paper explores the rise and fall of Bronzeville, Los Angeles as well as the lived experiences of the residents of Bronzeville and Manzanar. My research aims to illuminate how the control and exchange of resources, such as housing and employment opportunities, had a lasting impact on the interracial relations, intraracial relations, and urban development of Los Angeles as a major city and the complex intersectional identities of its residents.

Navigating the history of 1940s Los Angeles demands an exploration of the following subjects: the housing crisis which gripped Los Angeles in the mid-1940s, the racialized unions

that shaped the wartime labor effort, the formal (government/commercial) and informal (social) policies that helped institutionalize racial discrimination, and interracial relations—both between minority communities and between Los Angeles’ minority and European-American populations. My research and analysis is based on a variety of primary and secondary sources and seeks to offer an unbiased and nuanced perspective on the experiences and challenges encountered by the communities of Bronzeville and Manzanar.

The primary sources used in my analysis include, ‘Interview with Norma Martin’ from Kariann A. Yokota's dissertation "From Little Tokyo to Bronzeville and Back: Ethnic Communities in Transition," LA Housing Authority meeting minutes from the John Randolph Haynes Papers Collection, and contemporaneous publications such as *The Los Angeles Tribune* and *The Bronzeville News*. These sources offer firsthand accounts, insights from local government officials, and the independent media’s perspective on the events of the period. Additionally, personal letters and documents such as Leo Uchida’s “Letter to James Waegell” and the anonymous letter sent to President Franklin D. Roosevelt arguing against the incarceration of Japanese Americans, provide glimpses into the emotions and opinions of individuals directly affected by the forced evacuation of Japanese Americans.”

Complementing these primary sources, is a variety of secondary sources, including Dr. Keith Edison Collins’ dissertation ‘Black Los Angeles: The Maturing of the Ghetto, 1940-1950,’ Dr. Scott Kurashige's book ‘The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles,’ and Dr. Valerie Matsumoto’s “Reweaving the Web of Community in Postwar Southern California 1945-1950” from her book, *City Girls: The Nisei Social World in Los Angeles, 1920 - 1950*. These works contribute historical context, theoretical

frameworks, and varying interpretations which allow for a deeper understanding of the socio-economic, political, and cultural forces at play in Los Angeles in the mid-1940s.

In examining the experiences of Bronzeville and its multi-ethnic residents, the theoretical frameworks of urban scholars David Harvey and Michel De Certeau provide valuable perspectives to understand the dynamics of space, labor, and ‘right[s] to the city’. Harvey argues, crediting Henri Lefebvre, the existence of an inherent “right to the city,” which emerges as a grassroots demand from the streets and echoes a collective cry for assistance.<sup>1</sup> The residents of Bronzeville, grappling with issues of housing discrimination, under/unemployment, and forced migration, actively engaged in shaping their urban environment through practices such as squatting and entrepreneurship. The experiences of both African-Americans and Japanese-Americans in Los Angeles in the mid-1900s mirrors the broader trend identified by Harvey, where an increasingly precarious and marginalized labor force plays a pivotal role in “making and sustaining urban life”.<sup>2</sup>

Certeau's ‘Walking in the City’ relates directly to the ‘spatial practices’ within Bronzeville. While urban planning often aims to control and regiment space, Certeau asserts that everyday practices, or “lived space,” emerges as an organic counterforce—renegotiating the intended purposes of urban space.<sup>3</sup> In the context of Bronzeville, this renegotiation is evident in how the African American community navigated and appropriated living space in spite of racial discrimination, and in the interactions between Black residents and Japanese-American returnees

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey, David. “Henri Lefebvre’s Vision.” Essay. In *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London: CPI Group (UK), 1935. p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Harvey, David. p. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> Certeau, Michael de. *Walking in the City*. University of California Press, 1984. p. 95-6.

“...urban life increasingly permits the re-emergence of the element that the urbanistic project excluded...spatial practices...should lead us to a theory of everyday practices, of lived space...”

after internment. The spatial negotiations of Bronzeville, aligned with Certeau's thesis, formed a vibrant “metaphorical city”<sup>4</sup> within the planned urban landscape of central Los Angeles.

Bronzeville residents and their ability to carve out meaningful spaces and maintain a sense of community speaks to a resilience that transcends the limitations imposed by external forces.

Through the ideological lenses of Harvey and Certeau, the struggles and triumphs of Bronzeville’s occupants become integral to understanding a broader discourse on “the right to the city” and the dynamic connection between urban planning and lived experiences. These theories illuminate the agency exercised by communities like Bronzeville, who actively shape their urban realities and resist the constraints imposed by external powers.

The following sections will cover the experiences of Japanese-Americans and African-Americans pre-World War II in Los Angeles, the wartime challenges faced by these communities, and the lasting impact of WWII on post-war housing, labor, intraracial relations, and interracial interactions within the city.

### **First Section: Living in Los Angeles Pre-World War II: Housing, & Labor (1920s-1930s)**

In the period preceding World War II, Los Angeles witnessed economic growth in the 1920s followed by a Great Depression-motivated housing shortage in the 1930s. This section is a historical examination focused on the availability and quality of housing and employment opportunities during the 1930s. It delves into the impact of Los Angeles’ housing scarcity and investigates the experiences of two communities—Japanese Americans, in Little Tokyo, and African Americans, along Central Avenue. Further study of pre-war life in Los Angeles provides

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<sup>4</sup> De Certeau, Michel, p. 110.

an opportunity to identify the formal and informal economic, social, and political policies that helped shape events in Los Angeles during World War II.

In the 1920s, Los Angeles underwent significant changes, driven by economic growth. The booming agricultural, movie, oil, and manufacturing industries attracted a diverse population to Los Angeles in search of employment and economic opportunities. This period also saw a notable expansion in the city's housing infrastructure to accommodate the growing numbers. However, many of these housing developments utilized racial covenants to prevent the purchase, or leasing, of homes by individuals of ethnic minorities, such as Jewish, African-Americans, and Asian individuals. The economic development and population growth during this time set the stage for developments in employment opportunity and housing availability, which shaped Los Angeles' evolving socio-economic landscape. As oil surpassed agriculture as the state's leading industry in 1924, the LA basin harbored 32 refineries employing 5000 people by 1930.<sup>5</sup>

The migration patterns of the 1920s were almost entirely domestic; this change was influenced by changes in federal law such as the National Origins Act of 1924, which limited international immigration from Europe and Asia but placed no restrictions on immigration from Canada and Latin America.<sup>6</sup> This federally-sponsored racial discrimination, in the form of immigration policy, was a direct reflection of the xenophobic attitude of many Californians of European ancestry in the 1920s. Concerns surrounding the availability of housing and employment were already prominent topics, and many Americans feared that a continued stream of immigrants from abroad would place a strain on already constrained resources. According to *Competing Visions: A History of California*, representatives from California and Southwestern

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<sup>5</sup> Cherny, Robert W., Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, and Richard Griswold del Castillo. "California Between the Wars, 1919–1941." Chapter 8. In *Competing Visions: A History of California*. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Cherny, et. al.

agricultural business interests were forced to constantly advocate for the admission of immigrants from Mexico due to their indispensable labor.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to economic opportunity, the migration of American laborers to Southern California was aided by consistent marketing. Promotional efforts, showcasing perpetual sunshine, palm-lined boulevards, and economic prosperity, lured hundreds of thousands to southern California (Cherny, et. al.). **Figure 1: “Rock Island System Railroad Ad”** and **Figure 2: “California, the cornucopia of the world”** are examples of the type of ads that Americans all over the country, but especially those in the Midwest and Deep South, would have seen in their local newspapers.<sup>[8][9]</sup> These ads, often funded by railroad companies or the California Immigration Commission, were publicized as early as the late 1800s.

The combination of laborer migration and advancements in the oil and manufacturing sectors allowed for major economic growth in Los Angeles throughout the 1920s. Between 1919 and 1930, LA moved from 28th to ninth place among American manufacturing cities.<sup>10</sup> However, despite the booming economy, the economic gains of the 1920s were unevenly distributed, “with a disproportionate amount of wealth in profits rather than wages...Many workers struggled with low incomes, hindering their ability to afford the very products they were producing”.<sup>11</sup> This inequity underscored the complexities of economic growth during the 1920s, and set the stage for the economic turmoil Los Angeles experienced in the 1930s.

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<sup>7</sup> Cherny, et. al.

<sup>8</sup> **Figure 1:** California Immigration Commission. *California, the cornucopia of the world : room for millions of immigrants, 43,795,000 acres of government lands untaken, railroad and private lands, for a million farmers, a climate for health and wealth, without cyclones or blizzards.* Calisphere, University of California. California State Library, 1885. <https://calisphere.org/item/7b99ec2308bb012d88a0131bd3b79b2f/>.

<sup>9</sup> **Figure 2:** Rock Island System Railroad. *Rock Island System Railroad Ad Golden State Limited to California.* Go Antiques. GoAntiques LLC , 1994. <https://www.goantiques.com/rock-island-system-170269>.

<sup>10</sup> Cherny, et. al.

<sup>11</sup> The Great Depression: California in the Thirties. Accessed December 10, 2023. p. 2. <https://www.csun.edu/~sg4002/courses/417/readings/depression.pdf>.



