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Los Angeles

The Promise and Principles of Real Estate Development in an American Metropolis:

Los Angeles 1903-1923

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in History

By

Laura Redford

2014



## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The Promise and Principles of Real Estate Development in an American Metropolis:  
Los Angeles 1903-1923

By

Laura Redford

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Janice L. Reiff, Chair

This dissertation provides a new perspective to apply in the study of metropolitan development at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> Century America. It reveals a group of entrepreneurial men whose collective contribution to the real estate industry had just as much to do with shaping urban spaces as the wealthy, more established, and power-wielding elites that are often credited with such development. Los Angeles is the case study of the dissertation because it underwent such a dramatic transformation during this time period from a small California city to the largest and most important metropolitan region on the West Coast. Key to its growth and expansion were the members of the Los Angeles Realty Board. After organizing in 1903, the members of the board sought to bring legitimacy to their profession, encourage cooperation and fellowship among real estate men, and use their collective power to create a more dynamic business environment for their industry. They earnestly engaged in local and state politics and boosterism, redefining the role of developers and brokers. Before any formal planning structures existed in Los Angeles, they served as unofficial urban planners as they laid out the physical and social landscape of the region.

This study relies heavily on the local realty board records and those of the national association. To temper their colorful and hyperbolic language, I have scrutinized a variety of other primary and secondary sources to ascertain the real impact of the board's actions on constructing a metropolis. This dissertation establishes the realtor's ideas for their future city and their social status within it. Their aspirations are essential to understanding Los Angeles because, for better or worse, what these men imagined the region could be is what they developed, constructed, promoted, bought and sold. That vision included a spread out city filled with communities of homes for all classes, albeit communities segregated by both class and race. Members of the Los Angeles Realty Board also had a great impact on establishing the fundamentals for the professionalization of real estate practice nationally. Their participation at the national level reveals the increasing importance of Los Angeles with its foundations for many of the patterns of 20<sup>th</sup> century urban development throughout the nation.

The dissertation of Laura Redford is approved

Valerie Matsumoto

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2014

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Cherrita Smith, former head of administration for the Beverly Hills/Greater Los Angeles Association of Realtors, made the focus on the realty board possible when she found, mentioned, and allowed me access the Los Angeles Realty Board's records, which had been missing for nearly three decades. Gratefully, she was willing to part with the collection to ensure their preservation and access to future scholars. Frederik Heller has done amazing work digitizing the early years of the *National Real Estate Journal*. My time at the National Association of Realtors archives in Chicago was fruitful because of his efforts and guidance. He has patiently answered numerous follow up questions via email for which I am very thankful. Michael Holland at the Los Angeles City Archives has been an attentive archivist to whom I also owe a great debt. Throughout the research process, I received able assistance from many at UCLA's special collections. Gabriella Gray, the endnote specialist at YRL was particularly helpful. Jaybird Millsaps and his father Jerry Millsaps of Provident Title Company cheerfully and quickly provided restrictive covenant information I would not have been able to find on a variety of properties.

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## Introduction

In the spring of 1903, a handful of young entrepreneurial men gathered in the office of William May Garland, a well-known real estate dealer, to discuss organizing the real estate brokers of Los Angeles. They wanted to separate themselves from the unscrupulous dealers who made their money swindling the unsuspecting public, and legitimize their work as professional men. Newcomer to the city Herbert Burdett offered a plan to form an association of real estate men based on his experience with the Denver Real Estate Exchange, founded in 1888. He was aware that real estate men in other locations like Chicago (1883), St. Louis (1899) and Kansas City (1900) had also found a professional association advantageous. The realty men of Los Angeles were keen to organize themselves in a similar fashion. Subsequently, on May 29, about forty invited men assembled at the Chamber of Commerce building to form an organization, elect officers and create a governing committee. They set out to establish professional standards, codify work in the real estate sector, build their own business through collegiality and cooperation, and eliminate dishonest real estate dealers. The Los Angeles Realty Board (LARB) filed incorporated papers with the state of California on June 9, 1903.<sup>1</sup>

This small group would blossom into the largest real estate board in the nation and come to guide the formation of Los Angeles and its surrounding communities. Its members and leaders dominated the real estate industry in the City of Angels. Real estate offered these young men an alternative to the dead-end, white-collar jobs that formed Los Angeles corporate culture documented by historian Clark Davis. For some, it was an opportunity to pursue dreams and

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<sup>1</sup> “History of the Los Angeles Realty Board, Inc. as of February 28, 1956, unpublished manuscript, history folder, Los Angeles Realty Board Records (Collection Number 1913), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, (hereafter cited as LARB Records); “Herbert Burdett Resigns,” *National Real Estate Journal* (hereafter *NREJ*), May 15, 1911, 179; Janet Pearl Davies provides a short history on all of the earlier boards in *Real Estate in American History* (Washington DC: Public Affairs Press, 1958), 40-42. “Los Angeles Realty Board Incorporation Papers,” 1903, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.

launch themselves to the top of their own corporate organization. This was true for those who developed properties as well as those who participated solely in brokerage, mortgages, and building management. The leap into real estate in a market that had suffered from severe ups and downs and had wiped out many fortunes was certainly a risk. As entrepreneurs, the LARB members also had ideas about how their work fit into a larger vision. They could see the size and shape of a future Los Angeles in their mind's eye. Yet, the story of their contribution is largely unwritten.<sup>2</sup>

The history of Los Angeles development in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century most often centers on a handful of powerful men. Henry Huntington, nephew and heir to the powerful Collis P. Huntington of the Union Pacific, came to Southern California and built streetcar lines that determined the pattern of future growth. Moses Sherman and the influential owners of the *Los Angeles Times*, Harrison Gray Otis and Harry Chandler, grew their fortunes even greater by using privileged knowledge to buy vast quantities of cheap land in the San Fernando Valley, and subdividing when the Owens' River Aqueduct delivered water to the dry area. While these narratives are not incorrect, they miss the contributions of the men of the LARB, whose collective influence shaped the city just as much.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Clark Davis, *Company Men: White-Collar Life and Corporate Cultures in Los Angeles, 1892-1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000). The idea of realty men as entrepreneurs comes from John M. Allswang, *The Initiative and Referendum in California, 1898-1998* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), who used the term for Progressive Era reformers. Carolyn Loeb applied the term to real estate developers of the 1920s in *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers' Subdivisions in the 1920s*, *Creating the North American Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> William B. Friedrichs, "A Metropolitan Entrepreneur Par Excellence: Henry E. Huntington and the Growth of Southern California, 1898-1927," *The Business History Review* 63, no. 2 (1989); *Henry E. Huntington and the Creation of Southern California* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992); Robert C. Post, *Street Railways and the Growth of Los Angeles: Horse, Cable, Electric Lines* (San Marino, CA: Golden West Books, 1989); Frederic Cople Jaher, *The Urban Establishment: Upper Strata in Boston, New York, Charleston, Chicago, and Los Angeles* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982). Jaher's study as it pertains to real estate only uses the familiar story of the San Fernando Mission Company with members Henry Huntington, Col. Harrison Gray Otis, Harry Chandler, Moses Sherman, and banker Joseph F. Sartori to illustrate the possibilities for wealthy men to make even more money. Robert Fogelson likewise focuses on the railway entrepreneurs in his discussion of real estate in Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California

While no one member of the LARB owned as much property as Huntington, Otis, Chandler, or Sherman, by 1923 almost half of real estate in the City of Angels was under control of a member of LARB.<sup>4</sup> These men were not small-time operators taking cues from the more well-known and historically celebrated (or despised) figures. They were innovators, investors and industry trailblazers who dynamically created the Southland during its seemingly continuous population boom, as Los Angeles came to be a place distinguished by its downtown buildings surrounded by deliberately arranged subdivisions of single-family homes. Combining the LARB members' achievements in the residential sector with their efforts regarding commercial, industrial and agricultural properties, this group's contributions to the growth of Southern California equals those of any of the single empire builders famous in the region's history. One of the purposes of the organization, in fact, was to use the collective strength of its membership to influence the growth and prestige of the real estate industry in Los Angeles and beyond.

This dissertation looks at metropolitan development in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century through the lens of the local realty board and seeks to answer two questions: 1) What did it mean for Los Angeles that after 1903 the LARB was the policy setting organization for the local industry? 2) What impact did the actions of the LARB have on the national industry?

In studying one organization and one region (the LARB's direct impact extended to almost all of present day Los Angeles and Orange Counties), it can be easy to fall into the thinking that what happened in Los Angeles was unique or special. This must be tempered with the knowledge that most urban centers throughout the United States were expanding, growing, and changing. Urban populations all over the nation increased for one hundred years from 1830 to the Great Depression, culminating with over one fourth of the total population living in

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Press, 1993). A fictional account of the water and real estate scandal was presented in Roman Polanski's 1974 award winning film, *Chinatown*, starring Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston.

<sup>4</sup> "An Astonishing Fact," *National Real Estate Journal*, June 4, 1923, 38, (hereafter *NREJ*).



metropolitan areas by 1930. Just as cities were growing in numbers of people, they were also geographically expanding through annexation, especially from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century into the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Railroads helped to determine the location of cities big and small, providing the economic basis for existence and growth. Many bedroom communities or “streetcar suburbs” sprouted on the outskirts of municipal boundaries because of transportation innovations. Elite neighborhoods some distance from the city center, like the Country Club district of Kansas City, gained popularity everywhere. All of the major metropolises had active boosters or promoters, which included the real estate operators, who were poised to make fortunes developing, selling, and promoting new home sites, offices spaces, and industrial properties. Individual real estate boards began forming in the 1880s, and a national organization started to coordinate their efforts and amplify their impact on national policy in 1908.<sup>5</sup>

While much of the development of Los Angeles fits into these familiar narratives, what happened in Southern California was slightly different in scale, periodization, and perception. Because of its geography and abundantly rich soil stretching from the Tehachapi Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, the volume of undeveloped land, and the region’s thirst for a steady and reliable water source, Los Angeles expanded into a larger metropolis than other cities. It also started as a smaller town than the older, established, industrial centers of the East Coast and Midwest. There were fewer physical obstacles thwarting the implementation of 20<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>5</sup> While not exhaustive, some of the major books that address these themes of urban development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries include: Eric H. Monkkenon, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns, 1780-1980* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), especially chapter 8, "Suburbs into Neithorhoods: The Rise and Fall of Municipal Annexation"; William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991); Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); William S. Worley, *J.C. Nichols and the Shaping of Kansas City: Innovation in Planned Residential Communities* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1990). On the formation of real estate boards and a national organization see Jeffrey M. Hornstein, *A Nation of Realtors: A Cultural History of the Twentieth-Century American Middle Class* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

ideas of community and urban formation. In fact, the city's industrial base remained relatively small until after World War I. The pace of transformation produced a feeling among boosters that the location was unique.

It seems that Los Angeles promoters and the LARB members in particular truly believed theirs was a different kind of city. Beginning with the moderate, Mediterranean climate and the tangible health benefits it provided, Southern California promoters argued that Los Angeles did not have the problems of those industrial centers east of the Mississippi. Their tropes became familiar assertions about the city. As an "open shop," anti-union city, and a place where working-class families could live in a free standing house, Los Angeles was void of class conflict. There were no tenements to breed disease. Few problems from unwanted, "unwashed" masses of immigrants plagued the city. None of these situations were true. Repeated often enough, however, they became mainstays of the city's image. Another frequent pronouncement about Los Angeles centered on the affordability and access to single family residences in maintained communities. Like the healthy climate, this was more accurate than some of the other claims about the city.

Historians often describe the detached single home affordable to more than just the ultra wealthy as a suburbanization phenomenon of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the post-WWII housing shortage, federal subsidies, baby boomer families, and new methods of housing construction. The concept of housing away from the city center that could be available to all classes, however, was in place in Los Angeles even before WWI. Single family home living in defined neighborhoods with services, amenities, and communal ground maintenance would be available to working-class, white-collar, and wealthy Angelenos prior to WWI. Unlike the "Unplanned Suburbs" of Toronto, these planned residential communities were the result of the

vision and deliberate efforts of real estate leaders in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars have overlooked this period of development to focus on the larger booms that surrounded it.<sup>6</sup>

Much has been written about Los Angeles' building booms of the 1880s and the 1920s, without significant attention to construction in the years in between. Discussions of the 1880s center on the real estate speculation and bust that dramatically wiped out fortunes, and scared investors and developers for decades to come. Published scholarship on the decades between has focused on boosterism and expansion of public works projects and transportation networks. The scale of residential building in the 1920s, however, has captured the attention of many historians. Some have focused in on the 1920s as a special moment in Los Angeles history, when the city was a "Metropolis in the Making," or a "Magnetic L.A." The decades between the 1880s and the 1920s deserve closer scrutiny.<sup>7</sup>

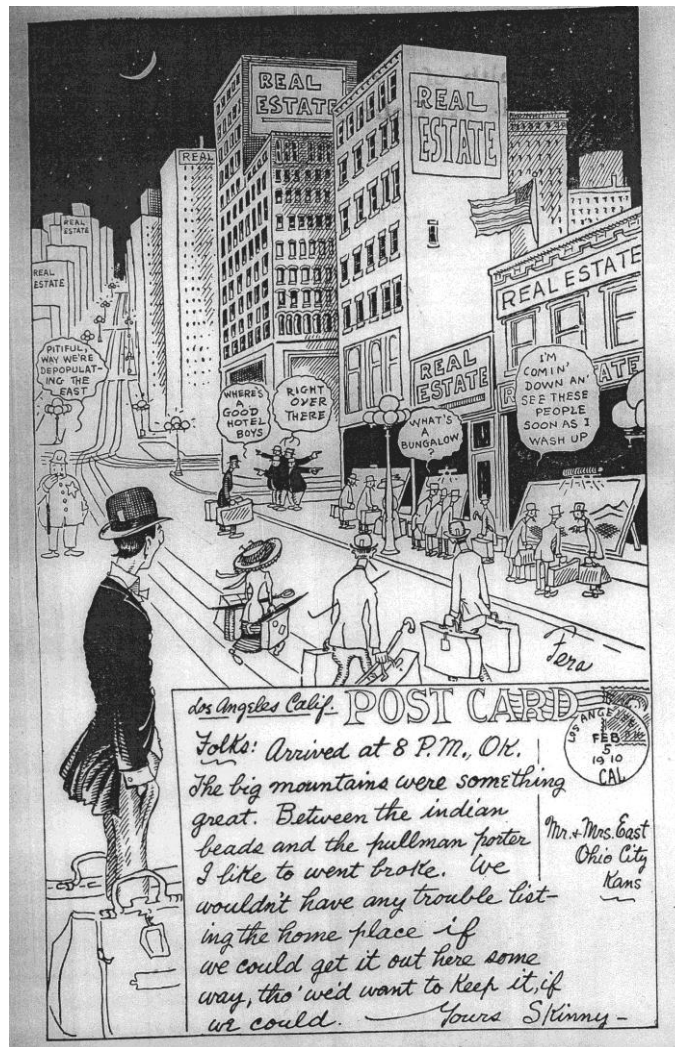
The observations of a new Los Angeles resident just seven years after the LARB began highlight the thriving real estate industry in the region between the two booms. Born In the

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the history of post World War II suburbanization is Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*. For Los Angeles working-class housing see: Kim Hernandez, "The "Bungalow Boom": The Working-Class Housing Industry and the Development and Promotion of Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles," *Southern California Quarterly* 92, no. 4 (2010); Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Richard Harris, *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto's American Tragedy, 1900 to 1950* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Glenn S. Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1970); Gloria Ricci Lothrop, "The Boom of the '80s Revisited," *Southern California Quarterly* 75, no. 3/4 (1993); Christopher G. Boone, "Real Estate Promotion and the Shaping of Los Angeles," *Cities* 15, no. 3 (1998). Carey McWilliams did address the 1906 boom in addition to the 1880 and 1920s epochs. See Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith, 1973). On the Citrus Industry in Southern California and boosterism see Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). For leisure boosterism see Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). On the water issues for Los Angeles see Steven P. Erie and Harold David Brackman, *Beyond Chinatown: The Metropolitan Water District, Growth, and the Environment in Southern California* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). They correct some of the information shared in McWilliams' "Water! Water! Water," chapter 5 of *Southern California: An Island on the Land*. Robert Fogelson wrote about both the Owen's River Valley Aqueduct and the Harbor in *The Fragmented Metropolis*. For transportation networks see Spencer Crump, *Ride the Big Red Cars: The Pacific Electric Story* (Glendale, CA: Trans-Anglo Books, 1983); Post, *Street Railways and the Growth of Los Angeles*. Important books that focus specifically on the 1920s are: Tom Sitton and William Francis Deverell, *Metropolis in the Making: Los Angeles in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

imagination and from the pen of cartoonist Adolph C. Fera, Skinny East arrived in the City of Angels on February 5, 1910, from a town in the Midwest. The cartoon illustrations were published in the *Los Angeles Herald*. Two of Skinny's postcards home to "the folks" commented on the breadth and pace of real estate development in Los Angeles during this time<sup>8</sup>

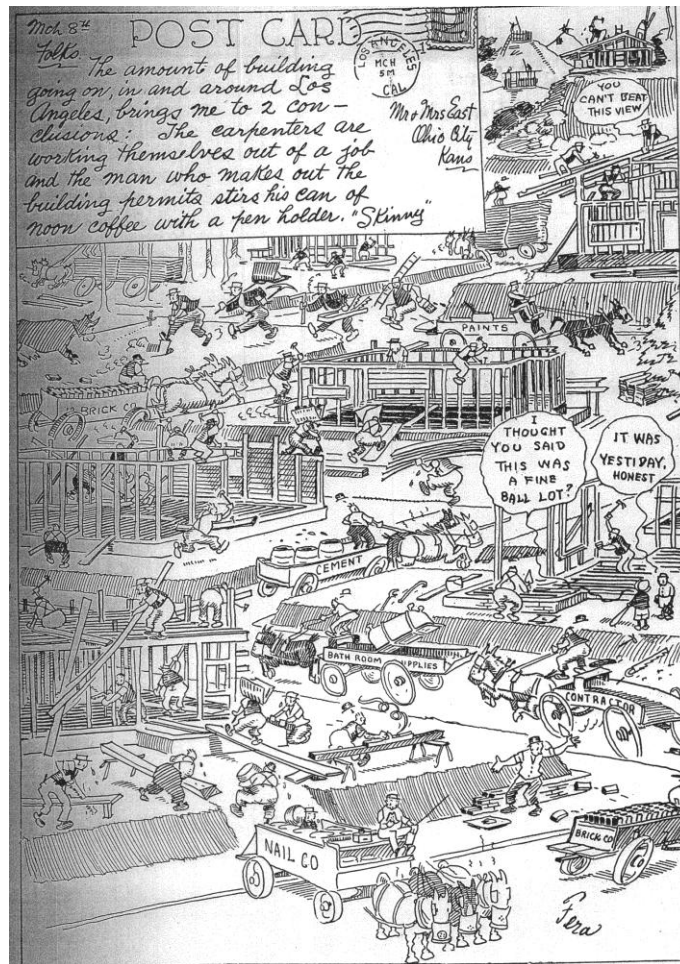


In his very first postcard Skinny focused attention on the vast number of land purchasing opportunities available in Los Angeles, and the number of practitioners peddling property.

Seven buildings on the downtown street advertised "REAL ESTATE". All of the new arrivals

<sup>8</sup> Adolph C. Fera, *Post Cards of a Tourist: Cartoons of Southern California* (Los Angeles: Henry J. Pauly Company, 1910).

to the city crowded around storefront windows, suitcases in hand, looking at the housing prospects. One man wondered “What’s a bungalow?” referring to the ubiquitous Southern California architectural style of a single family home. Another remarked, “I’m comin’ down an’ see these people as soon as I wash up,” a comment on how quickly one had to move to take advantage of a new lot on the market. Fera’s cartoon depicted accurately what was happening in Los Angeles. Real Estate was one of *the* significant regional industries.



By March 8<sup>th</sup>, Skinny had had the time to observe the quickly changing landscape due to all the new residential buildings and projects. He offered this insight: “The amount of building going on, in and around Los Angeles, brings me to 2 conclusions: The carpenters are working

themselves out of a job and the man who makes out the building permits stirs his can of noon coffee with a pen holder.” The image behind the postcard is of wagons and men running as quickly as they can around a burgeoning subdivision of half-framed homes. Equipment and supplies are flying off the wagons they are moving so fast. These wagons are filled with nails, bricks, bath room supplies, cement and paint, everything necessary for construction. The only wagon not racing up the hill cannot start because the road is so full of other wagons. To demonstrate how quickly it seemed to Angelinos that new subdivisions were springing up, a young boy with a bat questioned his friend, “I thought you said this was a fine ball lot?” The chagrined reply: “It was yesterday, honest.” Skinny East’s comments about this critical period of development around 1910 describe the advent of the monumental growth of the residential communities which became the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Los Angeles metropolis. LARB members sponsored, developed, marketed, and sold the vast majority of those developments.

As the second Skinny East Cartoon indicated, construction required a city building permit. The number of building permits issued each year from 1900-1923 provide a powerful example of the city’s growth during this time period. There was over a three-thousand percent increase in building permits issued. A closer look at the year by year increases and decreases in permits shows Los Angeles’ building markets were subject to national and international pressures (see Appendix A). There was a steady growth in the number of permits from 1900-1906, and a decline in 1907, the year of a nation-wide financial panic. By 1909, permits were once again on the rise. The growth from 1909’s total permits of 8,571 to 1913’s 16,442 is almost a doubling of the number of permits in a four year period. Building slowed again during the four years of World War I, falling back to the 1903 level of issued permits. Construction robustly rebounded in 1919, and would continue to explode during the first half of the 1920s.

Fueling the increase of building permits was the expansion of the geographical boundaries of the city and the local population. Like other metropolitan centers, Los Angeles grew in size by absorbing smaller, established communities. Annexation occurred for three reasons. First, some communities wanted to be part of the larger city in order to benefit from its policing and water supply. Residents in the 1895 annexed area known as Highland Park wanted help controlling saloons and other undesirable activities in a wooded area along the Arroyo Seco. Hollywood sought to be part of Los Angeles in 1910 in order to have a consistent and reliable water supply. The other two reasons Los Angeles annexed other areas and cities were for the larger city's benefit. Los Angeles needed to secure a pathway under its control to the port. It also required areas to help pay for and use the water from the Owen's Valley Aqueduct. The initial land grant in 1781 gave the city of Los Angeles exclusive rights to water in the region. California State Supreme Court cases of the late 1800s affirmed this privilege, but also imposed the restriction that the city could not sell water outside of its limits. A 1911 amendment to the state's annexation laws allowed taxation of the annexed area at the regular city rate to pay for debts incurred before annexation. The bond debt from building the Los Angeles Aqueduct spurred this legal change. From 1900 through the 1910s, Los Angeles engulfed ten previously incorporated communities and thousands of acres of unincorporated land in the San Fernando Valley. Los Angeles' most impressive spatial growth through annexation was this period in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to 1929, what historian Philip Ethington called the period of "Metropolitanization"<sup>9</sup> (see Appendix B for list of Annexations).

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Bigger and James D. Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew: A Century of Municipal Independence and Expansionism in Metropolitan Los Angeles*, Studies in Local Government Series (Los Angeles: Bureau of Governmental Research, University of California, 1952), especially pages 36, 129, 55-92; Philip J. Ethington, "The Spatial and Demographic Growth of Los Angeles," in *The Development of Los Angeles City Government: An Institutional History, 1850-2000*, ed. Tom Sitton (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Historical Society, 2007).

A chronicler of the region, Carey McWilliams famously wrote, “The growth of Southern California since 1870 should be regarded as one continuous boom punctuated at intervals by major explosions.” There was a steady increase of residents to Los Angeles and its surrounding communities throughout this period. The population grew 147% in the decade 1900-1910, the largest percentage increase between years 1870-1940. The increase for the following decade was another 79.3%. While some tried to belie the rate of migration to the city and use its annexation to explain the population growth, in 1920 *The Los Angeles Times* defended the position that the majority of population increase was due to newcomers. “All gains through annexation excluded, Los Angeles has in ten years received new population virtually great enough to stock another city as large as Portland, Oregon.” All of these new residents needed someplace to live. The city’s chief inspector lamented in his 1919-1920 fiscal year report that “housing accommodations are not being provided fast enough to meet the normal increase in population.” The population increase and the need for housing made even more acute by the wartime slowdown in construction explain why during 1922, Los Angeles would open the equivalent of one new housing tract per day during 1923, as reported in *California Real Estate* magazine.<sup>10</sup>

This study ends in 1923 for several reasons. In the early 1920s several important endeavors pertaining to real estate professional development that had been discussed for years came to fruition. Most notable was the education partnership with local universities to offer real estate courses. It was in 1923 that the LARB past president, Frank Ryan chaired NAREB’s Code of Ethics revision committee. In the same year, NAREB rolled out its organization changes, making it more able to help realtors everywhere. Stopping in the early 1920s also curtails the discussion of that decade’s housing boom and additional real estate related issues that other

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<sup>10</sup> McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 114; “Did Los Angeles “Annex” Its Big Population?,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 28, 1920; J.J Backus, “Report of Building Department for Fiscal Year 1919-1920,” Los Angeles California, 2; California Real Estate Association, *California Real Estate*, January, 1923, 28.



authors have already discussed. Furthermore, the focus on the board's first twenty years draws attention to the groundwork it laid for the city's future growth. How and why Los Angeles came to look the way that it does can be answered by studying the actions of the board during its formative first two decades.<sup>11</sup>

Jeffrey Hornstein highlighted the growing importance of the real estate profession through the early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century in *A Nation of Realtors*. Hornstein explained that early realtors subscribed to a similar code of masculinity and middle-class values. The composite profile of the LARB leadership is very similar to the national trends outlined in his work. The national story further highlights the realtors' role in enshrining home ownership as an American value and government-backed priority. An important read for anyone wanting to learn about the real estate profession, Hornstein's book leaves room for a more local study, specifically, how the body of realtors and their goals transformed a certain metropolitan landscape.<sup>12</sup>

The only study of the LARB was part of a larger work on land use and planning by historian Marc Weiss. He recognized the boards' contribution to establishing the 1908 zoning law—the first of its kind in the nation—and their efforts to revise and expand the law in 1924. Without the zoning ordinances, Weiss' "community builders" of the 1920s and beyond would have been unable to carry out their planned communities as they did. In Los Angeles the principles of planning and developing that defined residential communities were already in practice by the 1920s. The LARB's influence in pioneering zoning was notable. The group's reach went even further, however, designing Los Angeles' physical and social geography

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<sup>11</sup> On NAREB's structural changes see Davies, *Real Estate in American History*, 153-56.

<sup>12</sup> Hornstein, *A Nation of Realtors*.

through home building and marketing, formulating segregation, and impacting local political matters. And it did all this before the 1920s.<sup>13</sup>

This project relies heavily on the realty men's own records. The minutes of the governing committee for the Los Angeles Realty Board proved invaluable. I accessed them at the Beverly Hills/Greater Los Angeles Association of Realtors, and they are now available for further study in special collections at the Young Research Library at UCLA. The *National Real Estate Journal*, the official organ of the National Association of Realty Boards (now National Association of Realtors) was very helpful in providing other information on the activities of the Los Angeles Realty Board, and comparing their efforts to those of other boards throughout the nation. I quote extensively from these two sources because of the colorful and expressive nature of early 20<sup>th</sup> century language. Skepticism is required, however, to tame the hyperbole realty men used about themselves. They did not lack in feelings of self-importance. While some of that may have been posturing for a better social position, I believe the realty men in Los Angeles truly thought they were building a distinctively new kind of city. In order to determine the accuracy of their claims about their own efforts, I have relied on a variety of city reports, newspaper accounts, advertisements, legal documents, and other primary and secondary sources.

Because Los Angeles became the hub for the region (some have argued the entire West), and because the realty board members in this early time period did not restrict themselves to the municipal boundaries of the city, I use the term Los Angeles very loosely. It can describe both the city and the incorporated and the unincorporated areas around it. Often times it is interchangeable for the southern California region, or what Carey McWilliams called the "Southland." Of course, city boundaries matter. For issues of zoning and municipal services

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<sup>13</sup> Marc A. Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders: The American Real Estate Industry and Urban Land Planning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

such as what policing agency services a neighborhood, municipal lines mean a great deal. Debates about schools in the wake of mandatory school integration fueled the efforts of cities to legally demarcate themselves from Los Angeles. But in the context of real estate development, especially residential communities, those boundaries were very blurry in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The developers and brokers with the LARB worked throughout the entire Southern California region, and influenced smaller, local boards. When I am discussing a point that pertains only to the demarcated boundaries of the city of Los Angeles, it will be evident in the text. Otherwise, the name Los Angeles can stand in for the whole region, since it was the metropolitan hub.<sup>14</sup>

Suburbanization and suburbs are also terms I use with great flexibility. For this project, they again are not dependent on municipal jurisdictions. They are the design, construction, or presence of single family detached homes in distinct developments away from the city center, but connected to it. These communities of homes were sometimes bounded by commercial thoroughfares such as Santa Monica Avenue or Wilshire and Sunset Boulevards, but strictly avoided industry or commerce within the neighborhood. In this sense the “city” would be only where people worked in the downtown business district or the industrial zones. Suburbs were where people lived. This is how the real estate promoters of the time seem to have used the word suburban.

Homes away from the city center were not a new concept. Historically, suburban communities were either for the incredibly wealthy or industrial workers living near job sites. In fact, the very wealthy had relied on country estates to escape city living as far back as ancient Rome. Beginning in the 1870s, as historian Sam Bass Warner, Jr. argued, both the wealthy and people of more moderate means began relocating to suburban communities surrounding Boston and relying on streetcar lines to connect them to the city. In his study, the rural ideal of suburban

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<sup>14</sup> McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*.

living quickly faded as the new communities became crowded with new construction and residents. In Los Angeles, the suburban ideal was ultimately about distinct residential communities. The municipalities separate from Los Angeles followed the same principles of neighborhood planning as those used in the larger city, largely because of the far-reaching influence of the Los Angeles Realty Board.<sup>15</sup>

The principles upon which Los Angeles would grow and its real estate be sold solidified in these crucial years. The LARB was fundamental to that expansion. It was during the first two decades of the board's existence that realty men tried to systematize and legitimize their work. They had a specific vision for the city and their role as professionals. Knowing more about who participated in the LARB and what they did illuminates the entrepreneurial forces that designed and promoted property and land use in the Los Angeles Southern California and supports why the region has been influential in housing policy throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Chapter one covers in depth who was a part of the LARB, and who was excluded, and how they linked themselves to the region's moguls like Henry Huntington. It examines how they manifested their collective power and vision for the city, using the 1911 mayoral election as a prime example. Chapter two investigates the purposeful effort of the LARB to build a spread out city of single family homes. Housing was a large component of the real estate industry in Los Angeles and would come to shape how the realty board men envisioned, marketed, and sold their budding metropolis. Chapter three discusses the active role of the LARB in segregating the city according to class and race. For a variety of reasons and using restrictive covenants, the LARB purposefully reinforced a segregated metropolis. Chapter four highlights how the LARB tried to promote the real estate possibilities in the region through the 1912 Land Show and as hosts of the

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<sup>15</sup> On the history of suburbs as an elite privilege see Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987). For Industrial suburbs see Graham Romeyn Taylor, *Satellite Cities: A Study of Industrial Suburbs* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1915). Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*.

1915 National Association of Real Estate Boards annual conference. The LARB emerges as one of the most important booster organizations the city had. Chapter five focuses on the board's pursuit of professional status through its own policing methods and by relying on Progressive Era institutions of authority. Los Angeles emerges as a national leader in two important steps to professionalization: state licensing and college-based education.

Collectively, these chapters demonstrate that the realty board was a powerful force in city affairs and in the national real estate organization. Moreover, the principles real estate professionals used to subdivide during this time period set the foundation for the growth of the 20<sup>th</sup> century metropolis that Los Angeles came to be. What people built, where they built it, and who used the spaces were ideas congealing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the formulas the LARB espoused provided the promise of and the principles for future development.

## **Chapter 1: The Los Angeles Realty Board**

In 1890, twenty-four year old William May Garland, future Los Angeles Realty Board (LARB) founding member and president, arrived from Chicago in the City of Angels with twenty-three dollars in his pocket. By the end of his life in 1948, numerous honors and awards marked his steady climb to personal wealth and professional success as a realty man, financier and Los Angeles booster. Garland participated in a number of business and social clubs. In recognition of his considerable influence, the heads of the five newspapers in Los Angeles in 1918 pegged him as the leader of an organization of thirty influential businessmen that called itself the Community Development Association. Garland wrote of that experience:

*Some time in 1918, when my office was located at 729 South Spring Street, I was visited by five publishers--Harry Chandler of the Los Angeles Times; F.W. Kellogg, representing the Los Angeles Evening Express; Guy Barham, representing the Los Angeles Herald; M. H. Imsen, representing the Los Angeles Examiner, and H. B. R. Briggs, representing the Los Angeles Record. They stated to me that, for the first time in the history of Los Angeles, the newspapers had arrived at the determination to become a unit on everything that had to do with the upbuilding and advancement of Los Angeles. They reserved the right to exercise their judgment politically and in the fundamental organization and conduct of their several papers, but in everything that had to do with the upbuilding of Los Angeles, they would work unitedly. They enlarged their plan by suggesting that they add about twenty, or twenty-five representative business men to the organization, to be selected from different walks of business endeavor, and complete an organization which would be known as the Community Development Association. They further requested that I act as president of the organization when it was formulated. At that time I was president of the Los Angeles Athletic Club. It immediately struck me as a splendid idea and I very willingly accepted.<sup>1</sup>*

At the helm of the Community Development Association, and as president of the Los Angeles Athletic club, Garland played a seminal role in securing the tenth modern Olympic Games for Los Angeles in 1932. He became president at one time or another of almost every one of the many organizations with which he affiliated, including three terms as the head of the Los Angeles Realty Board. In addition to his many state and national commendations, he received

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<sup>1</sup> "William May Garland," *Babcock Ancestry*, accessed January 16, 2014, <http://babcockancestry.com/SS2-o/p4.htm>.

eight knighthoods or other special decorations from the leaders of European countries, for his continued work as a member of the International Olympic Committee.<sup>2</sup>

Garland brought with him valuable banking skills acquired in Chicago. Having used a family connection by marriage to bankers William H. Mitchell and his son John J. Mitchell, he had worked his way up to the position of receiving teller at the prominent Illinois Trust and Savings Bank. Like many other Southern California migrants suffering from poor health, Garland was attracted by the salubrious Southland climate. Soon after his arrival he observed that real estate offered the possibility of great financial returns and bought a small piece of land with earnings from his job at the Pacific Cable Co. The property quickly increased \$500 over his initial purchase investment. Seizing opportunity, in 1894 Garland opened his own realty firm, the W.M. Garland and Co. that provided brokerage services for real estate transactions and first mortgage loans. The company gave special attention to business property, high-end residence property, and management services for out-of-town property owners. Streetcar magnate Henry Huntington employed Garland as his primary real estate broker. Like others in LARB leadership, Garland came to serve a prominent role in a local financial institution as president of California Standard Finance Corporation. Garland participated actively in LARB affairs. Between 1907 and 1913 he served as either a vice president, a member of the governing board, or president of the organization. His involvement in realty boards was not limited to the local

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<sup>2</sup>"Garland Funeral Rites Scheduled for Friday," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 September, 1948; "Civic Leader W. M. Garland Dies at 82," *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1948; "Business Men Honor Garland," *Los Angeles Times*, August 23, 1918; *Who's Who in the Pacific Southwest: A Compilation of Authentic Biographical Sketches of Citizens of Southern California and Arizona*, (Los Angeles: The Times-mirror Printing & Binding House, 1913); Shirley Bill, "Classic Selling Job," *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1983; Friedrichs, *Henry E. Huntington and the Creation of Southern California*, 125. Garland also played a prominent role in the city's artistic endeavors. See Sarah Schrank, *Art and the City: Civic Imagination and Cultural Authority in Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

level. He was active in the leadership of the state association and served as the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) president for two years.<sup>3</sup>

Garland's business success story included several of the variety of efforts typical of the many LARB entrepreneurs in the early decades of Los Angeles' growth. Not only did Garland serve in many leadership positions both locally and nationally affecting the real estate profession, he participated in key events involving the city of Los Angeles and the state of California. In 1911 when the LARB made its biggest political impression on Los Angeles during the mayoral election, Garland led the organization. His significant involvement on the state and national boards demonstrated the considerable influence LARB members had on the larger real estate profession throughout the state and nation.

The LARB encompassed more than one person, however. Although most members of the LARB may not have achieved the national and international recognition Garland did, the board was made up of members with similar drive and aspirations. The point of the organization was to use the members' collective power to create a positive working climate for real estate professionals and property owners. The members involved themselves in any endeavor that enhanced their profession and their city. This included local politics and participation in real estate circles outside of Southern California.

Nine men signed the realty board incorporation papers on May 29, 1903. All had migrated to Los Angeles from various parts of the country between the 1870s to the 1890s and established very successful real estate businesses.<sup>4</sup> LARB membership grew quickly and

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<sup>3</sup> Formed in 1908, the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges changed their name to the National Association of Real Estate Boards in 1916, and again in 1973 to the National Association of Realtors, by which name they are still known. For consistency, I refer to the organization by the acronym NAREB.

<sup>4</sup> The nine who signed incorporation papers were: Robert A. Rowan (born in Chicago 1875, came to LA before 1880), John D. Foster (born in Pittsburg 1870, came to LA in 1897), Fredrick W. Flint (born in Minnesota 1872, came to LA by 1892), William May Garland (born in Maine 1886, came to LA by way of Chicago 1890), Byron Erkenbrecher (born in Cincinnati 1874, came to LA in 1895), Edward D. Silent (born in 1865, location unknown,



continuously. Its first meeting included a few dozen members. Within a year the group extended membership benefits beyond city limits to real estate men in Los Angeles County. Little information remains regarding the basis of selection for membership in the organization. Most of the board leadership, however, shared comparable profiles.

The one hundred men who served in leadership positions on the realty board in its first twenty years from 1903 until 1923 (see Appendix C for a complete list) were mostly US-born migrants to Southern California, who had typically come young to make names and fortunes for themselves.<sup>5</sup> Most declared Protestantism their religion, a few were Catholics, and there was one Jewish man. Even in a place like Los Angeles, where history and proximity to the Pacific Region and Mexico produced a multi-racial population, the men in LARB were all white. The vast majority identified as Republican—87.5%—underscoring their interest in business growth. Only a few members were from outside of the United States: three Canadians, two Europeans. Nine proudly claimed native son status, having been born in California, two of them Angelenos from birth. Consistent with historian Carey McWilliams' assertions about who came to the Southland in decades surrounding the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, almost half—48%—of the men migrated from the Midwest to Los Angeles. The majority of migrants came in their twenties or thirties and

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came to LA by 1888), George N. Black (born in San Francisco 1876, came to LA by 1900), Charles W. Conway (born in Louisville 1850, came to LA in 1895), and Paul Schenck (born in Albion, Michigan, came to Los Angeles via Illinois in 1902). All except Schenck, who was a lawyer, maintained a high profile in the realty board and ran very successful companies.

<sup>5</sup>I pieced together a short biographical sketch of eighty-seven of the one hundred LARB leaders through a combination of sources that included, *Los Angeles Times* articles and obituaries, census return information, city directories from 1909-1923, voter registration lists, the Los Angeles Public Library's California Index, California Biography files (hereafter LAPL CA bio file), Robert Burdette, *Greater Los Angeles & Southern California Portraits & Personal Memoranda* (Los Angeles: Lewis Publishing Company, 1910); *Who's Who in the Pacific Southwest*; *Who's Who in Los Angeles, 1924*, (Los Angeles: C.J. Lang, 1924).

moved into the real estate profession quickly to build their companies. These similarities suggest that they sought like-minded men with similar business situations and backgrounds.<sup>6</sup>

All LARB members had financial interest connected to promoting their city and its surroundings. Some were also directly involved in the financial institutions that served the real estate industry. Several operated companies that had ties to the important banks of the region as well as insurance brokerage firms headquartered on the East Coast. Four LARB members came to real estate from banking. Seventeen sat on the boards of banks or mortgage companies, and some of those men on more than one. At least eleven companies represented in LARB were the sole brokers for at least sixteen major fire insurance companies headquartered in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, England and New Zealand. These attachments linked the financial capitals from the East Coast and beyond to the growing economy of the Southland. This played a significant role in expanding Southern California economy. Linkages to large pools of capital outside the immediate area brought in the necessary funds to support much of the industry and growth in the region.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of that first year the board had more than doubled in size to eighty members. By 1912, LARB had 386 active members. It was by far the biggest realty board involved in the state real estate association at three times the size of the San Francisco exchange, the next largest board. Despite the breaking away of scores of local realty boards—Santa Monica-Ocean Park (1905, folded quickly, reestablished 1914), Monrovia (1906), Pasadena (1907), Glendale(1920),

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<sup>6</sup>See McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*. I could identify the ages they were when sixty-two of the men came to the region. Fifteen arrived in their teenage years or earlier. Only five were in their forties. The other forty-two men were in their twenties or thirties.

<sup>7</sup> See *Western Insurance News*, May 25, 1910, pg 14. In the late 1920s, Howard Ahmanson started his first Los Angeles venture in fire insurance. His father had been head of a large fire insurance company headquartered in Omaha. Later, Ahmanson would build the largest savings and loan in Southern California. See Eric John Abrahamson, *Building Home: Howard F. Ahmanson and the Politics of the American Dream* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013).

and others—that all took members away from the flagship organization, the LARB’s roster remained robust in 1920 at 254 members. Part of LARB’s ability to be an influence at local, state, and the national levels was the number of brokers who associated with the organization. Impressed by the success of the board’s membership campaigns, which included the active recruitment of new members recommended by those already in the association, NAREB’s secretary asked LARB’s secretary to explain at the 1912 national convention how they had been so fruitful. With 386 members, LARB had become the largest realty board in the country. This feat testified to both the size of the real property business in the rapidly growing Los Angeles County, and to the enthusiasm of LARB leaders for establishing a professional face and social position for themselves and their membership.<sup>8</sup>

The realty board did not include all people dealing in real estate. Table 1.1 indicates that many more people worked in developing or selling real estate than participated on the board. Determined to establish themselves as legitimate and trustworthy businessmen, the LARB leadership provided notices of all applications to the membership and welcomed feedback from members who had good reasons as to why someone should not be admitted to the organization. Most applicants enjoyed entry into the association. LARB records from 1912 and 1913 indicate the board rejected twelve applications for membership even as they expanded their ranks considerably with an addition of 348 new members. Still, the board could close its doors to those it deemed unsuitable for membership.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Real Estate*, October 1912, 17. All editions of the magazine prior to 1921 accessed at the Los Angeles offices of the California Association of Realtors. *NREJ*, June 15, 1912, 298. In 1912, NAREB had 68 member boards throughout the United States and Canada. By 1920, there were 225 local real estate boards associated with the national organization. See "Membership: Historic Report," accessed February 1, 2014, <http://www.realtor.org/membership/historic-report>.

