The American Dream Denied: The Inland Empire and Southern California's Legacy with Postwar, Anti-Black Racial Housing Discrimination

Akunna Chilaka

March 18, 2022

UC Santa Barbara

History Senior Honors Thesis

Course Instructor: Professor Brad Bouley

Thesis Advisor: Professor Giuliana Perrone

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

Completing this thesis was both an intense and rewarding experience. I owe my greatest gratitude to a group of extraordinary students and faculty at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Without these people's intellect, support, and above all camaraderie, I could not have partaken in this academic endeavor with the same enthusiasm and vigor. Similarly, this thesis would not have been possible if not for my faculty advisor, Professor Giuliana Perrone. I cannot stress the importance of Professor Perrone's support, knowledge, and personal guidance in pursuing this research topic. Likewise, much thanks to Professor Brad Bouley for all the support, instruction, and feedback he gave not just me, but the entire thesis class over the past two quarters.

I also want to thank Professor Sherene Seikaly, who supported my initial research and encouraged me to pursue the honors thesis during my Junior year—all the way back in Spring 2021. Moreover, I owe authors Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson and Dr. Lynn M. Hudson my appreciation, as during Summer 2021, they provided me with crucial insights into the research topic alongside further contextualization of their sources: *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites During the Jim Crow Era* and *West of Jim Crow: The Fight against California's Color Line*. There were a few students who, beyond moral support, not only peer-edited my paper, but gave vital feedback and additional research that strengthened my overall scholarship. Of such students, I want to thank Tamia MacDonald, Emily Searson, and Carolina Sanchez.

Lastly, a special thanks to my family and friends, especially my mother. Their help and support, be it motivational speeches or allowing me to vent in the wee hours of the morning, truly helped me reach the finish line that was completing this honors thesis.

Preface

In 2010, I faced a moment that dramatically altered my childhood: moving from Los Angeles County's Covina to the Inland Empire's Fontana. The Inland suburb's abundance of affordable land and space symbolized opportunity and progress for my ten-year-old self and family—ideals that were momentarily lost during the Great Recession era. However, as I became college aged, I grew curious about the Inland Empire's racial politics. What about this region could possess my family, Nigerian Americans native to Los Angeles County, to willfully migrate to one of its many boroughs? I scavenged the Internet with searches like, "the history of African Americans in Fontana" or the broader, "Racism in the Inland Empire" to quench my curiosity. What I discovered from this basic research shocked me: Black Angeleno O'Day H. Short and his family were murdered on December 16th, 1945, in their Fontana home. It not only troubled me that such a horrendous tragedy occurred in my hometown, but that I was unaware of it for years. From this discovery I then unearthed more illuminating history: following World War Two, an "exodus" occurred in Southern California. Akin to America's notable "Great Migration" that featured African Americans leaving the South for cities in the North and Midwest, this movement of people involved former Black Angelenos, like O'Day H. Short, who migrated to Inland cities like Fontana, San Bernardino, and Riverside. Such a phenomenon seemed to signal Black Californians' participation in widespread Postwar prosperity. They, too, were seeking a new life in a region that promised abundant housing and socioeconomic uplifting. The grisly murders of the Short family, however, begs a crucial question: How were pervasive racial violence and biased policies used to impede Black Californians from basking in the Postwar fruits of secure housing and financial stability in the Inland Empire and broader Southern California?

This thesis exposes the hidden legacy of harmful housing discrimination in post-World War Two Southern California. Unlike traditional studies, however, I focus on the underappreciated stories of the Black Americans who migrated to Inland Empire cities – including Fontana and Riverside, between the 1940s and the 1960s. By tracing the explicit racial violence and colorblind legislation that fueled housing discrimination, I will show how and why the Postwar promise of guaranteed housing and greater socioeconomic stability went unfulfilled for this subset of Black Californians.

Chapter 1:
The National Mid-Century, Postwar Moment: A Dubious American Dream

Shelter as a Status Symbol

"In the post-war United States, you had this race to the suburbs. Cities shrank, the suburbs got bigger - and the notion of community changed drastically. You went from all being very close together to all being spaced apart and slightly suspicious of one another." [1]

Joe Gebbia, American Designer, CEO of Airbnb

In discussing the Postwar African American housing struggle in the Inland Empire (IE) and Southern California (SoCal), it is crucial to first examine and contextualize the social phenomena that engulfed the twentieth century United States. From World War One, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and ultimately World War Two, such phenomena ushered in a fixation with opulent homeownership signaling one's socioeconomic success. This preliminary study thus unveils the significance housing and property ownership grew to have in not just Southern California, but the overall American public sphere throughout the twentieth century. Considering this gradual contemporary development; I ask: how did housing transform from typifying man's basic shelter into a commodity that indicated one's socioeconomic stability and greater affluence?