By the mid-1930s, Los Angeles was experiencing a housing shortage that was a direct consequence of the Great Depression; this shortage heavily impacted the city's urban development and ethnic landscape. The intersection of economic challenges, racial discrimination, and housing scarcity influenced the daily lives of residents in Los Angeles, and was institutionally supported by federal agencies and policies such as the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, the Federal Housing Administration, and the National Housing Act of 1934.

The housing shortage in the 1930s had extensive consequences that went beyond the economic downturn, influencing the social structure of Los Angeles. The commercial response to the crisis can be seen in the efforts of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and their 1939 map of Los Angeles.<sup>12</sup> In **Figure 3**: "1939 HOLC's map for Los Angeles," the differently colored highlighted areas represent varying levels of 'desirability'. Red areas were deemed "Hazardous" or unfit for investment, yellow areas were labeled "In Decline", blue areas were considered "Still Desirable", while green areas were coded as the "Best".<sup>13</sup>

Typically, zip codes on the Westside and to the North of Central Los Angeles were graded as 'green', whereas those to the South and in Downtown Los Angeles were often labeled 'yellow' and 'red'.<sup>14</sup> African Americans, and other Los Angeles minorities were often kept out of Western and Northern neighborhoods through means of racial covenants, violence, or cost.<sup>[15][16]</sup> These stark visual representations illustrate the racialization of residents by local developers and

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<sup>12</sup> Nelson, Robert K., Winling, LaDale, Marciano, Richard, Connolly, Nathan, et al., "Mapping Inequality," American Panorama, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers. 2023.  
<https://scalar.usc.edu/hc/jewish-histories-boyle-heights/media/losangelesholc-med.jpg>.

<sup>13</sup> **Figure 3**: Gatto, Damien. "Homeowners Loan Corporation (HLOC) - 1939 Los Angeles Survey Areas: Downtown, Eastside, Hollywood, Northeast LA, Westlake, and Wilshire." Geohub.lacity.org. Accessed 2023.  
[http://theasphaltisland.weebly.com/uploads/2/9/2/4/29246713/3-dtla-eastside-nela-hollywood-wilshire-westlake\\_orig.png](http://theasphaltisland.weebly.com/uploads/2/9/2/4/29246713/3-dtla-eastside-nela-hollywood-wilshire-westlake_orig.png).

<sup>14</sup> Gatto, Damien. "Homeowners Loan Corporation (HLOC)".

<sup>15</sup> Smith, R. J. (2007). *The Great Black Way : L.A. in the 1940s and the lost African-American Renaissance*. PublicAffairs.

<sup>16</sup> Wright, Niulan; From little Tokyo to Bronzeville and Back Again, 2021.

agents, and the discrimination perpetuated by federal agencies during this period. In **Figure 3: “Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America — Los Angeles, CA,”** the area dubbed Little Tokyo, which would even later still come to be known as Bronzeville, is outlined in purple.

The boundaries of Little Tokyo intersected with the federally drawn districts 34, 35, and 37. **Figures 4-6**, all “**Residential Security Maps**” from 1939, provide insight into the heavy racialization of residential neighborhoods, perpetuated by federal agencies. The report for District 34, coded as “Los Angeles”, states “Nationalities: Mexicans, Russians & Polish Jews. A few Orientals. Foreign Families: 20%. Negroes: 10%. Repair: Poor to Fair. Owner Occupied: 35%”.<sup>17</sup> In comparison, the report for “D-37, Bunker Hill” describes the neighborhood ethnic composition as “Nationalities: Orientals & Mexicans. Foreign Families: 60%. Negroes: 0%. Repair: Very Poor. Owner Occupied: None Known”.<sup>18</sup> Neighborhoods were classified almost solely on racial and ethnic criteria and the National Housing Act of 1934 allowed both private and public lenders to take these ‘gradings’ into consideration when approving home mortgages.

The Los Angeles housing crisis in the mid-1930s wasn't merely an economic challenge but also a product of systemic racial discrimination. Federal agencies, including the Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration, played a significant role in perpetuating discriminatory practices. Additionally, a 1938 report by the Los Angeles Bureau of Housing and Sanitation, directed by M.S. Siegel, acknowledged the inadequacies in densely populated areas and proposed low-cost public housing as a means to mitigate the crisis. Siegel states that, “by furnishing low-cost public housing, ‘to those most deserving we can inaugurate a

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<sup>17</sup> **Figure 5:** Federal Loan Agency, Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Home Owners' Loan Corporation. “Area Description: D-34, Los Angeles”. Residential Security Map: Los Angeles. City Survey Files, 1935–1940. 1939. National Archives Catalog. 2023. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/720357>

<sup>18</sup> **Figure 6:** Federal Loan Agency, Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Home Owners' Loan Corporation. “Area Description: D-37, Los Angeles”. Residential Security Map: Los Angeles. City Survey Files, 1935–1940. 1939. National Archives Catalog. 2023. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/720357>

program of slum demolition and at the same time possibly prevent the creation of new slum areas.”<sup>19</sup> However, the reality for many Los Angeles residents was an income that did not match its contemporaneous cost of living; the resulting effect of this economic inequality is that most Los Angeles residents could not afford even the proposed low-cost housing proposed by Siegel<sup>20</sup>, underscoring the socio-economic limitations of new housing developments.

The pre-World War II Japanese-American experience in Los Angeles found its epitome in Little Tokyo; the community's multifaceted development was shaped by economic ventures, social groups, and distinct spatial dynamics. In carving a non-competitive niche in the produce industry, the Japanese community achieved dominance through a vertically integrated network, including growers, wholesalers, and retailers.<sup>21</sup> This strategic positioning allowed not only economic growth but also indicated a concerted effort to establish a self-sustaining community.<sup>22</sup> In fact, “Little Tokyo was established primarily to provide goods and services to those engaged in the produce industry,”<sup>23</sup> according to Asian American historian Kariann Yokota.

Little Tokyo's physical landscape was composed of structures primarily not owned by its Japanese residents. “Japanese Americans never owned more than 20% of Little Tokyo’s stores and 10% of its hotels and apartments.”<sup>24</sup> Smith's findings highlight a harsh economic reality – while Little Tokyo thrived as a cultural and economic center, the ownership of its infrastructure remained predominantly in the hands of white absentee landlords. This economic discrepancy

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<sup>19</sup> Siegel, M. S. Rep. “*Report of Slum Conditions (Reasons for the Inauguration of Low Cost Public Housing), 1938.*” Los Angeles Department of Health Publications Collection. Box 2, Folder 39. CSUN. Los Angeles (Calif.). Dept. of Health, 1938. [https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c82n54bq/entire\\_text/](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c82n54bq/entire_text/).

<sup>20</sup> Siegel, M. S. Rep. “*Report of Slum Conditions*”

<sup>21</sup> Yokota, Kariann Akemi. 1996. “From Little Tokyo to Bronzeville and Back : Ethnic Communities in Transition.” University of California, Los Angeles, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> **Figure 7:** *Map of Little Tokyo, “The Japanese Business Center in L.A.,” in 1926.*

<sup>23</sup> Yokota, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, R.J., p. 141.

points to broader systemic challenges faced by the Japanese-American community in establishing ownership and economic autonomy.

Despite the tight-knit economic community that existed in Little Tokyo, the area was never racially exclusive to individuals of Japanese ancestry. This sharply contrasts the pre-war African American neighborhoods that existed in Los Angeles, such as Central Ave.<sup>[25][26][27]</sup> “Many African Americans had lived and worked within the area that became Little Tokyo since at least the mid-nineteenth century.”<sup>28</sup> The coexistence of African American and Japanese communities in the 66-block radius<sup>29</sup> that constituted ‘Little Tokyo’, before World War II, emphasizes the dynamic and inclusive nature of the area, setting the stage for a unique tapestry of cultural and social interactions.

### **War-Time Housing & Labor in LA (1942-45):**

During the years of World War II, 1942-1945, the dynamics of community, housing, and labor in Los Angeles witnessed significant shifts, particularly for African Americans and Japanese Americans. This subsection delves into the experiences of these communities, exploring the consequences of black migration, labor discrimination, and housing discrimination for African Americans, while also addressing the forced migration experienced by Japanese Americans and its impact on their lives. The aim is to examine the complex interplay between wartime policies and the lived realities of these diverse communities in Los Angeles.

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<sup>25</sup> Smith, R.J.

<sup>26</sup> Yokota, p. 9

“Housing covenants, which were the equivalent of “private Jim Crow legislation,” had built a “white wall” around the Black community on Central Avenue” p. 9 - 10

<sup>27</sup> Yokota, p.37

“NORMA: “We had everything in our own neighborhood. Everyone knew one another and we had a lot of goodtimes,” recalled Norma Martin, a life-long resident of the city.””

<sup>28</sup> Jenks, Hillary. “Bronzeville, Little Tokyo, and the Unstable Geography of Race in Post-World War II Los Angeles.” *Southern California Quarterly* 93, no. 2 (2011): 201–35. p. 205. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41172572>.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, R.J., p. 139

An anonymous letter to FDR during World War II underscores skepticism about the government's justifications for the forced evacuation of Japanese Americans: "As we understand it, there are two main reasons back of this evacuation order: to forestall any possible subversive activities, and as a matter of protection to the Japanese themselves in case of uncontrollable anti-Japanese hysteria. To the best of our knowledge, however, neither of these reasons has any sound basis in fact".<sup>30</sup> This letter raises crucial questions about the reliability of the government's publicized motives and reflects the prevailing doubt among Japanese Americans regarding the necessity and fairness of the evacuation.