<sup>9</sup> “Report of W.M. Garland,” May 29, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 26; “Report of Secretary Phillip D. Wilson,” May 29, 1913,” *LARB Minutes*, 47, LARB Records.

**Table 1.1: Los Angeles Realty Board Membership vs. Real Estate Operators in Los Angeles<sup>10</sup>**

Year	Los Angeles Realty Board Active Members	City Directory listing for Real Estate Agents or Dealers
1906	217	NA
1911	362	1,747
1912	386	1,887
1915	387	2,262
1917	280	NA
1918	NA	1,437
1919	203	NA
1920	254	NA
1921	288	1,911
1922	234	2,083
1923	328	2,694

Although many were admitted, especially during these years of purposeful membership drives, certain individuals were clearly not welcome. No black, Hispanic or Asian real estate businessmen were part of the realty board. An unlikely explanation is that there were no people of color participating in the sale and development of real estate. While that might be the case for Asians, who, after the Alien Land Laws of 1913, were barred from owning property and concentrated their efforts and wealth accumulation in farming leased land, we know that to be incorrect for Mexicans and African Americans. The largest land owners in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were Mexican, and while their power and land holdings dramatically decreased in the 1870s and 1880s, many families still owned important land. African Americans like pioneer Bidly Mason and L.G. Robinson made great sums of money in real estate. Historian Douglas Flamming recorded that many black brokers got involved in the industry because they were also speculators and developers. Hilliard Stricklin had a success story similar to his white LARB counterparts.

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<sup>10</sup> Membership lists not available for every year. 1906 and 1911 from "Our Realty Men's Big Contribution," *Los Angeles Times* 1906; "Wipe out Forever the Smudge of Socialism," *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1911. The 1912 figures from: National Association of Real Estate Exchanges, "Complete List of Members," (Minneapolis, MN 1912). Other LARB lists from the "Roster of Realty Boards" published in the *National Real Estate Journal*. Figures for real estate operators in Los Angeles from *Los Angeles City Directories* collection at the Los Angeles Public Library.

When he came to Los Angeles in the 1890s he began participating in real estate brokerage and investment. A few decades later, he was a full-time real estate agent and even owned his own business block downtown on Sante Fe Street. Had he not been black, it is entirely possible that Stricklin would have been invited to apply for LARB membership. The absence of information regarding the application requests or specific exclusion of men from these groups in the LARB records indicates they may have known they would not been welcome in the association and did not apply.<sup>11</sup>

In its first two decades, white women tried on several occasions to enter the ranks of the LARB. They were repeatedly denied. Adelia Hickman was the first female real estate agent in Los Angeles when she opened her office in 1902. In 1911, she applied for membership in LARB. In response to her request, the men simply changed the association's bylaws to read: "Membership in all classes shall be restricted to *male* residents of Los Angeles city and county." While California is known for being on the forefront of opening the real estate profession to women, even as late as 1922 the LARB insisted on a single gender membership. In that year the Hollywood Business Women's Association petitioned the Governing Committee to reverse its stance on female members. The response from the meeting minutes revealed unrelenting opposition: "It was moved, seconded and carried that the Women's Association be informed that the result of the [their] questionnaire to the Board [was that the members were] opposed to admitting women members at this time." Women would make inroads in the real estate profession eventually, but for the first twenty years, the realty men felt their professional

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Dolores Hayden, "Biddy Mason's Los Angeles 1856-1891," *California History* 68, no. 3 (1989); Baxter S. Scruggs, *A Man in Our Community: The Biography of L.G. Robinson of Los Angeles, California* (Gardena, CA: Institute Press, 1937); Douglas Flammig, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 78-81; J. Max Bond, "The Negro in Los Angeles" (Thesis, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1936), 65-67.

association should be only for men. This vision of a male dominated industry, or at least organization, pointed to the fraternal nature of the board, and the members' desire for masculine, professional recognition.<sup>12</sup>

Table 1.1 also indicates that membership fluctuated from year to year. Men working in real estate were certainly affected by economic cycles. LARB leaders actively recruited membership leading up to its hosting of the 1915 NAREB annual meeting. The more difficult years that followed saw a drop off in membership. Membership numbers began to increase again in the early 1920s in advance of the tremendous building boom that marked that decade.

A constant tension existed between increasing the organization's size and keeping it for the "right" kind of real estate operator. Given the large number of those engaged in the real estate industry in Los Angeles, the public wariness of real estate scams, and the board's desire to create and maintain a trustworthy image of its members, the LARB had to be an elite institution. The members needed to feel apart from other real estate dealers in order to claim they were above the practices that harmed their reputation. The association also provided opportunities for its members to meet frequently for business and social events that furthered working relationships and cooperation. If anyone who claimed to work in real estate was allowed to join, those benefits would have been compromised. President W.W. Mines insisted that the LARB retain its dignity by being "confined to the best men," and to keep out those who were "unworthy." Yet, in order to assert its influence on the local industry and the national association, the LARB had to be large enough to demonstrate that it led the real estate sector in

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<sup>12</sup>*LARB Minutes*, August 17, 1911, 46; *Governing Committee Meeting Minutes*, June 15, 1922, 82, LARB Records. On Adelia Hickman and other early female realty professionals see: Eileen V. Wallis, *Earning Power: Women and Work in Los Angeles, 1880-1930* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2010), 29-30. For more on the success of women Realtors see: Marcie Geffner, "From Suffragettes to Top Producers," *California Real Estate: Celebrating the Century*, December 1999; Hornstein, *A Nation of Realtors*, Chapter 6, "'Rosie the Realtor' and the Re-Gendering of Real Estate Brokerage, 1938-50".

the Los Angeles region. In Secretary Phillip Wilson's words, the LARB "stood for quality in addition to quantity."<sup>13</sup>

To develop a powerful role the LARB also had to encompass more of the major players in the region's real estate industry. The LARB invented a new category of membership to include those people it wanted to claim. Associate membership provided the Board with a direct connection to the developers, land owners, financiers, and political figures who had significant interest in the Los Angeles real estate industry (see Appendix D). Underscoring the significant connection between the realty men and the institutions that financed the region's growth, LARB president William May Garland boasted in 1910 that, "practically every bank in the city had been received into associate membership." A few years later, secretary Phillip D. Wilson reported that a recent membership drive had successfully reached prominent capitalists in the region who had not previously enjoyed associate membership, including Henry Huntington, the streetcar magnate and developer; Paul Shoup, president of the Pacific Electric Railway Co.; Lieutenant Gov. A.J. Wallace, an Angeleno who served under Progressive Republican Governor Hiram Johnson; and others. Associate membership allowed the LARB to assert its close relationship to these influential Southern Californians. The board kept them abreast of their efforts and could request their help on the issues that it deemed essential to protect or progress the industry.<sup>14</sup>

An example of LARB influence when aligned with their associate members occurred in 1917 when LARB published and disseminated a 28 page pamphlet throughout Los Angeles discouraging the realignment of Los Angeles County to match the current city boundaries. The authors argued that realignment would have deleterious effects on the city's future growth, its

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<sup>13</sup> W.W. Mines, June 4, 1914 *LARB Minutes*, 60, LARB Records; Phillip D. Wilson, *California Real Estate*, May 1914, 144.

<sup>14</sup>"Optimistic Report," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1910. Phillip D. Wilson, *California Real Estate* May, 1914, 144. Wilson named only a few of the people who had joined as associate members. The *Los Angeles Times* did publish a list in an LARB ad in 1911. See "Wipe out Forever the Smudge of Socialism."

legitimacy as a banking center, its status as the county producing the most agricultural goods in the country, its ability to maintain good roads or manage water resources and the harbor, its public health, and other negative fiscal impacts. The LARB called on some of its associate members to write portions of the pamphlet including developer Henry Huntington, bankers J.F. Sartori and Frank Putnam Flint, attorneys John Griffin Mott and W. C. Petchner, and the industrialist Fred L. Baker. With the LARB and so many prominent and connected Angelenos against the idea city and county realignment did not occur. Linking the prominent associate members to the LARB increased the impact of its activities.<sup>15</sup>

In 1916, the LARB created another specialty category of membership for honorary members. Through this honorary membership category the board further extended its reach and publicly encouraged cooperation with fifteen other pro-growth institutions in the city. The presidents of these influential organizations became *ex officio* honorary members of the LARB. Power brokers in the Southland stayed abreast of LARB's mission, initiatives, and efforts to build up Los Angeles through cross-organizational networks and the associate or honorary membership categories. In turn, association with these well-known figures enhanced LARB's image.<sup>16</sup>

Those who were part of the active membership of the LARB were the best known real estate brokers in the city and many of them also developed their own properties. Their influence was apparent in the volume of work they handled in the city in actual development, construction

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<sup>15</sup> Los Angeles Realty Board, "Report of the Los Angeles Realty Board on the Subject of City and County Consolidation," (Los Angeles 1917).

<sup>16</sup>*Governing Committee Minutes*, February June 10, 1916, LARB Records. The organizations welcomed into honorary membership were: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Merchants and Manufacturers Association of Los Angeles, Advertising Club of Los Angeles, Rotary Club of Los Angeles, Retail Dry Goods Merchants Association, Chamber of Mines and Oil, Associated Jobbers of Los Angeles, Automobile Club of Southern California, City Club of Los Angeles, Municipal League of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Clearing House Association, Motor Car Dealers Association, Builders Exchange, Southern California Hotel Men's Association, Building Owners and Managers Association of Los Angeles, and the Jovian League.



and sales. The LARB dominated all four sectors of the real estate market—commercial properties, industrial sites, agriculture, and residential communities. By doing the lion’s share of the work in these sectors, the LARB was able to claim that it was the voice of professionalization and ethical business practices for the entire real estate industry in Los Angeles. Its members’ activities and influence also went far beyond the city’s official boundaries.

In commercial properties no one wielded more influence on the physical shape of the downtown business sector than Robert A. Rowan (Founding Member and governing committee 1903).<sup>17</sup> Although named after its primary partner, the R.A. Rowan Company was really a family enterprise. His brothers Frederick, Phillip and Paul all held leadership positions in the firm. The R.A. Rowan Company did not restrict its efforts to downtown, but that is where it left the biggest mark. The company managed hundreds of thousands of square feet of downtown office property as the agents for five of the largest buildings in the business district. In addition to managing properties, R.A. Rowan was one of the city’s greatest builders, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Before his sudden death in 1918, Rowan had constructed at least seven of the major business and office buildings downtown.<sup>18</sup>

In industrial properties, William H. Daum (vice president 1920-21) was one of the most active. Having come to Los Angeles as an agent for the Santa Fe Railroad, Daum’s commercial real estate firm eventually represented that company as well as the Union Pacific and the

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<sup>17</sup>"Obituary 5 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1950. Many other LARB members also constructed office buildings downtown. The Black Brothers, and Gilbert S. Wright, with his partner H.R Callender, built office buildings at 4<sup>th</sup> and Hill Streets. At 9<sup>th</sup> and Broadway, William May Garland erected an office building of his own. Frank Strong made a handsome profit when he sold the Marsh Strong building for \$1,000,000 in 1946. It had been a joint venture with fellow LARB member Robert Marsh. Strong and his partner George W. Dickinson financed another of his structures, the Meredith/Strong and Dickinson Building at 6<sup>th</sup> and Spring, with LARB father and son-in-law duo of Bryan and Bradford.

<sup>18</sup>"Capitalist Rowan Passes Away," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1901; "Among Real Estate Owners and Dealers," *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1901; "To Make New Chester Place in Western Part of City," *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1911; "Genial "Bob" Rowan Is Suddenly Called Away," *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1918; "Robert A. Rowan," *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1918. One of Rowan’s buildings is now called “The Rowan” and has been transformed into upscale loft space for residential living.

Southern Pacific Railroads. Subsequently, his clients included a larger array of businesses from food processing (Swift & Company) to can manufacturing (American Can Company). Daum located over 650 industrial ventures, representing an investment of millions of dollars, in the Southwest, mostly in Southern California. He did not restrict himself to industrial brokerage and sat on the boards of several industrial and oil ventures. Begun in 1904, his commercial real estate company passed from father to son, to grandson and is still in operation today. Industrial companies relied on LARB men like Daum to locate and secure property for this fast growing sector of the economy.<sup>19</sup>

In agricultural properties and projects, Edwin G. Hart (vice president 1916-1917, governing committee 1922, President 1923) exemplified LARB efforts. He specialized in farmlands in Los Angeles County in present day La Habra and Whittier. Additionally, he pioneered commercial avocado growing as a viable business venture for the region, and founded the California Avocado Association. To bypass the mistakes made in the early days of the citrus industry, the Association's members cooperated and shared information in order to accomplish "the improvement of the culture, production, and marketing of the Ahuacate."<sup>20</sup> Hart's work demonstrated that LARB men were not merely the middlemen involved in large-scale transactions, but innovators and investors in other enterprises as well.

In the residential sector, LARB members provided a low density, single-family home model that came to characterize Southern California. Members purchased, cleared, platted, designed, and built countless subdivisions throughout the city and the Southland in addition to selling those under someone else's ownership. LARB men developed notable residential

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<sup>19</sup>Rockwell Dennis Hunt and Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, *California and Californians* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1926), vol.4, 112-13.

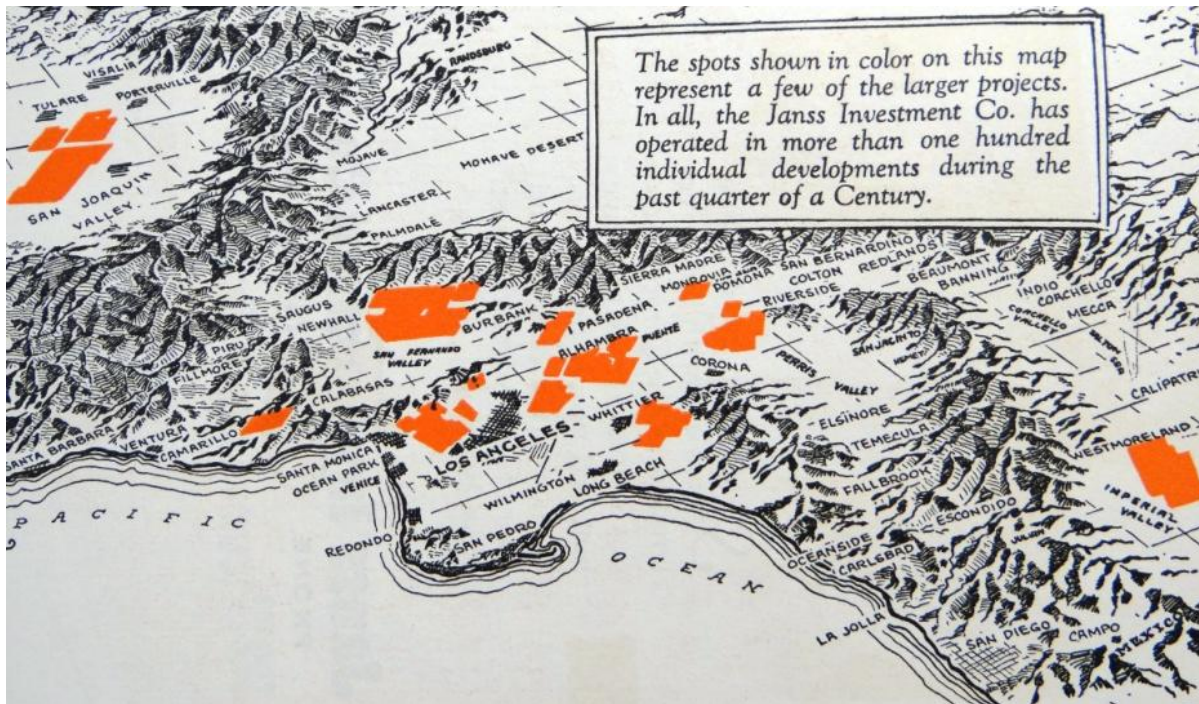
<sup>20</sup>"Edwin G. Hart Funeral Planned," *Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 1939; "Report of the First Semi-Annual Meeting of the California Avacado Association," (Los Angeles 1915).

communities inside and outside of Los Angeles' municipal boundaries, spreading their influence throughout the Southland and beyond its mountain ranges. Sites within the city included: Bel Air, Westwood, Mt. Washington (which required LARB member Robert Marsh to construct a cable car line), Silver Lake, and Toluca Lake in the valley. Member Harry H. Culver founded the independent municipality Culver City. Percy H. Clark, also an LARB member, masterminded the exclusive city of Beverly Hills, financed by a syndicate. Likewise LARB members were responsible for housing in all of the following cities, some of which later incorporated into Los Angeles: Claremont, Inglewood, Lynwood, Southgate, Whittier, Lakewood Village, and parts of Redondo Beach. They also stretched farther afield into Orange, Tulare, and Riverside counties; the San Joaquin, San Gabriel, and Imperial Valleys; and the northern coastal communities of Santa Barbara, and Morro Bay.

Not all developers stayed tied to one area, or one class of neighborhood construction. The Janss Investment Company exemplifies how a realty firm could determine a category of citizens for and geographic scope of a development. They were involved in building, promoting, and selling a wide variety of tracts, from working-class neighborhoods to the most notably exclusive tracts in the first few decades of the 20th Century. Herman Janss (governing committee 1915-1917) and Peter Janss (governing committee 1911-1915), who both trained as medical doctors, started in real estate with lower-cost developments in Belvedere Heights in East Los Angeles, and later added Belvedere Gardens. They built Ramona Acres in the San Gabriel Valley for local blue collar workers as well. The Janss' branched into middle and upper-middle class developments in Los Feliz Square, Holmby Hills and Westwood Hills. They helped attract the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) to its current site near these latter two developments. In its first ten years, The Janss Company built housing for more than 65,000

people. An undated brochure that referenced early 20th Century enterprises claimed that “During the last twenty-five years [the Janss] have subdivided more than 100 separate properties embracing nearly 100,000 acres of land!”

### Map of Selected Janss Investment Co. Developments<sup>21</sup>



Including their work in several of the valley areas, the Janss’ wide-spread involvement in residential development illustrates the direct impact LARB members had on the social and geographic face of Southern California. While the LARB did not include all real estate professionals, its members were the preeminent leaders of the local real estate industry.<sup>22</sup>

The organization of the association emphasized its professional nature and desire to systematize what had been a chaotic industry. The governing committee was self-perpetuating in that members approved their own successors. An appointment to the governing board was on a rotational basis for either one, two, or three years in order to avoid annual turnover of the entire

<sup>21</sup> A Short History of Los Angeles, “Janss Investment Co” folder, California Vertical File, Los Angeles Public Library, undated.

<sup>22</sup>Hugo Martin, "Developer Edwin Janss Jr. Leaps to Death in Suicide," *Los Angeles Times*, March 19, 1989.

committee. The majority of the men who served as president of the organization had been part of the governing committee for years. Herbert L. Cornish is an example of that kind of long-term involvement for the leadership structure. Once involved in the fire insurance industry, he started a company in 1905 that bore his name and specialized in real estate, investments, brokerage and insurance. He started as a LARB Vice President in the 1911-1912 officers cycle, became a member of the governing committee in 1914-1915 and was president in the 1917-1918 year. Many held consecutive terms or positions making them part of LARB leadership structure for several years. The governing committee presented a slate of officers that the general membership approved each year. By the 1910s the president, first and second vice-presidents, and treasurer were also on the governing committee. Despite the yearly change in officers, there remained consistency in the leadership structure through its first two decades.<sup>23</sup>

The president served for a one year appointment. He acted as the governing committee's spokesman, presided over LARB meetings, provided an annual report of the board's activities to the members, and represented the board in the media and at social functions. The president also monitored LARB's committees. Standing committees were concerned with the association's finances, legislation at all government levels, and arbitration for those who could not resolve disputes regarding real estate transactions. Additionally, the president could appoint special committees to work on specific, short-term issues. Examples of these topics include a 1908 Campaign Committee to pass a Los Angeles City bond measure to improve roads, and entertainment committees for when LARB hosted state and national realty conventions. As the organization matured it spawned more committees, involving more members in its operations. By 1915, LARB had eighteen standing or special committees that included separate units to

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<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the Chicago Real Estate Board was also self-perpetuating. See Everett C. Hughes, *The Chicago Real Estate Board: The Growth of an Institution* (New York: Arno Press, 1979). On Herbert Cornish see *Los Angeles City Directory* (1909); *Who's Who in the Pacific Southwest*.

handle issues involving subdivisions, leases, business and industrial property. They brought resolutions and recommendations before the governing committee for approval.

The secretary was the only paid position and a long-standing appointment renewed each year. From 1903 to 1920 only three men, Herbert Burdett (1903, 1905-1911), Phillip D. Wilson (1911-1917) and J.M. Best (1917-1920) held the post. While the president was the public face of the organization, the secretary ran the day to day operations and often acted as the liaison with the national association. He provided correspondence and information about the board's activities. Phillip D. Wilson became a nationally recognized figure for his reports to NAREB and his visibility at the 1915 national association meeting in Los Angeles. Reinforcing a high profile for LARB, the NAREB secretary Tom Ingersoll resigned his position in 1921 to accept the job as secretary for the local board in Los Angeles.

### **Mission of the Los Angeles Realty Board**

The brokers who organized the Los Angeles Realty Board sought to improve the real estate business and their standing as legitimate white collar professionals, by driving out unscrupulous competition. The LARB pursued growth for the industry as well as stability and "dignity of the business of dealing in real estate." Stability was necessary in the Los Angeles realty markets if growth were to be lasting. The over speculation rampant in the real estate markets around the country, fueled by railroad expansion and their accompanying land grants in the 1870s and 1880s, cost many real estate speculators in Los Angeles their personal fortunes and drove the economy into a deep recession by 1887. Additionally, the actions of many dishonest individuals had contributed to the economic instability and the bad reputation of real estate brokers. Professionalizing the group marginalized those who took advantage of the

unknowing. It also provided brokers a greater sense of job security and the public more confidence in property as a secure investment.<sup>24</sup>

To achieve the growth, stability and dignity realty men desired, the organization listed four missions in its incorporation papers that included:

1. "The benefit of united effort and concentrated power, to the end that the evils and annoyances now connected with the transaction of business in real estate and real estate brokerage, shall be abated;
2. "Promote good fellowship and fair dealing;
3. "Protect both its members and the public in general from irresponsible, unprincipled and dishonest dealers in real estate;
4. "The enactment of legislation for the protection of property rights"<sup>25</sup>

In mission statement 1, the real estate operators recognized that if they were to systematize the business transactions that were the bedrock of their companies, they would need a forum filled with other professionals who wanted the same thing. In the second decade of the twentieth century, LARB began publishing standardized forms. Drafted in a committee headed by Harry R. Callender, LARB adopted eight standardized forms covering regular business practices of realty men. The uniformity and widespread use of these kinds of forms relieved LARB members of mundane paperwork and streamlined business, and contributed to the image of the broker as a professional. They also reaffirmed the influence of the LARB on the state and national industry. Secretary Wilson asserted that the forms were "in demand from all parts of the country" and known as "the standard" throughout the state.<sup>26</sup>

Members realized tangible business benefits through the emphasis in mission statement 2 on good fellowship. This required positive associations and cooperation with other board

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<sup>24</sup> Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California*; Lothrop, "The Boom of the '80s Revisited."

<sup>25</sup> "Los Angeles Realty Board Incorporation Papers," 1903, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.

<sup>26</sup> Phillip D. Wilson, "Report of the Secretary," May 29, 1913, 55 and Phillip D. Wilson, "Report of the Secretary," May 28, 1914, 51, *LARB Minutes*, LARB Records. The forms included options, sales deposit receipts, sales deposit receipts for residences, exclusive agency contracts, offer to exchange, acceptance of offer to exchange, and employment of agent.

members. They had many opportunities to share helpful ideas and information with one another. LARB provided weekly digests to the members about city council decisions regarding street grades, improvements and engineer's reports. Members also enjoyed the benefits of expedited information from title guarantee and trust companies. President Andrews succinctly summed up the benefits of fellowship when he exclaimed, "If any man thinks he can make a success in the real estate business entirely alone, he is very much mistaken. It is the cooperative work with dealers [other realtors] that means success." The brotherhood the LARB developed with members and affiliate members had the potential to greatly boost a developer's or broker's business. Conversely, realty men and women outside of the board did not have access to the deal making that the board's emphasis on fellowship promoted.<sup>27</sup>

LARB hosted frequent gatherings that fostered these business and personal relationships. They had monthly lunch meetings to conduct the association's business. The board also planned many traveling and sightseeing opportunities, from caravans to state and national meetings, to annual outings exploring the vast terrain of Southern California. The collegiality developed through these frequent social interactions was integral for creating and maintaining a professional aura. By 1914-1915 President W.W. Mines was pleased to reflect that the "dog-eat-dog" business of real estate that abounded a decade prior was no longer the case. He believed "the spirit of good fellowship" had become "deeply rooted in the hearts of all of the Board," which allowed for some of its greatest cooperation and achievements. Professionalization scholar Magali Larson asserted professions created, "'real' communities, whose members share a relatively permanent affiliation, an identity, personal commitment, specific interests, and general loyalties." Building strong personal and professional relationships was not a by-product of the association, but rather, one of its purposes. With the hand of friendship (available to white,

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<sup>27</sup>*NREJ*, August 15, 1912, 494; "Los Angeles," *NREJ*, October 15, 1911, 174.



Christian men) through association in LARB, brokers placed a veneer of respectability and decorum over what had once been a cut-throat industry. Regular interaction at LARB semi-social gatherings encouraged certain standards of professional behavior that fell in line with the conduct and manners of professional men.<sup>28</sup>

The ties of fellowship and association also reinforced the other three missions. Uniting through bonds of professionalism created a block of support and a collective power more influential than any one member could muster. Recognition from and within the group allowed men to separate themselves and their reputations from the hucksters they abhorred and provided a professional status through peer identification. Most especially pronounced on the state level, the cohesive group of Los Angeles realty men contributed to a shift in legislation and government lobbying. Presenting a united front on issues of ethics, professionalization, and government lobbying required cooperation from a large number of diverse men and would have been impossible without the sense of belonging the organization fostered.

The third organization goal—protecting buyers and sellers—was a necessary component because of the bad reputation some dishonest brokers had saddled the industry with. To underscore this mission, in 1907 the board adopted the motto: “To promote honesty, harmony and dignity in real estate transactions.”<sup>29</sup> Membership was granted only to those who would represent the profession well. Herbert Burdett, the board’s secretary for its first eight years, cautioned that men who did not live up to appropriate standards should not be allowed on realty boards. “Trying to control a scoundrel or a trickster by admitting him to associate on equal terms with honorable competitors is very much like marrying a drunkard to reform him . . . and

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<sup>28</sup>Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 2; W.W. Mines, “Address of the President,” *LARB Minutes*, 59, LARB Records.

<sup>29</sup>“After Land Sharks,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1907.

probably the results are about the same, in the majority of cases.” Membership in the realty board proclaimed the honor and honesty of a realty man.<sup>30</sup>

From its inception, LARB leaders encouraged members to highlight their membership in print advertisements. Some identified themselves as “member of the Los Angeles Realty Board” below their name. Others simply used “L.A.R.B” to indicate association and compliance with the organizations professional standards. LARB members adopted the term REALTOR® in 1917 at the urging of NAREB. This was a trademarked term used only by members of a local board that belonged to the national association, in order to elevate themselves above other realty operators. Apparently, the advertising distinctions worked to earn public trust, as Los Angeles developer and California Real Estate Association (CREA) President Harry Culver declared in 1926, “that the public at large discriminated between the REALTOR® and the real estate man by looking up to the former and down at the latter.” Even though Culver believed that the public had confidence in a realtor and knew “him to be the acme of honesty, integrity and ability,” he urged the members of CREA to continue to uphold high standards in order to deserve those accolades. It is difficult to ascertain the public’s true feelings regarding the distinction between Realtors and other real estate brokers, but sustained successful business for the LARB members does suggest that they continually attracted clients.<sup>31</sup>

Confidence in a realtor became especially important in the 1920s given the ferocious market for speculative oil shares on Southern California land. Three major discoveries of oil deposits on developed subdivisions in 1920 and 1921 created an instant market for widespread

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<sup>30</sup>*Western Investment News*, “Real Estate Department,” August 25, 1910, 17.

<sup>31</sup> “Los Angeles Realtors Busy,” *NREJ*, 1917, 454. The term REALTOR was trademarked 1916 and can legally only be used by someone who has membership in the National Association of Realtors (NAR), formerly known as the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB). For purposes of readability I will not capitalize the term. Hornstein, *A Nation of Realtors*, 75-79; “Harry Culver, ‘The Realtor of Today—His Responsibilities,’” reprinted in *California Real Estate Celebrating the Century: 100 years of California Real Estate*, 112.

speculation. Historian Jules Tygiel recorded the vast operations of Southern California's most beloved and infamous oil speculator, C.C. Julian. Others, like Julian, relied on proven real estate sales techniques and promised great returns and potential fortunes from oil drilling on lands that had no confirmed oil reserves. Taking a stand to protect real estate investors and the realtor image, the LARB passed a motion in 1922 that it would drop from its membership anyone engaged in selling real estate for oil speculation.<sup>32</sup>

The governing committee clearly wanted jurisdiction over regulating the profession, including its own members. In 1918, when *The Angeles Examiner* published an unflattering and one-sided account of an LARB member, it contacted the paper asking publishers to refrain from running stories about suspicious transactions involving LARB members until the organization had a chance to investigate the situations. In another situation Anne Camilla Hotchkis and prominent LARB member Robert Marsh used the committee to resolve a dispute. Mrs. Hotchkis wrote to thank the Governing Committee for their "kindness in the matter" and assured them "her claim against Robert Marsh had been completely and entirely satisfied." The LARB strove to let the public know it would investigate any situation involving their members that seemed out of line with professional standards.<sup>33</sup>

Members followed all the principles the LARB created or faced severe consequence. The by-laws outlined suspension or expulsion from the group for members who participated in "any act prejudicial or inimical to the interests of [the] organization."<sup>34</sup> An example from 1918 illustrates the lengths to which LARB leaders would go to maintain high standards. In a dispute between two members, the governing committee determined Thomas Bundy owed Edwin G.

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<sup>32</sup> Jules Tygiel, *The Great Los Angeles Swindle: Oil, Stocks, and Scandal During the Roaring Twenties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); *Governing Committee Minutes*, July 25, 1922, 100, LARB Records.

<sup>33</sup> *Governing Committee Minutes*, December 5, 1918, 8, LARB Records.

<sup>34</sup> "LARB Bylaws," 1913, 11, *LARB Minutes*, LARB Records.

Hart \$500 in commission. Bundy, however, refused to pay. The reaction from the committee was severe, especially given Bundy's position a few years earlier as a member of the same governing committee. They declared his "action in this transaction is contrary to ethical practices and is unbecoming of a realtor and a member of the Realty Board." The LARB expelled Bundy from membership for his unethical behavior. It was not above purging its own membership in order to protect the image it desired for realty professionals.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to regulating membership, defining professional standards was also an important part of boosting public confidence in the business. The 1912 LARB publication of a *Schedule of Commissions* is one example of codifying professional practices. This pamphlet details what was expected and typical in regards to realty broker commissions for every land-related transaction imaginable including sales, property management, leasing, exchanges, loans, expert advice in the form of appraisals, court testimony and drawing papers. The pamphlet was useful for brokers in setting their fees in line with the industry standard. Following the schedule was highly encouraged although not mandatory for LARB members, unlike the ethical guidelines that would trigger disciplinary action against a member. The board printed and distributed 25,000 copies and sent them throughout the state. President William May Garland quipped, "seventy-five per cent of the realty dealers in Los Angeles abide by the doctrine of the new schedule as they do their Bible, while the other twenty-five percent use it occasionally perhaps as they do their Bible." Secretary Phillip D. Wilson believed the number slightly higher at 80%, but announced to the board that realty associations in at least four other cities—Seattle, Portland, Kansas City and San Diego—had adopted the LARB's commission schedule as their

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<sup>35</sup>*Governing Committee Minutes*, November 20, 1919, 10, LARB Records. Bundy is absent from the membership list for Los Angeles published by NAREB starting in 1920 and remained off the list through 1923, the last year of this study. He remained in business and formed a partnership with Charles C. Albright, a member of the LARB, sometime in the mid 1920s. Bundy & Albright first appears in the city directory in 1927, but first in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1924.

own and that many other cities asked for copies. LARB set professional standards locally and far beyond the Tehachapi Mountains. Wilson declared a year later that “every day applications for these rates are made to the Board by dealers and owners,” proving the professional standards were a help not only to realty men, but also the general public. And the following year, he commended the board’s efforts because the courts recognized LARB’s schedule as official and outsiders considered it “absolute authority.” The board adjusted and amended the Schedule of Commissions in 1914 and 1919.<sup>36</sup>

The fourth mission of the realty board—working for legislation beneficial to property owners and real estate brokers—aligned the members with the interests of homeowners. Generally speaking, if property owners would profit from specific legislation from a clean vacant lot ordinance to good roads the realty industry and members of the LARB made financial gains as well. Leading what would become a nation-wide trend, members successfully launched the first zoning laws in the country in 1908. That same year they joined ranks with the city’s prosecuting attorney to plead for state legislation to curb real estate swindlers. All of those efforts were to insure the protection or increase of property values.<sup>37</sup>

If at first the LARB worked on legal projects tied directly to property and land development, then it quickly moved its focus to any issue that could stunt or enhance Los Angeles’ growth and image. The LARB publicly supported municipal bonds for the aqueduct and Los Angeles Harbor projects because they were measures that would certainly increase the size and reach of the city. In 1914, LARB members took up the issue of taxicab drivers who

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<sup>36</sup>Los Angeles Realty Board, *Schedule of Commissions*, 1912, "Los Angeles Realty Board" folder, Business Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society; W.M. Garland, May 29, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 27; Phillip D. Wilson, May 29, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 32; Phillip D. Wilson, May 29, 1913, *LARB Minutes*, 55; Phillip D. Wilson, May 28, 1914, *LARB Minutes*, 51-52, LARB Records.

<sup>37</sup> For more on the role LARB played in ground-breaking zoning laws into the 1920s see Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*. On partnering with the city attorney in 1908 see Davies, *Real Estate in American History*, 55.

frequently robbed visitors with their dishonest practices and unregulated rates. Recognizing this could have an adverse effect on the city's reputation a committee of three LARB members surveyed municipalities throughout the nation and shared their findings with the City Council and the City Attorney's office. Together they agreed on a measure and the City Council passed an ordinance regulating fares.<sup>38</sup>

Tax rates had also become an important issue for the LARB. In 1913, the board unsuccessfully tried to reverse a decision by the Public Service Commission, which had raised water main extension and tap charges. In 1917, it was more successful in a tax issue that affected all property owners, not just the land developers. The board led the campaign to consolidate the city and county assessors and tax collector's offices. The consolidation saved the city \$80,000 a year and made it possible for citizens to pay assessments and taxes in one place. This effort required the cooperation of several civic organizations and all the local papers, a change in the city charter, and a special act from the state legislature. Nothing that affected property values, the city's image, or property taxes was too little or large to get the board's attention and action on a local level. By 1922, in order to keep its members abreast of city and county matters, LARB provided members access to a daily digest of measures before the City Council and County Board of Supervisors that concerned real estate.<sup>39</sup>

The four missions of the Los Angeles Realty Board—harnessing collective power, fostering fellowship, protecting buyers and sellers, and supporting legislation to further the cause of real estate and property owners—strategically steadied and strengthened the real estate industry in Los Angeles. All of these goals required a robust and engaged membership. The board's strength lay not only in the personal successes of their members, but also in the

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<sup>38</sup> Phillip D. Wilson, May 28, 1914, *LARB Minutes*, 53-54, LARB Records.

<sup>39</sup> Phillip D. Wilson, May 29, 1913, *LARB Minutes*, 53, LARB Records; "The Los Angeles Realty Board," *NREJ*, August 1918, 67; "Los Angeles, Cal.," *NREJ*, October 1916, 187; *NREJ*, June 5, 1922, 41.

organizational size. If the men who made their livelihoods in real estate transitions could band together and stand as a cohesive entity, they would streamline industry practices, increase fair dealing and fellowship amongst fellow practitioners, and become a force the public and policy makers would recognize. One realty man in Oakland, California, enviously declared in 1911 that the work of LARB had changed the image of Los Angeles from that of a boom town to a “city of stability.” In addition to the financial benefits of a well-functioning real estate market, legitimacy for their profession and increased social status accrued to the young, entrepreneurial real estate men from these efforts of the organization and the cooperation of its members.<sup>40</sup>

### **Los Angeles Realty Board Participation in State and National Boards**

Participation in the state and national real estate boards was an extension of the LARB’s mission. Just as their collective power could influence local policy, acting as a cohesive group would inform state and national legislation beneficial to land use, property development, and real estate sales. LARB members were leaders on both of these larger levels. That they were a strong voice in conversation and action on those levels reaffirmed their local prestige and power as well.

LARB was instrumental in calling for and forming the first state-wide organization of realty men. On May 27, 1905, about 100 brokers from Los Angeles and other parts of the state convened in the Lankershim Hotel in Los Angeles to formally organize themselves into the California Realty Federation. They changed the name in 1917 to the California Real Estate Association (CREA).<sup>41</sup> The federation’s mission was to instill confidence in property owners and investors in the CREA members and prevent rivalry amongst realty men in different parts of the

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<sup>40</sup>*NREJ*, November 15, 1911, 262.

<sup>41</sup> The present-day name of this organization is the California Association of Realtors (CAR). The group formed under the name the California State Real Estate Federation and used it until 1917, when it became the California Real Estate Association. For clarity, I have chosen to refer to the organization as CREA.

state. Similar in tone to the LARB incorporation papers, the CREA's charter claimed its purpose to "encourage the elevation of the character and dignity of the business of dealing in real estate and to promote uniformity of methods, good fellowship and fair dealing." William May Garland explained that the federation and its annual conventions promoted "harmony" and discouraged "narrowness and sectionalism" among the realty men in the state. Through the organization, different realty boards could share information and ideas.<sup>42</sup>

The group concerned itself foremost with state-wide legislation beneficial to the real estate industry. According to a letter the LARB sent to Republican Governor George Pardee asking for his support in forming the federation, an advantage of a state association would be that real estate men could exert influence "for or against proposed legislation in practically every Senatorial and Assembly district in the state." Such pressure "would be almost irresistible." Since most of the LARB members were active Republicans this claim to sway voting could have been highly desirable for the governor and his fellow Republicans at the state capital.<sup>43</sup>

Beginning in 1905, CREA officers and the legislative committee chairman engaged in an early form of lobbying, attending every session of the state legislature in order to represent real estate interests. The realty men were not always as successful as the letter to Governor Pardee indicated they might be. None of the legislative issues discussed at the 1905 meeting passed in Sacramento the following year. The brokers remained determined, however, pushing important legislation like the state-level licensing law. CREA introduced and backed the bill in 1911. It finally passed in 1919. Legislative issues also included property-based tax assessments,

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<sup>42</sup>Quoted in Marcie Geffner, *California Real Estate Celebrating the Century: 100 years of California Real Estate*, 12; *Western Insurance News*, "Real Estate Department," Jun 10, 1910, 16. Other states soon followed California's lead organizing their own associations including: Wisconsin (1909, reorganized 1911), Ohio (1910), Texas (1911), Washington (1912), Iowa (1913), Illinois (1916), Michigan (1916), New Jersey (1917), Nebraska (1918), Minnesota (1919).

<sup>43</sup> "Letter from Los Angeles Realty Board to George Pardee," folder 47, box 42, Collection MSS C-B 400, Bancroft Library, University of California.



defeating single tax measures, and other topics important to the growth and promotion of the industry in California.<sup>44</sup>

Representing both LARB and CREA (vice president), Leonard Merrill (LARB founding member, governing committee 1905-06, president 1906-'07) attended the 1908 meeting in Chicago that resulted in the formation of the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB). Los Angeles did not officially join the organization until the 1911-1912 fiscal year. Still, Merrill served on its executive committee in 1908 and 1910. From 1911 onward, the organization's executive committee included a representative from each member board who acted as the liaison between the national association and the local group. Someone in LARB's leadership held that position from the time it officially joined NAREB.

**Table 1.2: Service of Los Angeles Realty Board Members on the National Association of Real Estate Boards 1908-1920**

Year	Los Angeles Realty Board Member	Position in National Association of Realty Boards
1908	Leonard Miller	Executive Committee Member
1909	--	--
1910	Leonard Miller	Executive Committee Member
1911	--	--
1915	W.W. Mines	Vice President
1916	William May Garland	Vice President
1917	W.W. Mines	Treasurer
1918	William May Garland	President
1919	William May Garland	President
1920	W.I. Hollingsworth	Vice President

Beginning in 1915, the LARB had a strong presence on the NAREB Board of Officers. The LARB's continued participation at the officer level in NAREB for the next five years was similar to only a few other boards. These were mostly the boards that held established positions like NAREB's executive secretary (Minneapolis) and general counsel (Chicago for USA and

<sup>44</sup> California Real Estate Association, "Real Estate and Realtors at Legislature of California and U.S. Congress," (Los Angeles 1928), at the California State Library.

Montreal for Canada), or had members who as past president became a defacto part of the board of managers or advisory board. Garland was the only person ever elected to a consecutive term as NAREB's president. During his presidency he worked as a dollar-a-year man for the national government as the assistant manager of the Bureau of Industrial Housing and Transportation for the Department of Labor. He also coordinated real estate board cooperation in property assessments and valuation for potential purchase by the United States military (during WWI), earning not only for himself, but for realtors in general the appreciation of the president and federal government.<sup>45</sup>

Two appointments highlight the national significance of the LARB. First, the collaboration with the government during WWI's wartime housing shortages led to the creation of a Washington office and many years of cooperation between realtors and the federal government. NAREB chose Robert Armstrong, an LARB member, to head the office it established for a permanent presence in Washington D.C. Second, Tom S. Ingersoll, who had been the secretary of NAREB for more than a decade and worked extensively with realty boards throughout the nation left his post in 1921 to become the secretary of LARB, further cementing the ties between Los Angeles realtors and the rest of the country. Active Angeleno participation in NAREB simultaneously demonstrated the broad influence of Los Angeles realty men, and their reliance on a growing national network of real estate professionals.<sup>46</sup>

### **Los Angeles Realty Board Political Participation**

If active participation in state and national real estate associations was essential to the LARB's goals of professionalization and legislation, local political participation was equally necessary. The realty men were to be engaged in local civic matters as an extension of their

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<sup>45</sup> Davies, *Real Estate in American History*, 37, 131-41.