Shelter is historically integral to the American populace, customarily being declared one of the five basic needs to safeguard human survival.[2] For much of America's history, shelter often connoted tightknit, densely populated urban towns or vast, humble rural farmlands [3]. Yet, as

[1] Joe Gebbia, "Post-War United States," BrainyQuote, accessed December 1, 2021, https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/joe_gebbia_897273.
[2] "Human Needs," NASA, accessed December 1, 2021, https://www.nasa.gov/pdf/162514main_Human_Needs.pdf.
[3] Frank Olito, "Vintage Photos That Show What Life Was Like in America's First Suburb in the '50s," Insider, last modified September 14, 2020, https://www.insider.com/vintage-photos-levittown-suburbs-50s#before-the-1950s-people-mostly-lived-in-cities-to-be-close-to-factory-jobs-1.

industrialization, economic depression, and war ravaged the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a newfound ideal concerning shelter arose—one that crafted the entity as, albeit fundamental, a glamourous concoction of the past urban living rife with resources and spacious rural enclaves: suburbia.

An American Dream and Glamorized Suburbs

An aerial view of a suburban community. Hulton Archive/ Getty. Retrieved from Frank Olito's Article.[4]

During the post-World War Two era, the suburbs began to epitomize the ideal, conventional shelter within the United States. This is largely due to World War Two's aftermath ushering in a national "rebirth"; profitable wartime production alongside FDR New Deal-era policies designed to boost economic growth (i.e., the G.I Bill) triggered a Postwar boom in the economy and housing market. This boom resulted in an abundance of jobs, interstate highways,

[4] "An aerial view of a suburban community," *Insider / Hulton Archive / Getty*, n.d.https://www.insider.com/vintage-photos-levittown-suburbs-50s.

and the subsequent development of picturesque single-family housing.[5] Newfound optimism and capitalism reigned this Postwar American renaissance; comfortable, middle class living that led to long-term affluence was now widespread and normalized, thus seemed feasible for the average American to attain. The ability to own an idyllic home consequently became tantamount to achieving the status and prosperity that the overall nation championed. Hence, Americans growing up in the late 1940s to mid-1960s ultimately witnessed the vision of simultaneous rudimentary and attainable markers of socioeconomic success propagate the public discourse. Within this vision, the marker of secure, "oasis-like" housing was emphasized. Princeton University Professor Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor says it best in *Race for Profit*:

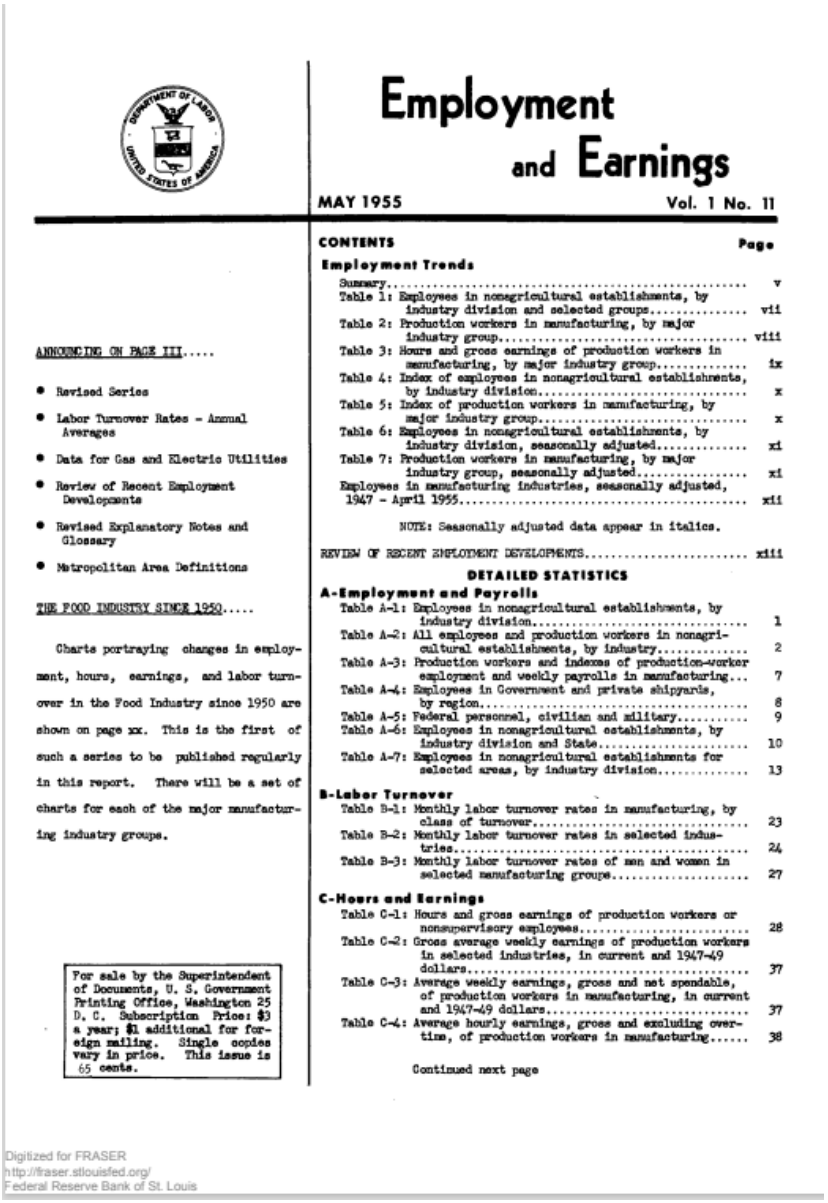
> *"The widespread access to homeownership across the United States in the aftermath of World War II cemented it as a fundamental feature of the cultural conceptions of citizenship and belonging.[6]"*

This growing accessibility and romanticization of homeownership could not occur without the abundant labor and rising consumer culture that the post-World War Two boom fostered. Blue-collar, industrial jobs experienced the biggest gains from the national Postwar socioeconomic prosperity. The Department of Labor's May 1955 Employment and Earnings Report exemplifies this reality, documenting the-then relevant employment trends.