Leo Uchida's "*Letter to James Waegell in December 1944*", reflects the uncertainty and distrust among Japanese Americans about their future on the West Coast: "It seems F.D.R. doesn't want us to go back to the West Coast, huh?" (Uchida, Leo). Uchida's inquiry encapsulates the prevailing uncertainty and skepticism among Japanese Americans, revealing deep-seated doubts about their post-war prospects and the government's true intentions.

John F. Embree's analysis of conditions in relocation centers reveals the multifaceted challenges faced by Japanese Americans:

"There are a number of factors inherent in the conditions of center life which may create difficulties regardless of how well centers are administered...1) A mass evacuation of people on the basis of Japanese ancestry, regardless of length of residency, citizenship, or past individual behavior, has created in many evacuees a sense of disillusionment or even bitterness in regard to American democracy...2) Another effect of relocation has been to create feelings of extreme social and financial insecurity as to the future...3) The throwing together on the basis of racial lines of a group of people...with little in common together as neighbors in the same block...4)...Most residents in relocation centers spent weeks and even months in assembly centers before finally moving to their present 'homes'...5) Physical conditions of life in the centers have also contributed to social disorganization...the lack of privacy and overcrowding

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<sup>30</sup>Letter to President Roosevelt. CSUDH Gerth Archives and Special Collections. California State University, Fullerton, University Archives and Special Collections, 1942. paragraph 2. <https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/15246>.

within the barracks has a demoralizing effect on many evacuees... These living conditions are similar in some respects to those of slums...”<sup>[31][32][33]</sup>.

Embree's exploration of disillusionment, social and financial insecurity, and demoralizing living conditions sheds light on the lasting adverse effects of the government's forced relocation of Japanese-American residents and Japanese-Americans citizens.

As waves of organic and forced migration reshaped Los Angeles' demographic make-up, racial discrimination permeated every aspect of residential life. “As Black Southern migrants arrived in the city they found unrestricted housing scarce and settled into the few areas that were open to people of color, the former residences of the Japanese. About 95% of residential spaces in Los Angeles at this time were racially restricted; Little Tokyo was part of the 5% that wasn't.”<sup>34</sup> Wright's observation provides more context on the racial restrictions shaping the housing market in Los Angeles and emphasizes the role of Little Tokyo in providing refuge for Black Southern migrants during the wartime labor boom and widespread housing discrimination.<sup>35</sup>

Valerie Matsumoto's research on migration within Los Angeles County, supported by the U.S. Census, reveals a staggering 49% population increase between the years 1940 and 1950:

“According to the U.S. Census, between 1940 and 1950 the population of Los Angeles County swelled 49 percent, from 2,785,643 residents to 4,151,687.”<sup>36</sup> This statistical data is evidence of

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<sup>31</sup> **Figure 8:** “Housing Director Holtendorff and men going up rickety fire escape of tenement during tour of slum areas in Los Angeles, Calif., 1948.”

<sup>32</sup> **Figure 9:** “Officials of City Housing Authority Touring Slum Area. (1949)”

<sup>33</sup> Embree, John F. “Community analysis report, no. 2 (February 1943): causes of unrest at relocation centers.” Japanese American Archival Collection. CSUDH Gerth Archives and Special Collections. California State University, Sacramento, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, February 1, 1943. <https://cdm16855.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/403>.

<sup>34</sup> Wright, Niulan; “From little Tokyo to Bronzeville and Back Again.”

<sup>35</sup> **Figure 10** “Is There Room For Vital War Workers Outside The Overcrowded Black Belt?” *The Bronzeville News*, 1943.

<sup>36</sup> Matsumoto, Valerie J. “Nisei Women’s Roles in Family and Community during World War II.” Chapter. In *City Girls the Nisei Social World in Los Angeles, 1920 - 1950*, 143–80. New York, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2017. p. 186.

the rapid and substantial growth that characterized the region during World War II. Matsumoto's discovery of this census information serves as a foundation for understanding how the Los Angeles population boom set the stage for further analysis of the socio-economic and cultural implications that affected the city late into the 1950s.

One aspect of these cultural implications were the economic / workforce changes that Los Angeles experienced during and after World War II. Ralph Bunche, in a letter to the F.D.R. administration, expands upon the labor difficulties faced by African Americans residing in Los Angeles. "The three most basic problems of the Negro worker in the American democratic society are: a) the right to work; b) the right to remuneration for work on the basis of merit and performance; c) the right to advance in rank and salary in terms of ability and productive contribution."<sup>37</sup> While the federal and state government did fail to intervene, the volatile situation was thoroughly monitored by Federal entities. "The FBI quietly monitored the shipyards with concern, as classified memos indicated: 'It was reported in April 1943 that racial trouble appeared imminent in several industrial plants in the Los Angeles area...It has been stated that a part of the difficulty appears to be that Negroes insisted that they be allowed to join regular unions rather than auxiliary unions.'<sup>38</sup>

As Los Angeles' workforce transformed due to the wartime defense industry, its residential housing also underwent major transformations. "Racially restrictive housing covenants and a citywide wartime housing shortage forced thousands of homeless African Americans into the dirty, deserted storefronts of the former Little Tokyo which was then renamed

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<sup>37</sup> Bunche, Ralph J., and Abram L. Harris. Letter to Miss Malvina C. Thompson. "Memorandum Presenting Suggestive Notes on 'the Negro Worker and His Struggles for Economic Justice,' Prepared for Miss Thompson," September 11, 1940.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, R.J., p. 95

Bronzeville.”<sup>[39][40][41]</sup> Photographic evidence of Japanese stores and community spaces, like churches, being repurposed into residential space is provided by **Figures 11 and 12**.

Bronzeville, a vibrant community in Los Angeles, was a focal point of African-American life during World War II, and was characterized by unique offerings and challenges that shaped the cultural expression of this enclave.

### **Post-War Housing & Interracial Interaction**

The enduring consequences of forced migration and internment camps during World War II reverberated deeply within Los Angeles' Japanese-American community, shaping their post-war experiences and interactions. Through a comprehensive examination of sources such as Mansumoto, Wright, and Yokota, this subsection delves into the long-lasting impacts of relocation and internment on Japanese-Americans in the aftermath of the war. By scrutinizing the socio-economic, cultural, and psychological dimensions, we aim to illuminate the complex legacy of forced migration and internment on the individuals and collective identity of both the Japanese-American and Black communities in post-war Los Angeles.

In the aftermath of World War II, “the discriminatory structural barriers to entrepreneurship and ownership that had either stunted Japanese American ambitions prior to Pearl Harbor or had been elaborated during the war years interfered with efforts to reestablish the prewar commercial enclave.”<sup>42</sup> The once vibrant Japanese-American economy, characterized by a vertically integrated network, lay in ruins, posing significant challenges to rebuilding Little Tokyo. “The housing situation for returning internees was dire, and there were limited options in

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<sup>39</sup> Yokota, p. 2

<sup>40</sup> **Figure 11:** “Interior view of makeshift housing for an African American family in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles.”

<sup>41</sup> **Figure 12:** “View of the subdivided spaces used for housing African American workers during World War Two.”

<sup>42</sup> Jenks, p. 211.



Bronzeville. The WRA estimated that no more than 25 percent of the returned evacuees were living on their own property”<sup>43</sup>

“The transition of Bronzeville back to Little Tokyo was fairly peaceful...Karrion Yokota has attributed the ‘lack of serious conflict’ in large part to ‘the fact that African American residents did not consider Bronzeville a permanent home, and therefore were not threatened by the return of Japanese Americans.”<sup>44</sup> This perspective is corroborated by the ownership rates in the area, “Bronzeville was one of tenancy, not ownership...at the end of the war, only 6 percent of property in Bronzeville was owned by Black residents.”<sup>45</sup> Bronzeville quickly became a cultural hotspot for individuals across Los Angeles. “Middle-class African Americans who did not have to endure the squalid living conditions of Bronzeville frequently ventured into the area to enjoy its vibrant nightlife.”<sup>46</sup>

As Japanese evacuees began to return to Little Tokyo, Bronzeville quickly lost its standing as a cultural beacon, although its housing and public health challenges continued. “...some Bronzeville residents working in the defense industry moved into low-rent public housing complexes built during and after the war. Initially, African Americans were barred from the majority of these facilities. However, the prevalence of residential restrictions throughout Los Angeles made it necessary to open government housing projects to ethnic minorities.”<sup>47</sup>

The rise and fall of Bronzeville, and the housing policies of World War II, had a lasting effect on Los Angeles' African-American community. As wartime migrations reshaped the city's demographic landscape, African Americans, grappling with systemic housing discrimination, found themselves concentrated in the vibrant enclave of Bronzeville. However, the dissolution of

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<sup>43</sup> Jenks, p. 213-4.

<sup>44</sup> Yokota, p. 181.

“Real estate provides a striking map of the uneven shifts and resistance to change in postwar race relations”

<sup>45</sup> Wright, Niulan, 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Yokota, p. 55

<sup>47</sup> Yokota, p. 75.