<sup>46</sup> *NREJ*, October 11, 1920, 8; *NREJ*, October 10, 1921, 44; Davies, *Real Estate in American History*, 132.

identity as community builders and leaders. From the beginning LARB members demonstrated their willingness to pursue political activity as a means of strengthening ties to the community. Their service and appointments to a wide variety of public positions illustrates their extensive influence. George M. Giffen served two years (1900-1902) on the School Board and several on the city's Library Board. Both Robert M. Allen (1913-1915) and W.W. Mines (1918) had terms as Los Angeles' Police commissioner. Byron Erckenbrecher and R.D. List were both very active in local Republican politics. Three LARB leaders found time to head mayoral campaigns, and one ran for the office. Robert M. Allen managed Mayor Meredith Snyder's successful second attempt in 1900 and then ran for mayor himself in 1915. Former LA City Council member (1903-1904) and democrat Oscar Farish lost in the primary election of 1909. George Black headed Republican A. Smith's bid that same year. Roy C. Seeley led the campaign for Republican Boyle Workman in 1921, and was joined by several realty board members. Long-time advocate for a City Planning Commission Percy H. Clark served as LARB representative to the board when it formed in 1920. Bert O. Miller was a member of the City Charter Revision Committee as well as the city's Board of Appeals. Both Frank Brooks and Clinton E. Miller served as members of the city's Water and Power Board. Allan Shore was part of the Hollywood Board of Trade. These powerful positions demonstrate how the realty board members were entwined with their city's civic life. Additionally, it is very likely they could use their political appointments, offices, and involvement to promote discussion and legislation that would benefit the real estate industry.

LARB members actively engaged in the communities surrounding Los Angeles as well. Edwin G. Hart chaired the San Marino School Board (1915-1926) and served on that city's Board of Trustees (1919-1925). Although a member of LARB, he was a resident of San Marino.

Harry Lee Martin was one of the principle developers of Inglewood and ran the gas and water companies that serviced the city. He was also a trustee of the City of Inglewood (1908-1912), a position in which he could clearly protect and encourage his own professional financial interests.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to representing realty interests at the local level, LARB members sought influence to benefit their professional pursuits on the state level. George Black served on Governor James Gillett's (1907-1911) staff. LARB's first president, Leonard Merrill, was by 1915 the State's inheritance tax appraiser, a position he filled for many years. Secretary Phillip Wilson's tenure on the State Board of Equalization was cut short by his untimely death in 1919. Many years later, Frank Ryan, LARB President from 1920-1922, earned an award for his twenty-five years on the Board of Equalization and then as the Realty Commissioner. Remaining active in local and state politics helped the Southland's realty men to ensure the regions' continual growth.

LARB President W.W. Mines (president 1914-1917) championed a politically active and informed membership to increase the power of LARB in the Southland. He invited gentlemen running for office at city, county and state levels to present their positions and platforms at LARB meetings, regardless of their party affiliations. Having served one time as chairman of the State's Republican Central Committee, Mines himself was politically active, but did not want his politics or that of other members to represent the entire board. This appearance of board neutrality seemed genuine in Mines' remarks, but it was a flexible principle. Mines exempted positions with direct responsibility for assigning property values, like the City and County Assessors. He also made an exception for the Board of Equalization, a statewide office

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<sup>47</sup> On Harry Lee Martin's involvement with Inglewood see LAPL CA bio file; Wellington C. Wolfe, *Men of California: Western Personalities and Their Affiliations, with Club Memberships and Civic Associations, Illustrated Record of Men, with Biographs of Their Activities* (San Francisco: Western Press Reporter, 1926).

responsible for regulating county assessment practices and assessing properties of interconnected railroads. He stated those elected positions were so essential to a realtor's business that it was their "duty to see that they are properly filled." He wanted to ensure that people in those positions that had direct impact on the real estate industry would work in favor of the LARB businessmen. Although he called for a politically engaged and neutral body, the latter was less important than positive outcomes for realty interests. Just three years before Mines' remarks, the LARB united in its opposition to a popular socialist candidate for mayor in order to preserve the pro-growth, pro-business trajectory of the city.<sup>48</sup>

To understand the 1911 Los Angeles Mayoral election, it is essential to place it in its so-called Progressive Era context. The politics of time period were marked by distaste for corrupt machine governments throughout urban areas. Armed with a new sense of urgency for political, social, and moral reforms, the Progressive Party garnered attention nationally. While Los Angeles did not have a formal Progressive Party until 1913, it did have robust organizations intent on a wide spectrum of reform platforms.<sup>49</sup> LARB members participated in two of the most important political reform groups. One historian emphatically underscored that progressive politics in California was the Lincoln-Roosevelt League. Gilbert Wright (governing committee 1906, 1908, VP 1918, 1920) served on the central organizing committee of the Southern California branch of that organization. Another scholar credits Charles Dwight Willard's

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<sup>48</sup>"On a Platform of Prosperity," *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1914. W.W. Mines, June 4, 1914, *LARB Minutes*, 60, LARB Records; *NREJ*, June 5, 1922, 41.

<sup>49</sup> Much has been written about California's reformers during the progressive period. Two older sources of continued value are George E. Mowry, *The California Progressives*, Chronicles of California (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951); Spencer C. Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons; Hiram Johnson and the Progressives, 1911-1917* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968). For more recent sources see William Deverell and Tom Sitton, *California Progressivism Revisited* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Allswang, *The Initiative and Referendum in California, 1898-1998*. Several helpful dissertations address reform politics as they played out in Los Angeles: Albert Howard Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles 1900-1910" (Claremont Graduate School, 1953); Merry Wickham Ovnick, "The Arts and the Craft of Persuasion: Developing a Language of Reform--Los Angeles Political and National Aesthetic Reforms, 1900-1916" (University of California, Los Angeles, 2000); Jeffrey D. Stansbury, "Organized Workers and the Making of Los Angeles, 1890-1915" (PhD, UCLA, 2008).

Municipal League with spearheading the effort to recall Mayor Harper in 1909, among other significant civic and political actions. At least three of the LARB's leadership participated in the Municipal League, most notably, Oscar Farish, who was a former city councilman, LARB president at the time of the recall, and later a democratic mayoral candidate. Another LARB leader, Harry Callendar, served as treasurer of the League.<sup>50</sup>

The LARB members typify historian George Mowry's description of an archetypal California Progressive. While he did not specifically mention realty brokers in his occupational assessment of the party, the profiles of the LARB leaders fit the composite profile Mowry suggested. Yet, a more recent collection of essays in *California Progressivism Revisited* has expanded the view of what it means to have been progressive. These essays identified progressive politics in the state as involved with a much wider spectrum of groups all intent on some kind of political or moral reform. Under this rubric Mowry's sketch and the LARB leaders might be better identified as "business progressives." They had a vested financial interest in keeping Los Angeles on a course of expansion and growth. They were more concerned with economics than with moral reform. For that matter, their efforts secured benefits to the middle and upper-middle classes that engaged in pro-growth businesses, without much consideration for working-class agendas or issues. They had a difficult time disentangling the intentions of unions and blue collar workers from the much more radical wings of the Socialist Party.<sup>51</sup>

Another important progressive reform group active in Los Angeles in the early 1900s set the stage for the 1911 election. John Randolph Haynes' Direct Legislation League pursued state

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<sup>50</sup> Allswang, *The Initiative and Referendum in California, 1898-1998*; Stansbury, "Organized Workers and the Making of Los Angeles, 1890-1915." On Farish see LAPL CA bio file; "Noted Realty Man Expires," *Los Angeles Times* December 13, 1917. He was an outlier in the LARB as a democrat among a mostly republican membership. On Wright see "The Lincoln-Roosevelt Republican League," undated pamphlet, John Randolph Haynes Papers, folder 22, box 96, UCLA Special Collections.

<sup>51</sup> Mowry, *The California Progressives*; Deverell and Sitton, *California Progressivism Revisited*. Deverell provides a very useful assessment of Mowry in the Introduction.

constitutional reform to include the referendum, initiative, and recall, in order to take power from machine politicians and give it to back to voters. The 1909 recall of Los Angeles Mayor Harper was a direct result of the principles put in place by Haynes' organization. Some of the moral reform progressives considered him an immoral leader because of his dubious connection to a brothel and political progressives found him to be a tool of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Reformers, under the title the Good Government Organization, wanted their own candidate on the ballot. Although George Alexander was not their first choice of a mayor because he was a career politician and advanced in years, his impeccable reputation for honesty and his willingness to run placed him at the top of the list. Rather than face a recall, Harper resigned amid the prostitution scandal and Alexander won the following election after serving the rest of Harper's term.<sup>52</sup>

The variety of reform ideas encapsulated in the Good Government movement demonstrated how tenuous reform coalition could be. No one was happy with Alexander's performance. He was interested in moral reform, whereas the people who helped elect him concerned themselves with scientific efficiency in government operations. Moreover, his hands were tied in working with an unsympathetic City Council that did not agree with the reform agenda. Others wanted economic change and were disappointed by the mayor's inattentiveness to their plight. Signing the anti-picketing ordinance passed by the City Council in 1910 further alienated him from labor and pushed those voters toward the Socialist Party. It fielded contenders for mayor and nine city council seats in the 1911 election. Their mayoral candidate, Job Harriman, had such a popular following—20,000 out of 45,000 votes—he had almost enough of a lead to have won the mayoralty in the primary election. Large numbers of Socialist

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<sup>52</sup> Tom Sitton, *John Randolph Haynes, California Progressive* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles 1900-1910."

supporters had voted, whereas Democrats had a weak showing at the polls. Republicans and other supporters of the Good Government Organization split their primary votes between candidates. The threat of a Socialist victory mobilized the realty board.<sup>53</sup>

For an organization dependent on the continued economic growth of Southern California and its land values, a popular socialist movement threatened the pro-business agenda of the LARB and its vision for Los Angeles. The Socialist platform was not that divergent from other progressive initiatives. It included a call for more municipal ownership of public utilities, improvements to city schools, and some publicly owned services such as community centers and a hospital. However, some of the Socialist positions revealed deep class tensions that had been brewing in Los Angeles for a number of years. Harriman proposed that the city buy land back from speculators in the San Fernando Valley like *Los Angeles Times* owner Otis and others who had purchased large quantities. This would ensure that profits from land sales after the Owens Valley Aqueduct was completed would go directly to the city and its citizens instead of to private investors. The abuse of police power and legislation against organized labor like the 1910 anti-picketing ordinance were also themes of the Socialist platform, who wanted to see the end of Los Angeles as an “open shop,” or non-union city. Their rhetoric pointed directly to class bias and structural inequality. One scholar noted that the Socialists’ campaign literature clearly emphasized class disparity in Los Angeles. The attack on middle-class and elite privileges that came at the expense of the working-class led the LARB and others to fear a socialist victory would mean a decline in economic growth. They worried such a climate would make financial institutions skeptical of Los Angeles city bonds that were essential for the massive municipal projects underway. Without the projected growth made possible by the enormous public works

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<sup>53</sup> For more on the working-class attraction to the socialist party in Los Angeles see: Daniel Jon Johnson, "A Serpent in the Garden: Institutions, Ideology, and Class in Los Angeles Politics, 1901-1911" (PhD, UCLA, 1996).



projects of dredging the harbor and building the aqueduct, property values would decline. Lower property values would interfere with the board members who were developing new subdivisions and repudiate the oft-repeated claim that real estate in Los Angeles was a good investment. A Socialist victory could have a very negative impact on the businesses of realty board members.<sup>54</sup>

While other authors have noted the significance of the wealthy business leaders or newspapers mobilizing against Harriman, they have overlooked the key role LARB played in organizing the Committee of 100 after the primary, or their varied efforts to defeat Harriman and reelect Mayor Alexander.<sup>55</sup> The LARB corralled other business progressives to defeat Harriman in 1911. Recognizing a leadership vacuum, in his own words LARB president William May Garland steered his organization “into the breach” and “assumed leadership” of the situation. He responded to the post-election call by the editors of the *Los Angeles Examiner* to organize a citizen’s committee to protect the city from the socialist threat. Two hundred LARB members attended the emergency meeting on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and unanimously declared their support for the creation of a “committee of 100” to be named by LARB members George N. Black, W.W. Mines, L.T. Bradford, Gilbert S. Wright and President Garland. Those six men met late into the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.; John H. M. Laslett, *Sunshine Was Never Enough: Los Angeles Workers, 1880-2010* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), chapter two; James P. Kraft, "The Fall of Job Harriman's Socialist Party: Violence, Gender, and Politics in Los Angeles, 1911," *Southern California Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (1988).

<sup>55</sup> There were a few notable Socialist businessmen in Los Angeles, namely Gaylord Wilshire. For more information on the Socialist Party in Los Angeles see Paul Greenstein, Nigey Lennon, and Lionel Rolfe, *Bread & Hyacinths: The Rise and Fall of Utopian Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: California Classic Books, 1992); Martin J. Schiesl, "Progressive Reform in Los Angeles under Mayor Alexander, 1909-1913," *California Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1975). Schiesl called the group that elected Alexander in 1909 “representatives of middle-class organizations,”<sup>40</sup>. On the committee of 100 organized after the Socialist scare he uses the terms “reformers and party regulars,”<sup>45</sup>. Clodius called the group responsible for re-electing Alexander “conservatives.” Clodius, "The Quest for Good Government in Los Angeles 1900-1910." Neither mentioned the involvement of the Los Angeles Realty Board. The *Bread and Hyacinths* authors did credit Garland for leading the committee of 100, but maintained it was Harriman’s nemesis Col. Otis who really swayed the election. Johnson also recognized the LARB creating the committee of 100, but credited women’s clubs with securing the vote favorable to Alexander. Johnson, "A Serpent in the Garden: Institutions, Ideology, and Class in Los Angeles Politics, 1901-1911." Kraft mentions the LARB in passing. He thought it was the combination of the unification of moderates and conservatives combined with the role of women voters that reelected Alexander. Kraft, "The Fall of Job Harriman's Socialist Party: Violence, Gender, and Politics in Los Angeles, 1911."

night at the exclusive Jonathan Club to decide on the appropriate influential Angelenos who would constitute the non-partisan Committee of 100. Its sole objective would be to defeat Harriman. They named well-known lawyer Bradner W. Lee as the president of the committee. While not an active LARB member, Lee was a well-known lawyer and the executor of the large Lucky Baldwin estate and its vast real estate holdings. He was also politically connected as a member of the county's Republican Central Committee. Other appointees came from banking, law, religion, and even included the Republican nominee who ran against Alexander in the primary, W.C. Mushet. At least fourteen members of the LARB served on the committee. The group represented the largest business interests in the city, showing how fearful that group had become of the working-class agenda. That so many involved in real estate and the LARB were on the committee demonstrates how important that sector was to the local economy and the power the LARB held as the industry's leaders.<sup>56</sup>

Members pledged their resources and time to the anti-socialist cause for the election. At LARB's meeting, they passed a resolution urging all members to contribute financially to Alexander's campaign with at least \$15 each. The *Examiner* exclaimed that "To a man the members pledged their time and money to the cause." Within LARB, all automobile owners offered use of their vehicles to mobilize voters. The board declared election day and the day

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<sup>56</sup>"A Long Pull, a Strong Pull and a Pull All Together," *Los Angeles Examiner*, November 2, 1911; W.M. Garland, May 29, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 28, LARB Records; "Business Men Organize to Meet Red Menace," *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1911. LARB members who served on the Committee of 100 included: Percy H. Clark, Byron Erkenbrecher, Oscar E. Farrish, L.T. Bradford, Lawrence B. Burck, Herbert L. Cornish, Robert M. Marsh, Frank Strong, James R.H. Wagner, Charles G. Andrews, Dr. Peter Janss, Guy M. Rush, O.A. Vickery, and Gilbert S. Wright. See also "Committee of 100 Organizes for Battle Today Campaign for Alexander to Break Records," *The Los Angeles Examiner*, November 6, 1911. LARB members William May Garland, Percy H. Clark (also the president of the Automobile Association of Southern California), W.W. Mines, Lawrence B. Burck, and secretary Phillip D. Wilson all wrote newspaper articles supporting the formation of a committee of 100. They were joined by J.E. Fishburn, President of the National Bank of California and Director of the Chamber of Commerce; W.H. Holliday, President of Merchant's National Bank; Garner Curran, President of the Federated Improvement Association of Los Angeles; Charles A. Elder, President of Globe Savings Bank and the Los Angeles Investment Company; and M. H. Newmark, President of the Angeles Jobbers'. "Business Men Push Alexander Campaign Endorse 'Examiner' Plan for Welfare of City," *Los Angeles Examiner*, November 2, 1911. On Bradner Lee, see "finding aid" Bradner Wells Lee Papers (Collection Number 480), Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

before real estate holidays. That action seemed almost needless since many members pledged and did “drop all business from now until Election Day and devote their time exclusively to the campaign,” a clear sign they were threatened by the Socialist ticket.<sup>57</sup>

Members also participated in the effort to defeat socialism by serving as deputy registrars and encouraging city growth. With cooperation from the Good Government Organization and the Women’s Progressive League, they undertook a campaign to register every eligible voter in the city before the deadline at midnight on November 9<sup>th</sup>. This included a big push to register eligible female voters, who had only been granted suffrage in California a month before. The socialists also had registration drives, mostly in the working-class neighborhoods of the city, but were not as successful as those registering middle-class and wealthy women. The *Los Angeles Times* reported the LARB and others had registered 10,000 new voters and were hoping for 5,000 more before the deadline. Closer to the election, LARB ran advertisements in the newspapers urging “all Right-minded citizens” to vote for the continued development of the city and reelect Mayor Alexander. Their argument touched on the threat of declining property values, decreased retail business, and the stoppage of important municipal projects like the Owens River aqueduct.<sup>58</sup>

LARB and its partners, including many local newspapers, successfully garnered support for Alexander. Harriman’s association as assistant defense council for the McNamara brothers, who plead guilty to charges of bombing the *Los Angeles Times* building two days before the elections, also helped sway voters away from the Socialist ticket. On December 5, 1911,

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<sup>57</sup> "Realty Board Launches Great Non-Partisan Movement with 'Defeat Socialism' as a Slogan," *Los Angeles Examiner*, November 3, 1911.

<sup>58</sup> Johnson and Kraft emphasize the role of women voters on two fronts. First, the anti-socialist group registered more women. Second, women were more likely to vote for a progressive ticket than a socialist one. Johnson, "A Serpent in the Garden: Institutions, Ideology, and Class in Los Angeles Politics, 1901-1911"; Kraft, "The Fall of Job Harriman's Socialist Party: Violence, Gender, and Politics in Los Angeles, 1911"; "Realty Board Getting Many," *Los Angeles Times* Nov 7, 1911; "Final Tug on Registration," *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1911; "Wipe out Forever the Smudge of Socialism"; "Display Ad 20 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1911.

Angelenos reelected Mayor Alexander with 85,739 votes to Harriman's 51,796. Every Good Government candidate beat out their socialist counterpart. Praising the efforts of LARB from the start of their leadership of the non-partisan effort to fight the threat of a socialist government, the life-long democrat Judge Albert M. Stephens insisted, "The real estate men of Los Angeles have done more good for the city than any organization in the city."<sup>59</sup> Within the LARB, Garland lauded the membership in his address at the end of the fiscal year for their work in leading the drive for a committee of 100 and "saving the situation." Such a united effort to defeat a political candidate illustrated the threat the real estate men perceived in government that was skeptical of large business enterprises, and favored policies that first and foremost benefited the working class.<sup>60</sup>

Debates within LARB about reforms to the new City Charter in 1912 were not as clear cut as the need they felt to get involved in the 1911 election. The governing committee appointed three men to coordinate with other business-oriented enterprises in the city including the Merchants & Manufacturers Association, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles Jobbers Association, and the Los Angeles Clearing House Association. Specifically, they charged the committee with monitoring all provisions dealing with public utilities put forth by the Board of Freeholders working to design a new City Charter. The issue of public utilities' rates had been central to the political turmoil of Mayor Alexander's first term and the subsequent, widespread working-class support of the socialist ticket in 1911. To keep members abreast of the proposed City Charter reforms, the committee printed it in pamphlet form and mailed it to all LARB members. Despite the recommendation of the three men for LARB to endorse the new charter, the governing committee resolved to maintain political neutrality.

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<sup>59</sup> "Realty Board Launches Great Non-Partisan Movement with 'Defeat Socialism' as a Slogan."

<sup>60</sup>"Complete Election Returns," *Los Angeles Examiner*, December 8, 1911; W.M Garland, May 29, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 3, LARB Records.

Indicating some dissention within the leadership structure, the committee passed a resolution neither endorsing nor condemning the charter and urged all members “to study the provisions therein contained and cast their ballots either for or against the measure as they, in their judgment, may deem best.” Nevertheless, in March of the following year, the Board passed a resolution supporting the eight amendments drafted by the Citizen’s Charter Revision Committee (on which LARB members George Black served) regardless of calls from members that such an action would be too political. In the end, like the threat of socialism, the issue of public utility ownership was important enough to the growth of Los Angeles that LARB felt it should take a public stand.<sup>61</sup>

The foray into local political matters represents one of the main reasons the realty men chose to organize themselves. In order to benefit their own professional pursuits, the members of the Los Angeles Realty Board could harness the collective influence of its members. Working in a competitive industry, LARB members recognized the benefits to collegiality and common goals for all honest male developers and brokers. Even one of the most accomplished brokers, like William May Garland, could have a deeper impact on the city and the profession with the weight of the realty board behind him. LARB members had unambiguous ideas regarding their position as professionals and their vision for what Los Angeles would become. Underscored by continued business growth, and an increasing population Los Angeles would avoid the pitfalls of established industrial cities by expanding from the city center with residential communities filled with single family homes.

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<sup>61</sup>July 24, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 42; November 21, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 56; November 25, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 58; March 6, 1913, *LARB Minutes*, LARB Records. In the failed city charter reform of 1912 see James W. III Ingram, "Charters: A History of the City's Constitution," in *The Development of Los Angeles City Government*, ed. Tom Sitton, 13-15.

## Chapter 2 Shaping the Space: “The Continuous City”<sup>1</sup>

Percy H. Clark’s (governing committee 1905-1906) housing developments and promotional campaigns were emblematic of the kind of city the real estate board members envisioned for Los Angeles. Born in Pennsylvania, Clark grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He worked in the same line as his father, managing lumber yards. He moved his family to Los Angeles in the early 1890s and continued in the lumber industry. In 1901 he started a company that specialized in real estate, insurance, and investments. In addition to his involvement in the LARB, he actively promoted the city through the Chamber of Commerce and served in many leadership positions there. He was on the Chamber’s Board of Directors from 1910-1912. Perhaps his most significant contribution was founding the Chamber’s industrial bureau, which encouraged area-specific industrial growth in Southern California. He also sat on several of the Chamber’s committees including the one that dealt with political matters for the city and county, and the committee on boulevards, parks, roads, and highways. A fervent supporter of automobiles and good roads, Clark was both a director and vice president of the Automobile Club of Southern California. In residential building, Clark was the entrepreneur behind the development of Beverly Hills, one of Los Angeles’ most exclusive residential communities. A long time advocate for comprehensive planning for Los Angeles, Clark sat on the City Planning Commission when it started in 1920.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "E.T. Earl's 'Pullback,' Aimed at Los Angeles Home-Building, Is Denounced by Business Men," *Los Angeles Examiner*, August 21, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> On Percy Clark see: LAPL CA bio file; Burdette, *Greater Los Angeles & Southern California Portraits & Personal Memoranda*, 62; "Beverly Hills Founder Dead," *Los Angeles Times*, December 29, 1925; "Percy H. Clark," *Los Angeles Times*, December 30, 1925; "Host Pays Tribute to P.H. Clark," *Los Angeles Times*, December 31, 1925; Franklin Harper, *Who's Who on the Pacific Coast: A Biographical Compilation of Notable Living Contemporaries West of the Rocky Mountains* (Los Angeles: Harper Publishing Co., 1913). Sam Bass Warner, Jr. clearly explained the important linkages between streetcar lines and city growth in *Streetcar Suburbs*.

Clark's work exemplifies LARB's spatial vision for Los Angeles in several ways. Members imagined a city free of the problems of the older, industrial centers of the East Coast and Midwest. Los Angeles' growth would be planned, not haphazard. Separate sections for industry and residences were essential to this idea. The detached single family dwelling was the centerpiece of this vision. Even though many other cities were developing residential neighborhoods connected to the downtown by transportation networks, the members of the LARB and other local boosters, like the Chamber of Commerce, repeatedly insisted they were building a different kind of city: a low density metropolis filled with communities of single family homes. The profits and livelihoods of LARB members depended on promoting that image and selling it again and again to new homebuyers.

What later urban historians and planners would identify in Los Angeles and disparagingly come to call "sprawl" was not a hapless or arbitrary building scheme without a plan. The men who developed, sold, and marketed real estate in the city *purposefully* built Los Angeles this way. In the era before formal planning commissions endowed with authority by local or regional governing bodies, real estate developers and brokers acted as informal planners for their cities. Historian Greg Hise noted in his book on 20<sup>th</sup> century city planning that Los Angeles' designers, planners and industrialists from the 1920s on "viewed and understood dispersion as an advantage, something to be planned for." Decades earlier, the realty board members had recognized this building pattern as a benefit. In the words of one LARB member from 1911, Los Angeles was to be a "continuous city." There was space for building this kind of city, with miles of undeveloped land stretching out in all directions, bounded only by the Tehachapi Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Promoting this ideal for the region was an intrinsic

component of their financial success. This principle established the foundations for the massive development in the 1920s. Subsequent decades continued this focus.<sup>3</sup>

Nationally, realty men were deeply connected to organizations focused on the structure of cities. Some of these organizations included the National Planning Conference, Association of City Planners, American Civic Association, National Municipal League, and the National Housing Association. The presence of these national organizations suggests a desire on the part of developers and brokers everywhere to have more livable and beautiful cities. Relying on technological innovations, especially the electric streetcar, which enabled people to live farther away from work, all urban areas were beginning to spread outward to decreased densities. Several developed plans for beautifying their landscape and increasing the number of parks or green space in an effort to decrease the physical and social problems of overcrowded areas. The Chicago Plan of 1909 designed by Daniel H. Burnham was a prime example of this trend.<sup>4</sup>

Los Angeles did not fully adopt its own City Beautiful Plan in the early 1900s, and the city did not have a formal planning commission until 1920 (when Percy Clark was appointed LARB's representative). Prior to the commission real estate professionals had been advocating planned development for at least two decades. LARB members played a direct role in deciding the physical shape of the city. Central to their vision for Los Angeles, the realty men focused attention on the single family home and the dispersed land use pattern it required. Separating industrial development from residential communities was the first step in assuring that housing

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<sup>3</sup> Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis*, 10. For more on the long history of city planning, including the start of the City Planning Commission see: Greg Hise and Todd Gish, "City Planning," in *The Development of Los Angeles City Government*, ed. Tom Sitton. "E.T. Earl's 'Pullback,' Aimed at Los Angeles Home-Building, Is Denounced by Business Men."

<sup>4</sup> Davies, *Real Estate in American History*, 74; Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*; Robert Bruegmann, *Sprawl: A Compact History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Carl Smith, Interpretive Digital Essay: The Plan of Chicago, (Newberry Library, 2005), <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/10537.html>. Many other cities including Denver and Kansas City adopted "City Beautiful" plans. See William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).



developments (especially those composed of wealthier owners) would remain apart from the environmental nuisances of industrial production. Their efforts to restrict industrial growth in specific areas resulted in the 1908 groundbreaking zoning laws that subsequently guided the pattern of city development for factories and residential areas. Likewise, the 1920 revisions the board supported for the zoning law were to ensure, as historian Marc Weiss described, that Los Angeles “enhance its reputation as America’s best planned and best regulated city.” The law that went into effect in 1921 was most notable for being the first in the nation to have a category specific to single family homes.<sup>5</sup>

Historian Robert Fogelson, who famously wrote about Los Angeles’ urban landscape as a “fragmented metropolis,” noted that pre-1900 Los Angeles did not look much different than other western cities. By the 1930s, however, it had become the “dispersed metropolis par excellence.” What came to distinguish Los Angeles were its communities of single family homes spread over such an immense area. Single family home occupancy rates higher than any other metropolitan area establish the veracity of his claims. By 1930 nearly ninety-four percent of the total Los Angeles population lived in these accommodations. However, Fogelson’s explanation for this phenomenon was misplaced. He argued a nativist approach claiming the “exceptional character of its population” explained the demand for single family homes. In his reasoning Midwestern migrants were somehow more cultivated in their tastes than the poor European immigrants who inhabited the older, industrial cities and settled for crowded multi-dwelling living situations. On the contrary, the reason Los Angeles developed into a region filled with a focus on this kind of development was really a result of the local marketing forces

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<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles Municipal Art Commission, "Report of the Municipal Art Commission for the City of Los Angeles, California," (Los Angeles: W. J. Porter, 1909); Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*, see chapter four, quote on page 91. First called category A, R-1 is what Los Angeles uses today to signify single family residential zones.

spearheaded by the Chamber of Commerce and the LARB. They continually pushed this image of the homeowners' paradise for people of all financial classes.<sup>6</sup>

From 1893-1915 the Chamber of Commerce published and distributed booklets entitled *Los Angeles City and County*. These pamphlets were written and revised yearly by Harry Ellington Brook, an Englishman by birth who also wrote editorials for *The Los Angeles Times*. The target audience was anyone who attended world fairs and other large gatherings throughout the country. They outlined the advantages of health and farming in the region. Brook continually emphasized the homes of Southern California in these booklets. For the Chicago Columbian Exposition publication Brook claimed, "The Homes of Los Angeles Charm the visitor, most of them standing in spacious lots, beautified with semi-tropical trees and shrubs." In the pamphlets from the early 1900s, he went much further emphasizing the importance of homes in Los Angeles in 1902 when he wrote: "After all is said, the chief attraction of Los Angeles to new arrivals lies in its beautiful homes." This could have been an effort to gloss over the lack of industrial jobs in Los Angeles at the time. Still, LARB members and other promoters consistently asserted that there were single family homes for people of all income levels available in Los Angeles.<sup>7</sup>

These *City and County* pamphlets included pictures of Los Angeles and Southern California homes. Captions show that along with the single family homes the Chamber promoted a developed tract with the single family home on an ample lots that included landscaping as the model for the region. This image from the 1902 booklet illustrated how

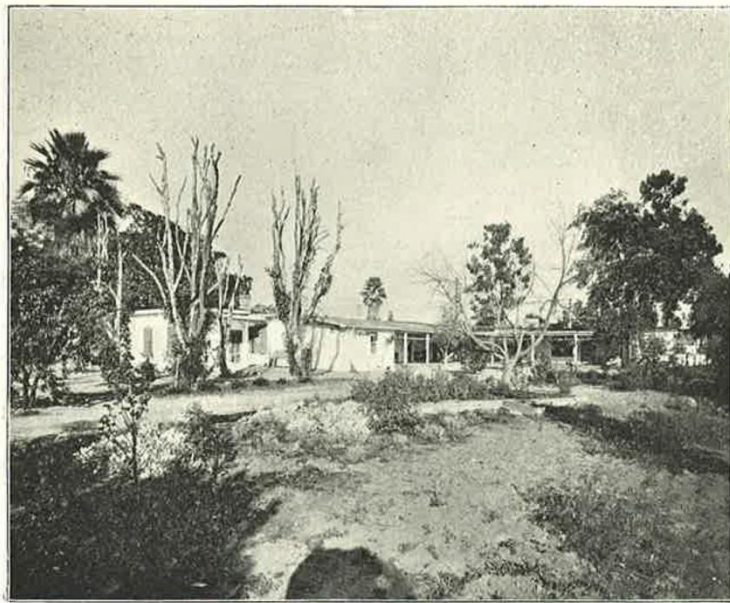
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<sup>6</sup> Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, see Chapter 7, "The Urban Landscape," quotes on 142, 44.

<sup>7</sup> Harry Ellington Brook, "The County and City of Los Angeles in Southern California," (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Co., 1893), 9; "The City and County of Los Angeles in Southern California," (Los Angeles: Chamber of Commerce, 1902), 27. All pamphlets accessed at Charles E. Young Library, UCLA. Kim Hernandez, "'Homeseekers Paradise': Cross-Class Real Estate Speculation and the Emergence of Los Angeles, 1896-1914" (PhD, UCLA, 2010).

development patterns changed from an isolated home on unimproved land in 1850 to one in a subdivision complete with paved roads, cement curbs, landscaped sidewalks, and neighbors close by. A home was not just a home. A home came with a neighborhood.

**Figure 2.1: How Neighborhood Came to Define Los Angeles Homes<sup>8</sup>**



LOS ANGELES HOME, 1850



LOS ANGELES HOME OF 1902

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<sup>8</sup> Brook, "The City and County of Los Angeles in Southern California," (1902), 59, Special Collections, Young Research Library, UCLA.

The emphasis on neighborhood improvement marked a substantial change in real estate practice, a stepping stone to the 1920s arrival of the “Community Builders,” subdividers who not only did all of the improvements for the tract, but also built all the homes in the neighborhood. As early as 1901, developers in Los Angeles began building what the *Times* called “An Ideal Subdivision” full of “large lots on fine streets.” Whereas during the 1886-1887 land boom tracts sold so quickly there was no need to waste money on basic amenities like sidewalks or streets, by the 1900s, developers had to grade and pave streets, lay sidewalks and curbs, provide water and sewer lines, and landscape their tracts. These amenities not only curtailed speculative subdividing because of the required outlay of capital, they also became part of the marketing strategy for new residential communities. The practice was so widespread that communities that did not offer these services would have been at a disadvantage.<sup>9</sup>

The Chamber’s pamphlets targeted both wealthy and working-class pocketbooks. Although pictures of very large homes surrounded by tropical vegetation and clearly not affordable for all incomes were commonplace, a bungalow was usually pictured as well.

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<sup>9</sup> Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*. Weiss notes in chapter five that other than a few laws about filing maps for subdivisions to ensure uniformity of streets within a city, Los Angeles and California had no regulations for subdividing until the 1920s. “House and Lot”--the *Times*’ Weekly Review of Real Estate and Building,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1903. All of the leaflets in the Collection of Tract Maps from a Real Estate Business Scrapbook, Los Angeles (Collection 295) Young Research Library, UCLA contain information on the kinds of improvements the developer has already made to the subdivision. It seems that Los Angeles was unique in that municipal services like water lines and sewers were under the direction of developers and not the city municipal services. For information on cities that relied on external companies to provide these amenities see Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*; Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban*.

**Figure 2.2: A Typical Large Los Angeles Home<sup>10</sup>**

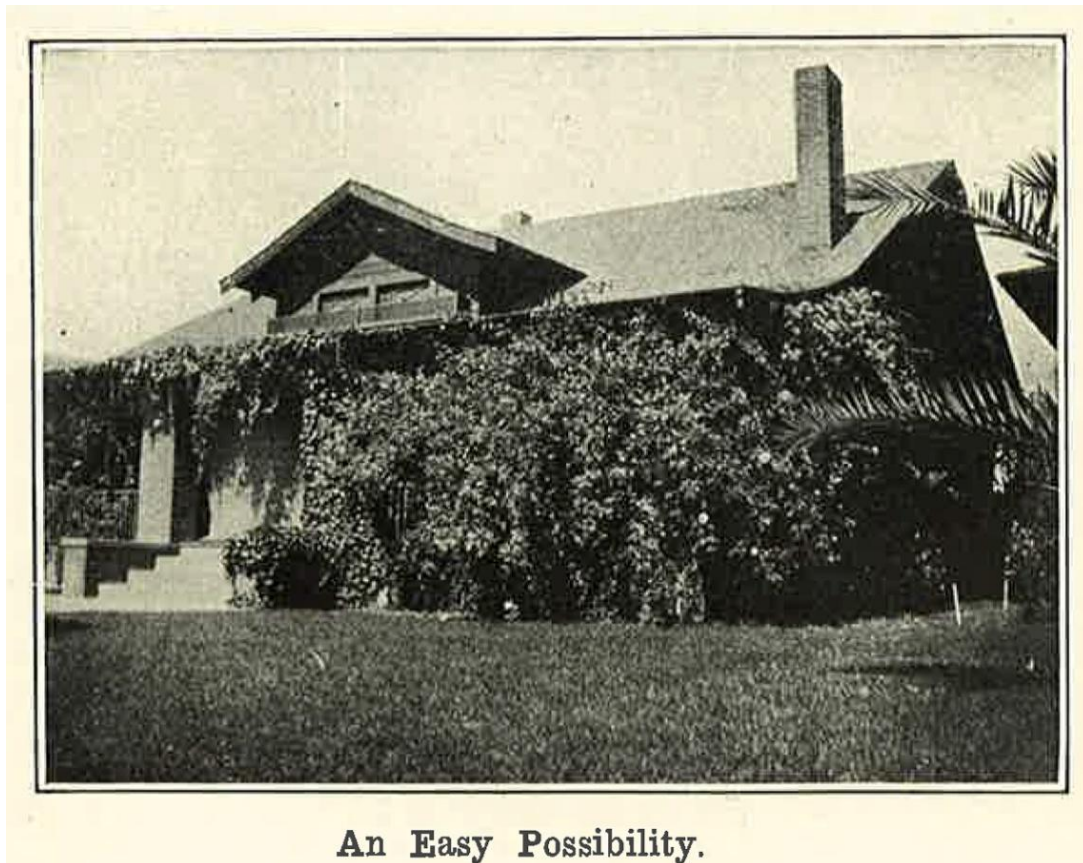


The pamphlets defined the California or Los Angeles Bungalow as “a cottage of one or one and one-half stories, with from three to seven rooms, built of lumber and shingles with wide eaves.” In the 1915 edition Brook added, “[it] is being copied all over the United States.” In 1910, one had the caption “An Easy Possibility,” suggesting the affordability of owning one’s own home in Los Angeles.

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<sup>10</sup> Harry Ellington Brook, "Los Angeles California, the City and County," (Los Angeles: Chamber of Commerce, 1912), 16, Special Collections, Young Research Library, UCLA.

**Figure 2.3: A Typical California Bungalow<sup>11</sup>**

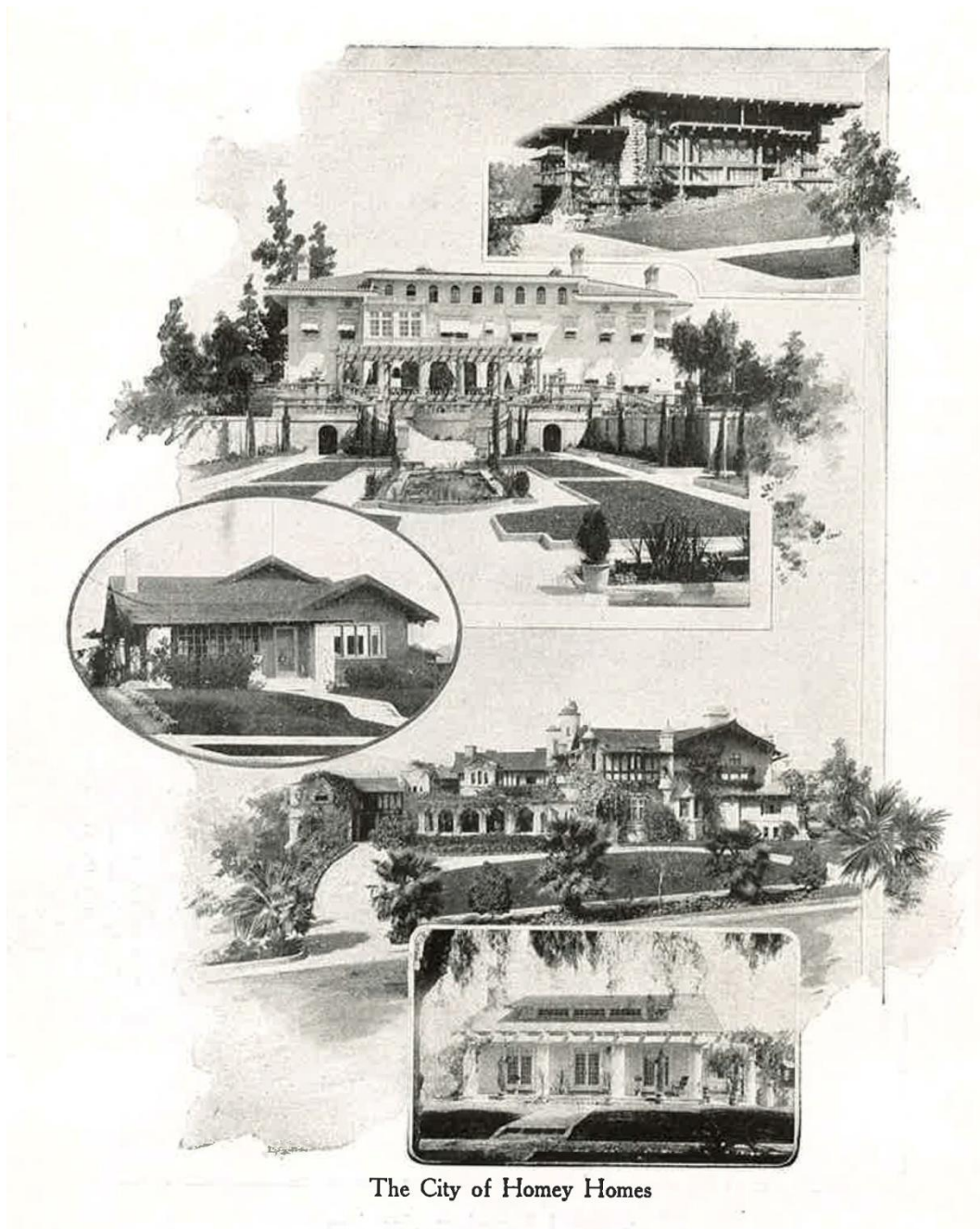


The 1915 version included a collage of high end and more affordable homes. “The City of Homey Homes” included mansions with lavish gardens and smaller bungalows. All were single family homes on their own portion of land.

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<sup>11</sup> Harry Ellington Brook, "Los Angeles California, the City and County," (Los Angeles: Chamber of Commerce, 1910), 71, Special Collections, Young Research Library, UCLA. .