---

[5] Larry Holzwarth, "Policies and Programs That Molded Society," HistoryCollection.com, last modified November 8, 2019, https://historycollection.com/policies-and-programs-that-molded-society/17/.

[6] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "INTRODUCTION: Homeowner's Business," in *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership* (North Carolina: Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), Kindle, 14.



Employment and Earnings

MAY 1955 Vol. 1 No. 11

ANNOUNCING ON PAGE III.....

- Revised Series
- Labor Turnover Rates - Annual Averages
- Data for Gas and Electric Utilities
- Review of Recent Employment Developments
- Revised Explanatory Notes and Glossary
- Metropolitan Area Definitions

THE FOOD INDUSTRY SINCE 1950.....

Charts portraying changes in employment, hours, earnings, and labor turnover in the Food Industry since 1950 are shown on page xx. This is the first of such a series to be published regularly in this report. There will be a set of charts for each of the major manufacturing industry groups.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25 D. C. Subscription Price: $3 a year; $1 additional for foreign mailing. Single copies vary in price. This issue is 65 cents.

CONTENTS

Continued next page

The documents affirm the ongoing growth in industries such as manufacturing, metal, lumber, etc. These jobs were steppingstones to the middle-class and its fruits of stability, and suburban housing connotated this stability.

Employment Trends

NONFARM EMPLOYMENT UP 400,000 IN APRIL

Nonfarm employment rose by 400,000 in April 1955, the sharpest March-to-April employment gain since 1950. Most of the increase was due to increased employment in construction, trade, and service, but the most significant over-the-month development was an increase of 40,000 in manufacturing. Factory employment has declined sharply between March and April in 7 of the 8 preceding postwar years. The improvement in the factory employment situation was widespread, with 17 of the 21 major industry groups showing strength.

Since the beginning of the year, nonfarm employment has risen by nearly 900,000, close to the postwar record rise of 1 million in 1950 and larger than gains recorded over this period in other postwar years. The factory uptrend was the major factor in this sharp rise.

Nonfarm employment of 48.6 million in April was more than 500,000 higher than a year earlier, but about 800,000 lower than the April 1953 level.

The average factory workweek declined by one-half an hour between March and April to 40.2, about the usual drop for this time of year, but was 1.2 hours above last April.

As a consequence, average weekly earnings were down from last month's alltime peak, but, at $76.77, were still an alltime high for the month.

1955 FACTORY UPTREND SETTING PACE

Manufacturing employment rose 40,000 between March and April 1955, to 16.2 million, almost 300,000 above a year ago. It was the first time since 1950 and the second time since the peacetime reconversion following World War II that the factory job total has risen between March and April.

Since January of this year, factory employment has increased almost 320,000, the sharpest January to April gain since 1947.

Improvement in the employment situation was general, as over-the-month changes in nearly all of the 21 major manufacturing industry groups met or exceeded seasonal expectations.

As in the past few months, the sharpest gains occurred in metal and metal products industries. These rises, plus gains in lumber and stone, clay, and glass, boosted durable-goods employment by 88,000, offsetting a decline of 47,000 in nondurable-goods plants.

Continuing its recent expansion, the primary metals group added about 23,000 workers--the largest March-to-April rise since 1950. The rise in primary metals since January was 71,000, an unusually large gain.

The machinery industry group added about 22,000 workers between March and April, the third consecutive significant increase and contrasting with the 18-month decline which began in mid-1953. Especially noteworthy was the fact that this month's employment pickup included plants making producer's durable equipment. Since January, machinery plants have added 60,000 workers to their payrolls. This gain, however, was insufficient to offset 1954 losses and, at 1.6 million workers in April of this year, employment was about 30,000 below the corresponding 1954 level.

The upswing in the transportation equipment group continued into the seventh month, as 17,000 more workers were added, mainly in automobile plants. Since the beginning of the year this group has increased by 70,000 and in April employed about 90,000 more people than a year earlier.

Improvement was also widespread in the nondurable-goods sector. Food products rose by 13,000--substantially more than usual. Over-the-month increases in paper, printing, and chemicals were in marked contrast to usual seasonal declines, while in textiles and apparel, the March-to-April employment reductions were smaller than in most post-Easter seasons.

Fourteen of the 21 major manufacturing groups were above year-ago levels, with only ordnance and machinery substantially lower. Compared to the 1953 alltime high for the month, however, manufacturing employment was still down 1.1 million.