Bronzeville and the aftermath of housing policies posed formidable challenges to the African-American community's socio-economic stability. "Real estate provides a striking map of the uneven shifts and resistance to change in postwar race relations."<sup>48</sup>

Jenks, Kurashige, Sides, Smith, Matsumoto, and Yokota collectively cover the lasting impact, revealing the intricacies of displacement, housing scarcity, and the broader socio-cultural implications in post-war Los Angeles. "In 1948 a landmark supreme court case *Shelley v. Kramer* ruled that restrictive housing covenants were not enforceable, but failed to end them. In southern California, European American realtors who helped minority clients risked reprisals... In 1950, Pasadena realtor William C. Carr faced threats to drive him out of business because of his aid to Japanese and African Americans."<sup>49</sup> However, the informal policies in Los Angeles that had been developed to keep 'desirable' neighbors African-American-free. For example, "In 1950, Pasadena realtor William C. Carr faced threats to drive him out of business because of his aid to Japanese and African Americans."<sup>50</sup>

This historical juncture not only reshaped physical spaces but also played a pivotal role in shaping the narrative of resilience and adaptation within the African-American community, influencing their trajectory in the evolving socio-political landscape of post-World War II Los Angeles.

"While Japanese Americans encountered a shifting perception toward desirability, white Californians still perceived them as fundamentally foreign, revealing the persistent challenges of integration."<sup>51</sup> The nationwide housing problem, emphasized by reporter Scotty Tsuchia, imposed acute hardships on evacuees, highlighting the enduring challenges in securing suitable housing.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Matsumoto, p. 181.

<sup>49</sup> Matsumoto, p.181.

<sup>50</sup> Matsumoto, p.181.

<sup>51</sup> Matsumoto, p. 223.

<sup>52</sup> Matsumoto, p. 187.

The opposition to integration, as Sides notes, was rooted in the perceived threats to the moral, aesthetic, and financial character of neighborhoods, emphasizing concerns about property values rather than overt racial inferiority.<sup>53</sup>

The post-World War II era witnessed a profound transformation in Los Angeles, as the confluence of war-induced migrations and discriminatory practices reshaped the experiences of African-American and Japanese-American communities. Jenks highlights how the promise of modern public housing, initially intended to uplift nonwhite neighborhoods through "slum removal," was thwarted by anticommunist reactions, undermining the prospects of inclusive urban development.<sup>54</sup> The war, although uniting these communities in shared experiences, also left an enduring impact on their trajectories, shaping their reconnection in the post-war urban landscape.

The challenges were not exclusive to Japanese Americans, as Bronzeville, the African-American enclave, faced a different but equally impactful fate. "Racialized ownership structure was a key factor in efforts to reestablish Little Tokyo after the war, as Anglo and Jewish property owners...repeatedly allow[ed] Japanese Americans to buy out the leases of African American tenants."<sup>55][56]</sup>

In March of 1950, the City of Los Angeles' plans to acquire land for a new police headquarters led to traumatic evictions, marking a 'second evacuation' that profoundly affected both African-American and Japanese-American residents.<sup>57</sup> The demise of Bronzeville was not a result of disputes between the two communities but rather stemmed from racist spatial practices by the local state, perpetuating discriminatory views on property value and reinforcing

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<sup>53</sup> Sides, Josh. "Chapter 4: Race & Housing in Postwar Los Angeles." Essay. In *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*, 95–130. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. p. 96

<sup>54</sup> Jenks, p. 206.

<sup>55</sup> Jenks, p. 213-4

<sup>56</sup> **Figure 13:** "Leadership Round Table to Meet Again Wednesday." Los Angeles Tribune.

<sup>57</sup> Jenks, p. 231.

socio-economic disparities.<sup>58</sup> This historical interplay illuminates the interconnected struggles of these communities in the post-war urban landscape, revealing the enduring effects of war and discriminatory policies on their respective trajectories.

In the postwar era, the state's role in ensuring equitable economic growth for African Americans was deficient and reflected the systemic challenges that still hindered Los Angeles as a city.<sup>59</sup> This divergence in postwar experiences is further accentuated by Kurashige's observations of the contrasting racialized narratives of Japanese Americans as a "model minority" and African Americans as a "perceived problem minority", which influenced the broader conversation on integration.<sup>60</sup> The racialization of working-class African Americans as culturally dysfunctional by policies of postwar reforms, such as urban renewal<sup>61</sup>, exemplifies the persistence of racial discrimination in 20th century Los Angeles.

The promise of modern public housing<sup>62</sup>, which was initially publicized to support the destruction of nonwhite neighborhoods through slum removal, faced significant setbacks due to anticommunist reactions<sup>63</sup>. This worsened the challenges faced by minority communities struggling to secure safe and affordable housing.

A stronger understanding of the urban development of 1900s Los Angeles can be gained through the Built:LA project, a web-based database which allows individuals access to LA County's Assessor data and superimposes that data over a map of LA. **Figures 15-17, "Little Tokyo in 1940-2008. "Building Age // 1890-2008,"** visually contrast the existing buildings in Central LA from the year 1940, with the years 1950 and 2008; these buildings are represented by

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<sup>58</sup> Jenks, p.232.

<sup>59</sup> Kurashige, Scott. 2010. *The Shifting Grounds of Race : Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*. Princeton, N.J. ; Princeton University Press. p. 206

<sup>60</sup> Kurashige, p. 205

<sup>61</sup> Kurashige, p. 206

<sup>62</sup> **Figure 14: "500 New Housing Units for Eastside."** Los Angeles Tribune.

<sup>63</sup> Kurashige, p. 206.

the colors blue, purple, and orange, respectively. (Buildings shaded in grey had no data on the year they were built). These maps allow one to easily see that in Little Tokyo, and the districts surrounding it, there was very little urban development that occurred between the years of 1940 and 1950. A lack of available housing, further constrained by a constant flux of wartime immigrants from the South and the return of Japanese evacuees to the West Coast, served to only further racialize conditions in LA.

‘Racialization’, as defined by Tawa and associates in the study “The Effect of Resource Competition on Blacks’ and Asians’ Social Distance Using a Virtual World Methodology,” “is the aggregation of people and ethnic groups into broad racial categories and the ascription of traits (e.g., “intelligence” or “aggres-siveness”) to these groups.”<sup>64</sup>

In their research, they investigated the impact of “resource competition”<sup>65</sup> on the social proximity of self-resembling avatars for participants of Black, Asian, and White backgrounds during 15-minute social gatherings conducted in Second Life. In their findings, they found evidence supporting the idea that Asians and Blacks tend to become less socially connected when there is competition for limited resources (such as housing and employment). Specifically, in situations where resources are contested, they observed a consistent pattern of increased social distance between Blacks and Asians. This pattern differed significantly from harmonious situations, labeled ‘utopian’, where there was no resource competition, as in those cases, there was a tendency for Blacks and Asians to move closer socially over time.<sup>66</sup>

Tawa’s (and et. al.’s) research offers modern scholars unique insight into the relative privilege both African-Americans and Japanese-Americans possessed within 20th century LA.

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<sup>64</sup> Tawa, John, Rosalyn Negrón, Karen L. Suyemoto, and Alice S. Carter. “The Effect of Resource Competition on Blacks’ and Asians’ Social Distance Using a Virtual World Methodology.” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 18, no. 6 (2015): 761–77. p. 3 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430214561694>.

<sup>65</sup>Tawa, et al., p. 4

<sup>66</sup>Tawa, et al., p. 12

“Understanding these areas of relative privilege involves further understanding the ways in which Blacks and Asians are racialized within the US...Blacks are racialized as insiders (compared to the perpetual foreigner stereotype of Asians), and Asians are racialized as meritorious (compared to the intellectually “inferior” stereo-type of Blacks)”<sup>67</sup>. The above sources provide context on the complex interplay of race, economic policies, and societal attitudes in the postwar period, which contributes a contemporary understanding of the challenges faced by minority communities in LA, long after the end of World War II.

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<sup>67</sup> Tawa, et al., p. 3-4