Figure 2.4: The Variety of Southern California Homes<sup>12</sup>



The City of Homey Homes

Since many LARB members, like Percy Clark, were active participants and leaders in the Chamber, we can assume at the very least widespread LARB support for this portrayal. Given

<sup>12</sup>Harry Ellington Brook, "Los Angeles, California, the City and County: Exposition Number," (Los Angeles: Chamber of Commerce, 1915), Special Collections, Young Research Library, UCLA.

their financial incentives for its success they more likely enthusiastically encouraged the Chambers' promotion of Southern California as communities of homes.

Los Angeles city building reports affirm that the real estate focus was on residential construction. Of 7,040 issued building permits from December 1903-November 1904 just over two-thirds (4483 or 64%) were for residences. 78% of those residences were the single story homes otherwise known as California Bungalows. Only 3% of construction permits went towards retail or industrial buildings. Figures were not broken out this way again until 1919. Between the middle of 1919 and the end of 1923, 33-40% of the permits issued were for the construction of single or double dwellings, the vast majority of those single dwellings. Figures from 1923 (table 2.1) illustrate that the city awarded permits for more residences than any other kind of structure. Private garages were the second highest category, pointing to the growing popularity of the personal automobile in Los Angeles. The combined total of structures dealing with industry and commercial sales was only 1,740 in contrast to 24,362 permits for dwellings, revealing that homebuilding was a much larger part of the region's economic growth than commercial enterprises.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>All building Inspector Reports and Report of Activities of department of building were from the Los Angeles City Archives. The 1903-04 report did not break out commercial structures. Since residences, flats, apartment buildings, sheds and stables and churches all had their own categories I lumped the rest together for commercial properties, although schools might have been included in that figure. All brick buildings (from one to eight stories) and three and four story frame structures totaled 217 buildings.



**Table 2.1 Classification of Building Permits by Use or Occupancy of Buildings for Calendar Year 1923<sup>14</sup>**

<b>Classification by Occupancy</b>	<b>Number Issued</b>
Apartment Building	803
Churches	49
Dwellings	24,362
Flats (3 & 4 apts.)	620
Factory Buildings	83
Garages Private	16,372
Garages Public	178
Gasoline Filling Stations	539
Hospitals	16
Hotels	76
Industrial Buildings Misc.	348
Mercantile Buildings	884
Motion Picture Studio Buildings	36
Office Buildings	36
Power and Light Buildings	7
Public Buildings	73
School Buildings	141
Sheds and Outbuildings	3,696
Shops, work	186
Theater Buildings	4
Theater Building, Motion Picture Only	4
Warehouses	148
Wharves	19
Miscellaneous Buildings and Structures	64
Additions	7,101
Alterations	6,425
Demolitions	239
Foundations only	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62,548</b>

LARB members found that the emphasis on single family homes could attract people of all incomes to Los Angeles. They expanded the idea and developed neighborhoods for working class residents, white collar workers, and the ultra wealthy. This approach allowed LARB members to promote neighborhoods of single family homes to a sizeable audience. The association's members built moderate-income and working class neighborhoods close to the industrial districts north and east and far past the fringes of city growth. At the same time, they

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<sup>14</sup> J.J. Backus, "Report of Activities of Department of Building of the City of Los Angeles for Calendar Year 1923," January 2, 1924, 4.

developed the majority of the housing tracts in upper-middle class and wealthy neighborhoods pushing city growth farther south and west. David Barry alone constructed twenty-one housing tracts in this area. Strong, Dickinson & McGrath built over 200 subdivisions also in the south and southwestern part of the city. At the same time LARB members launched some of the most elite neighborhoods along the Wilshire corridor and in the West Adams district such as Vermont Square, Windsor Square, and Ridgewood. They subscribed to the same logic of streetcar mogul Henry Huntington, who believed that if he built these kinds of homes and neighborhoods, people would move to Southern California and fill them.<sup>15</sup>

Not all Angeleno developers or LARB members were pleased with the focus on residential building and the lack of industrial and commercial development in Los Angeles. The changes in the zoning law in 1921 tried to meet the demands of both the realtors who wanted to protect residential communities and keep business centered in downtown (the LARB leadership fell into this camp), and the smaller land owners and brokers who desired increased business opportunities following the economic lull during WWI by selling their land for any use. The zoning changes were a double-edged sword for some of the largest realty firms and the most prominent members of the LARB. While over three quarters of the city's business activities were centered downtown in 1920, by the end of the decade Los Angeles had 600 miles of street frontage outside of downtown zoned for commercial use. Changes in zoning may have been the downfall for the business district enthusiasts. However, the new category of single family homes, more specific than general residential use, helped to ensure the residential communities

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<sup>15</sup> See Henry Huntington quote in Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 85. Huntington's biographer notes how the real estate mogul also developed neighborhoods targeting specific classes of people. See Friedrichs, *Henry E. Huntington and the Creation of Southern California*, 88-89.

LARB members had already built would be protected, and that their vision of a city with communities of these homes could be realized.<sup>16</sup>

The LARB and others could not have promoted Los Angeles as a city of low-density, residential neighborhoods without the infrastructure provided by its streetcar system. It is impossible to discuss the real estate market or the formation of communities in outlying areas before the age of the automobile without remembering street car lines were imperative for subdivision, suburban development, and speculative sprawl. The two had always been intertwined. For example, the investors of the Los Angeles and Aliso Avenue Street Passenger Railway in 1875 all had an ulterior motive for making land east of the Los Angeles River more accessible. William Workman and John Hollenbeck owned much of what became Boyle Heights. William Perry not only had a tract bearing his name, but also owned a lumber yard, which would surely profit as people built more and more homes. Attorney J.W. Gillett may not have held title to land along the route, but his partner Albert Judson did own the Evergreen Cemetery, which was not coincidentally located at the end of the horse-drawn rail line.<sup>17</sup>

No one was as influential in building Los Angeles' streetcar system as Henry Huntington. He directed the Pacific Electric Railway (PE) until 1909 when he sold his shares at a handsome profit to Edward Harriman of the Union Pacific Railroad. Huntington remained in control of the Los Angeles Railway (LARY). With funding from financial partners in San Francisco, using a great deal of his own personal fortune, and insisting upon funneling company proceeds into more rail line building, Huntington dramatically increased the spatial expansion of Los Angeles. He arrived with rail experience, having worked his way up to Vice President in his uncle Collis

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<sup>16</sup> Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 148; Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*. Not that many neighborhoods had the single family residence zone. Overtime, however, it became an even more frequently used tool for residential developers.

<sup>17</sup> Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*; Post, *Street Railways and the Growth of Los Angeles*.

Huntington's Southern Pacific Railroad. Chronicler Robert Post considered Huntington a "culminator" because he built upon LARY, a mostly intraurban (within city limits) system that was the result of consolidation of preexisting rail lines. While true, Huntington was also a builder, further developing LARY, and expanding the PE interurbans exponentially in the first decade of the twentieth century. Huntington made the Pacific Electric the foremost streetcar system in the nation and secured for himself and investors handsome returns in his land development and Pacific Light and Power electricity companies.<sup>18</sup>

Other developers depended on Huntington's streetcar lines for access to their subdivisions and to see a return on their investment. Laid out in the 1880s boom the Florence Terrace tract north east of downtown sat vacant until well after the bust and recovery of the real estate market. In the early 1900s, streetcar access was so important to the owner, Charles Silent, that he kept his son Edward D. Silent (LARB founding member, governing committee 1903 and 1908-1911) from selling lots that "might be needed for Mr. Huntington's right-of-way." The deference to the possible streetcar lane demonstrated the necessity of rail connection to subdivisions. Streetcar access helped with advertising this tract and making money for Silent. A 1902 advertisement targeted both the prospective investor and homeowner. For the former, the tract would be a "Money Doubler" and was "the safest real estate proposition on the market." For the homebuilder, this area was a perfect location for the working-class because the Southern Pacific Railroad general shops were just five blocks away. The ad highlighted the subdivision's

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<sup>18</sup> Collis Huntington was one of the Big Four along with Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, and Charles Crocker, who built through the Sierra Nevada Mountains to complete the first transcontinental line. Post, *Street Railways and the Growth of Los Angeles*. Huntington's syndicate partners grew increasingly frustrated at the frequent demands for more capital that continuous building demanded and with the lack of dividends on their investments. They sold their shares to Edward Harriman, president of the Union Pacific Railroad, who had become increasingly concerned with the PE's ability to transport freight, and possible alliances with the railroad's rival in the area the Atchison, Topeka, and Sante Fe. To avoid Harriman's influence on his business decisions, he sold his shares in 1909, retaining control over LARY. Friedrichs, *Henry E. Huntington and the Creation of Southern California*; "A Metropolitan Entrepreneur Par Excellence: Henry E. Huntington and the Growth of Southern California, 1898-1927."

connections to the region with electric rail lines that would “run through and completely surround this area.” In just more than one year, over half of the 150 lots in the tract had been sold for an aggregate of \$45,000. In 1906, Charles Silent sold the rest of the tract and the land around it for \$85,000.<sup>19</sup>

The links to downtown that streetcars provided were such lifelines for subdivisions away from downtown and independent cities in the region that their developers often sacrificed money in order to secure a rail connection. For example, a transportation link was so important to La Habra, an agricultural city just beyond the Los Angeles County line, that the city provided for free the right of ways needed for a streetcar in 1906. PE could transport freight or passengers, both necessary for this agricultural outpost. In 1911, Jared Torrance, who developed the “model industrial city” that carried his name, went as far as donating 125 acres of land for PE to relocate its workshops and car houses there, hoping to attract more workers, but also to establish the city as a significant point on the transportation map of the Southland. Within Los Angeles, subdividers often covered the cost of laying new rail. According to one newspaper account, real estate developers would pay “bonuses” to the rail companies for extending a line to a specific tract. Those payments equaled the amount of money it cost to build and outfit a new line. Unquestionably the value of real estate holdings increased with streetcar access. Many real estate developers, not the least of whom was Henry Huntington, made fortunes as the streetcar lines increased the value of their tracts.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Letter from Edward D. Silent Co. to George E. Pillsbury, Chief Engineer, Pacific Electric Railway, September 28, 1903, HEH Collection 9893, Huntington Library; "Display Ad 11 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times* September 7, 1902; "Display Ad 9 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 1903; "Among Real Estate Owners," *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 1904; "Buys a Corner on South Main," *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1906.

<sup>20</sup> Crump, *Ride the Big Red Cars: The Pacific Electric Story*; "An Agreement between Dominguez Land Company and Pacific Electric Railway Co.," Dec 26, 1911, Box 35, Dominguez Land Company Collection, Cal State Dominguez Hills; "City's Growth Abnormal," *Los Angeles Express*, August 19, 1911; Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*; Friedrichs, "A Metropolitan Entrepreneur Par Excellence: Henry E. Huntington and the Growth of Southern

Street car access was an essential part of real estate advertising in cities throughout the nation and in Los Angeles. In 1905, a leaflet for Shatto Place and other nearby tracts west of downtown at Vermont Avenue and Fourth Street boasted proximity to *four* different streetcar lines. The Ramona Park tract in Monterey Park some distance north east of the city stressed “rapid car service” to downtown. An ad for Seneca Heights, a development just north of the Wilshire Country Club, claimed its superior location by discounting the quickly growing southwest section of the city, which offered more expensive lots and “inferior car service.” To be viable communities they had to connect to a web of railways that would enable residents to get to their jobs. The owners and agents of these tracts were all LARB members.<sup>21</sup>

The LARB leadership revealed its spread-out vision of the city and identified single family homes as its key component during a battle over a new streetcar franchise ordinance in 1911. Before 1909, when they fell under local and state regulatory bodies, rail builders had enjoyed complete autonomy in their business practices. The city freely granted permits to build new lines, often without any stipulations. In 1911, the city council contemplated a new franchise ordinance for street car lines operating within the city. The ordinance was proposed to correct the *carte blanche* climate afforded the rail companies. If required to follow the specifics of the 1911 ordinance, the rail companies claimed they would not be able to find investors and would have to curtail their operations. The realty men feared what would become of their city and their balance sheets without easy access to new housing tracts. A prominent subdivider and LARB member Lawrence Burke suggested, “People will cease to demand homes in the suburbs if this ordinance is adopted.” With their profits and businesses on the line the LARB unsurprisingly

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California, 1898-1927”; Post, *Street Railways and the Growth of Los Angeles*; Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 86.

<sup>21</sup> Advertising information from Collection of Tract Maps from a Real Estate Business Scrapbook, Los Angeles (Collection 295), Young Research Library, UCLA. Shatto Place agents were T.H. Hastings Co, Ramona Park agents Althouse Brothers, A.M. and A.C. Parsons developed Seneca Heights.

sided with the street car companies. The LARB supported keeping the status quo and limiting the city's ability to interrupt the granting of permits to build street car lines.<sup>22</sup>

An article in the *Los Angeles Express*, the leading Progressive newspaper, examined the controversy over the proposed franchise ordinance and took up the real issue at stake: what shape should Los Angeles take? With headings like, "City's Growth Abnormal," "Why Spread So Much?," and "Haphazard Upbuilding" the article questioned policies that would produce sprawl. The author was likely the paper's publisher E.T. Earl, a major investor in Southern California real estate, and a Progressive reformer. He proposed that building new tracts should be avoided until lots within the city were fully utilized. His objection, either based on development principles or the location of his own property investments, was that outbuilding left too many vacant lots. The areas already built or half built suffered because developers were constantly moving to newer, farther subdivisions.<sup>23</sup>

It was true that in order to build the city outward, real estate developers had ignored or left undeveloped a great deal of land. In 1913, LARY undertook a survey of all of the residential properties near its lines. Some of them lay outside of Los Angeles city limits, but connected commuter suburbs to downtown. The results (see table 2.2) reveal a checkerboard development pattern. Within the surveyed area more than 70,000 lots remained vacant. The survey only accounted for property within two blocks of the streetcar lines. Surely, then, even more undeveloped sites existed within these new neighborhoods.

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<sup>22</sup> "City Builders Oppose Franchise Ordinance," *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 1911; "Wires Cross on Franchise," *Los Angeles Times*, August 23, 1911; "Great Roads Seeking Space," *Los Angeles Times*, November 05, 1911.

<sup>23</sup> "E.T. Earl Dies Suddenly," *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 1919; "City's Growth Abnormal."

**Table 2.2 Vacant Lots within two blocks of LARY tracks as of July 1, 1913<sup>24</sup>**

<b>Portion of System</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Possible Future Population</b>
North	3,360	15,120
Northeast	12,550	56,475
East	5, 184	23,238
Southeast	6,445	29,002
South	10,760	48,420
Southwest	18,430	82,935
West	13,800	62,100
Northwest	2,217	9,977
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>72,746</b>	<b>427,357</b>

Note—The above included about 15,000 vacant lots outside of the city limits, largely in the suburbs of Hawthorne, Inglewood, Eagle Rock and Huntington Park. Additional population is estimated at the rate of 4.5 persons per lot. Vacant lots are assumed to have an average frontage of 50 feet.

Some of that unevenness of development can be attributed to areas bought and platted in the 1880s boom and bust that sat undeveloped. Those areas would have been painful reminders that the work of selling homes in subdivisions depended upon a growing population and a clientele that believed purchasing a home would be a good investment. Even in the boom years of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and 1920s developers did not build up all of these areas. By 1939, when the Home Owners Loan Corporation undertook its survey of Southern California, 40% of subdivided land remained vacant. Some of that was of course due to the Great Depression, and was a motivating factor for using Federal Housing Authority funding to embark on new construction projects during the 1930s.<sup>25</sup>

Earl also took issue with the size of Los Angeles. He contended that the city land mass and population ratio seemed out of proportion with one another. The article compared other

<sup>24</sup> Los Angeles Board of Public Utilities, "Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Public Utilities, Los Angeles," (Los Angeles 1914), 100.

<sup>25</sup> "Special Comments and Explanation, Security Map and Area Description, Metropolitan Los Angeles, California," Home Owners Loan Corporation, 1939, accessed through Testbed for the Redlining Archives of California's Exclusionary Spaces, <http://salt.unc.edu/T-RACES/demo>, ad0002.



municipalities' spatial footprints to their populations (see table 2.3). The discrepancy between Los Angeles and cities with a similar population but much smaller geographical area concerned Earl. Los Angeles was spatially the largest city by at least thirty percent, despite its population being smaller than ten of the fourteen cities.

**Table 2.3: Comparison of City Populations and Square Mileage in 1911<sup>26</sup>**

City	Population	Square Miles
Los Angeles	320,000	More than 100
Boston	679,325	27.25
Baltimore	558,285	31.5
Buffalo	425,000	42
Cincinnati	400,000	50
Cleveland	570,000	45.9
Denver	213,381	59.5
Detroit	500,000	41.5
Kansas City	300,000	57.75
Milwaukee	378,000	22.75
Minneapolis	312,000	53.25
Newark	360,000	23
San Francisco	450,000	43
Washington	331,069	69.25

The response of several prominent members of the realty board, captured in the *Los Angeles Examiner*, a morning newspaper founded by William Randolph Hearst that was friendly to unions, exposed a collective disgust with the *Los Angeles Express* article and provided insight into the vision they had for a metropolitan Los Angeles. The realty men rejected the idea that lots within the city should be fully utilized before expansion for several reasons. First, they pragmatically pointed out that land farther away from the city center cost less money. Their second point was that Los Angeles was “different from any other city,” a city of homeowners with residents who enjoy large lots in an expansive web of suburban neighborhoods

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<sup>26</sup> "City's Growth Abnormal."

symbiotically connected to the city. This was the driving force of the growing region. The LARB men promoted this image.<sup>27</sup>

Figures from the 1910 US census (see table 2.4) indicated that Los Angeles had one of the highest homeownership rates (44.7%) compared with other cities that had a population over 100,000 people. The only municipalities with slightly higher rates were smaller cities such as Seattle, Grand Rapids, Oakland, or Portland. Los Angeles' percentage of owned homes was significantly larger than the more established industrial centers like Boston (17.1%), Chicago (26.2%), New York (11.7%), and Philadelphia (26.6%). Of those larger cities only Detroit had a similar rate. Realtors who wanted Los Angeles to be as important a city as those larger ones without repeating the problems associated with urban life could note this tangible difference in homeownership. Some of the Midwestern cities of comparable size like Milwaukee and Minneapolis did have similarly high percentages. The only municipalities with slightly higher rates were smaller cities like Seattle, Grand Rapids, Oakland, or Portland. Los Angeles County's rate was on par with those cities. County wide residents owned 47.8% of homes.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "E.T. Earl's 'Pullback,' Aimed at Los Angeles Home-Building, Is Denounced by Business Men." For more on brief overview of the city's daily newspapers see "The Players" in Rob Wagner, *Red Ink, White Lies: The Rise and Fall of Los Angeles Newspapers, 1920-1962* (Upland, CA: Dragonflyer Press, 2000), 9.

<sup>28</sup> Of the 120,547 Los Angeles County homes residents owned 57,680 and rented 59,563. 3,604 dwellings were unknown. "Population General Report and Analysis," (Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, 1910), county information on 1317. Grand Rapids total homes was 26,925 and its ownership rate 47.9%, Oakland 36,723 with a rate of 46.7%, Portland 42,029 with a rate of 46.3%.

**Table 2.4: US Census Population Statistics 1910 Homeownership—Selected Cities<sup>29</sup>**

<b>City</b>	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>Number of Owned</b>	<b>Number of Rentals</b>	<b>Number of unknown</b>	<b>% owned of total</b>	<b>% rented of total</b>
Los Angeles	78,678	34,159	42,202	2,317	44.7	55.3
Baltimore	118,851	38,400	75,381	5,070	33.7	66.3
Boston	139,700	23,496	114,312	1,892	17.1	82.9
Buffalo	91,328	30,592	58,745	1,991	34.2	65.8
Chicago	473,141	121,447	342,472	9,222	26.2	73.8
Cincinnati	87,541	19,965	66,153	1,423	23.2	76.8
Cleveland	124,822	43,473	80,005	1,344	35.2	64.8
Detroit	100,356	20,752	57,831	2,054	41.2	58.8
Milwaukee	80,566	28,824	50,352	1,390	36.4	63.6
Minneapolis	63,241	24,539	36,195	2,507	40.4	59.6
New Orleans	73,377	16,273	54,113	2,991	23.1	76.9
New York City	1,020,827	117,740	884,616	18,471	11.7	88.3
Newark	77,039	15,119	60,473	1,447	20.0	80.0
Philadelphia	327,263	83,262	229,354	14,647	26.6	73.4
Pittsburgh	110,457	29,983	77,288	3,186	28.0	72.0
Seattle	51,042	22,167	27,245	1,630	44.9	55.1
St. Louis	155,555	37,761	133,515	4,279	25.0	75.0
San Francisco	86,414	27,500	55,946	2,968	33.0	67.0
Washington D.C.	71,339	17,375	51,607	2,357	25.2	74.8

Healthy living was also part of the single family home vision. LARB members encouraged the demarcation between a healthy Los Angeles and the dirt and illness prevalent in overcrowded cities that had tenement slums, even though Los Angeles did have slum districts. High density was one of the key elements of contemporary slums Angelenos thought they could avoid. W.W. Mines worried that restricting the growth of street car lines and thus new housing developments would, “have the effect of building up a congested and slum district.” Secretary Phillip Wilson noted that Southern California had two resources other cities did not that prevented the formation of slums—the availability of good land and lovely weather. The healthy

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 1313.

climate had long been a staple of the region's boosters, as evidenced by the number of tubercular residents seeking relief in southern California and the many sanatoriums located there at the turn of the century. The combination of the mild weather and room for expansion into the undeveloped areas surrounding the city encouraged the belief that the population in Los Angeles generally enjoyed better health.<sup>30</sup>

The vision the realty men worked to achieve for Los Angeles did not always match the reality of the living conditions. While lacking tall tenement buildings like those in other parts of the nation, Los Angeles certainly had a poverty-stricken, immigrant population living in poor housing conditions, unable to afford their own homes. The city established a Housing Commission in 1906, following a visit from the well-known housing reformer and photo journalist, Jacob Riis. According to the commission's leader, Dr. Titian Coffey, Riis had declared, "he had seen larger slums, but never any worse." Since the most immediate consequences of poor housing were issues of contagious diseases, the commission became part of the city Health Department in 1913. From the beginning and throughout Los Angeles' history poor residents, often people of color, have suffered from dilapidated housing, inadequate services, severe illnesses, and environmental pollution.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> "E.T. Earl's 'Pullback,' Aimed at Los Angeles Home-Building, Is Denounced by Business Men." On Southern California as a healthier location see John E. Baur, *The Health Seekers of Southern California, 1870-1900* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1959); Emily K. Abel, *Suffering in the Land of Sunshine: A Los Angeles Illness Narrative* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); David Sloane, "Landscapes of Health and Rejuvenation," in *A Companion to Los Angeles*, ed. William Deverell and Greg Hise (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

<sup>31</sup>"Report of the Housing Commission of the City of Los Angeles," (Los Angeles 1908), 6; "Report of the Housing Commission of the City of Los Angeles," (Los Angeles 1913), 64-66. For more on housing reform see: Harold Brackman, "Making Room for Millions: Housing in Los Angeles," in *The Development of Los Angeles City Government*, ed. Tom Sitton. On the racialization of public health, the official response to ignore structural inequalities in housing that could have prevented or assuaged health issues see: William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Jennifer Lisa Koslow, *Cultivating Health: Los Angeles Women and Public Health Reform* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009); Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). Laura Pulido discusses the more recent health

The failure of the LARB to acknowledge the existence of the slums in the city was indicative of the culture of boosterism and their specific marketing strategy for selling the Southland. Defining slums as high density areas of old tenement buildings allowed LARB members to ignore the housing problems facing many of the poorest residents of their city. It also afforded a rationale for expanding the city and its suburbs by claiming that the space available in Los Angeles residential communities made it free from the typical urban ills. Even the housing commission thought Los Angeles could “have a city without tenements, a city without a slum” and suggested the way to do so was to “Ruralize the city; urbanize the country.” Following this logic, if the problem with slums stemmed from high density, Los Angeles could ameliorate those problems by purposefully being a low density city.<sup>32</sup>

This abundance of single-family homes for all interested buyers was an essential feature of the non-slum and sunshine vision of the city. H.H. Cotton and Peter Janss (governing committee 1911-1915) both cited the individual homes on ample land available in and around Los Angeles as a major appeal for purchasers. Even R.A. Rowan (founding member and 1903 vice president), whose company was known mostly for building and managing downtown commercial buildings, believed, “One of the great attractions of Los Angeles is its fine display of suburban homes. That is what draws people here. They want a chance to enjoy more room, more fresh air and sunshine.” Homes on a spacious piece of property were not just for the elite in Los Angeles, however. The realty men believed, according to James R.H. Wagner (vice president 1912-1913, president 1913-1914) that even “the poorest man now can go out and get a home of his own.” Their rhetoric leveled what was in actuality a very unlevel playing field, conjoining the luxurious homes of the wealthy with small homes in working-class communities.

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ramifications of environmental pollution. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90, no. 1 (2000).

<sup>32</sup> "Report of the Housing Commission of the City of Los Angeles," (Los Angeles 1910), 14.

Broad-based home ownership would be impossible, however, if developers and realty men were not able to build on the cheaper land, farther away from the city center. New communities linked to the rest of the city by street car were essential to providing single family dwellings at an array of affordable prices.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps the most telling arguments for the realty men defending their outbuilding practices were those that linked the future of the city to the strength of its residential communities, both within the city boundaries and outside of them. Lawrence B. Burke (governing committee 1910-1912, vice president 1912-1913) warned that the “discouragement to the improvement and sale of suburban real estate would be *destructive* to the city of Los Angeles.” The city’s future depended on its residential property, not the business district. James R.H. Wagner claimed it a “*vital* element of the city’s growth.” He believed in the “continuous city,” and knew that the opening of new tracts was the way to establish those connections. George Black (founding member, treasurer 1903, 1905, governing committee 1909-1911) asserted, “The improvement of suburban tracts is *indispensible* to the development of Los Angeles.” It is what gave the city “its reputation of artistic beauty.” These comments demonstrated an emphasis on suburbs as the strength and future of the metropolis. The city center was not rejected to favor suburbs, as historian Robert Fogelson framed Los Angeles history. Instead, the intrinsic connection between the city center and its ties to residential communities stressed the importance of the latter for the future of the former. The realty men did not concern themselves with the political boundaries of municipalities as we now define suburbs.

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<sup>33</sup> "E.T. Earl's 'Pullback,' Aimed at Los Angeles Home-Building, Is Denounced by Business Men."

They were championing communities of homes everywhere in Southern California, and believed that connection to Los Angeles' business center would make all areas thrive.<sup>34</sup>

The business district was no longer the single focus of the metropolis. The residential markets became the lifeblood of the city, and the realty men were quick to take credit for their significant role in the endeavor. Guy M. Rush (governing committee 1914-1917) declared, "The man who is daring enough to go to the outside and open up a new tract shows his confidence in the development of the city." Under these terms, the realty men were not merely businessmen, but saw themselves as brave and visionary entrepreneurs, shaping a future metropolis.<sup>35</sup>

The infrastructure of an expansive streetcar network allowed for the kind of growth the LARB envisioned and explains why they were so opposed to a proposed city ordinance that could have hindered the further expansion and addition of streetcar lines. An ordinance did eventually pass but only with significant modifications that pleased the rail companies and the realty men. The streetcar companies continued to build. At the end of its 1912 fiscal year, LARY reported it had carried 122,702,682 revenue passengers, operated 802 cars (761 passenger cars), and built 6.59 additional miles of rails bringing its total track mileage to 354.84 miles. By June 1914 LARY owned 876 passenger street cars. Henry Huntington's biographer William Friedrichs pointed out that the company saw an increase of 69 million revenue passengers between 1908-1914. According to the Chamber of Commerce, in 1917 all of the streetcars carried 160,000,000 passengers over 55 routes. Streetcars ran 2,300 times in Los Angeles County, over one thousand more rides than the *combined* total of departures of the nine largest cities in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois. The vastness of the streetcar system that provided

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., emphasis added; Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 2. The realty men would likely have agreed with Robert O. Self's approach (and hated his racial analysis) to urban studies that required understanding a metropolitan area in terms of the relationship between the city core and the suburbs. Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> "E.T. Earl's 'Pullback,' Aimed at Los Angeles Home-Building, Is Denounced by Business Men."

transportation to so many single family homes in Southern California set Los Angeles apart from other cities and advanced the city of residential communities concept.<sup>36</sup>

This infrastructure and pattern of building outward also ensure continued growth and business for LARB members and other subdividers within Los Angeles' municipal boundaries. Once developers had pushed the boundaries of subdivision building well beyond city limits, they turned to the lots and areas between developments. A joint advertisement of the LARB and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in a 1920 issue of the *National Real Estate Journal* proclaimed, "Within [the city] limits are nearly **400 square miles** of potential home sites. The demand for these is steadily increasing from all parts of the United States and many parts of the world." Those areas were prime residential properties since streetcar lines connecting farther communities with the city already ran past them. By spreading out first and then backfilling residential communities the real estate entrepreneurs in Southern California guaranteed a pattern that eventually undermined the realtors emphasis on low density development. Los Angeles came to be known in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century for its high density spread over a wide area.<sup>37</sup>

Other cities noticed what the Chamber of Commerce and LARB did in promoting Los Angeles as a city of homes. In 1912, *The National Real Estate Journal* editor commended an article from *The Duluth Herald* about the Los Angeles Realty Board "to all real estate brokers everywhere." It first affirmed the planning that the realty men had done declaring that development of Los Angeles has been "along the sanest lines with the keenest eye to the future and to the beauty and harmonious arrangements of homes and cities." The *Herald* article then

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<sup>36</sup> The LARB members supported cars and road improvement for similar reasons. They relied on that infrastructure to carry their consumers to their neighborhoods. Ira Sweet, "Chronology 1874-1951," *Interurbans Special*, 1960, 42; Friedrichs, *Henry E. Huntington and the Creation of Southern California*, 105; Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, "Los Angeles Today," (Los Angeles: Neuner Company, 1917), back cover.

<sup>37</sup> *NREJ*, April 26, 1920, 8, emphasis in original; Bruegmann, *Sprawl: A Compact History*, 5.



quoted *The San Francisco Call*, which had interviewed leading members of the LARB to solicit their advice on problems that faced San Francisco. The board members had four suggestions:

1. “Fewer flats and apartment houses and more homes on lots of ample size”
2. Try harder to get tourists to want to stay and live
3. Advertise and exploit the vacant land near San Francisco
4. Have subdivisions ready for those who come from the East to the world’s exposition in 1915, so that they will stay and buy homes.

In other words, the LARB leadership suggested that San Francisco work to be more like Los Angeles in both its spatial geography and its advertising, a likely argument since Los Angeles had begun to overtake San Francisco as the leading California city since the earthquake in 1906.<sup>38</sup>

The *National Real Estate Journal* did not record the reaction of the San Francisco Realty Board, which would not become a member of NAREB until 1915. However, in the 1910s and 1920s a series of new subdivisions opened in San Francisco such as Westwood Highlands, which architectural historian Carolyn Loeb described as “detached, single-family houses sitting in the middle of the lots. . .” many of which were larger than the usual San Francisco lots. That spatial arrangement sounds very similar to the one adopted in Los Angeles.<sup>39</sup>

Realty men elsewhere also took note of Los Angeles’ spreading residential communities. Amid the franchise ordinance battle of 1911 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that William E. Harmon of the Wood, Harmon Co, a real estate company that had offices in cities throughout the east coast, said Los Angeles was “beating the world in building homes.” He was in Los Angeles for several months taking pictures of residential neighborhoods and observing the home building

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<sup>38</sup> “What a Realty Exchange Can Do: A Duluth Paper Pays Tribute to Potency of Los Angeles Board,” *NREJ*, November 15, 1912, 214-215.

<sup>39</sup> In 1912, the San Francisco Realty Estate Board was the second largest in the state (120 members compared to Los Angeles’ 440) and the biggest board in northern portion of the state (Berkeley had 39, Oakland 50 and San Jose 19) “Memberships,” *Real Estate*, October 1912, 17; Loeb, *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers’ Subdivisions in the 1920s*, 94.

practices in the region. Residential communities of low density single family homes eventually came to typify much of the Southwest, as well as other parts of the nation.<sup>40</sup>

In the minds of the LARB, Los Angeles was destined to become a metropolis worthy of emulation, free from the urban problems of the era. They believed their focus on dispersed building and residential communities would help the city reach their glorified vision. This would require advanced planning and concerted efforts to promote their vision. Data from the 1930s illuminates the LARB's success in constructing a low density city of single family homes. 93.9% of its housing stock was for single dwellings. And a majority of these structures were built after 1900. City density remained noticeably low compared to other large metropolitan areas at this time.<sup>41</sup>

With the emblematic pattern of residential neighborhoods filling an expanding metropolitan region established by the early 1900s, the LARB also had to grapple with the issue of how to fill the spaces it created. As it had been active in forming the foundations of the region's physical layout, the LARB was a significant voice in guiding the social geography of Southern California. Los Angeles, like many other cities in the nation, would come to be marked by its communities separated by both class composition and racial background. The real estate industry was instrumental in establishing a segregated city. As the leaders of that industry locally, LARB members were responsible for this segregation, which began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>40</sup> "City Builders Oppose Franchise Ordinance."

<sup>41</sup> Brackman, "The Development of Los Angeles City Government," 379. Brackman asserts Los Angeles had a "population density (4,300 per square mile in 1930) only a fourth or a seventh as great as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia."

### Chapter 3:

#### Segregating the Space, the Covenants and Restrictions

In the early 1900s Frank Ryan came to Los Angeles from Massachusetts. With Hiram Metcalf, a man five years his senior who had moved to Southern California from San Francisco in his youth, he opened the real estate firm Metcalf & Ryan that specialized in property management, business leases, and fire insurance. He prospered in real estate, married, and lived in a large home off the fashionable Wilshire Boulevard corridor by the time of his untimely death in 1934. Only the third Los Angeles Realty Board (LARB) President to be elected to a second term, Ryan shared the honor with William May Garland and W.W. Mines. Like Garland and Mines, he served the national real estate association as well. In 1923, Ryan became the National Association of Real Estate Board (NAREB) Ethics Committee Chair. His committee oversaw a significant update to NAREB's code of ethics, previously adopted in 1915. The changes in the national code grew directly out of the history of established practices in place in Los Angeles and throughout the nation. The updated NAREB code codified class and racial segregation on a national scale.<sup>42</sup>

The new version followed the existing structural model that again included sections on the proper relationship between realtors, between realtors and the public, and then an *adendum* with suggestions for ways the public could secure the best service from a realtor. However, the updated code was more direct, expanded on recommendations from the earlier code, and included new protocols. NAREB members voted on and passed the revised version in 1924. Ryan advised his fellow realtors that with this new ethical standard, they should “hold hard and

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<sup>42</sup> 1910 US Census, "Display Ad 86," *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1918; "Frank Ryan Re-Elected President," *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1921; "Auto Crash Injuries Prove Fatal to Frank Ryan, Realtor," *Los Angeles Examiner*, July 29, 1934. On Hiram Metcalf see "H. F. Metcalf Private Rites Set for Today," *Los Angeles Times* May 26, 1951.

fast to those reasonable, healthful clauses . . . and insist absolutely and always. . . that they constitute the bone and sinew—the life-blood—of a realtor’s profession.” He maintained that 90 percent of the standards were dictated by one thing, “common, simple, everyday honesty of purpose, of motive and of act.” And honestly explicit of purpose they were. The 1924 Code of Ethics Article 34 defined the ideal neighborhood for its members as segregated by race and class. “A realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, *members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values* in the neighborhood.” This clause elevates the neighborhood over a specific property by requiring similar use of buildings and homogenous racial and class composition. In other words, model neighborhoods were to be communities of homes filled with people from the same racial background and of the same class standing.<sup>43</sup>

By 1924, the Los Angeles landscape already reflected these principles Ryan helped codify on a national level, as did many other US cities. Studying how class and racial segregation started in Los Angeles remains important for three reasons. First, Southern California developers could more easily use zoning laws and restrictive covenants to realize these segregated communities because there was so much new construction after 1900 and a focus on single family home neighborhoods both in newly annexed areas and independent communities. It was easier to build neighborhoods from the ground up on these principles than to retroactively apply them. Second, the story of class segregation is often overshadowed by the pernicious practice and consequences of racial segregation. Los Angeles’ history reveals the two

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<sup>43</sup> Frank Ryan, “Ethics and Practice in Real Estate Brokerage,” *NREJ*, July 20, 1923, 26; National Association of Real Estate Boards, “Code of Ethics,” (Chicago 1924), italics added. Realtors who violated the Code of Ethics were subject to discipline by their local board, which could include expulsion. Ryan was not chair of the committee when the code of ethics passed, but his committee did draft the code and it included racial exclusions. From a 1923 draft, “A Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood members of any race whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.”

really occurred hand in hand. Third, contrary to the familiar telling in other cities, racially restrictive covenants in Los Angeles were not merely a reaction to a growing African American population moving as part of the Great Migration from the south.

Just as the LARB men had purposefully constructed and supported a spread-out city, they had likewise intentionally segregated Los Angeles by both race and class. Developers planned segregated communities as a way to order their growing city. They took cues from the Progressive Era ideals of their time. Not only did progressive reformers seek political and social change such as more direct participation in democracy and assisting the poor in the region and state, many also embraced an ideal of racial and class segregation as a viable way to circumvent social problems of class and inter-racial conflict. An unidentified California progressive spokesman pontificated, “It is for the white peoples to resolve and the brown peoples to accept the permanent physical separation of their races.” Pivoting from the theoretical to the actual, the real estate developers were responsible for implementing segregation by class and race on the practical level.<sup>44</sup>

As in other cities around the country, Los Angeles underwent rapid changes from the 1890s on. The advancements in technology allowing for more complex transportation systems and taller buildings and the physical spread of the city altered the urban landscape. Drastic population changes with the migration of hundreds of thousands of people from farming communities to urban centers and waves of immigrants forming ethnic enclaves also contributed to the quick pace of transformation in cities and their residential communities. Urban historian

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<sup>44</sup> Progressive president, Woodrow Wilson was the first president to segregate federal civil workers according to race. See Woodrow Wilson, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, ed. Arthur S. Link, vol. 28 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966). Historian Michael McGerr claimed that segregation revealed progressive racism and pessimism that some differences were too great to overcome. *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003). Quote in Roger Daniels, “The Progressives Draw the Color Line,” in *Racism in California; a Reader in the History of Oppression*, ed. Roger Daniels and Spencer C. Olin (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 119. On the need for order during this time period see Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968).

Eric Monkkonen called the movement into and out of cities “a social world of astonishing residential fluidity.” He clarified that people who bought property and stayed in the same place throughout their lives were the exception, not the rule. Yet, real estate brokers like the LARB members tried to sell real estate as both a desirable community relationship and as an investment, which meant that it needed to be stable, predictable, and grow in value overtime. Los Angeles historian Robert Fogelson named that idea “permanence.” That meant buyers, sellers, developers and brokers were fearful of anything that could introduce negative change or instability into a neighborhood. These could include issues about use like mixing in factories with residences, or ideas about occupancy measured by the thickness of a neighbor’s pocketbook or his skin color. Introducing stability into the Los Angeles real estate market was one of the founding goals of the LARB.<sup>45</sup>

To preserve the character and permanence of a neighborhood, city governments and developers attached legal restrictions to property in the form of zoning laws and restrictive covenants. Zoning laws pioneered in 1908 by the LARB institutionalized the separation of industrial from residential areas. These restrictions established the first step toward building and maintaining neighborhoods strictly devoted to housing. In 1916 New York City adopted and enforced similar principles with its more comprehensive regional zoning plan.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban*, 195; Robert M. Fogelson, *Bourgeois Nightmares: Suburbia 1870-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). The Commission that investigated the 1919 Riot in Chicago found that even though blacks were moving into neighborhoods that were already deteriorating, whites felt that it was the presence of blacks was the negative agent driving down value of homes. Chicago Commission on Race Relations, "The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923). Charles Abrams claimed maintaining neighborhood values justified segregation in real estate manuals from the 1920s onward. See *Forbidden Neighbors; a Study of Prejudice in Housing* (New York: Harper, 1955), 155-68. Kevin Gotham argued the “preference’ of housing consumers for segregated living” is a product “cultivated, developed, and marketed by the real estate industry.” See *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900-2000* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 144.

<sup>46</sup> Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*; Whitnall Gordon, "History of Zoning," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 155 (1931).

Contracts, conveyances, and restrictions, also known as restrictive covenants (CCRs) that accompanied the title to a property addressed both use and occupancy. They could prohibit the specific use of a lot as a store, or stable, or distillery, or any other non-residential use. Until the U.S. Supreme Court declared enforcement of racial exclusions in CCRs an unlawful use of state power in 1948, they could also ban certain racial or ethnic groups from owning or occupying a property. Terms of the CCRs included severe penalties for owners who violated the contract. They could be forced to forfeit their claim to the property, which would revert to the original home owner, or tract developer, without compensation. Considered a legal contract, both original buyers and future owners of the property were legally obligated to follow the CCRs until they expired.<sup>47</sup>

The realty men were businessmen at heart and would not have continued to use CCRs to build these distinctive, restricted communities if they did not believe them to be profitable. They relied on CCRs for three reasons. First, in order to prevent the over speculation that led to the market's collapse of the late 1880s, Angelenos used CCRs to try to introduce more stability without curtailing growth. Specifying a timetable in which a property owner had to construct a building on a lot in the covenant, guaranteed that the land would not be swapped repeatedly at increasingly inflated prices with no tangible structure built. Entire subdivisions from the 1880s boom had sat vacant for decades as a visual reminder of what could happen in a real estate frenzy. The realty operators needed to promote growth, but guarantee the stability of the market. According to the *Western Insurance News* in 1910, they had achieved this goal. The magazine reported, "Los Angeles prosperity has ceased to be 'phenomenal' because it is steady. But it is steadily wonderful." As the real estate market flourished, developers and owners had more to protect. There was more money on the line. Urban property was valuable. It had investment

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<sup>47</sup> *Shelley V. Kraemer*, U.S. 334 (1948).

potential far beyond its merits for agricultural production. The *Western Insurance News* account used as an example or a “typical illustration of the increase of property values” a lot on Grand Avenue, near the business district, which grew in worth over a period of twenty years from \$3,500 to \$65,000. “Property that was almost valueless has become valuable.” In Los Angeles, fortunes could be made by investing in property that was steadily increasing. Those investments needed to be protected. They needed to be “as safe as money in a safety deposit vault, and unlike stored cash will become more and more valuable.”<sup>48</sup>

Second, CCRs were a tool to streamline development and save the tract subdividers money in both the construction and the sales of the neighborhood. In the earliest study of these covenants Helen Monchow wrote that “the subdivision business is characterized not only by extreme irregularity but also by great economic wastefulness.” She noted that developers began to use covenants to prevent superfluous work, stabilize land values, and promote amenities. The financial incentives for using CCRs could save a developer money in overhead costs.<sup>49</sup>

The third reason LARB members used CCRs was that they helped developers create an impression of community that could make marketing the neighborhood easier. Whereas, ethnic background or religious affiliation once marked the definition of American neighborhoods, with the increasing transience and social upheaval of the industrializing nation, restrictive covenants began to acquire that role. Los Angeles had by far the nation’s largest population growth rate from 1880—1930, with 212% between 1900-1910. Chicago and New York only had 29% and 39% population growth respectively in that time period. With the new residents, Los Angeles had remarkably fluid and overlapping ethnic communities, especially in comparison to the entrenched ethnic neighborhoods in more established cities like Chicago or New York. Los

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<sup>48</sup> *Western Insurance News*, July 10, 1910, 17; Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California*.