CONSTRUCTION RECORDS SECOND CONSECUTIVE SHARP GAIN

Construction employment rose by 153,000 between March and April, and unusually large gain for this time of year, bringing employment in the industry to 2.4 million. This was, however, 35,000 under last year's April figure and approximately 90,000 under the 1953 record for the month.

Mining employment, which usually declines at this time of year, was unchanged over the month, as heavy demands by the steel industry kept employment levels stable.

On the other hand, transportation and public utilities and trade did not show the usual March to April pickups. An over-the-month decline in trans-

x

Excerpt: "Manufacturing employment rose 40, 000 between March and April 1955, to 16. 2 million, almost 300,000 above a year ago. It was the first time since 1950 and the second time since the peacetime reconversion following World War II that the factory job total has risen between March and April." Since January of this year, factory employment has increased almost 320,000, the sharpest January to April gain since 1947." [7]

[7] Department of Labor, *Employment and Earnings, May 1955*, (1955), https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/employment-earnings-60/may-1955-20075.

Alongside this real-world implication of jobs strengthening housing's newfound importance, the flourishing of consumer culture further affirmed the perks and attainability of suburbia. Television and print media were the main culprits in advancing this perspective. Media portrayals of families like The Nelsons in *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* and The Cleavers in *Leave it to Beaver* cemented this reimagined American Dream into viewers' minds: an intact, financially stable nuclear family that effortlessly owned their beautiful residential property with a white picket fence. This message fundamentally preached upward mobility, hence the notion of men working hard at a blue (sometimes white) collar job was the sole crucial component that allowed anyone to achieve luxurious, middle-class suburbia—the quintessential piece of the American Dream.

[8]

The Nelson Family; left to right: David, Ozzie, Harriet, Ricky.

[8] Basing their trailblazing radio show and sitcom on their real-life domesticity, Ozzie and Harriet went on to become the main typification of the postwar, mid-twentieth century ideal: a harmonious, prosperous family unit, with their home serving as the true status symbol of their societal wellbeing.

. 

The fictional Cleaver Family in Leave it to Beaver; left to right: Ward (Hugh Beaumont), June (Barbara Billingsley), Wally (Tony Dow), Theodore "Beaver" (Jerry Mathers).[9]

This vision is inherently a byproduct of the United States vehemently desiring to forgo past hardship, ultimately favoring relaxed, pedestrian modernity. Such past hardship notably originated from two global events: The Great Depression and World War Two. Indeed, in a period of unprecedented economic struggle and larger national destitution, the Great Depression help produced the suburb ideal through federal relief policies. KCET's Jeremy Rosenberg highlights how Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Measures, specifically the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), simultaneously ended the Great Depression and birthed suburban sprawl.[10] Likewise, World War Two fundamentally changed the nation's mores, forcing the traditionally isolationist populace into a fast-paced, brutal international crisis. It is estimated that the conflict took up to 420,000 American lives.[11] Hence, for Americans distraught from the recent warfare, it is evident

[9] "The Cleavers from Leaver it to Beaver," *LAmag*, n.d.https://www.lamag.com/culturefiles/colonial-street-universal-studios/.
[10] Jeremy Rosenberg, "The Birth of Sprawl: How Ending the Great Depression Meant Inventing the Suburbs," KCET, last modified October 1, 2012, https://www.kcet.org/history-society/the-birth-of-sprawl-how-ending-the-great-depression-meant-inventing-the-suburbs.
[11] "How Many Americans Died in WW2?," History on the Net, last modified November 25, 2021, https://www.historyonthenet.com/how-many-americans-died-in-ww2.

that a life encompassing a stable quality outweighed wartime uncertainty. Having active autonomy over one's personal livelihood thereby became greatly stressed in the immediate Postwar period. Undeniably, the ability for one to decide their future home's type and location was crucial for Americans, as the home now symbolized a person's intimate space where not only family congregated but personal progress occurred. Alongside this, there was rising disillusionment with the collective, overpopulated urban communities amongst many Americans; following the war arose recent veterans with new, young families desiring to forgo the established cities' rowdiness and crowdedness for a suburban refuge—an oasis of plentiful, identical single-family homes that superficially retained past rural life's ample space and separation from bold, overwhelming city life that nevertheless maintained a close distance to metropolitan resources and greater industry. Notorious real-estate developer William J. Levitt seized this Postwar demand for picturesque, ostensibly understated affordable boroughs. In the late 1940s and 1950s, Levitt's firm Levitt and Sons pioneered the mass production of the modern suburb sprawl "Levittowns" in America's east coast.[12]

> *"Levittowns were built on vast tracts of exurban. They were filled with spanking new, cute, affordable mass-produced imitation Cape Cod colonial homes like those in Plate 6's 1947 streetscape of Levittown, New York."* [13]

[12] "Street in Levittown, Pennsylvania, Near Philadelphia."
[13] Herbert J. Gans, "Levittown and America," *The Levittowners*, 1967, 63, http://courses.washington.edu/gmforum/Readings/Gans.pdf.