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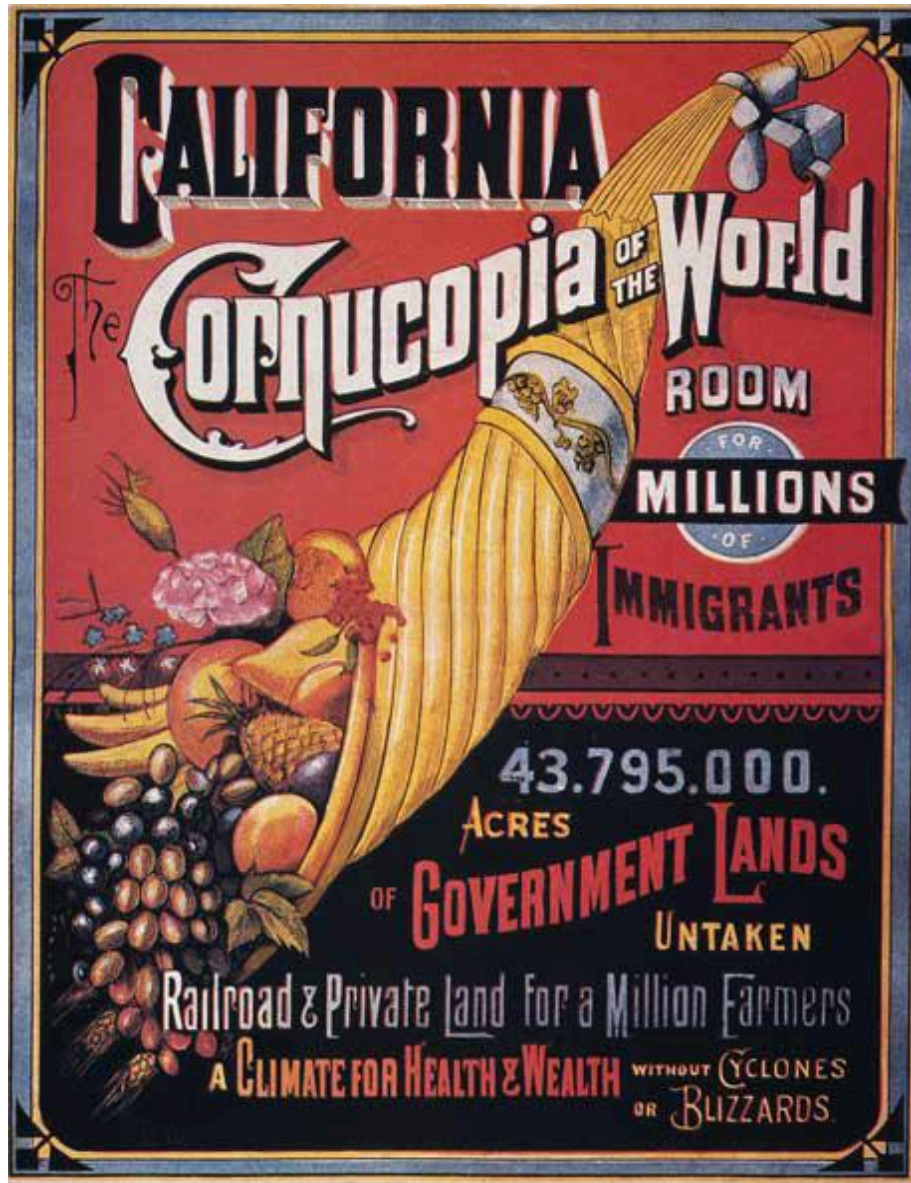
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Appendix



**Figure 1:** “California, the cornucopia of the world : room for millions of immigrants, 43,795,000 acres of government lands untaken, railroad and private lands, for a million farmers, a climate for health and wealth, without cyclones or blizzards.”



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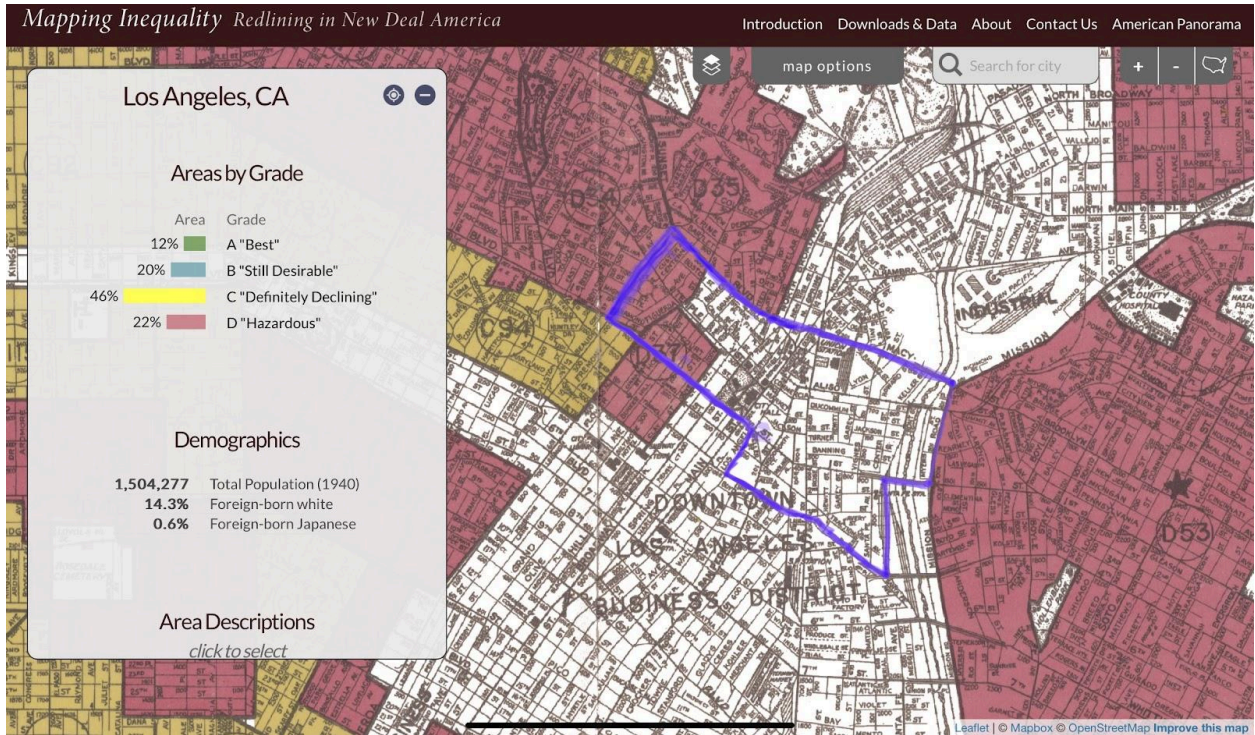
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Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Francisco.

Let us send you a name book on California and California you go to 1919  
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1800 La Salle Station, CHICAGO



Figure 2: Rock Island System Railroad Ad Golden State Limited to California.



**Figure 3:** "Mapping Inequality—Redlining in New Deal America"

**AREA DESCRIPTION**

Security Map of Los Angeles

1. POPULATION: a. Increasing \_\_\_\_\_ Decreasing \_\_\_\_\_ Static Yes
- b. Class and Occupation Laborers & WPA workers - Income \$700-\$1500
- c. Foreign Families 90 % Nationalities Mexicans, Japanese & Chinese d. Negro 0 %
- e. Shifting or Infiltration \_\_\_\_\_ None apparent
2. BUILDINGS:
 

	PREDOMINATING	90 %	OTHER TYPE	%
a. Type and Size	<u>3-5 rooms</u>			
b. Construction	<u>Substandard frame &amp; shack</u>			
c. Average Age	<u>30 years</u>			
d. Repair	<u>Very poor</u>			
e. Occupancy	<u>92%</u>			
f. Owner-occupied	<u>25%</u>			
g. 1935 Price Bracket	<u>\$ 800-2000</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>% change</u>
h. 1937 Price Bracket	<u>\$ 800-2500</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
i. 1939 Price Bracket	<u>\$ 800-2500</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
j. Sales Demand	<u>Very poor</u>			
k. Predicted Price Trend (next 6-12 months)	<u>Static to downward</u>			
l. 1935 Rent Bracket	<u>\$10.00-22.50</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>% change</u>
m. 1937 Rent Bracket	<u>\$12.50-25.00</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
n. 1939 Rent Bracket	<u>\$12.50-25.00</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
o. Rental Demand	<u>Poor</u>			
p. Predicted Rent Trend (next 6-12 months)	<u>Static</u>			
3. NEW CONSTRUCTION (past yr.) No. 0 Type & Price \_\_\_\_\_ How Selling \_\_\_\_\_
4. OVERHANG OF HOME PROPERTIES: a. HOLC. 0 b. Institutions Many
5. SALE OF HOME PROPERTIES (3 yr.) a. HOLC. 1 b. Institutions Many
6. MORTGAGE FUNDS: None 7. TOTAL TAX RATE PER \$1000 (1937) \$ 52.80  
1938
8. DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AREA:

Terrain: Level to hilly with some sharp grades which constitute construction hazards. Land improved 55% out of possible total of 85%. Deed restrictions: An unrestricted district which is also lacking in definite zoning. Public and parochial schools, churches, trading centers, recreational areas are all conveniently available. Dependent upon bus line on Figueroa St. for transportation. Within walking distance of Civic Center. This is an extremely old area which was never highly regarded and is now thoroughly blighted. A part of it known as "Dog town" is a typical Mexican peon district. Although there are a few old fairly presentable homes which are still in original ownership, the area as a whole is dilapidated and inhabited by a highly heterogeneous and subversive population. The area being thoroughly "blighted" is accorded a "low red" grade.