<sup>49</sup> Helen Corbin Monchow, *The Use of Deed Restrictions in Subdivision Development* (Chicago: The Institute for Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities, 1928), 2.



Angeles also had greater quantities of annexed, undeveloped land on which to build new communities. Instead of common cultural background, and shared traditions of food or language, class and racial segregation began to build distinct neighborhoods within the greater urban fabric. Economic status and a changing definition of who was included in the “white” category created neighborhood similarities and exclusivity that were additional assurances of many advertising campaigns, which already promoted property as the perfect investment.<sup>50</sup>

Adopting the CCRs in the early 1900s informed metropolitan development for the next century in two ways. First, it highlighted the shift in focus away from individual properties to the importance of the neighborhood. CCRs limited what an owner could choose to do with his or her property. Purchasers did not seem to mind this loss in personal choice and willingly gave up some autonomy for the greater good of a community. In return, they participated in a less capricious real estate market and were promised greater return on their investment. For example, a person’s property investment could decline if a factory moved in next door, or a homebuilder constructed an unsightly house, or an owner divided his home into multiple rental units. Restricting use through zoning and CCRs, ensured that the value of another property owner’s investment would not be undermined by such maneuvers.

Elevating neighborhood over individual ownership helped to enshrine the principle of similarity, or homogeneity, as the most important factor for describing a community and in assessing its value. The economic status and the racial category of the people you lived next to became just as important—if not more important—than the cost or grandeur of the home in

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<sup>50</sup> For a comparative population growth rate chart between Los Angeles and ten other large US cities see Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 79. Mark Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). Christopher Boone notes the changes in marketing between the 1890s boom and the 1920s, without realizing that the shift happened during the interim period and was already a common practice by the time of the real estate frenzy in the early 1920s. See Boone, "Real Estate Promotion and the Shaping of Los Angeles."

which you resided. This focus on neighborhood value over private property value played out in the Depression Era government intervention in the housing market when the Home Owners Loan Corporation evaluated the lending risk of nearly every urban neighborhood in the nation, in order to access the risk level of bank lending on individual properties. It has continued in 20<sup>th</sup> century debates about incorporation, the pace of development, and property taxation issues.<sup>51</sup>

The second effect CCRs had on urban formation was to map positions of power on the city. The location of these communities segregated by class and race determined which areas of the city would carry the most political capital, receive the most attention from elected leaders, and profit from the most city services. William Estrada explained that in the 19th Century moving city hall away from the original plaza demonstrated the transition in political power from the *Californios* to white Angelenos. In the next century, white, middle and upper-class neighborhoods on the Westside and in the San Fernando Valley dominated Los Angeles' political landscape until the 1960s when black and left-wing Jewish communities formed a coalition to elect Tom Bradley as the first black councilman and then mayor.<sup>52</sup>

Los Angeles subdividers applied restrictive covenants to ensure that residents would reflect the desired class composition for the development. To maintain the character of the envisaged community they often required a buyer to spend a minimum amount of money on constructing a home on the lot. Both high-end and lower-income developments utilized CCRs in this way. Near the foothills of Los Angeles, north of Los Feliz Dr., the property buyers in

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<sup>51</sup> For the lasting effects of the HOLC mapping project see Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*. Louis Lee Woods, II emphasized the adoption of a neighborhood standards over that of individual properties in "The Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Redlining, and the National Proliferation of Racial Lending Discrimination, 1921-1950," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 6 (2012). For more on other efforts to protect neighborhood values, or in the words of historian Mike Davis, defend "household equity and residential privilege," see "Homegrown Revolution," in *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> William D. Estrada, *The Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008); Raphael Sonenshein, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Hillhurst Park were required to spend from \$10,000-\$25,000 to build their palatial mansions. Residences in the Angelus Vista Tract just west of Western Avenue and south of Venice Blvd, from 1903, were to have a “reasonable cost . . . not less than three thousand dollars.” Property in the less-affluent Adams Street tract, at the intersection of Adams Blvd and Compton Avenue in the Southeastern part of the city, also from 1903, sold with the condition that homes built on each lot “shall cost and be fairly worth not less than one thousand dollars.” Keeping classes separated was an essential feature of these residential developments. This distinction and the focus on homes for people of all classes created niche markets for new neighborhoods, further expanding the businesses of LARB members.<sup>53</sup>

In 1911, an LARB member tested the legality of building restrictions embedded in a CCR. Emil Firth, developer of Walnut Park located between Figueroa and Moneta (now Broadway) and Vernon Avenue, not far from Exposition Park, sued Mary Lena Marovich for violating the terms of the CCRs that accompanied her property. Walnut Park opened in 1905, and Firth sold lots for between \$825-\$900, with “beautiful English walnut trees on every lot.” Firth’s advertisements made no mention of the building restrictions. The covenants attached to each property, however, mandated that the property should only be used for a private residence and should cost not less than \$1,500. Marovich, the second owner of the lot, built an “unsightly” home worth \$800, which Firth claimed was a “detriment” to his remaining lots. The court found that the building restrictions were valid and enforceable as long as Firth still owned any part of the tract for which he had designed the covenants. The court upheld forfeiture of title as the consequence for not following the restrictions. It did not matter that Marovich was not the original purchaser; she was still bound by the CCRs. This decision reinforced the real estate

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<sup>53</sup>Boone, "Real Estate Promotion and the Shaping of Los Angeles." Information from title paperwork for, 1623 South Gramercy Place, 1527 East Adams Blvd, "Display Ad 217," *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 1912.

practitioners' power and the validity of using restrictive covenants to design economic standing into a community in Los Angeles and beyond. Members of NAREB read about the case and its verdict favorable to the practice of class distinction within CCRs in the *National Real Estate Journal*.<sup>54</sup>

Developers tried to keep classes of homes—and therefore people—separate within their tracts. For example, in Edward Silent's (LARB founding member, governing committee 1908-1911) affluent Francisca Park, advertised as "the beauty spot of the Wilshire District," building restrictions ranged from \$4,000-\$6,000 depending on the street the lot was on. This subdivision was only a few blocks wide and long. Still, houses on certain streets were required to be two-story homes, and bungalows were only permitted along Hobart Blvd, which was in between two larger avenues (Western and Normandie). Keeping people separated by class position was, and still is, a marker of residential community development.<sup>55</sup>

Los Angeles real estate advertising often included references to the kinds of restrictions a new development would have. Financial restrictions were very common and a good assessment of who agents welcomed as a prospective buyer. They could be effective in keeping neighborhoods segregated by class *and*, because of the racialized nature of economic inequality in Los Angeles and most other cities, by race. Generally speaking, minorities had fewer educational opportunities and occupational choices in Los Angeles. Historian Ricardo Romo used marriage records from 1917 and 1918 to ascertain that 91.5% of Mexicans in Los Angeles worked in blue collar professions and that the vast majority, 68%, were employed in unskilled labor. Even through the third generation, nearly half of Mexican-American men were still in

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<sup>54</sup> The 110 Freeway now runs directly through what was Walnut Park. *Firth V. Marovich* 160 Cal. 257; 116 Pac. 729 (1911); "Vermont Avenue Square," *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1906; "Display Ad 67 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 1905; Davies, *Real Estate in American History*, 66.

<sup>55</sup> "Collection of Tract Maps from a Real Estate Business Scrapbook, Los Angeles, 1907-1915," Collection 295, box 1, Young Research Library, UCLA.

unskilled positions. They earned smaller paychecks than white collar or skilled and semiskilled positions. Unfair wages could also hinder economic progress. For example, a 1914 sociology study claimed that Mexican railroad workers received 25% less wages than other people doing the same job. They were by circumstance unable to afford to live in the same neighborhoods as the upwardly mobile, white, middle class. Advertising the minimum amount of money required to build on a property, then, also provided a convenient way of excluding minority residents.<sup>56</sup>

While income disparity could and did contribute to racially segregated communities, the LARB members and other real estate professionals were unambiguous in other efforts to insure racially segregated neighborhoods. Los Angeles did not have anything quite as drastic as the St. Louis Board's "Negro Segregation Committee," but the real estate men in the Southland worked actively over several years to make racial residential segregation a normal part of neighborhood development. While no written standard of race-based exclusion existed prior to the National Association of Real Estate Boards 1924 Code of Ethics, clearly the *modus operandi* advanced racial segregation.<sup>57</sup>

The first advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times* directly citing race restrictions appeared in 1906. Offered by John H. Saunders, the St. Francis Tract in Highland Park, Northeast of the Arroyo Seco Parkway and southwest of Eagle Rock, advertised that the properties were "restricted to white people only." The covenants and contracts attached to the deed spelled out

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<sup>56</sup> For inequality and racial tracking in education see Gretchen Tuthill, "A Study of the Japanese in the City of Los Angeles" (MA, University of Southern California, 1924); James William Cameron, "The History of Mexican Public Education in Los Angeles, 1910-1930" (PhD, University of Southern California, 1980). Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 115-20. For more on Mexican labor inequality see George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). On unequal railroad wages see William Wilson McEuen, "A Survey of the Mexicans in Los Angeles" (MA, University of Southern California, 1914).

<sup>57</sup>"St. Louis, Mo," *NREJ*, December 15, 1914, 491. St. Louis along with Atlanta (twice) and Louisville also tried to apply racial zones to the city. In 1917, however, the US Supreme Court barred local governments from instituting segregation through zoning *Buchanan V. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60.(1917). See Barbara J. Flint, "Zoning and Residential Segregation: A Social and Physical History, 1910-40" (Thesis, University of Chicago, 1977).

the restrictions more directly. The racial restrictions were sandwiched between the minimum financial requirements to build a house, where it needed to be situated on the property and a long list of prohibited uses such as horse stables or manufacturing. “Said premises shall not nor shall any part thereof be sold or leased to any person of African or Mongolian descent.”<sup>58</sup>

The St. Francis tract illustrates an important point about racially restrictive covenants: they were not just tools to preserve the whiteness of high-class developments. That neighborhood was decidedly targeted toward the working class. The cost to buy the land and the minimum requirement to build were not that great. For only \$75-\$150 down and at 6% interest an Angeleno could buy a lot and build a home. Perhaps the fact that it was a working class neighborhood and non-whites might have been able to afford to buy there explains why the advertisements were so explicit about the racial restrictions. According to the 1920 Census the occupations of the residents of the thirty-two households in that tract were mostly blue collar. They included: boiler maker, railroad employees, a truck driver, machinists and mechanics, contractors and carpenters, a meat cutter, and a miner. Three residents worked in white collar sectors as a bookkeeper, salesman, and school principal. Restrictive covenants ensured that similar class composition became a significant part of neighborhood formation.<sup>59</sup>

The tract also reveals the fluctuating definition of white and the creation of white identity. Interestingly, all of the residents were migrants or immigrants. None had been born in California, or any of their children. Twelve were from other countries (Ireland, Sweden, Canada and France.) None came from Mexico or had names of Mexican descent. Even though Mexicans were not specifically prohibited in restrictive covenants, given the racism they faced in other

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<sup>58</sup> "Display Ad 171 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times* December 9, 1906. The restrictive covenant comes from the title paperwork for 5726 Meridian St. Los Angeles, 90042. By 1910, there were 8,461 Japanese in Los Angeles. See 1910 US Census, P2, p. 36.

<sup>59</sup> See 1920 US Census, Los Angeles, Precinct 733, enumeration district 119. The St. Francis tract borders are Meridian Street, Milwaukee Avenue, Fayette Street and Ave 57.

neighborhoods, it is possible they were also not welcome in the St. Francis Tract. The residents were not all from the same place or of the same ethnic background. By not falling into the racial categories prohibited in the CCRs, they did fit into a new category of “white” Americans. Their specific ethnic ties became much less important than their disassociation with the groups prohibited in the community.<sup>60</sup>

Torrance, a new city located south of Los Angeles, provides another example of a working class community that segregated by race. LARB member Thomas B. Campbell (governing committee 1916-17, Vice President 1920-21) oversaw the marketing and selling of lots in Torrance, which was the brain child of wealthy industrialist Jared Torrance. With zones for factories, residents, and commerce, and designed to be an “Industrial Garden City,” Torrance opened in 1912. Several important factories located there including the Union Tool Company (Jared Torrance served on its board). The Pacific Electric moved its car buildings and repair shop there in 1913. Architect Irving Gill designed the homes intended for the workers and the industrial company heads and officers, who would also live there. All homes had the same race restrictions. An author for the local newspaper, the *Torrance Enterprise*, wrote that the city “restricted against non-Caucasians (negroes) Japanese, Chinamen and for the purpose of this interpretation, Hindoos.” He clarified that non-Caucasians could be household servants and that a “foreign quarters” existed on the outskirts of the city limits, which in 1921 had a population of five hundred. Designed as an ideal industrial city of the Progressive Era in contrast to older factory cities, and populated with working-class Angelinos, Torrance signifies that racially

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<sup>60</sup> David Roediger writes about the making of a white working class in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991). Linda Gordon suggests that ethnic ties played a much less significant role in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century West than they did in the East. *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

restrictive covenants were an instrumental part of community formation, even in working-class communities.<sup>61</sup>

CCRs often expired after a few decades, but some developers began to extend the restrictions for an unspecified amount of time. Employing the “iron clad race restrictions” Lawrence B. Burck advertised for two tracts roughly twenty blocks south of Exposition Park could ensure that the racial composition of a tract would remain the same. These lots were “*never* to be sold or leased to anyone except a person of the white or Caucasian race.” Like the St. Francis and the industrial Torrance lots, Burck’s tracts both targeted working-class Angelenos. They were to be the “New bungalow site of the Southwest,” and required the value of the house be only \$1000 in one subdivision and \$1500 in the other. Perhaps Burck could advertise with such certainty about the foolproof racial segregation because in addition to his own firm and his involvement in the LARB (governing committee 1910-1912, vice president 1912-1913), he helped found the Los Angeles Title and Trust Co. Title companies were the ones responsible to keep track of CCRS and ensure the land would be sold in compliance with the restrictions.<sup>62</sup>

The Guy M. Rush Company also employed racially restrictive language in its advertisements. Rush served on the LARB governing board in 1914. Originally from Michigan, by 1900 Rush and his family had relocated to Los Angeles. In his twenties, he became a real

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<sup>61</sup> Dana Bartlett, "An Industrial Garden City: Torrance," *The American City* IX, no. 4 (1913); "Town Taking Shape," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1912; "Will Find Town Ready," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 1912; "All Eyes on Newest Industrial Suburb," *Los Angeles Times*, December 21, 1913; George W. Neil, "Torrance," *Torrance Enterprise*, <http://www.torranceca.gov/archivednewspapers/Herald/1920%20Nov%205%20-%201921%20Dec%2023/PDF/0000013.pdf>. For more on the labor’s relationship with Torrance see Robert Phelps, "The Search for a Modern Industrial City: Urban Planning, the Open Shop, and the Founding of Torrance, California," *Pacific Historical Review* 64, no. 4 (1995). On Irving Gill’s designs in Torrance see Thomas S. Hines, *Irving Gill and the Architecture of Reform: A Study in Modernist Architectural Culture* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2000).

<sup>62</sup> CCR from title paperwork for 903 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, Los Angeles, CA, emphasis added. Ads for Burck’s Golden Tract and Normandie Avenue Tract from Collection of Tract Maps from a Real Estate Business Scrapbook, Los Angeles, 1907-1915, Collection 295, YRL, UCLA. On Burck, see LAPL CA bio file.



estate agent and in 1912 the California State Realty Federation's magazine called him "one of the best known Sub-division Experts on the Pacific Coast."<sup>63</sup> His work included developments in Seal Beach, Ingledeale Acres and Plymouth Acres in Hawthorne, Lawndale Acres, Municipal Harbor Acres, and Brooklyn West in Culver City. Rush's company dealt strictly in real estate development and sales until 1914 when it absorbed Edward D. Silent & Co., which the *Los Angeles Times* claimed had "played an important part in the realty operations of the city for a quarter of a century" and which had "extensive business in insurance, rentals and real estate loans." The merger transformed Rush's business portfolio to the extent that after serving as a Captain in the Army during WWI, he returned to Los Angeles and self-identified his occupation on the 1930 census as a "proprietor, stocks and bonds."<sup>64</sup>

Just before buying Edward Silent's company, Rush opened a development in the recently incorporated Culver City with a very creative advertising ploy that included a disturbing racial qualifier. Promoting their Brooklyn West tract, the Guy M. Rush Company promised a box of candy and a Christmas present to every child who brought an adult with them. Just as numerous other Los Angeles neighborhoods were segregated, so too was Santa's gift giving. Brooklyn West's Kris Kringle distributed presents based on color, given the parenthetical statement, "Lots and presents restricted to Caucasian race."

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<sup>63</sup> California State Realty Federation, *Real Estate*, October 1912, 18.

<sup>64</sup> "Takes over Old Firm," *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1914. "The Guy M. Rush Company Purchases Edward D. Silent Co.," *California Real Estate*, August 1914, 276.

1913 ad for Brooklyn West Tract in Culver City<sup>65</sup>

# 2 Gifts for Each Child Free

Every child at "Brooklyn"-West next Sunday when the big bell rings will get *absolutely free* and without obligation:

1—A big box of fine candy

2—A real sure enough Christmas present.

All any child has to do is to take a grown-up friend with him or her and register at the tract office at "Brooklyn"-West, and be at "Brooklyn"-West next Sunday with some grown-up person.

Your old fat friend,

SANTA CLAUSE.

## 50-Foot Lots From \$550

*10% cash—balance to suit you.*

*10% building discount.*

*10% discount for all cash.*

(Lots and presents restricted to Caucasian race.)

Free excursions from our office every day at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

### **GUY M. RUSH CO.**

901-5 927 Story Building, Sixth and Broadway

Phones: Home 60055—Broadway 24.

P. S.—Office open evenings.

Either the company was so explicit in their exclusion of non-white children because the child welfare department of the San Diego Exposition of 1915 used the occasion to produce a film which "showed California as the ideal place for happy children," or the department chose to film

<sup>65</sup> "Display Ad 42 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times* December 17, 1913.

at this site because it knew there would be only white children. Mr. Rush announced a second Santa Claus visit the following week because the event had been so successful.<sup>66</sup>

Rush Co. manager and LARB member Robert B. Armstrong insisted that developers and brokers be true to their promises in advertising. He delivered an address at the ninth annual California State Realty Federation convention entitled “Backing up Good Real Estate Advertising,” just prior to the Santa Clause gimmick. He declared:

Advertising to be effective in real estate must be absolutely truthful and must be backed up by the performance of the seller as well as the property itself... The man who advertises either by word of mouth, billboard, dodger, newspaper or otherwise, must deliver what he promises when he promises, in the way that he promised to do it; that is, if he intends to stay in business.

Indeed, the covenants and restrictions attached to one of the houses in Brooklyn West tract included demands of residential use, and the home’s location on the lot, and prohibited advertising on the lot. They also stipulated, “said premises shall not be leased or conveyed to any person other than of the Caucasian race.” As with the St. Francis tract, the Brooklyn West tract had legally binding covenants tied to the property that buttressed the racially restrictive advertising.<sup>67</sup>

Realty boards could also help prevent racial mixing once developments were already populated. In 1913, in a suburban, ocean-side community of Los Angeles, the Venice Realty Board boasted about their role in preserving the whiteness of a neighborhood. Resident R.V. Vaughan threatened to sell his property within two blocks of the beach to an African American in order to seek retribution on the community. Vaughan had been pulled over by a police officer

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<sup>66</sup> "Display Ad 82 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times*, December 16, 1913; "Strip Goodies from Big Tree," *Los Angeles Times* December 22, 1913; "Borders Ballons Creek: Brooklyn West Tract Combines Civic Comfort and Unique Natural Advantages," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1914; "Display Ad 66 -- No Title," *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 1913. Not all purveyors of real estate went to the extreme measures of the Guy M. Rush Co., which at another time offered buyers tokens toward rail fare to the 1915 world exhibitions in San Diego and San Francisco, or a free turkey for the holidays.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Armstrong, “Backing up Good real Estate Advertising,” *California Real Estate*, November 1913; CCR for 4224 Lincoln Avenue, Culver City, CA 90232 in the Brooklyn West tract.

for a speeding violation and then held in custody after allegedly trying to injure the officer on the way to the police station. Vaughan claimed he gave the officer cash for bail and it was never returned. The police department denied receiving any money. Upset, Vaughan told his neighbors that he would sell his home to a black buyer. Some claimed he did so in order to “terrorize and frighten the citizens of Venice” into purchasing his property. The Venice Realty board investigated the matter, which they claimed to resolve successfully. Without providing details of their efforts, they reported in the *California Real Estate Magazine* that they “accomplished the work set out to do that of keeping the Negroes out of the residence section of the Beach.” It was a seemingly large victory for the small board, which like the LARB, supported racially restrictive covenants.<sup>68</sup>

There is some evidence that the larger LARB played a more direct role in adopting the use of racially restrictive covenants. According to meeting minutes from July 1911, the Title Insurance & Trust Company approached LARB members Strong & Dickinson, who had written “the premises shall not be conveyed or transferred to any person or persons other than of the white or Caucasian race” into property deeds. The title company was concerned that the legality of a racial covenant was not yet settled by the Supreme Court and wanted “the Realty Board [to] take the matter up and carry it through to a finish and have the question settled once and for all.” The matter was referred to the Governing Committee, and sadly no records of that body’s meetings from that year have survived. It is not a stretch to infer, however, that the realty board did support the wide-spread adoption of racially restrictive covenants.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> “Officials Ask Heavy Damages,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1913; “Druggist Makes Charges,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1913; “News Briefs,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 26, 1913; “Protecting Property Interests,” *California Real Estate*, September, 1913, 376. Vaughan’s exact address is unclear, and therefore unknown as to whether or not the property had a racially restrictive CCR.

<sup>69</sup> *LARB Minutes*, July 27, 1911, 52, LARB Records. California courts soon validated the use of restrictive covenants for occupancy in *Los Angeles Investment Co. v. Gary*, 186 Pac. 596 (1919). The legality of zoning was

When CCRs did not keep African Americans from moving to a mostly white community, some residents responded with threats, vandalism, violence. According to sociologist J. Max Bond's 1936 study, the first open conflict between white and black Angelenos occurred in 1902 over the issue of housing. It started when a black man moved across 7<sup>th</sup> Street down the Central Avenue corridor to what had been an all white neighborhood. A mob gathered and demanded that he leave. "With gun in hand," he refused, and the mob dispersed. Likewise, the well-known *California Eagle* editor Charlotta Bass told of African Americans who fought to stay in predominantly white neighborhoods. In the Spring of 1914, Mary Johnson bought a home on the then all-white street of East 18<sup>th</sup> near Central Ave. In her absence, neighbors trashed her home and posted a sign with the warning: "Nigger if you value your hide don't let night catch you here." A hundred women from the California Association of Colored Women's Clubs marched to Johnson's home that evening and demanded police help her re-enter her home. Eventually, they did. Still, the threat of violence or retaliation may have kept many blacks from trying to move into white neighborhoods. Restrictive covenants were a more peaceful and lawful way for whites to retain homogenous communities.<sup>70</sup>

African American lawyers pursued the legality of race covenants in CCRs in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Los Angeles legal cases involving Angelenos and restrictive covenants made their way to the state Supreme Court in the late 1910s. The California Supreme Court adjudicated both *Title Guarantee and Trust v. H.L. Garrott* and *Los Angeles Investment Co. v. Gary* in 1919. Four years earlier, Homer Garrott, an African American had used a white man to purchase property at 420 East 59<sup>th</sup> Place, a home covered by a deed restriction prohibiting non-

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also still in question until 1915, when the United States Supreme Court upheld the decision in a Los Angeles-based case *Hadacheck V. Sebastian*, 239 U.S. 394 (1915).

<sup>70</sup> Bond, "The Negro in Los Angeles," 70; Charlotta A. Bass, *Forty Year: Memoirs from the Pages of a Newspaper* (Los Angeles: Charlotta A. Bass, 1960), 95; Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 140-41.

whites from buying the property. The plaintiff argued that Garrott's move into the home would "cause great damage of said property and to all other lots in said Angeles Park tract."<sup>71</sup> The state court upheld the ruling of the Los Angeles Superior Court that determined barring sale of private land or ownership based on race unconstitutional. However, the Gary case left those opposed to residential segregation with little hope. The court provided thinly veiled support for race restrictions by declaring occupancy bans enforceable under restrictive covenant clauses. Thus, Mr. Garrott and other people of color were free to purchase homes wherever they chose, but they might be prevented from living in them! The courts in effect affirmed segregation with occupancy clauses in restrictive covenants.<sup>72</sup>

What role did the LARB play in these landmark cases? LARB Records indicate that they supported the efforts of the homeowners' Southwest Protective Association (SPA) to uphold racially restrictive covenants. In May 1916, the SPA held a meeting to raise funds for the legal challenge that became the *Gary* case and invited representation from the LARB. The *Los Angeles Times* report about the meeting stated that the LARB supported the legal challenge. Several weeks later the LARB Governing Committee summoned SPA's leadership to its meeting in order to inquire how they could lend assistance. Asked to submit an amicus brief on behalf of maintaining racially restrictive covenants, the LARB agreed, but delegated the task to Captain Melville P. Fraiser of the Title Insurance and Trust Co. LARB members and title companies had always had a close relationship, as the realty men came to depend on the legal certificates issued by the title companies. The major title firms in Los Angeles were associate members of the

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<sup>71</sup> *Title Guarantee v. Garrott*, (Los Angeles Superior Court, 1916), 3. For state ruling see *Title Guarantee and Trust Co. v. Garrott*, 42 Cal. App. 152, 154, 183 Pac. 470 (1919).

<sup>72</sup> *Bound for Freedom*, 152-56. These two verdicts informed legal decisions throughout the nation about racially restrictive covenants until 1948. In the 1948 landmark decision *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the US Supreme Court declared it illegal for the government to enforce the private contracts. Unfortunately, the decision did not make the covenants themselves illegal, just the enforcement of them. So, if a community decided to maintain racially restrictive language in their housing deeds it was free to do so, unless challenged in court, a costly and time consuming process.

LARB (see Appendix D). Some of the connections went beyond business. LARB member Lee Gates was the brother-in-law of Oliver P. Clark, a founder of the title business in Los Angeles.<sup>73</sup>

Why did separate neighborhoods for people of color become a principle of neighborhood formation in Los Angeles? Historian Doug Flamming recorded that African Americans did face increasing racism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Although the Ku Klux Klan was not revived until 1915 and did not have a large presence in Southern California until the 1920s, the popular film that sparked the resurgence of the KKK, *The Birth of a Nation*, was filmed in Los Angeles and shown in theaters for a year. According to Flamming, some African Americans believed at the time that increasing segregation came from the influx of white southerners, “who taught other whites how to promote segregation.” That is far too simplistic an explanation. The developers who designed, encouraged and enforced segregation were not all southerners. I ascertained the birthplace of seventy-five of the ninety-eight LARB board members from 1903-1923. Only thirteen of those men, a small minority of the leading real estate operators, were of Southern origin. There was more to the systemization of racial segregation in Los Angeles than Southern-based racial prejudice, although prejudicial thinking certainly informed the practice.<sup>74</sup>

Some have argued that high black home ownership rates frightened white residents and developers. It is true that blacks were better housed in Los Angeles than elsewhere in the nation. W.E.B. duBois celebrated black homeownership in his 1916 NAACP *Crisis* magazine issue devoted to Los Angeles. Statistics included in a study by Leslie Wilson show that in cities around Los Angeles, homeownership rates were very high. In 1900 only 6.6% of African Americans in Santa Monica were not homeowners, and in Pasadena 15.6% did not own their

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<sup>73</sup> *Governing Committee Minutes*, May 18, 1916, June 1, 1916, June 8, 1916, LARB Records; "Race Restriction War to the Highest Court," *Los Angeles Times*, May 23, 1916; A. Grenier Judson, "Growing Together for a Century: Southern California and the Title Insurance and Trust Company," *Southern California Quarterly* 75, no. 3/4 (1993).

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 61. The breakdown of the fifteen southerners was: five from Texas, three from Missouri, two from Kentucky, one from Georgia, one from Tennessee, and one from Washington D.C.

own homes. But real estate operators would have encouraged high ownership rates in neighborhoods without racial covenants because they supported a robust business built on the theme of residential neighborhoods.<sup>75</sup>

Even with a high rate of single family homes occupancy, African Americans made up only a small portion of the total population in the early 1900s—a slow increase of just 2% in 1900 to 3% in 1930. Not until the WWII era did African Americans comprise a significant percentage of the overall population of the region. The multi-ethnic and multi-racial composition of Southern California, however, included both the largest Mexican-American and the largest Japanese American populations in the nation. While many other urban areas had large ethnic enclaves of immigrant communities, Los Angeles had a less assimilable population. Racial covenants were just as much about keeping these groups out of white neighborhoods as African Americans.

**Table 3.1: Los Angeles City Population and Selected Minority Population 1900-1930<sup>76</sup>**

	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>1930</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	102,479	319,198	576,673	1,238,048
<b>African American</b>	2,131	7,599	15,579	38,894
<b>Mexican</b>	817	5,632	21,653	53,648
<b>Japanese</b>	152	3,931	8,536	11,832

While Mexicans did not form a “barrio” until the 1930s, they faced segregation and restrictive covenants much earlier. Labor camps set up by railroad companies, agricultural companies and other large-scale employers of working-class Mexicans segregated workers by

<sup>75</sup> On black homeownership in cities around Los Angeles see W.E.B Du Bois, "Colored California," *The Crisis*, August, 1913; Leslie Wilson, "Dark Spaces: An Account of Afro-American Suburbanization, 1890-1950" (PhD, City University of New York, 1992).

<sup>76</sup> Figures from Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 76. County population for Japanese was much higher, since that would have included more agricultural lands. 1900: 1,200 (an underestimate); 1910: 8,461; 1920: 19,911; 1930: 35,390 from John Modell, *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation: The Japanese of Los Angeles, 1900-1942* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 18.



race. Privately organized *Colonias* represented an alternative to the paternalistic and oppressive company town, but still enforced separate communities. This self-segregation created a pattern in non-developed and unincorporated parts of Los Angeles County. Many working-class Mexican families had a very difficult time finding adequate housing.<sup>77</sup>

In 1913, the city's Housing Commission cited how troublesome racially restrictive covenants were for its Mexican population and offered that securing housing would be easier "if restrictions and race feeling were not placed upon every new tract of land where lots are sold." To further illustrate this point, the report provided an example of Mrs. S, a recent widow, and her four little children, "all clean and attractive." Her husband had died of tuberculosis and her seven year old son suffered from the same disease. One of the housing inspectors tried to find this family a home in a healthier location. Problems arose when she could not secure a new home because "neighbors objected to Mexicans." The report further claims "everywhere this objection was encountered." Objections may have been in the form of a general attitude, or through the use of restrictive covenants. Since under state and federal law Mexican's were technically white, CCRs that used "white" would not have affected Mexican residents. "Caucasian," on the other hand would have excluded Mexicans. Finally, the inspector relocated the family to a healthier environment "in spite of bitter opposition." It appears, working-class Mexicans were unwelcome in white working-class communities.<sup>78</sup>

Class was a barrier some Mexicans could overcome. Elite Mexican and Mexican-Americans had an easier time obtaining housing than their working-class or darker-skinned counterparts. Historian Ricardo Romo discovered that movie stars and political elites who had

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<sup>77</sup> Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio*; Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>78</sup> Housing Commission of the City of Los Angeles, "Report of the Housing Commission of the City of Los Angeles," (1913), 22-23.

supported and likely profited from the policies of the former Mexican leader Porfirio Diaz lived on the west side and in the Adams district in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They did not face the same discrimination as did less wealthy Mexicans or equally successful African Americans. Both Academy Award-winning actress Hattie McDaniel and poplar singer Nat King Cole were famously unwelcome in the Sugar Hill and Hancock Park neighborhoods in which they bought homes.<sup>79</sup>

Racial CCRs were worded in such a way, often using the term “Mongolian descent,” that would have meant all Asian residents. With the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, and the subsequent end of new Chinese immigrants, the Japanese were targeted by white nativists in Los Angeles. The Japanese faced the greatest legal challenges of any minority group in regards to property ownership. Much anti-Japanese sentiment existed on the state level. Historian Roger Daniels cited that in 1909 five bills before the state legislature were anti-Japanese legislation. In 1911, elected officials introduced twenty-seven anti-Japanese bills. Most notable was the Alien Land Law of 1913 (renewed in 1920) that forbade non-citizen residents from owning land. Since Japanese immigrants were not eligible for citizenship, they were the targets of this law and only able to rent land for a period of three years at a time. (Some Japanese purchased agricultural and residential property in the names of their American-born children, a practice upheld by the courts in the 1910s in *California v. Harada*) California’s Alien Land Law in conjunction with the 1924 Immigration Act, which restricted most Asian immigration to the United States and was passed the same year as NAREB’s new Code of Ethics, revealed the larger currents in race relations and anti-immigration sentiment. Yet, as historian John Modell pointed out, the Japanese in Los Angeles were major economic players.

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<sup>79</sup> Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio*, 85; Jill Watts, *Hattie McDaniel: Black Ambition, White Hollywood* (New York: Amistad, 2005); Michael T. Jarvis, "Special Delivery for Nat King Cole: Homage to an Unforgettable Angeleno," *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 2003.

Their domination of fruit and vegetable production reinforced a farm caste and segregated communities, but presented an opportunity for a niche market and financial success. He claimed that Angelenos “displayed an uncertainty about how to draw a line that could exclude Japanese from some endeavors but not from those which were important to the economy and to the smooth functioning of business in the area.” LARB actions regarding Japanese dealt with this conundrum, always backing the angle most beneficial to the members’ businesses.<sup>80</sup>

The LARB members supported ethnic purchasing power. When the ability to buy any property curtailed overall business, the LARB urged restraint. In 1913 the LARB sent a resolution strongly describing their vigorous opposition to the state senate bill that became the Alien Land Law to Governor Hiram Johnson and to the United States Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan. They also made a plea for members to personally call on their legislators to urge the same. Clearly the LARB felt that the Alien Land Law was not in the interest of real estate professionals who resolved: “every effort should be made by the people of the State of California to encourage the investment in the State of foreign capital.” General purchasing power and foreign capital were essential elements of business and city growth that the LARB did not want to curtail. LARB members did not want to appear unfriendly to Japanese money and investment, although they did want to restrict where Japanese lived.<sup>81</sup>

When neighborhood composition was the issue, the LARB joined many other white Californians as anti-Japanese. In 1923 the LARB lent its support to white homeowners in Hollywood to keep their area “a white residential district,” after “being threatened by a Japanese

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<sup>80</sup>*Daniels, "The Progressives Draw the Color Line."* For a review of California legal history regarding Japanese, and a review of the court case that Japanese used to circumvent the law and purchase land in the name of their Americans-born (citizen) children see Mark Howland Rawitsch, *No Other Place: Japanese American Pioneers in a Southern California Neighborhood* (Riverside: University of California, Riverside, 1983). Modell, *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation*, 32.

<sup>81</sup> *LARB Minutes*, April 24, 1913, 28, LARB Records. There was no mention either for or against the Alien Land Law when it was renewed by the California Legislature in 1920.

invasion.” Two years earlier the board heard a motion to support the activities of the Japanese Exclusion League of California. Members seconded and carried to the motion, and referred it to the Legislative committee for action.<sup>82</sup>

LARB members found no problem selling homes to minorities as long as they were in designated areas. The LARB chose not to be involved in a dispute that involved member Harry Culver (governing committee 1915-1917), who sold property to “colored people” in Santa Monica. A resident wrote the board to demand some disciplinary action, and the board refused, stating: “the question involved does not come under the jurisdiction of the Realty Board....” The issue for the board was not that the property was in Santa Monica, a beach-side city near Los Angeles which had its own real estate board. Since Culver was a member of the LARB, a reprimand or sanction for not abiding accepted professional practice would have come from that body. This may have been a case where racially restrictive covenants did not apply to the property involved. The realtors were not opposed to people of color as clients as long as they could sell them homes in designated places, meaning areas that did not have racially restrictive covenants.<sup>83</sup>

Creating a city with distinct neighborhoods defined by class and race was part of the vision LARB members projected onto Los Angeles. While the board was not responsible for every development in Los Angeles and its surrounding communities, its policies and practices helped establish and most certainly solidified patterns already in place. Those principles for

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<sup>82</sup> *Governing Committee Minutes*, April 5, 1921, 56, LARB Records; “For Caucasians,” *NREJ*, November 19, 1923, 53. For more on keeping Japanese Christian churches out of Hollywood in 1923 see Modell, *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation*. He also discussed the interesting case of the housing development in 1940, Jefferson Park, which had race restrictions to include Japanese and whites, and exclude all other races.

<sup>83</sup> “A short history of Los Angeles,” Janss Investment Co folder, CA Vertical File, LAPL, undated; *Governing Committee Minutes*, September 8, 1921, 31, LARB Records. There was significant money to be made also in selling a “newly opened” community to residents of color who had to pay top dollar for the “privilege” of moving there. For more on this practice called block busting see Amanda I. Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

neighborhood formation became the norm for the local and national real estate industry. That LARB members supported class and race-based segregation meant that others could easily follow suit. By the 1920s, when Los Angeles had its largest housing boom to date, racial and class segregation were already standards in residential developments. For example, white ownership was an important facet to the 1922 Palos Verdes Project, designed for a wealthy population. The promotional literature declared, “there are the *usual* restrictions prohibiting Negroes, Asiatics, and people other than the white or Caucasian race, except in the capacity of domestic servants.” The word “usual” suggests that this practice was widespread and frequent. Indeed, by the 1920s, racially restrictive covenants were usual in Los Angeles subdivisions of all classes, and racial mixing was only permitted when working-class minorities served wealthier, white families.<sup>84</sup>

Two years later, the national real estate association’s ethics committee, chaired by LARB’s past president Frank Ryan, insisted that a realtor should never be the instrument through which people of color were introduced into a neighborhood. Racially restrictive covenants in property deeds and the realtors’ pledge to keep neighborhoods racially homogenous worked to openly secure racially divided neighborhoods until the U.S. Supreme Court declared the covenants an illegal use of state power in 1948. In 1950 the National Association of Realtors modified their code of ethics to officially exclude language about race, although the practice undoubtedly continued surreptitiously for many more years and mortgage lending practices publicly sustained the effect for many more decades.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “*Protective Restrictions Palos Verdes Estates*,” August 1926, italics added, 78 Folder, 200 Box, CA Ephemera Collection, Young Research Library, UCLA; Tract 6883 Protective Restrictions Palos Verdes Estates, 4.

<sup>85</sup> In 1950 the NAR removed the race and nationality references from article 34. The entire article was removed from the Code of Ethics in 1974.

The LARB promoted its vision of Los Angeles, which included dispersed communities of single family homes linked to the city center that were segregated by class and race. It held a land show for hundreds of thousands of people who were interested in Los Angeles and the west in 1912. Three years later the LARB hosted the NAREB national conference and had the opportunity to show the national association its city-building methodology, and demonstrate its influence on the development of Los Angeles.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Promoting Real Estate Possibilities in Los Angeles**

Phillip Wilson was thirty-two years old when he came to Los Angeles in 1904. Although born in Atlanta, he spent much of his younger life in Chicago. Making his way west, Wilson worked several years for a stock and bond company in Denver. In Los Angeles employment as real estate editor for several local newspapers familiarized him with the industry. His most influential role in real estate, however, was as LARB Secretary leading the day-to-day work of the board from 1911-1917. In that position, he was closely acquainted with the efforts of the board, and participated on many city-wide committees that were important to LARB's mission. Wilson initiated successful campaigns to increase the membership of the LARB, and under his tenure the board broke the national record for number of members. He was active in defeating proposed state tax plans and also served a year as a member of the Board of Equalization. He was responsible for making sure several of LARB's most important promotional schemes including the Los Angeles Land Show of 1912 and the 1915 Annual National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) convention in Los Angeles went off without a hitch. The first event targeted future homeowners, while the second intended to impress fellow realty men from around the nation. Both stressed the promises and possibilities of real estate development as the future of Los Angeles and its place as the most important metropolis in the West. Due to his work for LARB, his regular attendance as an LARB representative at the national conventions, and his involvement in the informal NAREB gatherings of board secretaries at the annual meetings, upon his untimely death in 1919 the *Los Angeles Times* claimed Wilson was "one of the best known real estate men in the country."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Warren McIntire, "History of the Los Angeles Realty Board," *NREJ*, June 15, 1915, 315; "State Official Is Killed," *Los Angeles Times*, September 15, 1919.

The LARB members were significant boosters for the Southland. In addition to the railroads with their vigorous promotional brochures and price wars, the active Chamber of Commerce and Col. Harrison Gray Otis, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times* and adamant open-shop advocate, get most of the credit for the booms in the region in much of the information about the promotion of Southern California. However, because population growth and geographic size were essential to the realty business, the real estate men were also very active and notably important in popularizing, promoting, and selling the Southland.<sup>2</sup>

On a national level fellow realty men recognized the significance of the work of the LARB in 1910, while also highlighting the boards of Chicago and Seattle. The National Real Estate Journal proclaimed, "The marvelous growth and prosperity of these cities is due more to the enthusiasm and energy of the real estate men individually and collectively than to natural resources and advantages." Booming as one of the main departure points for the Klondike Gold Rush in Alaska, Seattle had seen impressive growth. Chicago's expansion was tied to its importance in the national railroad network that brought to the city raw products and allowed companies to export packaged and manufactured goods, and its flourishing stock market. To be singled out with these other cities at a time of national urban growth was a compliment to Los Angeles and its realty board members, whose business efforts made a significant impact on the city.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A nice review of the various railroad promotions is in Lothrop, "The Boom of the '80s Revisited." For more on the chamber see Charles Dwight Willard, *A History of the Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, California: From Its Foundation, September, 1888, to the Year 1900* (Los Angeles: Kingsley-Barnes & Neuner, 1899); Tom Zimmerman, "Paradise Promoted: Boosterism and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce," *California History* 64, no. 1 (1985). On Otis and his legacy see Dennis McDougal, *Privileged Son: Otis Chandler and the Rise and Fall of the L.A. Times Dynasty* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publisher, 2001). A wonderful fictional account of Los Angeles' promotional zeal is Mark Lee Luther, *The Boosters* (Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1924).