A Levittown community in the 1950s. (Insider and Tony Linck/ Getty)[14]

With their external, prototypical familiarity and prices as low as $7,000, Levittowns were a hit, attracting young adults hoping to seize an opportunity to obtain idealized middle-class domesticity.[15] Championing his company as ““the General Motors of the housing industry” William Levitt famously oversaw the construction of one Levittown home per sixteen minutes, utilizing a parallel, Henry Ford-esque assembly line system that revolutionized the automotive industry decades prior.[16] Ultimately, Levitt’s unabashed approach to quenching the lust for suburbia was innovative, as his “Levittowns” transcended their East Coast roots and spearheaded parallel developments nationwide throughout the Postwar period.

[14] "A Levittown community in the 1950s," *Insider and Tony Linck/ Getty*, n.d.https://www.insider.com/vintage-photos-levittown-suburbs-50s.
[15] Colin Marshall, "Levittown, the Prototypical American Suburb – a History of Cities in 50 Buildings, Day 25," The Guardian, last modified April 28, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/apr/28/levittown-america-prototypical-suburb-history-cities
[16] Marshall, " Levittown.”

"Street in Levittown, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, one of the United States' earliest complete, planned communities aimed at satisfying a ferocious demand for housing in the late 1940s and 1950s, especially from veterans of World War II and their families […] Levittown became the prototype for the stereotypical American suburb."[17]

[17] "Street in Levittown, Pennsylvania, Near Philadelphia," Library of Congress, accessed December 1, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/highsm.56988/.

A Doubtful American Dream amidst Lingering Discriminatory Housing Policy

Given the background of housing's definitive importance to America's Postwar years, evidently the home became nationally analogous, perhaps predestined, to a fulfilling, complete mid-twentieth century American identity. The propagation and assertion of a definite American Dream and its achievable societal markers of employment and property ownership truly attested to this notion. However, this identity was unfortunately only reserved for white Americans. The inclusion of African Americans and other people of color's mid-twentieth century experiences challenged the prospects of widespread, equitable achievement. Indeed, the perspectives of working to upper middle-class white Americans are overemphasized in this uplifting recollection of housing's gradual formation into the ideal representation of Postwar American socioeconomic richness. For white Americans, this notion of "upward mobility" that came with the housing and greater socioeconomic boom was not solely an aspiration within the Postwar American vision, but rather a feasible reality. For Black and other non-white Americans, the dream came with tremendous struggle.

This general recount of national, mid-twentieth century prosperity often brushes over or outright negates the struggle marginalized communities like African Americans faced when seeking fair, worthy homeownership—the key element of the Postwar riches. Historically, such racial/ethnic discrimination against minorities was legally entrenched nationally for decades in the pre-Postwar past; decisions like the Supreme Court's 1926 *Corrigan v. Buckley* upheld the enforcement of racially restrictive housing covenants, thereby barring minorities from purchasing residential properties in white neighborhoods.[18] The case states:

[18] "Corrigan V. Buckley, 271 U.S. 323 (1926)," Justia Law, last modified May 24, 1926, https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/271/323/.

"1. This Court has no jurisdiction of an appeal from the court of appeals of the District of Columbia founded on alleged constitutional questions so unsubstantial as to be plainly without color of merit and frivolous. P. 271 U. S. 329." [19]

After the war however, the possibility for change seemed brighter. Throughout America's involvement in World War Two, a newfound national sentiment arose and subsequently lingered following the war's aftermath: the need for America to stand as the modern supreme world power, free of the injustices and fascism that the rivaling Axis Powers advanced. This viewpoint would consequently interpret practices that explicitly obstructed Americans' livelihoods as shameful—an affront to the principles of liberty, equality, and justice that the nation's Framers professed. Hence, there was a moment where the nation attempted to relax explicitly race-based housing policies amid the Jim Crow, Postwar period. *1948's Shelley v. Kraemer* embodies this subtle Postwar push for fairness; including key arguments from Civil Rights champions Justice Thurgood Marshall and Loren Miller, *Kraemer* ruled the state-enforcement of restrictive, discriminatory covenants unconstitutional.[20] The case states:

"It cannot be doubted that among the civil rights intended to be protected from discriminatory state action by the Fourteenth Amendment are the rights to acquire, enjoy, own and dispose of property. Equality in the enjoyment of property rights was regarded by the framers of that Amendment as an essential pre-condition to the realization of other basic civil rights and liberties which the Amendment was intended to guarantee."[21]

---

[19] "Corrigan V. Buckley."
[20] Gaye T. Johnson, "Luisa Moreno, Charlotta Bass, and the Constellations of Interethnic Working-Class Radicalism," in *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2013), 42, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520954854.
[21] "Shelley V. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1 (1948)," Justia Law, last modified May 3, 1948, https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/334/1/.

Shelley v. Kraemer was the landmark decision that opened homeownership to non-white people. The case not only-cemented individual property ownership as the integral expression of a secured, valuable American livelihood, but signaled key powerful government actors' desire to erase the overtly bigoted practices in the mid-twentieth century housing market—a tactic that would thereby ensure America's Postwar image as the bastion of equally accessible opportunity. Taylor best encapsulates the case, writing: "This American particularity of property rights as an expression of citizenship was reinforced in the 1948 landmark Shelley v. Kraemer."[22] Knowing this, one might presume that following *Kraemer*, instances of housing discrimination against African Americans and greater people of color were curtailed or at the very least scrutinized. They were not.