9. LOCATION Elysian Park and Dog town District SECURITY GRADE 4th - AREA NO. D-35 DATE 2/27/39

**Figure 4:** "Area Description: D-35, Elysian Park and Dog town District"

**AREA DESCRIPTION**

Security Map of Los Angeles County

1. POPULATION: a. Increasing Slowly Decreasing \_\_\_\_\_ Static \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Class and Occupation From business & professional men to WPA workers. Very mixed.  
Income from \$700-\$3000 & up
- c. Foreign Families 20 % Nationalities Mexicans, Russians & Polish Jews. d. Negro 10 %  
A few Orientals
- e. Shifting or Infiltration Shifting to subversive racial elements and lower income groups.
2. BUILDINGS: PREDOMINATING 40 % OTHER TYPE 35 %
- |   |                           |                 |   |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------|---|
| a. Type and Size                            | <u>5-7 rooms</u>          |                 | <u>Apts., flats, bungalow courts &amp; multi-family</u> |
| b. Construction                             | <u>Frame</u>              |                 | <u>Frame, stucco -<br/>Frame &amp; brick</u>            |
| c. Average Age                              | <u>30 years</u>           |                 | <u>25 years</u>   |
| d. Repair                                   | <u>Poor to fair</u>       |                 | <u>Poor to fair</u>                                     |
| e. Occupancy                                | <u>95%</u>                |                 | <u>90%</u>  |
| f. Owner-occupied                           | <u>35%</u>                |                 | <u>?</u>  |
| g. 1935 Price Bracket                       | <u>\$2500-4500</u>        | <u>% change</u> | <u>\$4250-12000 &amp; up % change</u>                   |
| h. 1937 Price Bracket                       | <u>\$3000-5000</u>        | <u>%</u>        | <u>\$4750-13500 &amp; up %</u>                          |
| i. 1939 Price Bracket                       | <u>\$2750-4500</u>        | <u>%</u>        | <u>\$4500-12500 &amp; up %</u>                          |
| j. Sales Demand                             | <u>Slow</u>               |                 | <u>None at a fair price</u>                             |
| k. Predicted Price Trend (next 6-12 months) | <u>Static</u>             |                 | <u>Static</u><br><u>(Unit rental)</u>                   |
| l. 1935 Rent Bracket                        | <u>\$ 20.00-42.50</u>     | <u>% change</u> | <u>\$15.00-35.00 % change</u>                           |
| m. 1937 Rent Bracket                        | <u>\$ 25.00-50.00</u>     | <u>%</u>        | <u>\$20.00-45.00 %</u>                                  |
| n. 1939 Rent Bracket                        | <u>\$ 22.50-45.00</u>     | <u>%</u>        | <u>\$17.50-40.00 %</u>                                  |
| o. Rental Demand                            | <u>Fair</u>               |                 | <u>Fair</u>   |
| p. Predicted Rent Trend (next 6-12 months)  | <u>Static to downward</u> |                 | <u>Static</u><br><u>Single &amp; multi-family</u>       |
3. NEW CONSTRUCTION (past yr.) No. 9 Type & Price \$3750-\$10000 How Selling Slow
4. OVERHANG OF HOME PROPERTIES: a. HOLC. 2 b. Institutions Many
5. SALE OF HOME PROPERTIES (3 yr.) a. HOLC. 15 b. Institutions Many
6. MORTGAGE FUNDS: Very limited 7. TOTAL TAX RATE PER \$1000 (1937-) \$ 52.80  
1938
8. DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AREA:

Terrain: Level to heavily rolling in northwest portion with many steep grades which constitute construction hazards. Land improved 50% out of possible total of 85%. Deed restrictions have generally expired. Zoning is spotted and varies from single family to commercial use. Conveniences are all readily available. This area was subdivided some 40 years ago and has long since lost its desirability as a residential area, and is extremely heterogeneous both as to population and improvements. Architectural designs vary from 4-room cracker boxes to frame, stucco and brick multi-family structures. In the northwest portion, which is protected by topography, will be found a small section along Kensington and Edgeware Roads which has better quality of both population and improvements. In the southwest part, west of Belmont Ave. and south of Bellevue Ave. is a concentration of Negro families which is gradually expanding. For four blocks on each side of Temple St. throughout the district is a large population of Russian and Polish Jews. There is also a settlement of Mexicans north of Temple St. in the eastern part of the area. The area, while definitely blighted, has some sections which are still in the declining period and, for this reason, it is accorded a "high red" grade.

9. LOCATION Los Angeles SECURITY GRADE 4th + AREA NO. D-34 DATE 2/27/39

Figure 5: "Area Description: D-34, Los Angeles"

## AREA DESCRIPTION

Security Map of Los Angeles

1. POPULATION: a. Increasing \_\_\_\_\_ Decreasing Slowly Static \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Class and Occupation WPA & Service workers, Low income level \$700-\$1500
- c. Foreign Families 60% Nationalities Oriental & Mexicans d. Negro 0%
- e. Shifting or Infiltration \_\_\_\_\_ Yes. See B below.
2. BUILDINGS:
 

	<u>PREDOMINATING</u>	%	<u>OTHER TYPE</u>	%
a. Type and Size	<u>Nondescript</u>			
b. Construction	<u>All types</u>			
c. Average Age	<u>40 years</u>			
d. Repair	<u>Very poor</u>			
e. Occupancy	<u>90%</u>			
f. Owner-occupied	<u>None known</u>			
g. 1935 Price Bracket	<u>\$ See below</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>% change</u>
h. 1937 Price Bracket	<u>\$ " "</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
i. _____ Price Bracket	<u>\$ " "</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
j. Sales Demand	<u>" "</u>			
k. Predicted Price Trend (next 6-12 months)	<u>" "</u>			
l. 1935 Rent Bracket	<u>\$ " "</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>% change</u>
m. 1937 Rent Bracket	<u>\$ " "</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
n. _____ Rent Bracket	<u>\$ " "</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
o. Rental Demand	<u>" "</u>			
p. Predicted Rent Trend (next 6-12 months)	<u>" "</u>			
3. NEW CONSTRUCTION (past yr.) No. 0 Type & Price \_\_\_\_\_ How Selling \_\_\_\_\_
4. OVERHANG OF HOME PROPERTIES: a. HOLC. 0 b. Institutions. Few
5. SALE OF HOME PROPERTIES (3 yr.) a. HOLC. 0 b. Institutions. Few
6. MORTGAGE FUNDS: None 7. TOTAL TAX RATE PER \$1000 (193 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>1938</sub>) \$52.70
8. DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AREA:

Terrain: Rolling hilltop. No construction hazards. Land improved 98%. Deed restrictions have expired. Zoning permits business and light industry. Conveniences are all readily available. This is one of the older and practically obsolete single family residential sections, having had its beginning 50 years or more ago. It has been through all the phases of decline and is now thoroughly blighted. Subversive racial elements predominate; dilapidation and squalor are everywhere in evidence. It is a slum area and one of the city's molting pots. There is a slum clearance project under consideration but no definite steps have as yet been taken. It is assigned the lowest of "low red" grade.

9. LOCATION Bunker Hill SECURITY GRADE 4th - AREA NO. D-37 DATE 2/27/39

Figure 6: "Area Description: D-37, Bunker Hill"



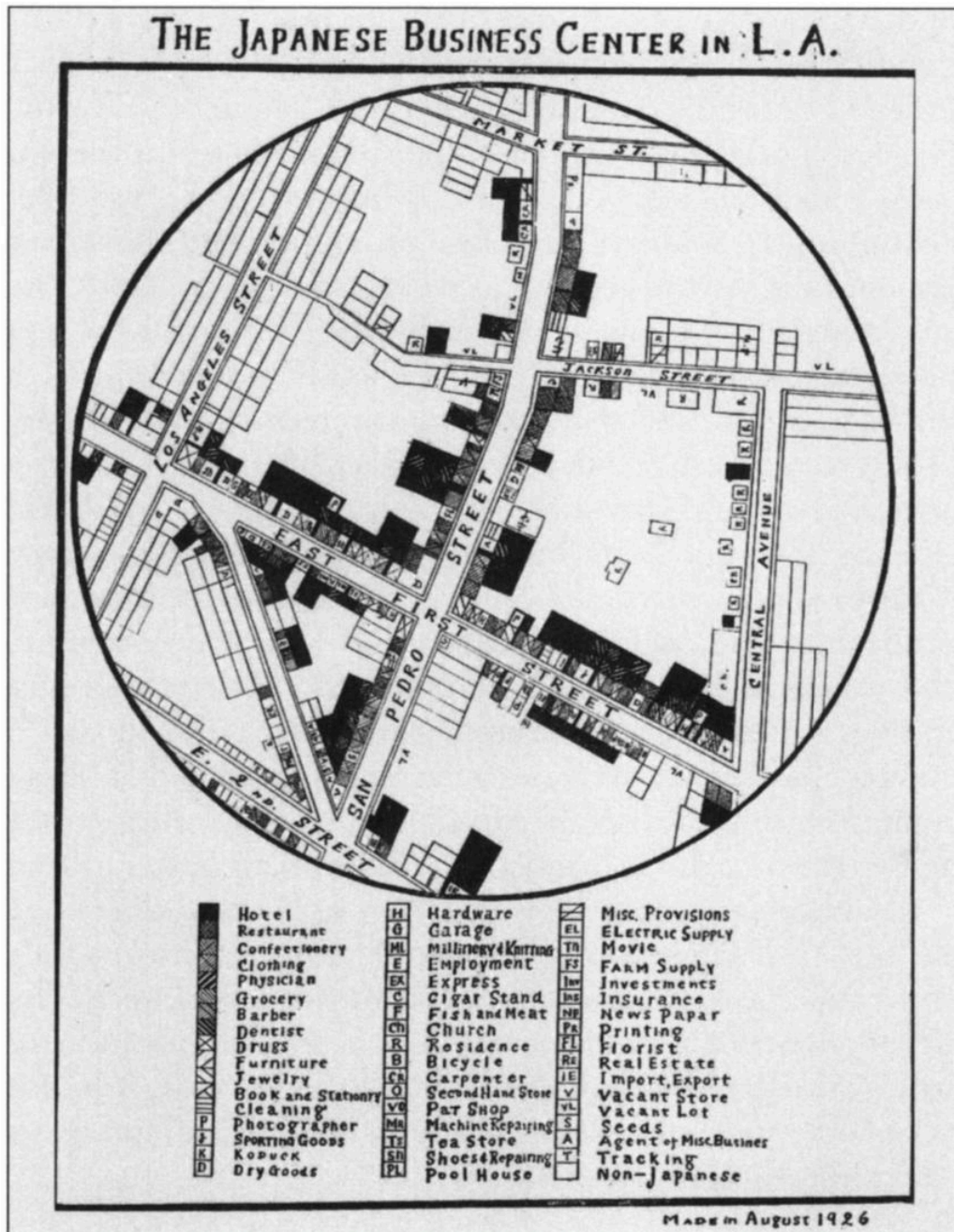


FIGURE 1. Map of Little Tokyo, "The Japanese Business Center in L.A.," in 1926. From Koyoshi Uono, "The Factors Affecting the Geographical Aggregation and Dispersion of the Japanese Residences in the City of Los Angeles" (Master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1927).