<sup>3</sup> Quote from Theo. F. Smith, "The Scope and Purpose of an Organ," *National Real Estate Journal NREJ*, July 15, 1910, 264. On Seattle and Chicago see: Lisa Mighetto and Marcia Babcock Montgomery, *Hard Drive to the Klondike: Promoting Seattle During the Gold Rush* (Seattle: Northwest Interpretive Association in association with University of Washington Press, 2002); Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*.



Promoting the Los Angeles region may have been easier because of the “natural resources and advantages,” but it still required much effort. Phillip Wilson explained in 1913 how actively involved the real estate board had been to dispel a rumor that could harm the region’s image and draw for newcomers. Word had spread that in January of that year a slight frost had done irreparable damage to crops. Targeting East Coast newspapers, the LARB raised funds to disabuse the public of this idea requesting that those who wanted up to date information could contact the LARB. The board received letters from people all over the country asking about the local resources, and responded to over two thousand inquiries. All of this happened at the board’s own expense in order to preserve the idea that Southern California weather created a perfect climate for agriculture, healthy living, and a bounteous lifestyle.<sup>4</sup>

The realty men’s business could not have thrived without their promotional efforts. They needed a continuous supply of investors and new residents to ensure growth in their collective industry and within their personal companies. Los Angeles was a small city at the turn of the century, but the realty men promised and proclaimed its possibilities. William May Garland’s company broadcast this enthusiastic view of city growth when in 1911 his firm published a handbill citing that their population predictions ten years earlier had been scorned by others and since their predictions had proved accurate, the company forecast an even grander forecast, that the city would reach one million by 1920.

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<sup>4</sup>“Report of the Secretary Phillip D. Wilson,” May 29, 1913, *LARB Minutes*, 46, LARB Records.

## Handbill from W.M. Garland Co, 1911<sup>5</sup>

The handbill is enclosed in a rectangular border. At the top, a sign reads: "POPULATION-LOS ANGELES 1910--350,000 W.M.GARLAND & CO. 214 WILCOX BLOCK". To the right of this sign, text says: "In 1901 Los Angeles laughed at this sign. But we were right." Below this, a second sign reads: "POPULATION 1920-1,000,000. GRASP THE SITUATION. W.M.GARLAND & CO. REAL ESTATE." To the left of this sign, text says: "In 1911 All Los Angeles believes this sign. And it will come true." At the bottom, a section titled "The Lesson:" contains the text: "Buy Los Angeles Realty. We specialize on high class income and inside property. W. M. GARLAND & CO., Pacific Electric Building Los Angeles, California".

POPULATION-LOS ANGELES  
1910--350,000  
W.M.GARLAND & CO.  
214 WILCOX BLOCK

In 1901 Los Angeles  
laughed at this sign.  
*But we were right.*

In 1911 All Los An-  
geles believes this  
sign.  
*And it will come true.*

POPULATION  
1920-1,000,000.  
GRASP THE SITUATION.  
W.M.GARLAND & CO.  
REAL ESTATE.

The Lesson:  
Buy Los Angeles Realty. We specialize on high  
class income and inside property.  
W. M. GARLAND & CO.,  
Pacific Electric Building  
Los Angeles, California

LARB men knew building the metropolis required constant promotion of the land and lifestyle available only in Southern California. The realty men preached their optimistic outlook for continued growth, even amid financial downturns. 1913 and 1914 were years of regional economic slowing after more than a decade of overall gains, including a quick recovery from the national 1907 panic. LARB President W.W. Mines refused to buckle to pessimism under those conditions. He told the realty board he desired to be “on record as an optimist.” He further explained, “I believe in Los Angeles, I believe in the Los Angeles Realty Board...and while the

<sup>5</sup> Real Estate Promotional handbill from the W.M. Garland Company predicting Los Angeles Population Growth for 1920,” 1911, [www.digitallibrary.usc.edu](http://www.digitallibrary.usc.edu).

clouds of doubt have intimidated and hovered over us at times, I have never for one moment faltered in my faith of the future greatness of this, our beloved City of the Southland.” They believed that the city they envisioned and promoted would become the most influential city in California and the most important one in the West. The realty men earnestly supported and developed these themes at both the Land Show in 1912 and the 1915 NAREB national convention. While they did not see significant regional growth during the financial lulls and the intrusion of WWI on the national economy, the groundwork the LARB laid at these promotional events flowered in the 1920s when Los Angeles’ steadily increasing population exploded.<sup>6</sup>

The first land show was in Chicago in 1909, sponsored by *The Chicago Tribune*. Chicago’s Cook County Real Estate Board assisted with the convention, which showcased the many opportunities to farm, irrigate, and invest in land around Chicago and throughout America. Representatives of government agencies, railroads, and individual states all had displays about the possibilities of agriculture. A popular annual event, other cities like New York and Omaha also scheduled land shows. Those were more localized, highlighting the favorable conditions of particular regions.<sup>7</sup>

Los Angeles’ first land show was in 1911, but the realty men felt that under their stewardship another event could have a greater impact. They asked to lead the development for a land show the following year. Underwritten entirely by the LARB at a cost of \$50,000 the land show not only proved financially profitable but was extraordinarily successful for the board’s mission to promote the region. Secretary Phillip Wilson related that, “many visitors who had

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<sup>6</sup> For a book on the promotion of the Southern California lifestyle see Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*. W.W. Mines, June 4, 1914, *LARB Minutes*, 61, LARB Records.

<sup>7</sup> "Land Show Opens Riches of Nature to City's People," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Nov 24, 1912; "Real Estate Men to Aid Land Show," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct 11, 1909; "The Land Show," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Nov 15, 1909; "The Chicago Land Show," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 26, 1911; "A Great Land Show Planned," *New York Times*, Sep 11, 1911; "Western Land Show Opens," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 17, 1911.

seen the New York, Chicago, Kansas City and Omaha Land Shows stated the Los Angeles Land Show was far more complete and successful in every way than any of the Eastern Shows.” *The Los Angeles Times* also praised the event as “the biggest, boldest, and brainiest thing of its kind ever attempted, and credit is due to the Los Angeles Realty Board, its father.” Perhaps as homage to The City Beautiful, a popular urban design movement of the early 1900s, the 1912 Land Show was also named “The Land Show Beautiful.” 240,000 people attended the event at Fiesta Park at the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Grand Avenue, from March 12<sup>th</sup>-March 28<sup>th</sup>.<sup>8</sup>

Another of the land show’s names was the “Pacific Lands and Products Exposition.” By offering other cities a chance to provide displays the show helped to frame Los Angeles as the national access point to the West Coast. The “whole west [was] to be on display,” boasted the *Los Angeles Times*. Included in that general heading was anything “bounded on the East by the Mississippi River,” although it may have been exaggerating to include Midwestern territories. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported a smaller scale noting all states west of the Rocky Mountains would have displays. International in its scope, Mexican land companies and railroads that operated along the coast also participated. The LARB used the land show to constantly insist on Los Angeles’ importance as the focal point of western development.<sup>9</sup>

Housing was another important theme for LARB promotions at the land show. The *Times* reported that the experience provided “a condensed view of what the whole West has to offer to homeseekers.” While emphasizing agriculture like the other land shows had, the Los Angeles event also focused on housing. Lands in the West, and Los Angeles in particular were

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<sup>8</sup> On the City Beautiful see Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*. For Charles Mulford Robinson’s recommendation on a City Beautiful plan for Los Angeles see: Los Angeles Municipal Art Commission, “Report of the Municipal Art Commission for the City of Los Angeles, California.” “Annual Report of the Secretary,” May 29, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 33-34; W.M. Garland, May 29, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 26, LARB Records; “Greatest Land Show Is Over,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1912.

<sup>9</sup> “Los Angeles,” *NREJ*, November 15, 1911, 273-274; “Whole West to Be on Display,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 07, 1911; “Land Show Beautiful,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 12, 1912.

not only for cultivation or investment. They were also places to live. Housing became an important piece of promoting the region as the LARB continued its booster activities in other venues.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, while Los Angeles participated in a few land shows in the Bay Area in the late 19 teens, the city did not host one of its own again until the real estate board sponsored it in 1929. The largest promotional event the LARB participated in after the 1912 land show was to host the 1915 NAREB annual convention. The importance of the city in the state and western region, and the ideal place for housing were once again themes the LARB implemented as it shared the city, the region, and the board's achievements with the rest of the real estate world.<sup>11</sup>

The 1915 meeting, billed as the "Eighth Wonder of the Realty World," showcased Southern California with much bravado. LARB members used familiar booster narratives, but combined them to portray a particular vision of Los Angeles. Directly, and indirectly LARB members asserted Los Angeles to be the West Coast capital. In 1915 Los Angeles was strategically located to maintain this claim as a result of occupying the middle location between two major fairs held that year—the Panama Pacific International Exposition of San Francisco and The Panama California Exposition in San Diego. The meeting also promoted Los Angeles as an agricultural oasis and an opportunity for homeseekers of all classes. LARB leaders anticipated that the convention would help with economic recovery as visitors brought needed tourist dollars to the local economy. The national meeting symbolized a prosperous future for the City of Angels and its real estate professionals.<sup>12</sup>

In order for the LARB to win the bid to host the eighth annual gathering, members worked for several years to lay the ground work promoting their city for the convention.

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<sup>10</sup> "Show Ahead of Schedule," *Los Angeles Times*, March 03, 1912.

<sup>11</sup> "Los Angeles Land Show Announced," *Los Angeles Times*, September 01, 1929.

<sup>12</sup> "On a Platform of Prosperity," *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1914.

NAREB members anticipated a 1915 meeting on the West Coast considering that two significant other expositions of that year were being held in San Francisco and San Diego. San Francisco, as the historical focal point of California and its Exposition, would have seemed to have been the natural location. In fact, the American Medical Association, another group of professionals to whom the realty men tried to compare themselves, held their annual meeting there in the summer of 1915.<sup>13</sup> Real estate operators in the City by the Bay, however, were not yet members of the NAREB. They had been active in the California Real Estate Association, but only sought membership in the national group at the urging of the LARB on the eve of the convention. Another emerging coastal city, however, fought hard to lure the association its way—Seattle. The national spotlight meant just as much to the city in Washington as it did to the one in Southern California. The host city would have the opportunity to boast of its accomplishments in housing a growing population and the local board's contribution to the national organization.

Both Seattle and Los Angeles functioned as regional centers as their populations outpaced much smaller nearby towns and settlements. Dynamic population growth was a notable feature of each location. Seattle's population nearly quadrupled from 80,671 in 1890 to 315,685 in 1920. Impressive as that may seem, Los Angeles' grew more than eleven times its size in 1890 from 50,395 to 576,700 in 1920. In both locations all those newcomers needed someplace to live. While the mainstays of the local economies had been agriculture and oil in Los Angeles and lumber and the Alaskan gold rush for Seattle, real estate and land development soon emerged as the economic engine powering the cities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "The Convention in a Nutshell," *NREJ*, August 15, 1915, 100.

<sup>14</sup>Dennis Meier John Skelton, Tom Hauger, "Introduction to Seattle Planning & Development History," *Seattle Planning Commission*, accessed January 12, 2012, <http://www.seattle.gov/planningcommission/docs/Introduction%20to%20Seattle%20Planning%20&%20Development%20History.pdf>; Bigger and Kitchen, *How the Cities Grew: A Century of Municipal Independence and Expansionism in Metropolitan Los Angeles*, 4.

Each city endeavored to signal the importance of its significance on the national level. Organized just months after the LARB, Seattle's realty board was a founding member of the national association in 1908. Los Angeles, although not officially joining until 1912, had been active on the national scene since the beginning of NAREB and maintained the distinction of being the largest board in the country. Each board had issued publications used far beyond their local borders, uncommon accomplishments at this time. In 1907 the Seattle board had released a report of its survey findings comparing land valuations and sales of cities throughout the country that also included some Canadian and European locations. In 1912 the Los Angeles board adopted, published and publicized the *Schedule of Commissions* which had become a nationwide resource. It detailed what brokers should charge by percentage or price for every real estate transaction imaginable. Each city aspired to receive the 1915 convention to confirm and endorse their national reputation as place worthy of attention, recognition, and investment.<sup>15</sup>

The location for a NAREB meeting was not decided until the end of the previous year's conference at the final general business session, when NAREB members voted where to hold the next year's gathering. Realty boards often started to muster support for their hosting opportunities many years before the vote for the next location took place. The LARB was no exception and planted the idea for a City of Angels convention several years ahead of time. At the Louisville meeting in 1912 LARB secretary Phillip Wilson extended the first invitation for NAREB to gather in his city in 1915. He argued that Los Angeles' tremendous population growth and expenditures on massive municipal projects made it a great choice for the convention. Of course, the LARB's distinction as the largest realty board in the nation did not go unmentioned. He reminded NAREB delegates that the 1915 the World's Exposition was to

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<sup>15</sup> Seattle Realty Board, *66 Years of Progress, Development, and a Look to the Future: Seattle-King County Board of Realtors, 1903-1969* (Seattle 1969); Seattle Real Estate Board, "Reports on City Real Estate Values," (Seattle: Pacific Press, 1907).

be in San Francisco (and could have mentioned the fair in San Diego as well) and assured them of inexpensive rail rates to visit the fair from Los Angeles. Demonstrating that courting the convention was important for pro-growth institutions beyond the realty board, formal invitations from Mayor George Alexander, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Merchants and Manufacturer’s Association followed Wilson’s speech.<sup>16</sup>



EXHIBIT OF LOS ANGELES REALTY BOARD AT WINNIPEG.

At the 1913 convention in Winnipeg, Canada the LARB erected a display to attract attention to their standing invitation.<sup>17</sup> Since few boards had elaborate displays like the LARB, it would have attracted attention from other meeting delegates. The large exhibit featured several of Los Angeles’ main selling points. In the center of the booth on the left hung a banner heralding its proximity to San Diego’s Exposition. Notably absent is a similar advertisement for

<sup>16</sup> *NREJ*, July 15, 1912, 380-381.

<sup>17</sup> Image from Phillip D. Wilson, “Los Angeles Invites Real Estate World,” *NREJ*, June 15, 1914, 411.



San Francisco's World's Fair. Perhaps because the San Francisco board had not yet joined the national association, LARB leaders decided not to include them in the promotion for the national meeting. The second banner, "Los Angeles Invites the Real Estate World in 1915," captured the spirit behind Los Angeles' invitation and emphasizes the expansiveness of its aspirations for the meeting and for the national organization. Although a relatively new national organization, NAREB members were undeniably some of the leading developers and agents in both the United States and Canada. As suggested by the presence of both the US and Canadian flags (Canada used the Union Jack until 1965 when it adopted the red maple leaf flag) members in attendance in Los Angeles would represent many of the most important North American players in the real estate industry. The "Real Estate World" would be there. The "See How it Grows" poster demonstrated fiscal progress and elemental aspects of economic growth in LA including population increase, number of buildings constructed per year, and number of building permits issued annually. Bank clearings further illustrated the city's fiscal health, while postal receipts indicated a robust business community. Los Angeles was offering NAREB members an ideal geographic location for their meeting, an opportunity to see first-hand the growing metropolis, as well as the occasion to view and recognize the contributions LARB members were making to the city's financial successes. Finally and to these ends the LARB added appealing visual images to persuade NAREB to bring its conference to the Southland. The "Los Angeles 1915 Main Entrance" picture included drawn back curtains acting as a proscenium arch to frame the drama that would play out if Los Angeles became the host city.

The familiar agricultural oasis trope for Southern California publicity had been absent in the 1913 booth. At the 1914 convention in Pittsburg, however, the LARB produced a more elaborate display which extolled the products of California and emphasized agricultural

production. The exhibit was not as intricate as the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to advertise California at world's fairs or in its own displays for visitors to Los Angeles. There were no elephants sculpted from fresh oranges, or horse and rider made from prunes, or liberty bells constructed with walnuts. Nevertheless, the LARB did employ techniques to remind the NAREB members about the agricultural efficiency of Southern California. Using the products of the Golden State to entice NAREB members to vote for the opportunity to come to Los Angeles the following year eighty LARB members with the assistance of two "charming Senoritas" and some Boy Scouts passed out thousands of boxes of raisins, oranges, and even bottles of wine. The slogan "be an angel in 1915" proved effective. The replica of the San Gabriel mission to house the eatables and souvenirs and the model of a California Bungalow exhibit showcased the mythic, idyllic past and the robust present and future of the region. This balanced theme of a romantic past and a homeseeker's charming and bountiful future would be replicated in the LARB presentation of Los Angeles in 1915.<sup>18</sup>

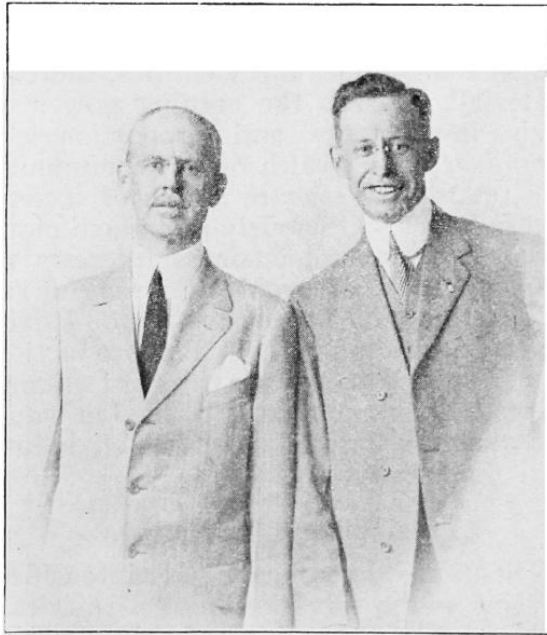
The Seattle board was also trying to persuade the NAREB membership to meet in its city years in advance of the 1915 convention. While it did not have a display at the 1913 Winnepeg conference, it did entertain the NAREB leadership and delegates following the meeting. They provided luncheons and automobile tours of the city. The board also initiated a letter writing campaign that year, contacting other real estate boards in hopes of persuading them to vote for Seattle as the 1915 location. Like the LARB, the Seattle board also distributed promotional

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<sup>18</sup> On the region as an agricultural oasis and land of sunshine see Sheri Bernstein, "Selling California 1900-1920," in *Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900-2000*, ed. Stephanie Barron, et al. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; University of California Press, 2000); Norman M. Klein, "The Sunshine Strategy: Buying and Selling the Fantasy of Los Angeles," in *20th Century Los Angeles: Power, Promotion, and Social Conflict*, ed. Martin J. Schiesl (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1990). Phillip D. Wilson, May 27, 1915, *LARB Minutes*, LARB Records; "Los Angeles," *NREJ*, July 1914, 80; "It's All Ours Says Mines," *Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 1914; "Heed Call of Pacific," *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1914.

merchandise at the 1914 fair. Their totem pole lapel pins were very popular in Pittsburgh. They also passed out photo books of the city.<sup>19</sup>

### Friends or Foes?



Left to Right, PHIL D. WILSON, Los Angeles  
and JOHN J. ELLIOTT, Seattle, Contenders  
for the 1915 Convention.

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The competition between Seattle and Los Angeles for the annual meeting was ongoing in the *National Real Estate Journal*. Representatives from both boards wrote lengthy articles in the *Journal* in advance of the 1914 meeting explaining why their city deserved to be selected as the next host. Phillip Wilson's appeal for Los Angeles was full of hyperbolic language about Southern California's growth and climate. Wilson assured NAREB members that the meeting could be organized to conduct all business in three days, leaving four to explore wonders of the

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<sup>19</sup> "Seattle Entertains Association Officers," *NREJ*, September 15, 1913, 21; "Seattle," *NREJ*, October, 15, 1913, 93; *NREJ*, July 1914, 30.

<sup>20</sup> Picture of Wilson with Elliott in *NREJ*, August 15, 1914, 125.

Southland and a few extra days to visit the world's fairs in San Diego and then San Francisco. Los Angeles Mayor H. H. Rose called his city "Mecca," a place that would attract real estate men.<sup>21</sup>

Samuel Collyer, President of the Washington Association of Real Estate Dealers and former president of the Seattle Real Estate Exchange, wrote on behalf of his city. His realty board's invitation had preceded Los Angeles' by a year, having first suggested it at the convention in 1911. Collyer argued that precisely because of the two expositions, the NAREB meeting should not be held in California. There would be too many distractions from the association's business, and Seattle offered an alternative West Coast location near the fairs but far enough away to avoid diversions. His city also presented an opportunity for the real estate men to explore the Pacific Northwest in addition to California. In what must have been an untenable argument for Angelenos, even if it were true before air-conditioning, Collyer claimed Seattle had the best July climate for the comfort of meeting participants.<sup>22</sup>

At the conclusion of the 1914 convention in Pittsburgh, LARB member and California State Senator Lee C. Gates, who specialized in real estate law and represented the Title Insurance and Trust Company in Los Angeles as its chief counsel, gave the final impassioned plea for his city. Seattle rebutted with three speakers. The votes of the convention's attendees were nearly even. As an expression of collegiality, Los Angeles voted for Seattle, and Seattle in turn cast its ballot for Los Angeles. Certainly other California boards would have voted for Los Angeles, as they also would benefit from NAREB members coming to the state. According to the official report, Los Angeles slightly edged out Seattle, at which point Samuel Collyer moved that the vote for Los Angeles be unanimous to show support for the LARB. Los Angeles would host the

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<sup>21</sup>*NREJ*, 1914, 24; Phillip D. Wilson, "Los Angeles Invites Real Estate World," *NREJ*, June 15, 1914.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Collyer, "Seattle's Claim to the 1915 Convention," *NREJ*, July 15, 1914, 412-414.

eighth annual National Association of Real Estate Boards' convention in 1915. LARB men would have their opportunity to impress upon real estate men throughout the country a "deeper knowledge and a keener understanding of the present development and, the wonderful, limitless resources of not only Southern California, but of [the] entire state."<sup>23</sup>

Promotion of both Southern California and the state in general benefited all Angeleno boosters, who wanted to see the city grow. Recognizing the opportunities for introducing thousands to Los Angeles in the year of the world's fairs, city leaders had formed a committee of 100, called the "1915 General Committee of Los Angeles City for Entertainment and Celebration of the Opening of the Panama Canal," to coordinate beautification projects. The county contributed ten thousand dollars to the NAREB meeting, a substantial sum given that the convention was just one of twenty-five annual meetings held in the city that year. Secretary Wilson noted that the real estate gathering was "considered of greater importance than any convention scheduled for this city during the entire year." It was to "bring from all of the principal cities of the United States and Canada, men of the highest type of intelligence whose stamp of approval upon City and State will redound to the great credit and advantage of not only the members of the Los Angeles Realty Board but of all the people of the entire commonwealth." Members of the board with funds available to donate as subscribers more than doubled the amount the county contributed. Still, fundraising was difficult during the economic downturn. The LARB went so far as to temporarily withdraw its membership from the state federation in order to conserve its financial resources for hosting NAREB. This action momentarily hurt the CREA treasury since one-fourth of all its members were from the LARB. The anticipated gains to real estate work throughout the state, however, off-set the negative fiscal impact of their temporary absence. Devoting their best efforts to raising the necessary money for the

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<sup>23</sup> *NREJ*, June 15, 1914, 24; *NREJ*, July, 1914, 24; "The Convention in a Nutshell," *NREJ*, August 15, 1915, 98.

convention during a period of economic hardship demonstrated that LARB and county leaders recognized the importance of hosting the realty men and showcasing the best sides of Los Angeles. LARB leaders desired to make the NAREB convention the most elaborate and memorable it had yet known.<sup>24</sup>

In 1913, two years before the national meeting, the LARB members had the opportunity to practice their hosting skills at the California Real Estate Association (CREA) annual meeting, which was held in Los Angeles. The entertainment for that meeting was very different in scope and focus than what was required for the national conference and the budget was only just over \$5,000. (The NAREB convention budget, on the other hand, necessitated upwards of \$20,000.) For the CREA, members organized rides throughout the city and events at some of Los Angeles' chic locations: a lunch at the Jonathan Club, a theater party at the Orpheum, and a banquet at the Alexandria Hotel. The LARB emphasized the fashionable locations with the city. They did not need to introduce the state to fellow Californians, nor entice them as outsiders to start with Los Angeles when exploring California.<sup>25</sup>

By contrast, at the 1915 NAREB convention in Los Angeles, LARB members tried to showcase the entire state and position Los Angeles as its most important city. The fairs in both San Francisco and San Diego celebrated the opening of the Panama Canal and the role that California expected to play in international trade and exchange. Los Angeles City and the LARB did as much as they could to capitalize on and promote the fact that LA had the largest port in the state where ships connected the US to the Pacific region. Additionally they worked with the

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<sup>24</sup> "Report of the Secretary Phillip D. Wilson," May 27, 1915, *LARB Minutes*, 23; "Report of Secretary Phillip D. Wilson," May 25, 1916, *LARB Minutes*, 2, LARB Records; "Los Angeles, Cal.," *NREJ*, Oct 1915, 302; "Los Angeles, Focal Point of the World Travel the Coming Year, to Entertain Million and a Half Visitors from Many Lands," *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1914; "Programme Meets with Approval," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1915; Marcie Geffner, "1910-1919: The Growing Years," *California Real Estate: Celebrating the Century*, December, 1999, 25.

<sup>25</sup> Phillip D. Wilson, "Report of the Secretary 1913," *LARB Minutes*; Phillip D. Wilson, "Report of the Secretary," 1915, *LARB Minutes*, 3, LARB Records.

train companies to secure low rates for conference participants traveling to and from Los Angeles and to and from the two fairs. The *Times* backed this view of Los Angeles' prominence writing, "it is hardly conceivable that anyone could attend both of the fairs without coming to the Garden City of the Golden State." Civic leaders hoped to establish their city as the starting point for exploring the Golden State.<sup>26</sup>

It was difficult to disentangle the presentation of California from the image of Los Angeles, which is just what the LARB wanted. In a letter encouraging delegates to make the trip west for the convention, NAREB's secretary Tom Ingersoll wrote in the *Journal*, "One need be here only a few days to get the Spirit of California—I nearly wrote Los Angeles—but our hosts want it distinctly understood that it is a California welcome awaiting us." At the end of the conference William May Garland jested, "If you don't love California before you leave, it certainly will not be the fault of the Los Angeles Realty Board." By welcoming and hosting the national association as representatives of California, the LARB declared the triumphant place of Los Angeles with the space of the state.<sup>27</sup>

The LARB embraced two very different foundational myths of California at the convention to accomplish this goal. Historian Glen Gendzel called the two mythologies "Pioneers" and "Padres." He argued that loyalists to San Francisco fronted the "Pioneer" mythology claiming the gold rush and the '49ers' entrepreneurial spirit had launched California onto the national scene. Some Southern California loyalists, however, placed emphasis on the mission culture and Spanish past, the "Padres" mythology, thus focusing attention south of San Francisco. Local travel writer and editor of *Out West* magazine George Wharton James addressed the convention on using myth or "sentiment" to sell property and promote a region.

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<sup>26</sup> "The Two Fairs and Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times*, October 02, 1914.

<sup>27</sup> "Westward Ho!," *NREJ*, June 15, 1915, 312; "Earth's Gardens Toasted by Realty Experts of All America," *Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 1915.

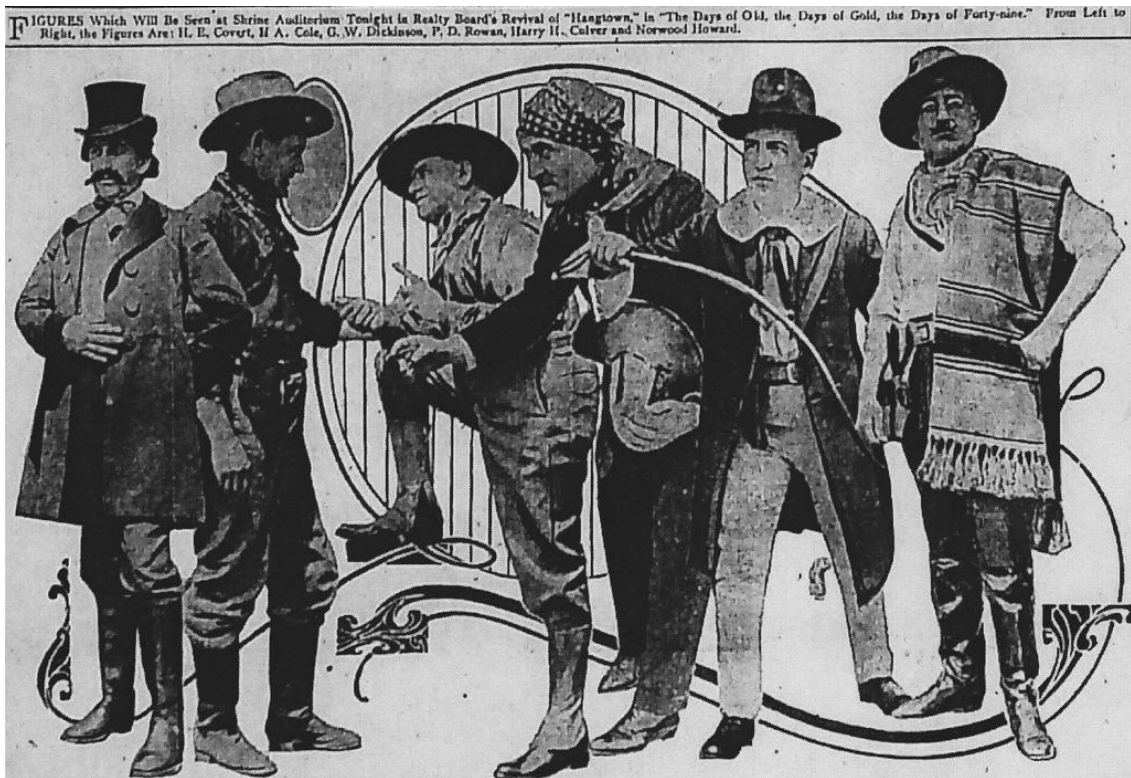
When speaking of Southern California, he employed both the stories of the Gold Rush as well as the romance of the Franciscan Friars and the fictional popular book, *Romona*. The LARB likewise used both myths. Los Angeles' modernity was third myth the realty board used.

A stag event at the Shrine Auditorium allowed men to recreate the entrepreneurial spirit of the Gold Rush and “carry them back to the times when their fathers and grandfathers joined the ranks of the Argonauts to California.” They transformed the auditorium into a mining camp complete with an array of buildings that included the unscrupulous land office of Ketchum & Skinnem, a joke no doubt to emphasize how far the real estate industry had come in California. Further highlighting the advances of the profession, two hundred LARB men dressed as “halfbreeds, Chinamen, mule drivers, prospectors, Indians, cowpunchers, swashbucklers, painted women and other heathen of the old, old days of Gold Hill” to further set the stage. Clearly, the LARB had fun playing with the myth of the gold rush, as the picture from the *Los Angeles Examiner* exhibited. Donning this attire placed the realty men's normal emphasis on decorum and white, middle-class values in stark relief to the racialized and gendered outcasts and “heathen” of the olden days.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> “Westward Ho!” *NREJ*, June 15, 1915, 309; David R. Summers, “The Story of The Convention,” *NREJ*, July 15, 1915, 12; *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 21, 1915, Section II, 1. This was not the first time the LARB dressed in costume and reenacted the gold rush days. They were similarly attired for the opening of their new offices in 1912. See “Los Angeles,” *NREJ*, May 15, 1912, 220.





They also went to great pains to highlight the romance of the padres in California history. The LARB bragged about, “the romantic atmosphere of early California that still permeates the city.” Visitors enjoyed a special performance of John Steven McGroarty’s famed *Mission Play* that had been around for several years. It offered a mystical and glorified version of white settlers and California’s Spanish fantasy past. Historians William Deverell and Douglas Flamming noted that the play drew attention to ethnic hierarchies and situated the future of Los Angeles in the hands of white leaders. Other moments in the festivities also underscored and dramatized this idea of remembering a darker-skinned past while celebrating a future dominated by Caucasians. At an illustrious, LARB-sponsored outdoor gala, musicians dressed in traditional Mexican attire. The *National Real Estate Journal* emphasized their connection to the past. It reported that men wore “costumes of bygone days [and] troubadoured through the crowds, rendering many quaint melodies of a dim past.” By accepting and celebrating both narratives,

and arranging visits to the fairs in San Diego and San Francisco, Los Angeles boosters asserted the city's urban dominance over competing locales.<sup>29</sup>

To extend conventioners experiences, the board planned an entire week of sightseeing excursions that went well beyond the city or county boundaries and thus promoted LA as a hub for future growth. Past meeting hosts had likewise organized special side trips. Denver had offered a rail tour of mountain regions via the Denver and Rio Grande railroad in 1911. Louisville had provided a short river cruise in 1912. None, however, compared to the extensiveness of the Los Angeles offerings. Visitors were treated to a submarine ride off the coast of Catalina and to a leisurely luncheon on the island. Trains and automobiles toured over 1,000 delegates and their families through orange groves in much of the San Gabriel Valley, visiting Whittier, Azusa, Glendora, San Dimas, Lordsburg (now La Verne), and Pomona. Cars were also available at various times throughout the conference for general sightseeing tours of Southern California beaches, mountains, and parks. Going so far beyond municipal boundaries emphasized the extensive influence of the local realty board and its efforts to market California more broadly. The comprehensive and dramatic convention social activities entertained, educated and announced a brilliant future for the City of Angels.<sup>30</sup>

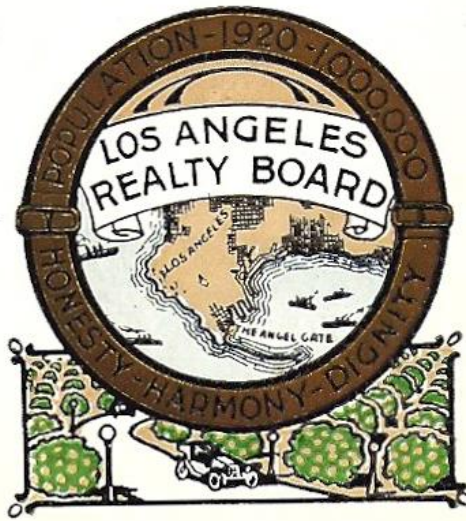
By 1915, LARB had adopted a seal that showcased many of the booster themes the real estate board would highlight during the convention.

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<sup>29</sup> William Deverell and Douglas Flammig, "Race, Rhetoric, and Regional Identity: Boosting Los Angeles 1880-1930," in *Power and Place in the North American West*, ed. Richard White and John M. Findlay (Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest in association with University of Washington Press, 1999); Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*. For more on creating racialized myths for promotional purposes see: Phoebe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); David M. Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002). Summers, "The Story of the Convention," 12.

<sup>30</sup> "Fourth Annual Convention National Association of Real Estate Exchanges," *NREJ*, June 15, 1911, 237; "Fifth Annual Convention National Association of Real Estate Exchanges," *NREJ*, June, 1912, 264; "Activities Book" and "Official Program," Meetings June 1915 (Los Angeles) folder, National Association of Realtors; "Captivated by Citrus Empire," *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1915. Monrovia, disappointed not to be included in the automobile tour of agricultural sights formally presented boxes of oranges to the convention delegates. For more on Catalina Island and Southern California leisure culture see Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*.

## Los Angeles Realty Board Seal<sup>31</sup>



The board's name appeared across an image of the Los Angeles harbor with ships coming in from all directions, highlighting its importance for international markets, and touching upon the global themes of the expositions celebrating the Panama Canal. The automobile moving through a paved and well-lighted street represented the city's technological advancements. Row upon row of orange trees, present in many promotional images of the Southland at the time, spoke to the region's agricultural abundance and excellent climate. Interestingly, there were no built structures—office buildings, industrial sites or homes—on the seal. However, the population prediction of one million (lifted from the W.M. Garland Company), by 1920 insinuated that construction and home sales would be significant in Los Angeles' future. The seal encompassed the booster spirit LARB adopted around the themes of international hub, technology, agriculture, and future business in Los Angeles.

LARB member James R. H. Wagner's (1912-1913 Vice President, 1913-1914 President) remarks at the convention addressed the state's exceptional agricultural merits but emphasized Los Angeles County's substantial attributes above and beyond the glories of the rest of

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<sup>31</sup> "Official Program."

California. Wagner was the perfect man to brag about the virtues of farming lands in California. A Michigan native, he moved to Los Angeles in 1901 at the age of thirty with his wife and two daughters. By then, he had already transitioned from banking to land related enterprises as an employee of a tobacco company. Wagner wasted no time involving himself in land ventures in the Southland, establishing a real estate syndicate in Santa Barbara in 1903. Before the 1910s, he was the manager for Cudahy Ranch, which held LARB associate membership. Southeast of downtown, near the agriculture communities of Downey and South Gate, Michael Cudahy owned the development. He'd made a fortune in meat packing and real estate and retired to Mackinac Island, off the coast of Michigan. He relied on Wagner to sell the undeveloped lots that were large enough to support homes and small agriculture. The Los Angeles City Directory from 1915 noted Wagner's company's specialty as "country lands." As a past president of the Los Angeles Realty Board, he spoke with authority about real estate matters.<sup>32</sup>

Wagner's speech entitled "California Lands" defended the cost of agricultural property throughout the state. Because of California's arid climate and alkali lands, only areas that could feasibly be irrigated were viable options for farming. Despite the relatively small size of cultivatable land in Southern California, Wagner proclaimed with pride and emphasized that Los Angeles county led "the entire United States in the total volume of its agricultural products, which include not only its remarkable production of citrus fruits, but also apples, lima beans and sugar beets to say nothing of a good quantity of deciduous fruits." He argued that farmers in and around Los Angeles avoided the dreary loneliness of farm life elsewhere because the productive land required smaller plots, which in turn allowed farming neighbors to live closer to one

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<sup>32</sup> Los Angeles City Directory, 1909; Los Angeles City Directory 1915; *Who's Who in the Pacific Southwest*; "Cudahy's History," *City of Cudahy*, accessed January 26, 2012, <http://www.cudahy.ca.us/about/history.asp>.

another. Wagner certainly championed California as a whole. His attachment to Los Angeles, however, was evident as he described the city, as the state's crowning jewel.<sup>33</sup>

Lest visitors think Los Angeles was merely an agricultural production center or a romantic city of yesteryear, a nationally significant and well publicized LARB activity asserted the area's importance to the future with an emphasis on modernity and technology. One month prior to the convention, realty men participated in a significant national technological achievement. Prominent men in the worlds of "business and science" gathered in two rooms on May 6 in New York and Los Angeles for the first transcontinental phone call. In an hour and forty-five minute conversation that would have cost \$1,030.40 if it had not been sponsored by the phone company, mayors exchanged greetings. The stock exchange superintendents in both cities said hello to each other. Henry Huntington conducted some business with one of his employees in the East. LARB President W.W. Mines reiterated Los Angeles' invitation for all NAREB members to come to the City of Angels when he spoke with the national association's President. That realty men were included in the auspicious gathering on each coast showed how important their sector had become to local and national economies. Fortunate to occur before the NAREB meeting, the LARB used the telephone call to signal that Los Angeles realty men would embrace technology to promote the city.<sup>34</sup>

Convention planners further highlighted Los Angeles' modernity with their meeting activities. An automobile party at the convention emphasized the growing number of well-maintained vehicles and paved roads in the area. An electrical light parade through downtown streets one evening furthered the modern feel LARB hoped to achieve. Its goals of representing the Los Angeles as an advanced city with a bright future were indeed lofty, as it tried to prove

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<sup>33</sup> James R.H. Wagner, "California Lands," *NREJ*, August 15, 1915, 84-89.

<sup>34</sup> "Human Voice Spans the American Continent," *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 1915.

“the city vibrates with industrial activity and has a Broadway that rivals its famous Gotham namesake.” Delegates and guests were also treated to a technological and cultural excursion to a hot-spot in the film industry, Universal City. The LARB combined the themes of agricultural bounty, technology advancement, and a whimsical history to weave a particular story of the Southland and its promising potential.<sup>35</sup>

Housing was intrinsic to that story about Los Angeles. It boasted of its residential communities for a variety of class levels as if it were the only city to build that way. LARB members celebrated their ideal, elite communities. Chester Place, in the heart of the fashionable West Adams district, was the perfect example of the high-end and exclusive neighborhoods Angelenos were building. During the convention, the LARB hosted an evening outdoors in Chester Place and the adjoining St. James Park. Edward Silent, an active member of LARB may have organized the event since his father, Judge Silent, owned a home on the block. The reports of the evening detailed its wonders: four bands at different points, dance floors under trees, fantastic electric lights and Japanese lanterns, groomed streets closed to traffic, displays of California fruits, and floral wonders to the point that “never had the city of Los Angeles witnessed a fete on so lavish a scale.” It became for the 5,000 invitation-only guests “a paradise for the select and elect for a few hours.” Showing the very best of Los Angeles’s wealthy communities—a “Garden of Magic”—allowed the LARB to demonstrate privileged neighborhoods of the city’s future.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>For more on Los Angeles’ early embrace of car culture see Scott L. Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile: The Making of the Modern City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). “Activities Book” and “Official Program.”

<sup>36</sup> Summers, “The Story of The Convention”; “House and Lot”—the Times’ Weekly Review of Real Estate and Building,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1903; “Five Thousand Persons in Gardens of Magic,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 1915; G. Turner Timothy, “Our City Parks—St. James,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 1937.