Inescapable: Ubiquitous Housing Discrimination persisted in the Postwar Years

While monumental, *Shelley v. Kraemer* was not the ultimate "deathblow" to biased housing practices. The ruling made clear that courts could not be used to enforce discriminatory housing covenants, but individuals could still refuse to sell their homes to non-white people. Neither the law nor the courts could regulate personal behavior. Therefore, more implicit, colorblind strategies were implemented to keep barring African Americans from lucrative homeownership; Organizations ranging from white homeowners' associations to the Federal Housing Act allowed, or outright required, neighborhoods, realtors, and loan companies to comply with the problematic covenants. Mainstream resistance to this continuing housing problem was initially limited; the suburbs' chief champion William Levitt famously acquiesced to excluding Black Americans from the majority white Levittown neighborhoods:

[22] Taylor, "Homeowner's Business," 14.

"[…] I have come to know that if we sell one house to a Negro family, then 90 or 95 percent of our white customers will not buy into the community. This is their attitude, not ours. As a company, our position is simply this: We can solve a housing problem, or we can try to solve a racial problem, but we cannot combine the two." [23]

Clearly, the Postwar American landscape contained a major, irrefutable predicament: homeownership was deemed as a modern, universal American ideal, yet segments of the population were impeded from obtaining this socioeconomic marker of success. This prejudicial mid-twentieth century landscape unsettled African Americans. As the modern civil rights movement grew, the group expressed opposition to racialized housing discrimination through activism, community-organizing, and overt defiance. Indeed, Black Americans recognized their right to exist in the American polity akin to their white peers; thus, covenants alone would not stop the minority group from attempting to seize and ultimately bask in rewarding Postwar property ownership. However, admirable, and brave Black insistence would at times be insufficient to combat the mounting racial violence and hostile tactics utilized concurrently with established policies. Case in point: The trials and tribulations within the Postwar Black housing struggle in Southern California.

[23] Bruce Lambert, "At 50, Levittown Contends With Its Legacy of Bias," New York Times, last modified December 28, 1997, https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/28/nyregion/at-50-levittown-contends-with-its-legacy-of-bias.html.

Chapter 2

From Los Angeles to the Inland Empire: The Flourishment and Implication of Jim Crow, Housing Discrimination in Postwar Southern California

A map of California from Lynn M. Hudson's West of Jim Crow. The cities crowded together southward encompass what is often deemed as Southern California's Los Angeles (LA) and Inland Empire (IE): Pasadena, Los Angeles, Anaheim, Fontana, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Big Bear.[24]

"What any person can know with entire certainty…is that the Shorts were victims of Jim Crow…All the Shorts are dead. Only Jim Crow is alive."[25]

The Los Angeles Sentinel's John Marshall reflecting over the deaths of O'Day H. Short and his family in Fontana in the Sentinel's February 28, 1946 issue.

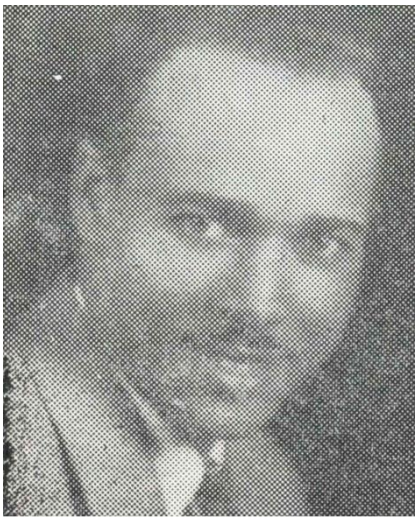
[24] "A Map of California," *Lynn M. Hudson's West of Jim Crow*, 2020, https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:9443/chapter/2731788/pdf.
[25] "John Marshall," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, February 26, 1946, 7.

December 16th, 1945: The Day Terrorism Entered an Inland Town

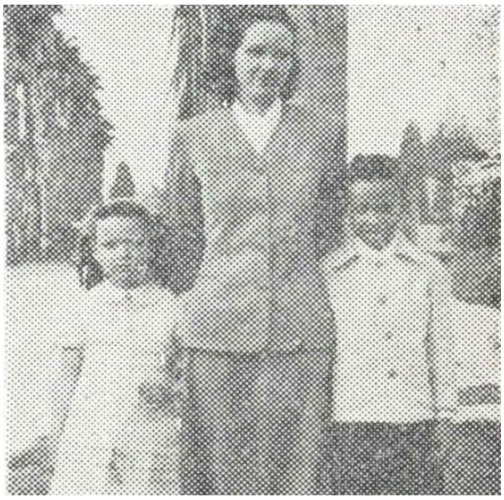
Sunday, December 16th, 1945. At first glance, the date symbolizes the early days of America's immediate Postwar moment; a mere three months prior, World War II was formally declared over on September 2nd.[26] This event was indicative of the United States' simultaneous literal and figurative entrance into the modern, Postwar age, standing as a world power with an abundance of jobs, affordable suburbs, and strong family units. Knowing this, one might see the date, December 16th, 1945, and find it difficult to envision anything noteworthy, let alone insidious, occurring amid America's resurgence. Yet, ultimately, December 16th, 1945, lives in subtle infamy. It is a day emblematic of the region's existing racial resentment clashing with the ongoing Postwar middle-class suburbanization that was paradoxically deemed as accessible for all. This nuanced clash robbed a Black man and his family of their American Dream in Fontana, a town in Southern California's San Bernardino County, part of the greater Inland Empire. It was that Sunday evening when O'Day H. Short, his wife Helen, and two children, Barry and Ann, were victims of a fatal house bombing that took both their Fontana home and lives.