Figure 7: "Map of Little Tokyo, "The Japanese Business Center in L.A.," in 1926."



**Figure 8:** *“Housing Director Holtzendorff and men going up rickety fire escape of tenement during tour of slum areas in Los Angeles, Calif., 1948.”*



**Figure 9:** *“Officials of City Housing Authority Touring Slum Area.(1949)”*

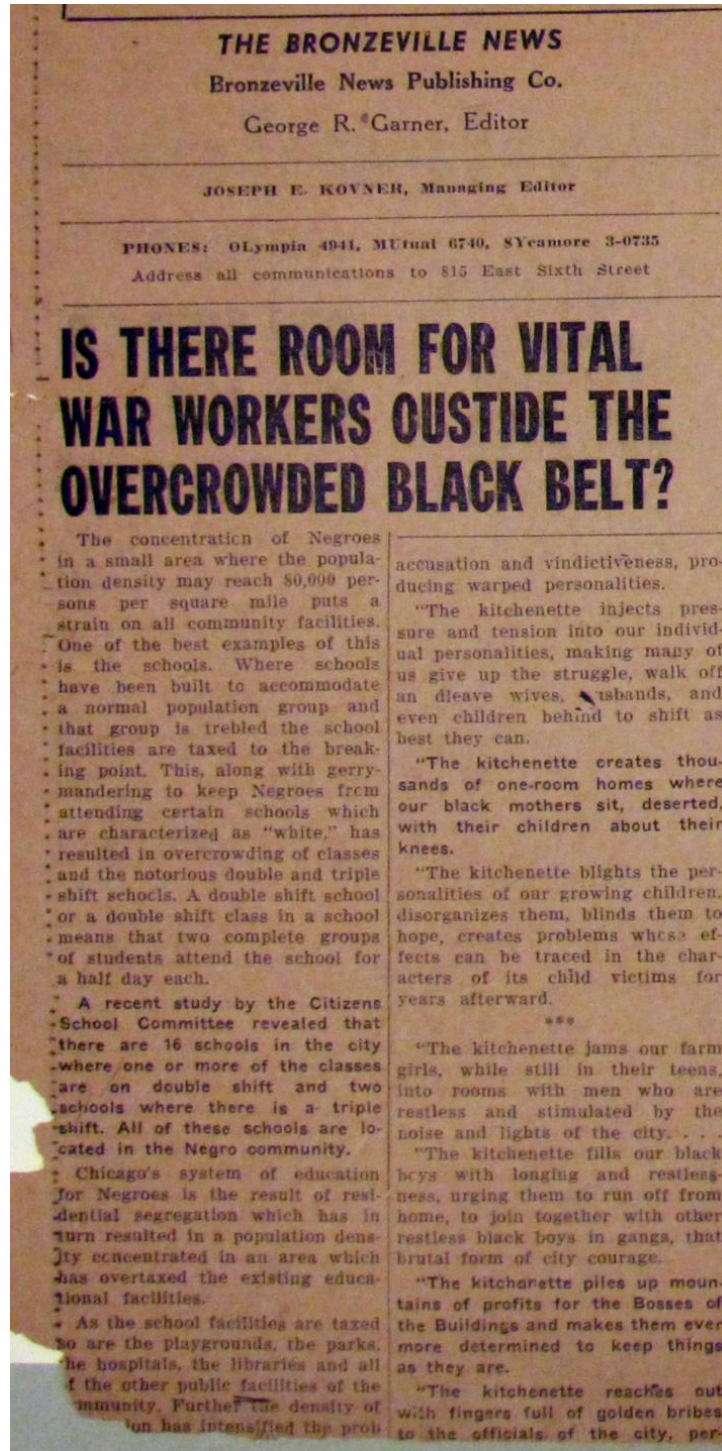


Figure 10: "Is There Room For Vital War Workers Outside The Overcrowded Black Belt?" The Bronzeville News, 1943.



**Figure 11:** *“Interior view of makeshift housing for an African American family in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles.”*



**Figure 12:** *“View of the subdivided spaces used for housing African American workers during World War Two.”*

# Leadership round table to meet again Wednesday

The regular meeting of the Leadership Round Table will be held Wednesday afternoon from three to five p.m. at Carver Junior High School, 885 E. 45th st., with entrance on 45th st.

Progress reports on **housing**, "Little Tokyo" and racial tension will be made by committees. Special subject up for discussion will be Community Health with Miss Helga Weigert, director of the Health Division of the L. A. CIO council as guest. Flloyd C. Covington is chairman; Mrs. Noreen Forney, Round Table secretary.

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Figure 13: "Leadership round table to meet again Wednesday" Los Angeles Tribune (September 13, 1943)

# 500 new housing units for Eastside

Back from Washington where he presented facts of Los Angeles' critical housing shortage to national officials, Executive Director Howard L. Holtzendorff of the Los Angeles Housing Authority predicted this week that additional public housing units available to all races would be programmed for this area soon.

"I consider the 1000 units programmed as a result of the extreme need here only a beginning," Holtzendorff declared. "I had several conferences with John B. Blandford, Jr., administrator of the National Housing Agency, and he was impressed with the tragic facts of this city's housing shortage."

Announcement of the additional units came last week while Holtzendorff was still in Washington. Included were 500 units of public war housing to be constructed and managed by the city authority and 500 more to be handled by the Los Angeles County Authority and intended for civilian employees of the navy.

"The whole program of housing consists of the combined efforts of private enterprise and the federal government to produce additional accommodations," Holtzendorff added. "The 500 units which this authority will construct as soon as possible will be available to all races on the basis of need. They probably will be located in the southeastern section of the city and will take part of the pressure off the congested sections in which members of racial minorities are now living."

Holtzendorff had sought 5000 units of public housing, 2500 to be constructed immediately. He cited to Blandford statistics showing an increase in the Negro population of Los Angeles from 40,000 in 1920 to nearly 100,000 this year. In a file which he turned over to the housing chief were letters of city officials and industrial leaders describing the conditions under which war workers, particularly members of racial minority groups, were living, and asking for more housing immediately.

Figure 14: "500 New Housing Units for Eastside." Los Angeles Tribune, 1943



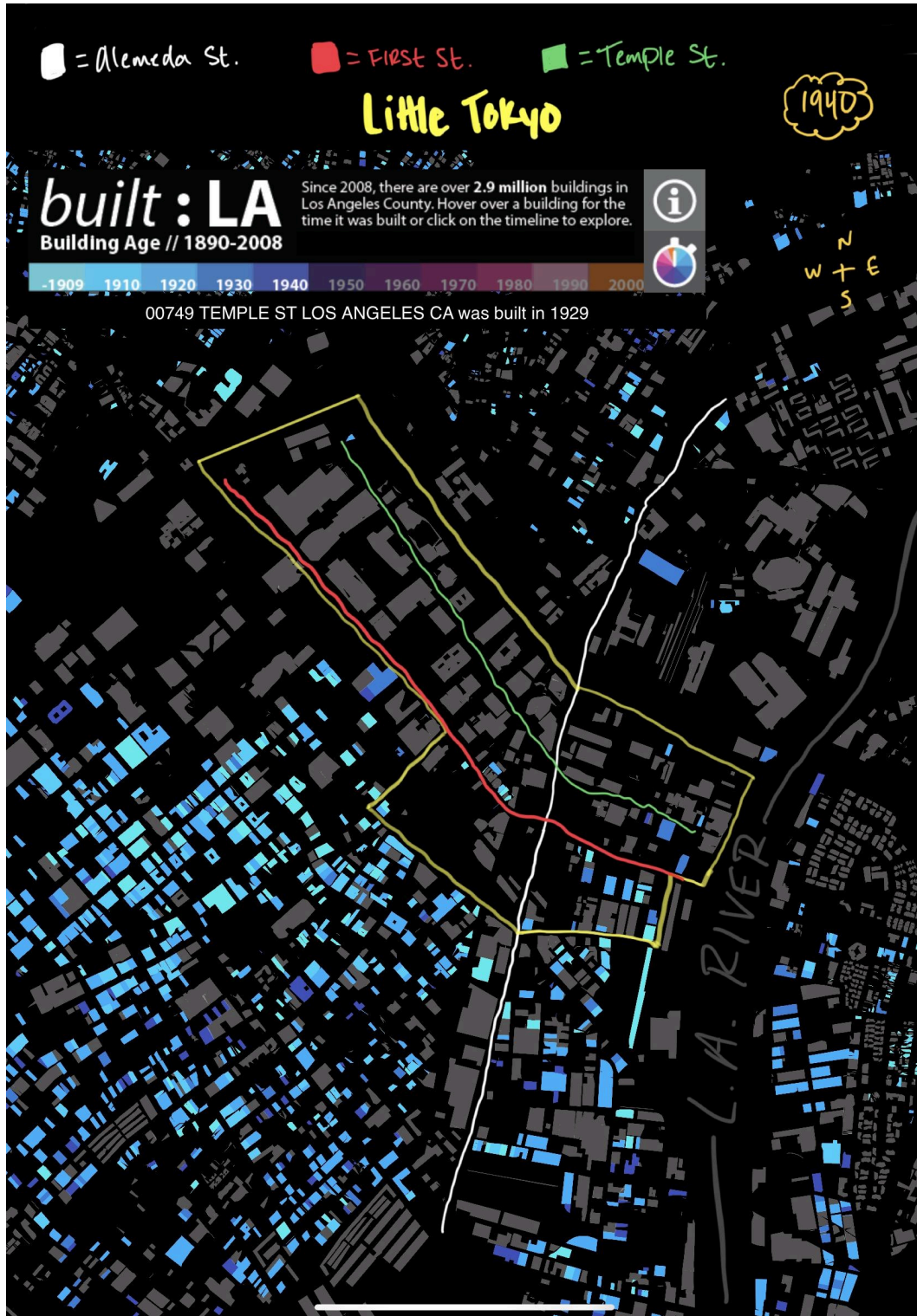


Figure 15: Little Tokyo in 1940. "Building Age // 1890-2008." Built LA. Built LA. 2023.