Los Angeles was, however, to be a city of homes for all classes. The *Los Angeles Examiner* happily declared to the visiting realtors that many local “laborers own pretty bungalows.” While Los Angeles did have overcrowded housing without sanitation that shared a common courtyard called court homes that continued to plague the City Housing Commission, it did not have the overcrowded, dark, disease ridden, high rise tenement districts of East Coast cities. The paper proudly asserted that “working people of Los Angeles, as a rule, live in separate houses. . . with well kept lawns and flowers.” Additionally, the article claimed the fantastic climate and productive ground enabled the working class to grow some of their own food, reducing household costs and allowing them to make larger payments on their homes. A commercial shown during a business session of the convention supported the idea that Los Angeles was a place for working-class homes.<sup>37</sup>

To advertise one of his subdivisions, LARB member Robert Armstrong presented a short film he had produced, a fitting innovation, given that by 1915 Los Angeles was well on the way to becoming the movie-making capital of the nation. The film “showed the development of a man discouraged and out of work and his wife, into prosperous and contented land owners, independent of factories.” Or, as the editor of the *Journal* described it, the short was a “story illustrative of the advantages of the wage-earner acquiring a home of his own.” The short film also underscored industrial growth in Los Angeles and the purpose of its 1908 zoning law, a clear separation between factories and residences. Armstrong was an innovator in real estate advertising, not only by making the commercial, but also for contracting with local movie

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<sup>37</sup> “‘Slumming’ is Omitted from Realty Men’s Plans,” *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 21, 1915, 8. For more on working-class home building and advertising in Los Angeles see Hernandez, “The ‘Bungalow Boom’: The Working-Class Housing Industry and the Development and Promotion of Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles.” Historian Mike Davis believed there was a downside to Los Angeles’ working class home ownership. It made some “slaves of the Bungalow,” in that they bought homes they might not be able to afford over time, and that the emphasis on low priced homes was another way to keep construction wages low. See Mike Davis, “Sunshine and the Open Shop: Ford and Darwin in 1920s Los Angeles,” in *Metropolis in the Making: Los Angeles in the 1920s*, ed. Tom Sitton and William Deverell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

theaters to air it as a regular reel before films. While the article and Armstrong's film were hyperbolic, the presentation of Los Angeles as a haven with homes for all classes was an important part of the image the LARB offered to the visiting realty men.<sup>38</sup>

Planning for the annual meeting strengthened professional relationships and drew real estate operators closer on a local and state level. Logistics for the event required extensive collaboration. The LARB set up twenty-seven committees to oversee different aspects of the convention. Some two hundred-fifty members participated on these committees. The other three hundred were on hand to help where needed. Such widespread involvement among the board strengthened relationships between local members. The convention offered an expansive tour of California and necessitated the assistance of other boards. The opportunity for cooperation between boards was already in place because of the state-wide real estate organization. San Diego, Fresno in the Central Valley, and San Francisco all hosted events for the convention participants. The emphasis may have been on Los Angeles, but a national audience was exposed to real estate work in all of California.

The possibilities through connections made at the convention seemed endless. Mayor Rose could not have been clearer when he addressed convention delegates as the "priests of prosperity" during his official welcome speech. The LARB and Angeleno leaders hoped to see the benefits of hosting accrue through increased business. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, NAREB members would return home armed with information for "a growing clientele the country over who are looking longingly to the Southland as their home." The host cities of the

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<sup>38</sup> "The Convention in a Nutshell," *NREJ*, August 15, 1915, 121; David R. Summers, "The Story of The Convention," *NREJ*, July 15, 1915, 6.



previous seven NAREB annual meetings had all seen an increase in real estate investment and sales after the conventions. Angelenos desired similar results.<sup>39</sup>

An editorial in the Hearst-owned *Los Angeles Examiner* that ran during the convention explained that because the real estate convention was important for the City of Angels, every person in Los Angeles had a responsibility to make a good impression:

It will bring to us as visitors the leaders in and managers of one of the greatest economic interest of the country. Properly impressed with the resources, growth and future of the Southern California metropolis, these gentlemen will be in a position to do us a world of good in spreading the facts they may learn here among their home people. It should be remembered that in each of the ninety great communities they represent, they are men of large affairs, of personal importance and influence, and it is the duty, as certainly it will be the pleasure of all the citizens and progressive influences of our city to get together and make their stay among us as pleasant and informative as may be possible.<sup>40</sup>

LARB President W.W. Mines promised the convention goers that “nothing would be left undone to make [their] stay enjoyable and cause you to return to your respective homes with a feeling of kindness for the Angel City.” While there is no complete list of attendees, in the official conference proceedings realtors representing at least two dozen different cities were identified, and the *Examiner* suggested an even greater representation of people from ninety individual communities. The former NAREB president suggested that those able to make the trip west were the more successful or prominent men in the industry because they could afford the time off and the expense of train travel to come to Los Angeles. Building and strengthening business relationships between realtors in cities across the nation, within California, and as brother-

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<sup>39</sup> “Convention in a Nutshell,” 98; “Realty Men's National Convention Means Much,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1914.

<sup>40</sup> “Real Estate Men are Welcome Guests,” *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 21, 1915, 8.

members of the LARB reinforced professional status for the realty men, and brought financial gain for them personally as well as the city at large.<sup>41</sup>

Although much time and energy went into the promotion of Southern California and the rest of the state through the social and sightseeing events of the convention, the NAREB meeting was first and foremost a business gathering. The organ of the association, the *National Real Estate Journal*, reprinted every talk, paper, and group discussion presented at the convention for the benefit of those unable to attend in person. This ensured the nearly 5,500 members of ninety-one different boards throughout the United States and Canada would know what transpired at the annual meeting in Los Angeles, even if they could not personally be there. Locally, the LARB printed pamphlets of key address for members and others in the community who might be interested. While formally a national presentation, the business portions of the convention also provided opportunities to showcase the host city and its realty board.<sup>42</sup>

Like all NAREB conventions, the program allowed ample time for participants to be reminded of the work of the national association, and to hear about new ideas and successful programs other boards had implemented. One speaker talked about NAREB's national publicity, one the importance of the *Journal*, and another, uniform legal blanks to make business transactions more standard and smooth. Members of the Memphis exchange explained the merits of their "bargain board" and answered delegates' questions. The Chicago board presented information on rentals. Through these kinds of open exchanges delegates could learn about new

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<sup>41</sup> "Greetings From Real Estate Men," *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 20, 1915; "Convention in a Nutshell"; "1000 Realty delegates here for Sessions," *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 21, 1915.

<sup>42</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Managers and Executive Committee of the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges," February 22, 1915, National Association of Realtors; NAR's record of board membership at 91 is more accurate than the *Examiner's* estimate of 90 "Membership: Historic Report"; *Governing Committee Minutes*, Sept. 2, 191, LARB Records.

ideas in real estate that might work for their local board. Committees of the association also gave their annual reports.

The report of the City Planning Committee on subdivisions was especially timely in Los Angeles. Having come from the National Conference on City Planning, Lee J. Ninde of Fort Wayne, Indiana presented what he had learned at the meeting attended by real estate men, landscape architects, engineers, and city planners. He gave a concrete example of financial profit from abandoning the gridiron, or checkerboard pattern of subdivision. He encouraged members to consider using curved streets, following the topography of the land, reserving space for community activities, and employing deed restrictions to protect the financial investment of each lot. Developers throughout the nation were starting to adopt these planning ideals and realizing great profits for doing so. Los Angeles real estate men had already begun to build foothill neighborhoods in this manner, and their efforts to construct communities along those lines would only increase.<sup>43</sup>

Every speech and presentation was about some aspect of the real estate business, but not all meeting presenters were realtors. According to the reports in the *Journal*, the “Most talked of Address at the Convention,” was given by a prominent Angeleno: Stoddard Jess, the Vice-President of First National Bank in Los Angeles. The *Journal* reprinted his talk on the first page of its annual meeting coverage. Decrying both the business practices that created the fortunes of the nation’s railroad builders and the anti-business legislation that followed, Jess called for a new rubric to measure success. It should no longer be the accumulation of wealth, nor merely the ability to make a profit. The former removed the necessity of labor and therefore handicapped the magnates’ children. The latter demonstrated successful management, but Jess warned that

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<sup>43</sup> “Convention in a Nutshell.” For more on Angelenos building whole communities that followed the suggestion of Mr. Ninde see Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*; Fogelson, *Bourgeois Nightmares: Suburbia 1870-1930*.

should not be the “sole objective and aim.” He had in mind something slightly harder to measure, which he called “accomplishment.”<sup>44</sup>

This accomplishment would require the cooperation of men who were concerned with a prosperous city, not just a private bank account. Bankers and real estate agents needed to join forces. Jess suggested, “The real estate men and the bankers should do effective team work that will make for the upbuilding and development of both city and country along right lines.” He noted that the two groups’ missions intertwined. Bankers depended on real estate men to grow their businesses, which would result in increased deposits for the bank. Real estate operators needed bankers to loan money to customers for more sales. Each group benefited from a thriving metropolis.

The nuts and bolts of city building, he conceded, rested in the hands of the real estate professionals. His remarks echoed the earlier call for more intensive subdivision planning. Developers dictated the direction of urban growth through subdividing and selling suburban lands, and providing for or encouraging public transportation to these new developments. The width of streets and size of lots were choices controlled by real estate men. The character of improvements required by the restrictions and covenants they imposed determined the condition, usability, and appearance of the area.

Moreover, he acknowledged the public role real estate had for a metropolis when he said: “The standing of a city in the eyes of the world, and the reputation of its people is materially affected by the character of its real estate men, their manner of doing business and the treatment they accord those with whom they have dealings.” With such responsibility riding on the shoulders of the convention’s delegates, Jess emphasized the importance of the association’s Code of Ethics. He also advocated local political involvement, and specifically commended the

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<sup>44</sup> Stoddard Jess, “The Relation of the Bank to the Real Estate Man,” *NREJ*, August 15, 1915.

Los Angeles Realty Board for its efforts to keep its members informed regarding political questions and its influence for ensuring what it felt was right.

Jess had a clear idea of what a real estate board could accomplish after watching and working with members of the LARB. At least two men from the board's leadership were affiliated with First National Bank. Austin O. Martin (governing committee 1918-1920) was invited to the bank's board in 1915 after he successfully reorganized the Los Angeles Investment Company when it collapsed from ponzi-like business practices and its directors were arrested in 1913. By 1918, he simultaneously served on the LARB's governing committee and as a Vice President at Stoddard Jess' bank. William Hollingsworth (governing committee 1915-1919; President 1919-1920), one of the most successful Los Angeles subdividers also served as a director of that bank. So it is no wonder that Jess believed "the Relation of the Bank to the Real Estate Man" should be a close one. Nor is it surprising that the NAREB membership responded enthusiastically to that conclusion.<sup>45</sup>

In one of the most notable matters of business at the Los Angeles meeting, the association unanimously adopted a Code of Ethics that went far beyond the basic ethics statement drafted in 1913, which had been subject to approval by individual, local boards instead of the body of the national association. This Code of Ethics provided a rubric to distinguish between the professional, competent realtor and a dishonest broker. That this happened in Los Angeles underscored the LARB's emphasis on professionalization, and as the organization's seal proclaimed, its principle of striving for "Honesty, Harmony, Dignity" in the industry.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> For information on Austin O. Martin see the LAPL CA bio file. For the Los Angeles Investment Company see Hernandez, "Homeseekers Paradise': Cross-Class Real Estate Speculation and the Emergence of Los Angeles, 1896-1914." For W.I. Hollingsworth, *Who's Who in the Pacific Southwest*; "Hollingsworth's Children Willed Bulk of Estate," *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1937.

<sup>46</sup> "Code of Ethics National Association of Real Estate Exchanges," *NREJ*, August 15, 1915, 332-334. See Chapter three in Hornstein, *A Nation of Realtors*.

A member of the Washington State Realty Association published in the *Journal* a short summation of the convention in Los Angeles. In it he conceded that “Los Angeles proved herself an ideal convention city.” He related an anecdote about the city that captured the importance of the meeting for its hosts. A delegate had asked what Los Angeles had behind it to ensure future stability. The bragging response: “The whole United States.” With the 1915 NAREB convention, the entire realty world of the nation had seen all Los Angeles had to offer.<sup>47</sup>

Los Angeles actually became an attractive permanent destination for some NAREB delegates. The winner of the traditional five minute speech competition took home a lovely silver cup and bragging rights for the year, but more importantly lauded the city and its board. Upon winning, Ohioan and former NAREB president Alexander Taylor remarked, “I am fond of Cleveland and devoted to Cleveland, and I am going back to stay there for a while and then come back to Los Angeles to live.” While Taylor never followed through with his announcement, he did join the board as a non-resident member in 1916, which means he would have had a vested business interest in Los Angeles following the 1915 convention. Another well-known national figure, however, did relocate to Los Angeles because of the 1915 meeting. In 1922, the beloved NAREB secretary Tom Ingersoll of Minneapolis resigned “from the most distinguished office in realtydom” in order to move to Los Angeles, where he took up duties as the Los Angeles Realty Board Secretary. He had become enamored with the city when the LARB showcased it at the NAREB meeting in 1915. That Ingersoll would want to lead the administration of the LARB also reinforced the weight of the board at the national level.<sup>48</sup>

With all the publicity and attention showered on Los Angeles and its realty board as hosts of the eighth annual NAREB convention, it is no wonder the LARB worked for several years to

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<sup>47</sup> A. H. Barnhisel, “Lessons from the National Convention,” *NREJ*, 1916, 83.

<sup>48</sup>“The Convention in a Nutshell,” 127; *NREJ*, April 1916, 141; “History of the Los Angeles Realty Board, Inc. as of February 28, 1956,” unpublished, 6, LARB History folder, LARB Records.

secure the location. Visiting realty men from far and wide were able to observe firsthand the exciting growth of Southern California, and the bounty and variety of products coming from all California markets. As boosters of their region, LARB members successfully presented an image of the area and the state as one celebrating romantic traditions of the past, but more importantly, an area that embraced a future of modern conveniences, population growth, industrial production, and a haven of both refined and working-class homes.

With unabashed self-importance, LARB President W.W. Mines proclaimed that the 1915 NAREB meeting “did more for Los Angeles than any Convention ever held.” He commended the LARB for its efforts announcing, “It did more to favorably advertise Los Angeles and the realty profession than anything that we could have done.” Planning the convention also provided an opportunity for LARB members to strengthen their bonds with each other and with other city leaders. The meeting represented the flourishing of the LARB in its importance to the national association and a reinforcing of the professionalization of the real estate trade locally and nationally.<sup>49</sup>

One conference official predicted the following: “Los Angeles will continue to benefit from this Convention for a decade or more to come.” Indeed, in the 1920s Los Angeles realty men did see their vision of the future Los Angeles come to life. Within five years of the convention, Los Angeles had recovered robustly from its WWI era economic downturn and launched the biggest housing building boom it had ever known. While many factors encouraged the tremendous growth of the 1920s, the national real estate convention had set the table. As hosts to some of the most ambitious and consequential realty men throughout the nation and Canada, LARB members had introduced Southern California first hand to many influential associates. Through numerous invitations, articles, and stories about the convention printed in

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<sup>49</sup> W.W. Mines, May 5, 1916, *LARB Minutes*, 17, LARB Records.

the association's *National Real Estate Journal* they reached an even larger audience. From the 1915 meeting, the real estate business relationships were in place for the growth of Southern California soon experienced.<sup>50</sup>

The national stage also reinforced two of the LARB's most important claims. First, that its members were a professional group of men engaged in a legitimate business, an especially important message after the Los Angeles Investment Company debacle. Second, they were an important player in regards to the national development of a real estate industry. Their diligent effort to be the stewards for the industry locally, and their path-breaking work in real estate licensing laws and in college-based real estate education are three of the significant contributions the LARB made to the developing real estate profession.

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<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Phillip D. Wilson, *LARB Minutes*, May 25, 1916, LARB Records.



## Chapter 5 Pathways to Professionalization

In 1928 the Los Angeles City Council purchased the land for its municipal airport. Known today as the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), it was then called Mines Field after the realty man who championed the project and brokered the deal. William Wales Mines was W.W. Mines in print, but fellow LARB members knew him as “Billy.” His was a classic Southern California migrant story. He came to Los Angeles from Montreal, Canada to recuperate after an illness in 1896. He became active in Republican politics and was that party’s state central committee chair person in 1915. Mines involved himself in a broad array of local affairs. For one year he was the Police Commissioner. Nearly a decade later, he was the president of the prominent and powerful Merchants and Manufacturers’ Association. It was in real estate, however, that he made his name and his money, which allowed him to serve in these prestigious positions.<sup>1</sup>

From his arrival until 1912 he partnered with Oscar E. Farish in the real estate firm Mines and Farish. In 1915 he opened another realty enterprise, the W.W. Mines Co, with a similar focus on “Real Estate, Insurance and Business Rentals.” Mines developed many subdivisions along Wilshire Boulevard and in the Westlake district of the city. Active in local, state, and national real estate matters, he served on the LARB governing committee for a total of six years in addition to the three years he spent as its president (1914-1917). He was on the NAREB’s executive committee or served as one of the national association’s officers from 1914-1917 and again from 1919-1920. During the break in his service there, he was the California

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<sup>1</sup> Information on W.W. Mines from LAPL CA bio file, *Los Angeles City Directory 1915*, (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Directory Company); “W. W. Mines Dies in Lake,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1939; *Who’s Who in the Pacific Southwest*. Saskia Sassen has argued that one of the most significant elements of today’s global cities are international airports that unite metropolitan areas to other parts of the world. In this light, W.W. Mines contribution to Los Angeles was enormous. Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Real Estate Association (CREA) president (1917-1918). Just as his support for the city's airport secured a particular geography and future of international connections for Los Angeles, his push for a state realty licensing law insured professional standing for realtors. Those efforts, combined with the start of university-based real estate courses, simultaneously expanded the entrance pool into real estate brokerage and curtailed the participation of unethical dealers.

Mines and other LARB members recognized the necessity for their organization to create restrictions and ethical standards for their industry, but also understood the limits of a membership association to enforce those principles. Like other businesses in the Progressive Era, they turned to powerful institutions to further their organizational goals and improve the economic climate for their financial pursuits. The government and universities were two of the most authoritative institutions at this time. Realtors sought out both. LARB members assertively promoted legislation and built relationships at universities in order to influence the implementation of laws and programs that would uphold their values and the mission of their organization.

They labored to earn the distinction of "professionals" through their efforts to regiment and codify the local industry. In order to achieve professional status in the Progressive Era, workers in a particular field had to do four things. First, they needed a formal organization. The LARB completed this in 1903. Another significant action was adopting a code of ethics, which the LARB did as part of NAREB in 1915. Licensing laws and education classes were the other important steps. Sociologist Andrew Abbott maintained that attempts to professionalize an industry were really the efforts of a specific group to claim the public authority to control a specified field. While the real estate professionals in Los Angeles were not trying to take over an existing arena of practice like the psychiatrists whom Abbott used as his key examples, they

were certainly carving out a space they wished to dominate within the business world. Although they did not achieve the exclusivity of other professions like medicine or law, realtors in Los Angeles succeeded in creating hurdles that would bar some from entry.<sup>2</sup>

In his book on the coalescing of national trends of real estate operators, Jeffery Hornstein added a fifth step to real estate professionalization, which was the implementation of the moniker “realtor” in 1916 for members of the national association. Hornstein’s national focus revealed the common experience real estate men shared throughout the country as the profession grew in size, scope, and status. The local version of the professionalization tactics of licensing and education remains significant for two reasons. First, while the national association did establish overarching regulations, ethics, and standards, power to determine a realtor’s compliance and administer discipline if needed remained the purview of a local board. Second, the leadership role the LARB played in installing licensing laws and education classes is a significant contribution to the national story. As the first board to successfully lobby for licensing legislation and partner with universities for regular real estate curriculum, the LARB provided a how-to example for other boards. Their efforts transformed real estate practice in Los Angeles, and also established a path towards professionalization in all of California and at the national level.<sup>3</sup>

The real estate industry offered many opportunities for unethical brokers. The realty men used a wide variety of phrases to describe the broker who robbed them of their good name, and who stole money from the public. They included: curbstoner, crook, shyster, huckster, shark,

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<sup>2</sup> The follow essay was helpful in making sense of the vast literature of professionalization: Mary Ann Dzuback, "Professionalism, Higher Education, and American Culture: Burton J. Bledstein's the Culture of Professionalism," *History of Education Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1993). Abbott’s book also has an informative framing of the scholarship of professionalization. Andrew Delano Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Hornstein, *A Nation of Realtors*, see chapter 3, "Character, Competency, and Real (Estate) Professionalism, 1915-20".

knocker, boomer, speculator, swindler, jitney salesman, illegitimate operator, and dishonest operator. The results of their unscrupulous practices had two negative consequences. First, they endangered the financial prospects of other brokers. Every time someone fell prey to a dishonest dealer and was swindled out of money, real estate in Los Angeles became a less secure or lucrative investment. Second, their actions tarnished the image and social standing of all agents including those who followed principles of honesty and decorum. Professional status was critical for the LARB to differentiate itself from those practitioners. If not the leaders of a reputable profession, the LARB members would have not been able to hold the civic positions of power that helped further their business operations, nor would they have been granted entrance on an individual level to the elite clubs and social institutions in the city.

Once the leading real estate leaders established the LARB, they used their collective power to police the profession. Reprimanding and stopping brokers whose conduct was not in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the industry was fundamental to engendering public trust and establishing legitimacy. The LARB took action against several different, illegitimate real estate schemes in the early 1910s. Two LARB leaders wrote about the efforts the organization made to stop those who would abuse the professional image through unscrupulous practices. George Black announced that some of the board's work was "devoted to the weeding out of [Los Angeles] apparently crooked dealers." L.M. Pratt detailed how LARB worked with the state federation to expose corrupt brokers in two different instances. The LARB resolved the first when it suggested a revision of the company's literature, "so that it might state its proposition in a clearer way and stand less chance of misleading the public." The second situation was much more serious. LARB and the state committee issued a report to the press detailing the dishonesty of a specific scam. Pratt confidently reported "within a few days this

concern closed its offices and went out of business.” From modifying misleading literature to ending an illegitimate enterprise, the LARB would preserve its members’ reputations as trustworthy real estate operators.<sup>4</sup>

In 1911, the LARB published display ads in all six of the Los Angeles daily newspapers decrying the Aqueduct City Land Syndicate as a duplicitous organization, or according to one member, “a gigantic swindle.”<sup>5</sup>

### LARB ad in *The Los Angeles Times*<sup>6</sup>

# WARNING To Investing Public!

Within the past week there has appeared in some of the Los Angeles papers an announcement of the Aqueduct City Tract, the promoters of which

## The Aqueduct City Land Syndicate

picture a most remarkable investment opportunity, and particularly appealing “to the people of the Interior and Eastern States.”

According to their own plat, this property is just north of Mojave, on the Mojave Desert. They advertise a townsite, and are showing a map with approximately 8400 city lots, at prices ranging from \$25 to \$200 per lot.

## The Los Angeles Realty Board

Has investigated this project. From information at hand, to date, the conditions disclosed are as follows:

That all territory between Mojave and the point where the aqueduct crosses the Southern Pacific Railroad (where the AQUEDUCT CITY TRACT is said to be located) is a hopeless, barren, desert spot, with no possible excuse or hope for locating a city.

That according to plat of subdivision, they are offering enough lots to make homes for 40,000 inhabitants.

# Fraud

This is an attempt to sell a section of land which is worth about \$800 for \$800,000.

There are many reputable realty brokers who are not members of the LOS ANGELES REALTY BOARD. Their standing can be easily ascertained.

The REALTY BOARD appealed to its members to insert in all of their advertisements “Members of the L.A.R.B.” in order to protect “people from the Interior and Eastern States.”

It is the object of the board to promote HONESTY, HARMONY AND DIGNITY IN ALL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS.

## Los Angeles Realty Board

By JAMES R. H. WAGNER, Acting Pres.  
PHILLIP D. WILSON, Secretary

<sup>4</sup> “Real Estate Department,” *Western Insurance News*, September 25, 1910, 16.

<sup>5</sup> W.M. Garland and Phillip Wilson, May 29, 1912, *LARB Minutes*, 27, LARB Records.

<sup>6</sup> “Display Ad 23 -- No Title,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct 10, 1911.

The syndicate advertised subdivided land in the Mojave Desert that the LARB assured potential investors was “a hopeless, barren, desert spot, with no possible excuse or hope for locating a city.” The LARB’s efforts shut down the project, but the syndicate’s owners sued for libel and damages in the sum of \$225,000. The court not only found in favor of the defendants, but publicly lauded the LARB’s efforts to expose and stop the corrupt business practices. The presiding judge declared that the realty board “ought to be entitled to the gratitude of the people of this community.” The nationally popular magazine *Collier’s* reported on the outcome of this story as well and suggested that what the LARB had done was “a perfectly legitimate and feasible thing for similar bodies in other cities to do.” President William May Garland thought the action “showed conclusively that the Board has the interests of the people at heart in protecting them from fraudulent operators.” Through such investigations and actions and the resulting publicity the LARB proved to the public its commitment to extending its reach beyond its own membership to regulate the whole profession in the region.<sup>7</sup>

The board discussed land lottery schemes for “skinning suckers and incidentally selling property” at one of the governing committee meetings in 1906, but took no action since none of its members were participating in those endeavors. By 1913, however, the LARB had realized positive outcomes in protecting the public when it stepped outside its membership. The board “began a crusade of extermination” against land lottery companies that passed out lottery tickets in public places and would then tell recipients they had drawn a free lot if only they would pay the required recording fees. The land in question was generally inaccessible or practically worthless. The LARB approached the District Attorney’s office and the police to end these property schemes. The LARB records indicated that “these swindlers were compelled to cease

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<sup>7</sup>“Pours Hot Shot into Syndicate,” *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 12, 1912; “Vigorous Action to Protect Inverstors in Land,” *Collier’s*, November 11, 1911. See also William May Garland, “Eliminate the Unscrupulous,” *NREJ*, April 15, 1914, 258.

operations in Los Angeles.” Pressure from the LARB helped drive real estate schemes that cost residents money and lessened their trust in the industry out of the Southland.<sup>8</sup>

Even seemingly reputable companies could tarnish the image of real estate operators and require LARB action. In 1913, a former member of the LARB revealed insolvency. The directors of the Los Angeles Investment Company (LAIC) had come to Los Angeles in the late 19th Century and found real estate a lucrative business. They set up a unique company that blended property development and mortgage financing like many other LARB members, but structured the LAIC more like a mutual aid society or building and loan organization by selling shares of dividend-producing stock. The company would have continued to run smoothly had there not been a downturn in the real estate market. Undercapitalized, the LAIC was close to bankruptcy. Having solicited investors through mail advertisements, the federal government investigated and prosecuted the company’s three leaders for mail fraud. LARB leaders did not want the illegal and financially devastating practices of a company affiliated with the board to ruin the reputation of the membership. Moreover, the LAIC had developed so many small subdivisions and had such high name recognition that its failure could damage the entire real estate market in and around Los Angeles. LARB member Austin O. Martin led a new board of directors consisting of prominent Angeleno businessmen who “brought order out of chaos in the affairs of that company” and restored it to solid financial footing. Their work earned the commendation of the LARB governing committee in 1915.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Leonard Merrill, June 14, 1906, *LARB Minutes*, 152-153; Phillip D. Wilson, May 29, 1913 *LARB Minutes*, 48; *Governing Committee Minutes*, July 22, 1915, 34, LARB Records.

<sup>9</sup> On the Los Angeles Investment Company see Hernandez, "'Homeseekers Paradise': Cross-Class Real Estate Speculation and the Emergence of Los Angeles, 1896-1914;" "The 'Bungalow Boom': The Working-Class Housing Industry and the Development and Promotion of Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles;" *Governing Committee Minutes*, July 22, 1915, 34, LARB Records.

In 1917, the LARB tackled two issues its members felt impeded their goal of professionalism. First, they successfully outlawed curbstoners, those who sold real estate on the street and did not have an office. These salesmen in the business district were handing out tickets and soliciting for excursions to look at available property. The LARB sent an “urgent request” to both the council and the city prosecutor about the matter. The “undignified” practice ended when they convinced the city council to pass an ordinance to stop real estate “peddling” on down town streets. This is a concrete example of how the realtors sought to protect the image of brokers as professionals. President Mines asked rhetorically, “what could make our profession more subject to ridicule than such a condition?” It also highlights how they turned to sources of legal authority to aid in their professionalization efforts.<sup>10</sup>

The second activity the board ended in 1917 were “Texas Land Swindles.” In these schemes someone from “an organized gang of crooks” preyed upon a weakness in the Los Angeles housing market—the overextended homeowner. These companies offered a homeowner whose mortgage was difficult to meet a trade: their home for land in Texas. The certificates of ownership for the out of state lands were fraudulent, costing many Angelenos thousands of dollars. The LARB was distressed because those kinds of organized swindles brought “disgrace on the realty profession in this City.” Again, their efforts to protect their reputation and reaffirm their real estate transactions as profession took members outside of their own organization to police the industry.<sup>11</sup>

The LARB continued its “war upon unscrupulous and designing operators who prey upon the public,” as recorded in Secretary Phillip Wilson’s annual report to the LARB membership. Whenever it encountered crooks, the group acted to outlaw, or publicly debunk their illegitimate

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<sup>10</sup> W.W. Mines, May 24, 1917,” *LARB Minutes*, 6, LARB Records.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*; “Unearth Big Land Fraud,” *NREJ*, July 15, 1916, 47.



practices. Wilson asserted cooperation with the District Attorney and the City Prosecutor enhanced the LARB's efforts. James M. Best, who followed Wilson as secretary, used the same language in his yearly reports, demonstrating that the board was very concerned with ferreting out these practices. Although valiant, their efforts were not enough to thoroughly police all of the real estate dealers and all the various schemes in the region. While continuing to monitor and respond to unethical dealers, they turned to established institutions—the government and universities—to help them protect their business and the public by providing concrete pathways into the profession.<sup>12</sup>

In proclaiming the merits of a state licensing law in the *Los Angeles Times*, W.W. Mines argued that real estate “must be purged of its crooks and shysters if it is to hold high rank among the professions of credit and honor.” Clearly, he felt the way to secure the professional status LARB members hoped to achieve was through government intervention. His commitment to legislation as the answer to the problems that beset realtors because of dishonest and unscrupulous brokers was evident by the work he did on the local, state and national levels. It is possible that realtors like Mines sought government regulation because it was an increasingly popular use of state power. In a study on licensing from the late 1800s, economic historians Marc Law and Sukkoo Kim noted that for the eleven professions they studied most of the state license laws were implemented in the 1910s and 1920s. By the 1950s, state governments issued licenses for 75 different occupations. Mines would have also been aware that California imposed new regulations on the insurance industry after a national scandal in 1907. By leading

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<sup>12</sup> Phillip D. Wilson, May 25, 1916,” *LARB Minutes*, 22; and reports of secretary J.M. Best for 1917, 1918, 1919 in *LARB Minutes*, LARB Records.

the charge for government oversight, the realty men shaped the legislation and protected their own interests.<sup>13</sup>

Various members of NAREB had been pressing for state licensing laws since 1907. They wanted government oversight, not a license merely as a way for a city to collect a fee. (While other cities did, Los Angeles did not have this form of occupational tax.) Southern California's realtors especially were on the forefront of the push for state licensing laws. None worked harder in California for a state license law than LARB member W.W. Mines, and he was a strong voice at the national level calling for such an essential step in professionalization. For the 1919 annual NAREB meeting, Mines prepared a report giving a succinct history of the fight for a state license law in California and the merits of this type of legislation. Mines was unable to attend the meeting in person so State Senator Egbert Gates of Los Angeles read his remarks. A lively discussion followed, with Detroit's Judson Bradway agreeing with Mines' assessment that the professional status realtors wanted required licensing. He announced, "If we want our business to be a profession, and if we want our business to be conducted by experts, and if we don't want every Tom, Dick and Harry, of all kinds and descriptions, regardless of their moral views or ethical standards, to be practicing our profession, we must pass this law and stand for it." Bradway spoke from experience. He headed the NAREB committee that drafted the 1913 model legislation for state licenses and recommended all states have a regulatory licensing law, before a new committee under Mines' direction took up the issue.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Fact and Comment," *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1919; Marc T. Law and Sukkoo Kim, "Specialization and Regulation: The Rise of Professionals and the Emergence of Occupational Licensing Regulation," *Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 3 (2005).

<sup>14</sup> Davies, *Real Estate in American History*, 103-10; William W. Mines, "Real Estate Licenses," *NREJ*, September 1919, 7. Michigan actually passed legislation requiring a real estate license for all property transactions before California, but the law did not go into effect until after that of the Golden State.

Realty men desired a twofold benefit through the license law—protection for the public and the practitioner. The public, according to former NAREB president, Alexander Taylor of Cleveland, were susceptible to two types of dishonest brokers. First, Taylor explained that Americans were regularly “bunkoed” out of their money “by the shyster practices of so-called real estate agents,” whom he likened to “ordinary confidence workers.” Second, he cited greedy men concerned only about commissions, who gave bad advice to the unsuspecting public. Recognizing the tremendous loss to buyers and sellers, Taylor exclaimed, “the public should be safeguarded against them.” A formal designated procedure like requiring a license would add a level of protection for the public.<sup>15</sup>

A second purpose for support of the license law was to protect those businessmen engaged in the profession. Los Angeles’ William May Garland, then President of NAREB, said at the 1919 annual convention, “We feel that we are entitled to the same protection against fraud and quackery in every state of the Union, as is extended doctors, lawyers, bankers, and other professional men.” As many realty men did, Garland evoked the respected professions realtors sought to emulate and the status level they hoped to attain. Realtors felt they needed protection from people in the industry who did not adhere to the local or national association’s strict ethical codes. W. H. Mills of New York declared that, “nothing else will help us brokers if protection is what we are after.” The real estate men labored diligently to build a trustworthy reputation. Unscrupulous dealers cast a long, dark shadow over those efforts, giving all brokers a bad name. To be associated with the unprincipled broker impeded their quest for professional status and their ability to build trusting relationships with the public, their clients.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in "Real Estate Achievement in the United States," (Chicago: National Association of Real Estate Boards, 1956), chapter 4, part 1, 61-62.

<sup>16</sup> “Real Estate License Law,” *NREJ*, August, 1919, 9; Mines, “Real Estate Licenses,” 7.

W.W. Mines' comments to the LARB in 1916 brought both rationales for the licensing law together. He implied that the unscrupulous brokers would be weeded out and those left in the profession would be learned in the trade and trustworthy. He said, "With a law of that kind on our books and the ease with which we can prosecute them, we will soon reduce the number of real estate men from thousands to hundreds and have a situation here where it is safe for the tourists to go to any broker and he can feel that he will be treated honestly." Even tourists, the least informed potential buyer, who came to Southern California and found either the investment possibilities or the living conditions enticing, would be able to act with confidence, knowing a licensed real estate broker would be less likely to swindle them. The legal distinction would not only increase reputable realtors' business, by driving down competition, it would also command professional respect for those with a license.<sup>17</sup>

Decreasing its rolls to avoid more competition was not the primary goal of a licensing law. Although fewer brokers would mean less competition for those in the business and result in more commissions, the LARB members were actually concerned with increasing membership. Membership continued to be a regular discussion item at their meetings and the status of the Los Angeles Board as the largest in the nation remained a source of pride for those in the association. The membership roster did not decrease significantly due to the new legislation, only demonstrating that the LARB was already filled with license-worthy, reputable brokers. The drop in membership after the first license law passed in 1917 was due to the circumstances of World War I. In fact, the LARB had fifty-one more members in 1920 than it did in 1919, the year of the second, permanent legislation. Rather than corner the business market, the purpose for pursuing a license law was state-backed approval of the ethical guidelines the realty boards championed. While realty boards had limited ability to curtail all of the chicanery in the

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<sup>17</sup> W.W. Mines, May 25, 1916, *LARB Minutes*, 17, LARB Records.

industry, a state law provided them with the tools to better police the profession. A license law both recognized the limits of individual realty board power and secured more influence for the agenda of the local boards through government sanction.

Mines thought California offered particularly fertile ground for unprincipled “boomers,” or shady dealers, who too often took advantage of unknowing buyers. Successful booster campaigns that focused on the agricultural achievements available in the state and the home-owning opportunities in a land with perfect climate appealed to people throughout the nation. Mines reported to the National Association that in his state many a “poorly informed and defenseless” newcomer had sadly been duped into buying city or country property “out of all proportion to the present or potential value of the lands” by those more interested in turning a profit than meeting the expectations of the buyer. The “better class of realtors,” he related believed in “honorable and fair dealing.” A state-sponsored license would help the public and reinforce the dependability of the upstanding realtors in California and Los Angeles.<sup>18</sup>

The LARB’s first attempt at a state license law was in 1913, but it did not pass. Later that year, NAREB’s Committee on State Legislation also presented model licensing legislation at the national convention in Winnipeg. The proposed 1913 law was drastically different from the model legislation. The main difference was in the structure of the licensing agency. The 1913 bill worked within existing government entities—the Secretary of State, the County Clerks offices—and relied on the court system to adjudicate all disputes, whereas, NAREB’s model law called for an independent licensing board of several members. The bill appears to have died in committee. Looking back at the proposed legislation W.W. Mines felt it was “not a particularly satisfactory bill.” It took several years for the LARB to attempt a licensing bill again. The issue remained important, however. Mines became the chairman of the License Law Committee

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<sup>18</sup> Mines, “Real Estate Licenses.”

of the national association in 1916, and California passed license legislation in 1917, with the endorsement of all realty boards in the state.<sup>19</sup>

After only eight months, the state Supreme Court deemed the legislation unlawful because it exempted the fee for previously licensed insurance brokers. The law was, however, quite effective in its short application for real estate dealers. W.W. Mines claimed that over 5,000 realtors in California had licenses and that hundreds of unscrupulous agents got out of the real estate business since they knew they were not going to be able to operate in the climate of a state license. William May Garland declared even more colorfully in his description of the consequences of the 1917 law that during those eight months, “there were over five hundred of the scum driven out of the City of Los Angeles alone.” The law worked as the LARB had hoped.<sup>20</sup>

Following the court’s decision that made the law ineffective, realtors began working immediately on a replacement law to shore up their professional status and regulate those not involved with a local board. That legislation passed in 1919. Applicants had to have two property owners vouch for their character before they were granted a license. This system tried to ensure that brokers were “honest, truthful and of good reputation,” the kind of men who would strengthen the image of realtors that LARB wanted. Clearly, the legislation intended to license more than just the elite board member brokers since the requirements were so easily met, yet would still attract the fair-dealing practitioners the LARB championed.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *AB1246*, January 31, 1913, California State Assembly; a copy of the 1913 model legislation was printed in “Report on the Committee on State Legislation,” *NREJ*, August 15, 1913, 303-304; W.W. Mines, May 24, 1917, *LARB Minutes*, 8.

<sup>20</sup> William W. Mines, “Real Estate Licenses,” Garland quote on page 6.

<sup>21</sup> California State Legislature, “The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Forty-Third Session of the Legislature,” (California State Printing Office, 1919), 1255.

The 1919 law introduced by state Senator Lee C. Gates, an LARB member, established how the license was to be used, and was a carryover of Progressive-Era ideas about scientific management in business, which needed clear organization and regulation. The legislation defined broker and salesman. The first included anyone who was paid to sell real estate or negotiate real estate loans or leases. The second was a person paid to sell real property on behalf of a licensed broker. The law mandated that each have and display a state-issued license. The sliding scale for annual fees for each license corresponded to the differences between those jobs. A broker paid \$10 a year and a salesman \$2. These fees supported the newly created State Real Estate Department. The California law deviated from the NAREB model legislation by calling for a salaried Governor appointee to serve as the Real Estate Commissioner instead of creating a committee of a few unpaid members. The commissioner had the final say on who could hold a license. Brokers throughout the state were beholden to the decisions of the Real Estate Commissioner. Signaling the importance of Southern California's role in the real estate industry, for all but four months between 1917-1927 the Commissioner came from the southern half of the state.<sup>22</sup>

Abusing the law resulted in penalties including revocation of a real estate license. The LARB and California realty men used the law as intended to weed out unprincipled dealers and promote the image of a trustworthy and responsible professional. Causes for revocation included misrepresentation and false promises. The Commissioner had discretion to offer warnings, but with any "flagrant course of misrepresentation" he would take back a license without hesitation. Acting for more than one party in a transaction without the knowledge and

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 1252-60; California Real Estate Association, "Real Estate and Realtors at Legislature of California and U.S. Congress," (1928), 7. The real estate commissioners were: 1917-1818 Freeman H. Bloodgood, Santa Ana; 1919-1921 Ray L. Riley, San Bernardino; 1921-1925 Edwin T. Keiser, Pomona; 1925 (four months) A. P. Soule, Sacramento; 1925-1927 John R. Gabbert, Riverside; 1927 Stephen Barnson, San Diego.

approval of both the buyer and seller resulted in the loss of one's license. In very open-ended language, the law forbade "any other conduct. . . which constitutes dishonest dealing." License revocation deterred an unscrupulous person from continuing in the real estate profession since he was subject to prosecution for practicing without one. Other licensed brokers were not permitted to work with the unsanctioned practitioner. Punishment for operating without a license included a \$2,000 fine or up to two years in jail, or both. Corporations working outside the boundaries of the licensing law faced fines as large as \$5,000.<sup>23</sup>

A National Real Estate Journal review of the licensing laws in operation in 1923 related the effects of the law in California. For the year 1922 the real estate commissioner had issued 35,236 licenses. (All licenses expired on the last day of the year and required annual renewal.) The license fees raised \$163,436.77 and more than covered administrative charges. Since the passage of the 1919 law, the commissioner had overseen 300 serious license complaints, held 1,500 hearings and interviewed countless people, all of which resulted in the revocation or suspension of twenty-five licenses. While not a significant number of license revocations, the LARB saw the law as a deterrent to prevent illegitimate operators from entering the profession in the first place. Interestingly, the article also noted that brokers had begun to rely on the government oversight to resolve disputes between brokers. The commissioner also dealt with many cases involving misrepresentation. While no records of these investigations have been preserved, the Journal also reported that the public had received money back because of the commissioner's investigations and pursuits of dealers not conforming to the industry's ethical standards.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> California State Legislature, "The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Forty-Third Session of the Legislature," 1252-60.

<sup>24</sup> John H. Wagner, "Comprehensive Review of License Laws," *NREJ*, January 20, 1923, 32-37.