[26] "The End of World War II 1945," The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, accessed January 20, 2022, https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/topics/end-world-war-ii-1945.

The Shorts: Victims of the Dubious American Dream Ideal



Picture of O'Day H. Short[27]



Left to Right: Carol Ann Short, Helen Short, Barry Short[28]

The Shorts had a story akin to many white families in the immediate Postwar period. The young Black Californian family merely attempted to relish in the amenities of affordable, suburban housing and secure industry jobs that numerous cities in the state offered, exemplified with the Inland Empire's Fontana. Indeed, Southern California cities like Fontana personified the romanticized Postwar suburbanization that took over the nation; fifty miles east of Los Angeles and formally incorporated in 1952, Fontana was one of the many cities in the IE to undergo a transition from rural to suburban in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[29] This suburbanization was largely due to multi-millionaire Henry J. Kaiser's development of his eponymous steel mill.[30] Kaiser had a substantial footprint on the IE, with his steel mill fostering a plethora of industry jobs that guaranteed Americans easy entrance into secure, middle-class living—a position that the

[27] "O'Day H. Short," *From Vigilante Terror in Fontana*. 1946.
[28] "O'Day H. Short's Wife and Children," *From Vigilante Terror in Fontana*. 1946.
[29] "Trends for Fontana's Future- Fontana in the Context of the Inland Empire," Fontana, CA - Official Website | Official Website, last modified November 13, 2018, https://www.fontana.org/DocumentCenter/View/26757/Chapter-2---Trends-for-Fontanas-Future.
[30] "Fontana in the Context of the Inland Empire."

Postwar nation idealized. Thus, whether white or black, many were now attracted to Southern California's Inland Region, and O'Day H. Short was no exception.

KAISER EXPANDING PLANT AT FONTANA

To Spend $65,000,000 on New Facilities to Raise Steel Production Over 11%

NEW FINANCING ARRANGED

Banks to Supply $27,500,000 With $27,500,000 in Bonds to Be Sold Privately

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Title from The New York Times' March 7th, 1952 issue, suggesting the national recognition and publicization of Kaiser's industry developments in Fontana.[31]

O'Day H. Short's background is best detailed in Lynn M. Hudson's book *West of Jim Crow*. Hudson's commentary helps showcase Short as a man who was inherently a proactive, hard worker that simply wanted what was best for his young family. A native Black Angeleno for over twenty-five years, Short was a victim to Los Angeles's Postwar boom in population and development, a boom that inadvertently triggered a housing shortage that displaced, outright priced-out, many native Black Angelenos from the established urban mecca.[32] Moreover, with *Shelley v. Kraemer* still a few years away, restrictive racial housing covenants reigned over Los Angeles, further exacerbating the housing shortage, and barring Short and other minorities from

[31] "KAISER EXPANDING PLANT AT FONTANA," *New York Times*, March 7, 1952.
[32] Lynn M. Hudson, "Burning Down the House: California's Ku Klux Klan," in *West of Jim Crow: The Fight against California's Color Line* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 167-168, muse.jhu.edu/book/78346.

Los Angeles's desirable, majority white neighborhoods.[33] This overwhelming predicament, alongside the personal aspiration to ensure his family's wellbeing, drove Short to migrate his family to Fontana, one of the many blossoming SoCal Inland boomtowns in the Postwar years. As a refrigeration engineer, Short viewed Fontana's plentiful Kaiser Steel mill industry jobs with optimism. Likewise, the Inland borough's abundance of new, spacious suburban housing greatly excited the Shorts. Short ultimately purchased his Fontana home in September 1945;[34] the family subsequently moved into their home south of Fontana's Baseline Street in early December 1945—an area no Black family had ever resided beforehand.[35] This aspect to the Shorts' move is rather troubling; regardless of national mantras of Postwar progress and enlightenment, mid-twentieth century America—and Southern California—nevertheless subscribed to a Jim Crow social order where Black people and other marginalized communities were ostracized. Hence, the idea of a Black family moving into a white neighborhood was bound to ignite tension. However, it is noteworthy that Fontana explicitly denounced Jim Crow's embarrassing stranglehold—an act that could understandably reassure Black Californians like Short who were accustomed to rampant, daily prejudice. Lynn M. Hudson highlights how the Inland town promoted itself as a place, "[…] free of the Jim Crow restrictions that increasingly hemmed in and humiliated black citizens."[36] Despite outward expressions, however, O'Day H. Short's quest for socioeconomic stability dispels the notion of Postwar Fontana as a Jim-Crow free zone. His presence met instantaneous backlash and subsequent fatal brutality from Fontana's white residents.