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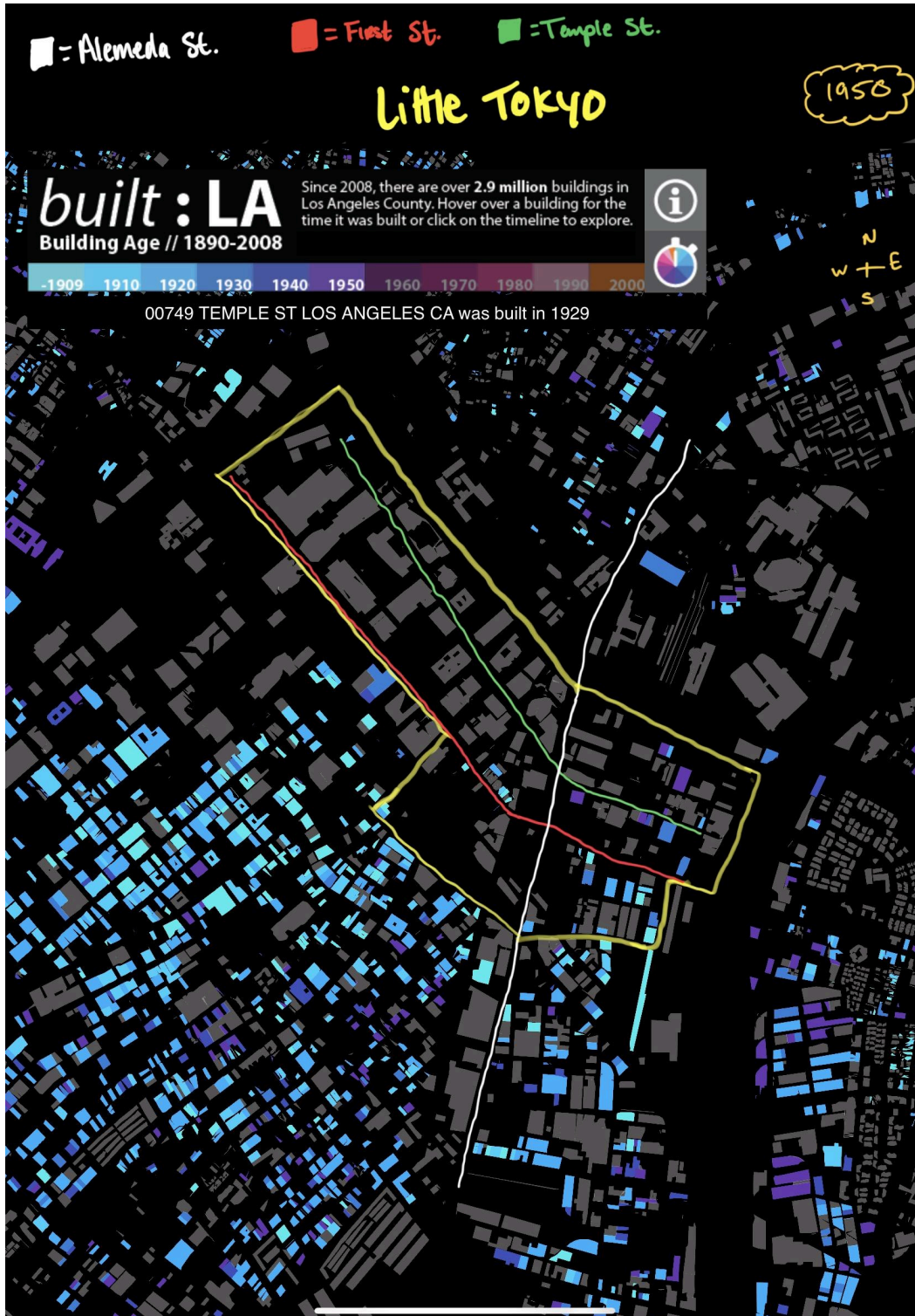
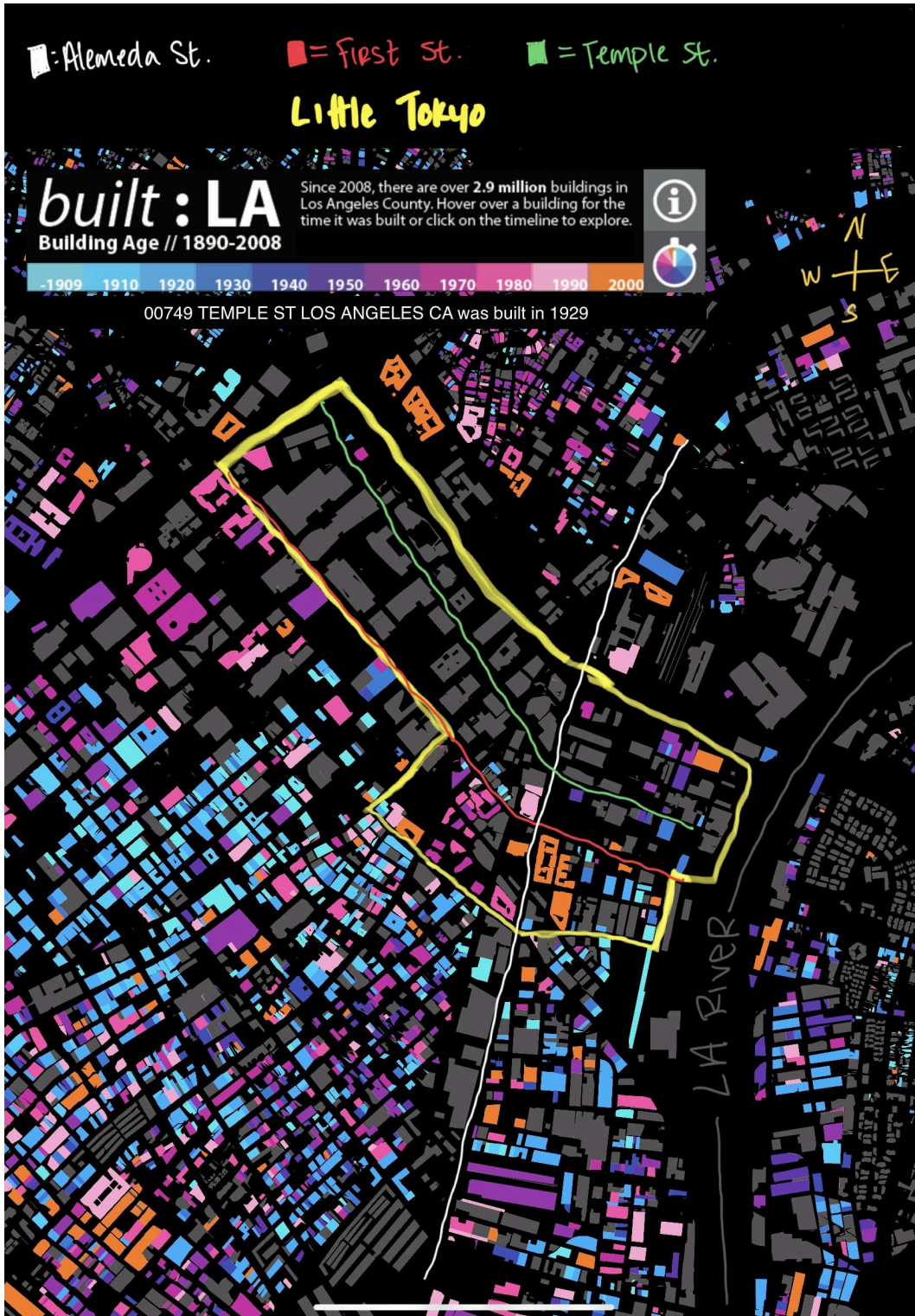


Figure 16: Little Tokyo in 1950. "Building Age // 1890-2008." Built LA. Built LA. 2023.

<https://www.builtla.com/transportation-infrastructure>.



**Figure 17:** Little Tokyo in 2008. "Building Age // 1890-2008." Built LA. Built LA, 2023.

[https://www.builtla.com/transportation-infrastructure.](https://www.builtla.com/transportation-infrastructure)