California's leadership on the licensing law had great effect on real estate practice in other states. LARB leaders were quick to recognize this contribution to the national profession. James Best, the LARB secretary, suggested the importance of his association's efforts when he praised the bill as "one of the most far-reaching and important laws that has been enacted effecting the realty broker in any part of the United States." W.W. Mines gloated publicly about the positive effects of the licensing law in California, calling it "the most beneficial act of legislation that had ever been enacted in the interests of ethical practices in the real estate business." According to Best and Mines, LARB's efforts to pass license legislation were important for realtors nationwide, not just those in California or Los Angeles.<sup>25</sup>

National leaders likewise applauded the LARB for leading out on this issue. Judson Bradway of Detroit, the chair of the NAREB committee that drafted the 1913 model legislation, offered this praise: "the California Law is practically ideal." He also acknowledged that his state's law mostly copied California's law. Of the 1917 law he said it "was the first license law of any real account that I have ever read; and I think I have read every one that has been enacted or attempted to be enacted in the United States." By this report, California launched the government-issued real estate license. The LARB, the largest realty board in the state and its former president W.W. Mines lead the charge to procure this legislation. By 1923 fourteen states including California had licensing laws, and also one Canadian Province. By 1950 forty-eight states had adopted license laws. The success of such a law also interested realty boards abroad. In 1921 the executive body of NAREB received a letter from Melbourne, Australia, inquiring

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<sup>25</sup> J.M. Best, May 24, 1917, *LARB Minutes*, 13, LARB Records; "Bright Future for This City," *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1919.

about licensing laws. The influence of the LARB's initiatives to professionalize real estate brokerage reached across the Pacific Rim.<sup>26</sup>

Realtors continued to tweak and improve the real estate licensing law. Introduced by LARB member Senator Gates in 1921, the state legislature passed the first amendments to the 1919 law. This legislation provided 1917 license holders a refund on their fees since the law and that license was not in effect very long. It also had clarifications to tighten the 1919 law. The process to procure a license also became more regimented over time. Until 1929 examinations were given orally by the state commission. Not until 1931 did the Division of Real Estate adopt the formal written test. Preparing for the real estate exam was one of the purposes of college real estate courses that were the next proposed course of action, the LARB followed to professionalize their industry.<sup>27</sup>

Clinton E. Miller was a great example of a realtor supporting the educational pathway to professionalization. He was born in Visalia, California, and arrived in Los Angeles at the age of 29. He spent a few years as a salesman for two large realty firms, but by 1911 he handled his own property in the San Joaquin Valley in central California from his office in downtown Los Angeles. He participated in the Chamber of Commerce as a board member and chairman of its membership committee, and belonged to several important social clubs in the city. His pursuits went beyond real estate and in 1924 he started Seaboard National Bank. Land remained at the heart of his financial dealings, however, as evidenced by his membership in the Los Angeles Realty Board where he served on the governing committee (1917-1919) and as President (1919-

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<sup>26</sup> Mines, "Real Estate Licenses," 6. Arizona, California, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Montana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and British Columbia all had licensing laws see "States Having Real Estate License Laws," *NREJ*, April 9, 1923, 50; Hornstein, *A Nation of Realtors*, 72; Davies, *Real Estate in American History*, 110.

<sup>27</sup> "License Law Is Amended," *Los Angeles Times*, May 1, 1921; California Department of Real Estate, "History of the DRE," accessed May 15, 2012, <http://history.dre.ca.gov/>. In 1931, the agency went by the title Division of Real Estate. The department was initially called the California Commission on Real Estate, and is now the California Department of Real Estate.

1920). He represented successful men concerned about the social standing of their profession. In 1922 he wrote an essay for the University of Southern California's Commerce Journal emphasizing the need for education in real estate.<sup>28</sup>

Miller thought that education for real estate brokers was “necessary if the business is to maintain a respectable existence.” Noting that one could attend school to learn banking, diplomacy, farming, bookkeeping, and stenography, he lamented that real estate had no set educational path. He longed for it to be on par with the “professions”—medicine, law, and teaching. Education was a key prerequisite in each of those arenas. He felt that cooperation between the realty board members and the university would “scientize” the business and therefore “bring it up to the dignity that it deserved—that of a profession.” Like fellow members of the LARB, Miller embraced the idea of an educational hurdle for entrance into the real estate industry and hoped that would help to legitimize the profession. Responding to the need for university real estate classes in Los Angeles, two local institutions, the University of Southern California (USC) and the Southwestern Law School, worked with the LARB and created courses in 1921.<sup>29</sup>

The university-sponsored real estate courses in Southern California were not the first in the nation. Real estate leaders throughout the country had recognized the need for education in realty brokerage for some time. The real estate board of brokers of New York City collaborated with the West Side YMCA in 1904 for the first public education programs. YMCAs in other cities, including Los Angeles, also offered courses, but they were not affiliated with the local realty boards. A handful of other universities scheduled real estate courses. The Wharton

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<sup>28</sup> “Clinton Miller,” LAPL CA bio file; Hunt and Sanchez, *California and Californians; Who's Who in Los Angeles, 1924*.

<sup>29</sup> Clinton E. Miller, “Real Estate as a Profession,” *The Commerce Journal: Commerce Club of the University of Southern California*, January 1922.

School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania and the School of Commerce and New York University were the only classes offered as part of the regular elective curriculum instead of in an evening or continuing school. According to the Wharton 1910 University catalogue, the course for third-year students dealt with “the legal and business problems connected with the sale, purchase and management of real property.” It crammed a little of every aspect of the business into one elective. Wharton first offered the class in 1905, three years before the formation of the Philadelphia Real Estate Brokers Association. It is unclear whether this local realty board played a role in assisting with lectures for the class after its founding, but it is likely the school drew on the vast experience and resources of local real estate men.<sup>30</sup>

Systematic real estate programs had been a topic of conversation at NAREB since the mid 1910s. Realtors bemoaned the lack of a comprehensive textbook. Many boards, like Detroit, had education programs taught by members located at the board’s headquarters. There was a move afoot, however, to locate these real estate classes in a university setting and to underscore their importance through scientific research. Dr. Richard T. Ely tried for years to gain the trust and cooperation of NAREB to support financially and ideologically his Institute for Research in Land Economics at the University of Wisconsin. In 1923 and 1924, Ely edited and published three textbooks to be used as part of a national curriculum, but only three universities adopted it in 1924. Ely was eventually successful in persuading NAREB that his Institute, its research, and its publications were of great value to them. Those in NAREB who supported Dr. Ely argued for less practical sermonizing from local, successful real estate developers and brokers and more of a scientifically-based, national curriculum to train future realtors. The

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<sup>30</sup> L.D. Woodworth, “Educational Work in Real Estate,” *NREJ*, January 15, 1914, 15-20; Davies, *Real Estate in American History; University of Pennsylvania Catalogue 1909-1910*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1910), 282.

LARB certainly applied the practical techniques of board members' lectures, but by tying their classes to a university with professors who taught about theories and principles of land development represented a middle ground or stepping stone from the older educational model to the one Ely promoted.<sup>31</sup>

In a 1922 article that appeared in the *National Real Estate Journal*, USC's *Commerce Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Realtor* announcing university-sponsored real estate courses in Los Angeles, the board reiterated the mantra that "the real estate business is distinctly a profession." They certainly hoped to prove as much by establishing official training courses and entry requirements to the real estate industry. As historian Burton Bledstein argued, situating classes in the American university system, "held before the society the image of the modern professional person who committed himself to an ethic of service, was trained in scientific knowledge, and moved his career relentlessly upward." The LARB members desired that image. The partnership was "an innovation in the board's activities," according to the *Commerce Journal*. It was by all accounts a success for both institutions. The LARB got legitimacy from the university for its pursuit of professional status, and the university proved its relevance as a preparatory institution for a dynamic field.<sup>32</sup>

While real estate boards pushed for greater educational opportunities, there were not always the resources or demand to make the courses successful. Attempts to establish permanent real estate classes in other parts of California did not take hold the way realtors hoped. In 1914 the LARB in conjunction with the Fresno Realty Board tried to establish classes through the

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<sup>31</sup> Hornstein, *A Nation of Realtors*, see chapter four. For more on the significance of Ely and his Institute for national policy see Marc A. Weiss, "Richard T. Ely and the Contribution of Economic Research to National Housing Policy, 1920-1940," *Urban Studies* 26, no. 1 (1989). NAREB and local board never lost interest in practical real estate education, even as they adopted the scientific, university-based approach. One of the most important functions of the national association and local boards for current members are practical educational classes.

<sup>32</sup> See "A Real Estate Course," *The Commerce Journal*, 4; "University Course for Real Estate Salesmen," *NREJ*, January 20, 1922, 45; Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976), 333.

Agricultural College of the University of California at Davis. These never materialized. In 1921 The CREA partnered with UC Berkeley to expand its one extension course on the fundamentals of real estate into a formal part of its four year curriculum. They announced a plan for those classes in the *National Real Estate Journal*, but the classes were not mentioned in subsequent years and do not appear in the university's campus catalogues from 1921 and 1922. In 1923 the *San Francisco Realtor* announced a collaboration between Berkeley and the San Francisco Real Estate Board, apparently fueled by a talk given by USC's Dr. Stonier on the success of courses offered in Los Angeles. However, by 1929 the CREA was working with USC, not UC Berkeley, to offer classes conducted by local realty boards in thirty-four different cities throughout the state. By 1929 USC's courses had gotten off the ground and were very popular. These courses prepared would-be realtors for the state licensing exam, or as the *Los Angeles Times* called it, the "educational test," which was required for any legal broker, under the state licensing law.<sup>33</sup>

USC opened its College of Commerce and Business Administration in 1920. It was part of a shift throughout the nation for the role of universities in practical and vocational training. Historian David Levine noted there was an increase in overall college attendance after World War I and that "business education became something of a craze." American colleges and universities started 117 business programs between 1919-1924. Already home to education and certification programs for professions like medicine and law the partnership with the LARB was the first foray into business education for Southern California. That the first business courses were in real estate speaks to the importance of the industry to the region's economy. That USC opened a College of Commerce marked a shift in ideas about business as one reporter explained that students were beginning to rely on universities to "equip themselves for executive positions

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<sup>33</sup> "Los Angeles," *NREJ*, March 15, 1914, 207; "Two Kinds of Brokers," *NREJ*, April 30, 1920, 15; "Close Ups from News Bulletin," *NREJ*, March 28, 1921, 35; "San Francisco Realtors Sponsor Realty Courses," *NREJ*, April 9, 1923, 48-49; "Classes Finish Realty Studies," *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1929.

in modern business.” This sentiment underscored the new-found practicality of college education. It was not only for cultural value, but had direct application in the business world. A flowchart in the school’s *Commerce Journal* described it this way: “Business training plus College activities and Business contacts, built upon scholarship brings success.” Business courses were, of course, to be built on a solid foundation of liberal arts curriculum. Rockwell Hunt brought administrative capabilities and academic training to the college as its first director and later its dean. He was an impressive scholar having written nineteen books on California history and was the head of the Southern California Historical Association. Hunt also served as USC’s first dean of graduate education. Offering real estate education so early in its departmental life demonstrated that the faculty of the College of Commerce intended their business training to find practical application outside of the classroom.<sup>34</sup>

In 1921 D. Parker Byron, manager of business properties for the Charles G. Andrews Co. and member of the LARB, taught the first classes at a Southern California University, College of Commerce and Business Administration. The course was in such demand that the school expanded its offerings to three classes in 1922. The first class was for basic real estate knowledge. Byron also taught the second course, which built upon the first course and covered more technical parts of the industry. USC professor Oliver J. Marston taught the third course, which focused on real estate law. Perhaps aware of Richard T. Ely’s success at the University of Wisconsin, USC increased its real estate courses again in 1923 with a course on the economics of real estate. Within the first decade of the program, USC became the first university in the nation to teach a course on real estate appraisal. Beginning in 1922

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<sup>34</sup> Emery E. Olson, “Business Training” diagram, *The Commerce Journal*, 4; David O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 59; “Long Lease Negotiated,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1924; Dean Reid L. McClung, “The University of Southern California under the Direction of Dean Rockwell Hunt,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1930. For more on Rockwell Hunt see LAPL CA bio file.

Southwestern Law School also offered three required classes on real estate. It mandated one course for each year of the three year law program. The compulsory law school classes and the growing program at USC signified how consequential the real estate business was in Los Angeles.<sup>35</sup>

The real estate classes at both schools were extremely popular. Attendance in the 1921 USC introductory course was “several times larger than expected” as reported in the National Real Estate Journal. In fact, enrollment of one hundred and forty-four students was so great that the class had to be divided into two sections. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that demand for the lectures required that notes were mimeographed and distributed. Interest in real estate courses continued in 1922 at both institutions, even exceeding the expectations of administrators at Southwestern Law School. The high enrollments of USC’s program also caught national attention and the college fielded inquiries from other large institutions about how they might achieve similar results.<sup>36</sup>

What set the classes at the University of Southern California and the Southwestern Law School apart from other initiatives in the nation, according to the emphasis in the reports on these classes in the National Real Estate Journal, was both their close collaboration with the Los Angeles Realty Board and their large enrollments. Both institutions had affiliations with prominent LARB members who were well connected in the business world. Richard Jewett Schweppe (Governing Committee 1916-17) and W. Ross Campbell (Governing Committee 1917-1919) were on the twenty member board of guarantors that started the College of Commerce at USC in 1920. Harry H. Culver (Governing Committee 1915-1917) sat on the

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<sup>35</sup> Davies, "Real Estate Achievement in the United States," chapter 5, part 2, 38.

<sup>36</sup> "California Real Estate Salesmanship Courses," *NREJ*, June 19, 1922, 57; "Large Enrollment in Realty Class," *NREJ*, April 10, 1922, 42; "Large Enrollment for Realty Classes," *NREJ*, December 18, 1922, 42; "Will Tell of Realty Class Work," *Los Angeles Times*, November 12, 1922.



board of advisors for the law school. While there is no way to tell what specific influence these men had on the establishment of the college courses, in their advisory roles at the schools and as members of the realty board they would certainly have been able to promote the complementary desire of the realty board for an educational requirement for entry into the profession and the universities' aspiration for their courses to better prepare students for future careers in business.<sup>37</sup>

LARB men brought practical knowledge and experience to the courses. Fifteen guest lecturers from the board presented throughout USC's introductory seminar. They spoke for 45-55 minutes about their specialties and answered questions from the students for 15-20 minutes. The remainder of each class period was under the direction of the faculty instructor, who led a discussion of the assigned texts for the course. Three of the speakers from the LARB leadership spoke to students at Southwestern Law School and typify the expertise guest lecturers brought to these real estate classes. They were very successful at large-scale development throughout Southern California. Clinton Miller, the author of the article in the *Commerce Journal*, worked in agricultural properties in the San Joaquin Valley. Charles B. Hopper (Governing Committee 1920-1922) operated as a successful subdivider for almost two decades. He built high-end neighborhoods like Bel Air and working-class suburbs such as Southgate. William Daum (Vice President 1920-1921) had started and continued to lead one of the largest real estate firms that specialized in commercial and industrial properties. Thus, students combined book learning with the practical experiences of successful men who knew the in and outs of the profession.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Dean Reid L. McClung, "The University of Southern California under the Direction of Dean Rockwell Hunt," *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1930; Southwestern University, "Official Announcement of the Southwestern School of Law 1921-1922," (Los Angeles 1921).

<sup>38</sup> "High School Courses in Real Estate," *NREJ*, April 9, 1923, 50; "Three Courses to Be Offered," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1922. For Charles B. Hopper see LAPL CA bio file and "C. B. Hopper, Early Area Developer, Dies," *Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 1964. For William Daum see fuller biography in chapter 1 and Hunt and Sanchez, *California and Californians*.

While both USC and the LARB claimed responsibility for initiating the partnership and regardless of who gets final credit for launching the USC real estate classes, collaboration between the university and the realty board was key to the success of this program. Dr. Stonier from USC's College of Commerce faculty declared in the *National Real Estate Journal* that the courses were "possible only because of the splendid co-operation given by the members of the LARB and its executive officers." Clearly each institution benefited from the joint effort to educate future realtors. The board members' aspiration to achieve for themselves and maintain for the organization's a professional status through an educational requirement was a perfect match to the University's assertion that school offered students practical knowledge and enabled future business success.<sup>39</sup>

Signaling interest in the cooperative educational model for boards in other cities, the *National Real Estate Journal* solicited an essay from H.J. Stonier. He wrote about the collaboration between his university and the Los Angeles Realty Board. The title of his essay "Training Men to be Efficient Realtors" highlighted the college's ability to teach professional principles that resulted in more professional business practices. Specifically, Stonier believed that, "education offers the answer" to abuses within the real estate profession. He claimed the program "attracted attention of real estate boards and educational institutions throughout the country," and suggested similar programs could be replicated elsewhere. In his estimation, the courses provided three things that Los Angeles needed: (1) better trained realtors, (2) a deeper understanding of the economic principles involved in the real estate business, and (3) wider education of the average person on real estate practices. Each of those points were relevant for Los Angeles, and they were general enough to be equally applicable elsewhere in the nation.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Dr. H.J. Stonier, "Training Men to Be Efficient Realtors," *NREJ*, February 12, 1923, 23-26.

<sup>40</sup> Stonier, "Training Men to be Efficient Realtors."

With the success of these courses national attention once again turned to the Los Angeles Realty Board and its innovations in professionalizing the industry. The men behind those courses were some of the largest subdividers and brokers in the region and were keen to continue to develop, build, buy and sell in and around Los Angeles. They also strove to legitimize their business and claim professional status for those involved in real estate development and brokerage. The university and law school classes proved a key part of the plan to institutionalize a pathway to enter the business of real estate.

One of the unintended consequences of establishing pathways to professionalization was the democratizing of real estate brokerage. Women, who had been purposefully excluded from the LARB, constituted nearly seventeen percent of the real estate class enrollment at USC in 1922. Twenty four women enrolled in the course. African Americans, who, for different reasons, were not allowed in the LARB, were able to take the state exam and pass receive a license. H.A Howard, a graduate from USC in 1924 and the first African American to pass the license exam in California, went on to a distinguished career in real estate and from there built a banking empire. In formalizing entrances into brokerage the LARB moved the business away from the “all boys club” of its past and opened the doors for previously excluded groups to join the industry with legitimate credentials.<sup>41</sup>

Despite their work and the advances in licensing and education requirements, professional status as they envisioned proved elusive for the realty men. Realtors never attained the more elite status of doctors or lawyers to whom they compared themselves. The licensing process and university-sponsored education initiatives worked differently for realtors than for these other professions. Their courses were valuable, but not essential or required to pass the

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<sup>41</sup> “Large Enrollment in Realty Class,” *NREJ*, April 10, 1922, 43; Robert Smith J, "H.A. Howard's Rise Termed 'Meteoric'," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, February 2, 1950.

licensing exam. Doctors, lawyers and teachers on the other hand had mandatory education that culminated in a license exam. Someone wanting to deal in real estate could study on his or her own and take the state test. Licensing did help to keep some land sharks away from real estate, but without compulsory education, it did not propel real estate into the highest category of professions. Nevertheless, the initiatives of the LARB to establish a professional pathway that involved policing the industry, state licenses, and university courses demonstrate the lengths to which they tried to legitimize their work and create space for their profession in the culture of early 20th Century Los Angeles and the national attention they received for these initiatives underscores their contributions as industry trailblazers.

## **Conclusion**

The Los Angeles of 1923 looked a great deal different than the city had twenty years earlier when that small handful of real estate entrepreneurs gathered in William May Garland's office to discuss plans to organize themselves formally. The city had expanded from a small geographical area of 43.26 square miles in 1903 to 399.90 square miles by 1923, making it one of the largest cities in the United States. It was the fastest growing city in the country in terms of population increase, both from its newly annexed communities and a seemingly endless increase in migrants and immigrants. In 1900 there were just 102,479 city and 170,298 county residents. In 1920 the city population was 576,673 and the county 936,455, nearly reaching Garland and LARB's prediction that the region would have a population of one million by then.

The built environment had changed dramatically as well with a booming construction industry and large infrastructure projects. The 336,292 city-issued building permits in that twenty year time frame marked several periods of tremendous construction. The majority of those permits were for single family homes, creating a patchwork of residential communities spread across the Southland. An expansive streetcar system connected those neighborhoods to the downtown core. Nevertheless by 1923, many Angelenos had begun to rely on their own automobiles for transportation. Auto registrations had increased to 60,000 in the city and 100,000 in the county by 1919 and fueled severe traffic congestion downtown in the 1920s. New roads for the cars would form a web of connections between suburban residential communities that the streetcars had not done. Impressive municipal projects further altered the landscape and created new opportunities for development. The Los Angeles Aqueduct brought water from the Owen's River Valley and increased the city's capacity and ability to support residential communities. Dredging the harbor and building a port that coincided with the opening of the

Panama Canal had insured Los Angeles would become a major player in international trade, the point for exports and imports to and from the Pacific Rim and elsewhere around the globe.<sup>42</sup>

The LARB clearly contributed to the metamorphosis of the city in these key years of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Members championed all projects from water to roads that increased the livability and potential for growth they saw in Los Angeles. They worked closely with the streetcar companies to provide access to new subdivisions. Although they supported and participated in the formal commissions devoted to planning, they had acted as the de facto urban planners for decades before city and county authorities organized those bodies. Its own emphasis and support for other promotional schemes that highlighted the “different” kind of city Los Angeles was becoming set the foundation for its growth for the next century. The idea of a sprawling city with so much residential space that it could advertise no high density slums supported a pattern of constructing a myriad of single family home neighborhoods. Having determined their vision for an ordered and planned city, and holding to the racist notions of their time, the LARB deliberately segregated these subdivisions by class and race. Promoting the zoning laws and restrictive covenants needed to achieve their aims made them pioneers in employing the techniques that became widespread throughout the nation by the 1920s. The LARB principles became the template for metropolitan regions in the United States for the 20th Century.

If the city had transformed into a metropolis by 1923, the local real estate profession had also undergone immense change. Beginning with forty members in 1903, by 1923 the Los Angeles Realty Board boasted 328 members and had spawned many other realty boards in

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<sup>42</sup> City permit number aggregated from J.J. Backus “Report of Activities of the Department of Building of the City of Los Angeles for Calendar Year 1923,” January 2, 1924, Los Angeles City Archives. Car registration figures from Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis*, 170. On traffic problems see Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile: The Making of the Modern City*.

neighboring communities. It had successfully organized the realty operators of California in 1905 with the creation of the state federation. LARB members also participated in the founding and growth of the national organization of real estate operators that began in 1908. These local, state, and national organizations altered the role of the realtor and created a powerful lobby that came to influence politics at all levels. The LARB had showed its local influence in swaying the 1911 election away from the popular socialist ticket. Legislation on a state level favorable to the interests of the real estate lobby continued to appear before the state legislature.

Cooperation with the federal government during WWI, when William May Garland was the NAREB president, ensured a privileged position for real estate lobbyists at the national level for decades to come.

The early history of the LARB demonstrates its pivotal role in supporting and furthering the nation-wide professionalization of the realty industry. Members in the national association were able to share ideas and learn from one another through annual meetings, participation in NAREB leadership, and through the widely circulated monthly publication *The National Real Estate Journal*. LARB members maintained visible presence at the early national conferences in order to win the right to host in 1915. They held important leadership positions in NAREB. Their work in Los Angeles and California was often featured prominently in the *Journal*. The LARB led in two specific steps towards professionalization—the implementation of legislation to license real estate brokers and legislation to create real estate education in universities as part of their new emphasis on expanding business training. These actions were an attempt to elevate the status of those working in real estate brokerage and secure the public's trust. They represented a Progressive Era inclination to turn to established institutions like government and universities to uphold the authority the LARB claimed over the industry.

There is still much to learn about the work of the LARB and the spread of Los Angeles in these first two decades of the twentieth century. A crucial component of the story of real estate development that needs more research is the nature of financial lending in this time period. There is some evidence that the easy terms mortgage popular in early 1900s Southern California actually hurt homeowners and undermined the single family neighborhood ideal when residents were unable to pay their principle balances after keeping up with interest payments and coming to the end of their mortgage contract. How these mortgages were approved and the role of real estate operators in securing financial lending needs further exploration, as does their participation in second mortgages. Mortgage markets were very different in the Progressive Era than after the Great Depression. During this time period, changes in state and federal regulations would have also had an effect on the financial operations of the home building industry. Several influential LARB members served in leadership capacities on many of the city's banks. Their role in ensuring the flow of outside capital to Los Angeles also begs further investigation.

The story of the LARB from 1903-1923 excludes the important role women played in the local real estate market because the LARB excluded women from its organization in those early years. The level of participation and impact that women had as investors and property owners should be evaluated. I am unaware of any women who acted as developers or subdividers, but that does not mean women did not participate in these roles. Many women did amass great personal fortunes in real estate, as did men during this time period. Several important studies have focused on Los Angeles women's clubs and their advocacy for Progressive Era reforms, especially moral reform, but female participation in the real estate markets and their impact on the formation of the city is largely unknown. It is not difficult to assume that women of all classes participated in real estate speculation, and an understanding of working-class female real



estate involvement should be further developed. Also, how did the very masculine LARB gender the concept of homeownership through its marketing strategies, as realtors did in the post-WWII era?

A third prong of inquiry relating to metropolitan development in Los Angeles in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century that calls for more analysis is the connection between restrictive covenants and property values. The real estate industry has often explained restrictive covenants as a way to protect homeowner investment. Los Angeles had a volatile real estate market that the LARB wanted to stabilize. Using tax records and property assessment maps may be one way to determine the actual correlation between CCRs and property value. Of course, it would also provide valuable insight into mapping the location and the time in which developers instituted restrictive covenants throughout Los Angeles.

The early history of urban development in Los Angeles can reveal much about the city's subsequent development. The physical, financial, and ideological foundations upon which the city and county would expand formed in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It also belongs to a longer history in which the Los Angeles region has been used as a bellwether for national trends. Southern California embodied working-class suburbs of the 1920s and the introduction of the "Community Builder," the post-WWII housing boom and suburbanization, the growth of suburban-based right wing politics since the 1960s, gated communities of the 1980s, and even the boom and crash of present time (especially in the Inland Empire). Likewise, its early development history can tell part of the national story of how and why low density single family communities segregated by class and race came to proliferate the American landscape.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965*; Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*; Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles*; Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings

In telling the story of Los Angeles and its expansion for the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it is essential to understand the leadership role of the LARB as the key organization overseeing the work of developers, subdividers, and brokers. The nexus of race, class, space, and development that continues to define Los Angeles was set in motion in the early 1900s. Moreover, using the LARB as a lens to view the city's development history alters many of the assumptions about who was responsible for these patterns. While certainly powerful influences on the region *The Los Angeles Times* was not the only pro-growth, pro-business institution and Henry Huntington was not solely responsible for its physical geography. The aspiring, entrepreneurial men of the LARB driven by their inseparable desires for professional respectability and maintaining a specific race and class order had just as great an impact in building Los Angeles. The organization exerted influence through its active members, associate members, and work in policing real estate activities internally and externally. LARB members simultaneously shaped the city's physical and social landscape and the professional backdrop in which their work occurred. The LARB vision for what Los Angeles could become is one of the fundamental reasons the region looks the way it does today.

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Institution Press, 1997). The Inland Empire area of Southern California was hit especially hard during the recent subprime mortgage crisis. For a few examples see David Streitfeld, "A Town Right on the Default Line," *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 2007, A1; Marc Lifsher, "Mortgage Meltdown," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 2007, C1; Tim Egan, "The Pools of Riverside County," *New York Times*, January 30, 2008.

Appendix A

Los Angeles City Building Permits 1900-1923

Year	Building Permits	% increase or decrease from the previous year	Valuation
1900	1,922		\$2,519,361
1901	2,826	47.0%	\$4,376,916
1902	4,863	72.1%	\$9,603,132
1903	6,395	31.5%	\$13,046,338
1904	7,089	10.9%	\$13,409,062
1905	9,543	34.6%	\$15,382,057
1906	9,072	-4.9%	\$18,158,520
1907	7,599	-16.2%	\$13,304,696
1908	7,371	-3.0%	\$9,931,377
1909	8,571	16.3%	\$13,260,703
1910	10,738	25.3%	\$21,684,100
1911	12,498	16.4%	\$23,004,185
1912	16,455	31.7%	\$31,367,995
1913	16,442	-0.1%	\$31,641,921
1914	9,979	-39.3%	\$17,361,925
1915	7,845	-21.4%	\$11,888,662
1916	7,565	-3.6%	\$15,036,045
1917	6,699	-11.4%	\$16,932,082
1918	6,381	-4.7%	\$8,678,862
1919	13,344	109.1%	\$28,253,619
1920	25,555	91.5%	\$60,023,600
1921	37,206	45.6%	\$82,761,386
1922	47,397	27.4%	\$121,206,787
1923	62,548	32.0%	\$200,133,181

**Source:** J.J. Backus “Report of Activities of the Department of Building of the City of Los Angeles for Calendar Year 1923,” January 2, 1924, Los Angeles City Archives.

## Appendix B

### List of Los Angeles City Annexations/Consolidations 1895-1929

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Total Square Miles</b>
Oct. 18, 1895	Highland Park	1.41000	30.62000
Apr. 02, 1896	Southern & Western	10.18000	40.80000
June 12, 1899	Garvanza	0.69000	41.49000
June 12, 1899	University	1.77000	43.26000
Dec. 26, 1906	Shoestring	18.64000	61.90000
Aug. 28, 1909	Wilmington	9.93000	71.83000
Aug. 28, 1909	San Pedro	4.61000	76.44000
Oct. 27, 1909	Colegrove	8.72000	85.16000
Feb. 07, 1910	Hollywood	4.45000	89.61000
Feb. 28, 1910	East Hollywood	11.11000	100.72000
Feb. 09, 1912	Arroyo Seco	6.90000	107.62000
May 22, 1915	Palms	7.30000	114.92000
May 22, 1915	San Fernando	169.89000	284.81000
June 10, 1915	Bairdstown	3.40000	288.21000
June 14, 1916	Westgate	48.67000	336.88000
June 14, 1916	Occidental	1.04000	337.92000
Feb. 26, 1917	Owensmouth	0.77300	338.69300
June 15, 1917	West Coast	12.41000	351.10300
Feb. 03, 1918	West Adams	0.59000	351.69300
Feb. 16, 1918	Griffith Ranch	0.23000	351.92300
Apr. 11, 1918	Hansen Heights	8.30000	360.22300
July 11, 1918	Ostend	0.00150	360.22450
Nov. 13, 1918	Orange Grove	0.23000	360.45450
June 17, 1919	West Lankershim	1.17000	361.62450
July 23, 1919	Dodson	1.05000	362.67450
Aug. 06, 1919	Fort Mac Arthur	0.56000	363.23450
Sep. 10, 1919	Peck	0.45000	363.68450
Sep. 25, 1919	Harbor View	0.17500	363.85950
Feb. 26, 1920	St. Francis	0.05000	363.90950
Sep. 10, 1920	Hill	0.11000	364.01950
Nov. 19, 1920	Chatsworth	0.34000	364.35950
Feb. 28, 1922	La Brea	1.53000	365.88950
Mar. 02, 1922	Manchester	0.33000	366.21950
June 16, 1922	Melrose	0.67000	366.88950
July 13, 1922	Sawtelle	1.82000	368.70950
July 27, 1922	Angeles Mesa	0.99000	369.69950
Oct. 05, 1922	Angeles Mesa 2	0.34000	370.03950
Oct. 05, 1922	Rimpau	0.14000	370.17950
Jan. 18, 1923	Hancock	0.26000	370.43950
Jan. 18, 1923	Evans	0.13000	370.56950
May 16, 1923	Ambassador	2.63000	373.19950
May 16, 1923	Laurel Canyon	13.57000	386.76950

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Total Square Miles</b>
May 17, 1923	Hyde Park	1.20000	387.96950
May 17, 1923	Eagle Rock	3.17000	391.13950
May 17, 1923	Vermont	0.02500	391.16450
May 17, 1923	Laguna	0.08000	391.24450
May 17, 1923	Carthay	0.38000	391.62450
Dec. 20, 1923	Rosewood	0.62000	392.24450
Dec. 20, 1923	Agoure	0.02000	392.26450
Dec. 29, 1923	Lankershim	7.64000	399.90450
Feb. 04, 1924	Providencia	4.82000	404.72450
Feb. 13, 1924	Cienega	0.93000	405.65450
Feb. 21, 1924	Annandale	0.68000	406.33450
May 31, 1924	Clinton	0.05000	406.38450
Sep. 08, 1924	Wagner	0.94000	407.32450
Sep. 08, 1924	Fairfax	1.88000	409.20450
Jan. 03, 1925	Holabird	0.01000	409.21450
Jan. 08, 1925	Danziger	0.12300	409.33750
Jan. 30, 1925	Hamilton	0.44000	409.77750
Apr. 28, 1925	Martel	0.23000	410.00750
Apr. 28, 1925	Santa Monica Canyon	0.17000	410.17750
Oct. 26, 1925	Beverly Glen	0.81000	410.98750
Nov. 25, 1925	Venice	4.10500	415.09250
Mar. 18, 1926	Green Meadows	3.57000	418.66250
May 10, 1926	Buckler	0.20000	418.86250
May 29, 1926	Watts	1.69000	420.55250
Aug. 04, 1926	Sunland	6.01000	426.56250
Nov. 18, 1926	Tuna Canyon	7.67000	434.23250
Mar. 05, 1927	Mar Vista	4.98400	439.21650
Apr. 11, 1927	Barnes City	1.81000	441.02650
June 11, 1927	Brayton	0.07500	441.10150
Feb. 10, 1928	Wiseburn	0.14000	441.24150
Nov. 27, 1928	White Point	0.01000	441.25150
Feb. 17, 1929	Classification Yard	0.41000	441.66150

**Source:** Annexation and Detachment Map, City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering M-880, City Archives. See also Phil Ethington, in The Development of Los Angeles City Gov.vol 2, 687.

## Appendix C

### Los Angeles Realty Board Leadership 1903-1922

William H. Akin: governing committee 1915-1917  
Robert M. Allen: governing committee 1911-12  
Daniel T. Althouse: governing committee 1905-1906  
Charles D. Andrews: vice president 1910-1911, governing committee 1911-1912,  
president 1912-1913  
Frank Ayers: governing committee 1920-1921  
James V. Baldwin: vice president 1904-1905, governing committee 1906-1907 and 1908-1909  
David Barry: governing committee 1908-1909 and 1910-1911  
James M. Best: secretary 1917-1919  
George N. Black: founding member, treasurer 1903 and 1905-1906,  
governing committee 1909-1911  
Rolden L. Borden: governing committee 1923  
Lucian L. Bowen: vice president 1906-1908  
Luther T. Bradford: governing committee 1915-1917  
Frank H. Brooks: governing committee 1920-1921, vice president 1922\*  
W. L. Brent: vice president 1923  
Elden P. Bryan: vice president 1914-1915  
Thomas C. Bundy: treasurer 1911-1912, governing committee 1912-1913 and 1914-1915, vice  
president 1913-1914  
Lawrence B. Burck: governing committee 1910-1912, vice president 1912-1913  
Herbert Burdett: founding member, secretary 1903-1911  
Theodore R. Cadwalader: governing committee 1917-1919  
Harry R. Callender: governing committee 1914-1915, vice president 1915-1916  
Patrick C. Campbell: governing committee 1917-1919  
W. Ross Campbell: governing committee 1911-1912  
Thomas D. Campbell: governing committee 1916-1917, vice president 1920-1921  
W. H. Chamberlin: governing committee 1906-1909  
S.J. Chapman:  
Percy H. Clark: governing committee 1905-1906  
Harry T. Coffin: governing committee 1919-1920  
Elmer E. Cole: treasurer 1920-1921, vice president 1922  
Charles W. Conway: founding member, governing committee 1903 and 1905-1906 and 1909-  
1910, treasurer 1910-1911 and 1912-1913  
Harold Cook: governing committee 1913-1914, treasurer 1914-1915,  
governing committee 1915-1916  
Herbert L. Cornish: vice president 1911-1912 and 1914-1917, president 1917-1918  
George A. Cortelyou: vice president 1912-1913  
Harry H. Culver: governing committee 1915-1917  
William H. Daum: vice president 1920-1921  
George W. Dickinson: governing committee 1916-1917  
Lucien J. Durnerin: vice president 1922  
Byron Erkenbrecher: founding member, governing committee 1903 and 1907-1910,  
president 1904-1906

Oscar E. Farish: president 1907-1909  
S. Ross Fenner: secretary 1919-1921  
Frederick W. Flint, Jr.: founding member, governing committee 1903 and 1905-1906  
Fred Forrester: governing committee 1918-1920  
John Foster: governing committee 1903 and 1911-1912  
Harvey M. Foster: governing committee 1922  
William May Garland: founding member, vice president 1906-1909, president 1909-1912  
E.J. Gates: governing committee 1918-1919  
George M. Giffen: governing committee 1905-1906 and 1909-1910, treasurer 1906-1909  
John T. Griffith: governing committee 1906-1907  
Horace G. Hamilton: governing committee 1914-1916  
W.H. Harrison: governing committee 1920-21  
Edwin G. Hart: vice president 1916-1917, governing committee 1922, president 1923  
Mr. Hastings: governing committee 1918-1919  
W. A. Heitman: governing committee 1919-1920  
J.B. Hollingsworth: vice president 1903  
William I. Hollingsworth: governing committee 1915-1919, president 1919-1920  
Charles B. Hopper: governing committee 1920-1922, vice president 1923  
Cal F. Hunter: governing committee 1918-1920  
Tom Ingersoll: secretary 1923  
Herman Janss: governing committee 1915-1917  
Peter Janss: governing committee 1911-1915  
Herbert R. Kells: governing committee 1920-1921  
Roy B. King: governing committee 1918-1919  
Fred Latimer: governing committee 1917-1919  
Richard D. List: vice president 1904-1906  
Joseph R. Loftus: vice president 1907-1908 and 1910-11, governing committee 1908-1910  
Robert Marsh: vice president 1910-1911  
Austin O. Martin: governing committee 1918-1920  
Harry Lee Martin:  
Daniel F. McGarry: governing committee 1915-1916 and 1919-1920, vice president 1916-1918,  
president 1918-1919  
Leonard Merrill: founding member, governing committee 1905-1906, president 1906-1907  
Clinton E. Miller: governing committee 1917-1919, president 1919-1920\*\*  
Bert O. Miller: governing committee 1920-1922  
William W. Mines: governing committee 1906-1907 and 1908-1909 and 1911-1913 and  
1918-1919, vice president 1913-1914, president 1914-1917  
Richard C. Mitchell: governing committee 1919-1920  
F.A. Patee: governing committee 1917-1918  
Clement J. Pearce: secretary 1922  
A.M. Pomeroy: governing committee 1905-1906, vice president 1907-1909  
R.W. Poindexter: governing committee 1906-1907  
Hervey M. Porter: treasurer 1923  
Loul M Pratt: governing committee 1909-1910  
Philip D. Rowan: governing committee 1918-1920  
Robert A. Rowan: founding member, governing committee 1903

Guy M. Rush: governing committee 1914-1915 and 1916-1917, vice president 1915-1916  
Frank Ryan: governing committee 1918-1919, treasurer 1919-1920, president 1920-1922  
William A. Ryon: governing committee 1919-1920  
Paul Schenck: founding member  
R.J. Schewpe: governing committee 1916-1917  
Roy C. Seeley: governing committee 1914-1915, treasurer 1915-1917  
Lewis E. Shepherd: governing committee 1916-1917  
Allan Shore: governing committee 1920-1922  
Edward D. Silent: founding member, governing committee 1908-1911  
George M. SoRelle: governing committee 1918-1920  
William B. Stringfellow: governing committee 1920-1922  
Frank Strong: vice president 1904-1906  
C.C.C. (Clifford) Tatum: founding member, governing committee 1913-1916 and 1923  
Ofield A. Vickrey: governing committee 1915-1919, treasurer 1917-1918,  
vice president 1919-1920, president 1920-1921  
Bernard Vollmer: governing committee 1914-1916  
James R.H. Wagner: vice president 1912-1913, president 1913-1914  
O.G. Wildey: governing committee 1919-1920  
Richard C. Willis: treasurer 1922  
Philip D. Wilson: secretary 1911-1922  
Gilbert S. Wright: governing committee 1906-1907 and 1908-1909,  
vice president 1919-1920 and 1922

\*In 1922 the LARB moved from nominating board members in June for a 12 month appointment to following the calendar year and electing new officers every January.

\*\* Clinton Miller took over presidential responsibilities from William Hollingsworth, who was appointed a NAREB vice president.



## Appendix D

### Los Angeles Realty Board Associate Members, 1911

Althouse Brothers*	Home Savings Bank
B. W. Bartels	Huntington Land and Improvement Company
Jonathan D. Bicknell	Isaacs Brothers
E. W. Britt	J. B. Lankershim
Broadway Bank and Trust Company	Arthur Letts
W. H. Bryan	Los Angeles Abstract and Trust Company
Burbank and Baker	Los Angeles Map and Address Company
California Saving Bank	Los Angeles Suburban Homes Company
Central National Bank	Los Angeles Trust and Savings Bank
Chapman Brothers' Company	Merchants' National Bank
Clark and Sherman Land Company	Orra E. Monatte
Commercial National Bank	National Bank of California
Ernest Crooke	Benjamin Page
Cudahy Ranch	George H. Pike
Equitable Saving Bank	A. W. Rhodes
Farmers' and Merchants' Bank	Security Savings Bank
First National Bank	Southern Trust Company
Lee C. Gates*	W. H. Stimson
German-American Savings Bank	Title Guarantee and Trust Company
Alfred E. Gwynn Company	Title Insurance and Trust Company
Hamburger Realty and Trust Company	Traders Bank of Los Angeles
H. W. Hellman Bldg.	Union Trust Company
Col. W. H. Holabird	J.B. Van Nuys

\*Indicates people/companies that later joined the Los Angeles Realty Board as active members.

**Source:** "Wipe Out Forever the Smudge of Socialism," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1911, III. No complete list of associate members has survived in the LARB Records. NAR published membership lists for active members only.

## **Bibilography**

### **Main Archive Collections**

California Association of Realtors

Collection of Tract Maps from a Real Estate Business Scrapbook, Los Angeles,

Young Research Library, UCLA

Home Owners Loan Corporation Records for Los Angeles

Los Angeles Realty Board Records, Young Research Library, UCLA

Los Angeles City Archives

National Association of Realtors Archives

### **Newspapers and Primary Source Magazines**

*California Real Estate*

*The California Eagle*

*Chicago Daily Tribune*

*Collier's*

*The Commerce Journal, USC*

*The Crisis*

*Los Angeles City Directories*

*Los Angeles Examiner*

*Los Angeles Express*

*Los Angeles Sentinel*

*The Los Angeles Times*

*Los Angeles City Directories 1909-1923*

*National Real Estate Journal*

*New York Times*

*San Francisco Chronicle*

*Western Insurance News*

*Torrance Enterprise*

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*Shelley V. Kraemer*, U.S. 334 (1948).

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