[33] Hudson, "Burning Down the House," 168.
[34] Ibid., 190.
[35] Ibid., 192.
[36] Ibid., 167.

The Murder of O'Day H. Short and his Family: The Horrors Before, Amid, and After

Indeed, with their move into a white neighborhood, local white residents quickly mobilized against the Shorts, violating the family's personal space and autonomy in the process. *The Los Angeles Sentinel,* a Black Californian newspaper crucial in publicizing and confronting SoCal's Postwar fair housing effort, frequently documented and exposed the Shorts' dangerous reality to its Southern Californian readers.[37] In a January 3rd, 1946 editorial, the *Sentinel* details a visit Short had with local deputy sheriffs "Tex" Cornelison and Joe Glines at his recently purchased residential property. In this visit, the two sheriffs delivered Short and his family a candid warning: that they were "out of bounds" and needed to move to alleviate neighbors' complaints.[38] Where exactly did Cornelison and Glines expect the Shorts to move to? In her February 1946 hard-hitting op-ed, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana,* local progressive trailblazer and Los Angeles' Social Workers Party (SWP) organizer Myra Tanner Weiss reveals that Fontana's segregated "Negro area" was the expected and preferred destination for the Black Californian family.[39] Such an interaction exemplifies the clear, established disregard for the Shorts' livelihoods among their white peers; indeed, as enforcers of the local law, Cornelison and Glines not only should have attested the unequivocal right Short had to living on his property to the complaining white neighbors, but protected the Short family's right to housing and larger property ownership in private residential areas.[40] However, considering that the officers went out of their way to give Short a frank warning at his home, it is undeniable that the quest to rid Fontana of O'Day H. Short's controversial

[37] For more on *The Los Angeles Sentinel* see: The Los Angeles Sentinel Newspaper is Published," African American Registry, last modified November 12, 2021, https://aaregistry.org/story/the-los-angeles-sentinel-newspaper-begins/.
[38] "Violence Threat Against Short Must Not Go Unchallenged: AN EDITORIAL," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, January 3, 1946, 1.
[39] Myra T. Weiss, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana: The Tragic Story of O'Day H. Short and His Family* (Los Angeles: SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY LOS ANGELES LOCAL, 1946), 7.
[40] "Violence Threat Against Short Must Not Go Unchallenged: AN EDITORIAL," 1.

presence at all costs was not only a collective effort amongst the town's white inhabitants, but garnered support from local federal actors.

The Shorts continued to face white pushback in the two weeks leading up to their deaths; on December 3, 1945, J. Sutherland, the white real estate broker who sold O'Day H. Short his Fontana lot, told Short about a vigilante committee that was determined to "deal" with the apparent Short problem:

"Short, the vigilante committee had a meeting on your case last night. They are a tough bunch to deal with. If I were you, I'd get my family off this property at once."[41]

Sutherland's words signaled a dangerous shift in the ongoing vitriol towards O'Day H. Short and his family, as he confirmed the vigilante committee's commitment to violence in their grave threat.[42] Despite the undeniable fear such threats could trigger, Short was not idle amid this ongoing white opposition. In his final weeks, Short connected with his attorney Ivan J. Johnson, a prominent NAACP lawyer from Los Angeles.[43] Following Johnson's advice, Short informed the FBI about the threats, and subsequently alerted local Black Californian newspapers like the *Sentinel* and *California Eagle* about his tribulations.[44] The *Sentinel* even published an interview with Short on December 6th, 1945, where the man recalled his, "[…] encounter with the vigilantes and his dangerous predicament."[45] It is these facts that suggest the spirit of protest and autonomy that O'Day H. Short and greater Black Californians had in the Postwar era; while already accustomed to centuries-long discrimination in the mid-twentieth century, evidently African Americans did not stay passive when being denied an entry into Postwar modernity, stability, and

[41] Weiss, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana," 7.*
[42] Weiss, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana," 7.*
[43] Hudson, "Burning Down the House," 192.
[44] Hudson, "Burning Down the House," 192.
[45] Ibid.

wealth accumulation. However, O'Day H. Short's activism unfortunately did little to deter Fontana's white vigilantes; ten days following the *Sentinel* interview, while the nation at large continued to craft an optimistic, just future, between 5:30 p.m. and 5:45 p.m., flames engulfed the Shorts' Fontana home.[46]

"The Short children were screaming; their mother was trying to quiet their cries. The two boys took the family to the hospital. The little girl Carol Ann, aged 7, was the first to die. Barry, aged 9, died during the night. By morning their mother, Mrs. Helen Short, was dead. Short himself died five weeks later."[47]

In the immediate aftermath of the Shorts' fatal house bombing, reports from Fontana's key federal officials like Fire Chief Ed Reeves and, questionably, Sheriff Joe Glines, deemed the Shorts' deaths an "accident", on the part of O'Day H. Short filling a lamp with kerosene that consequently caused the explosion [48]. Such a narrative grew traction in mainstream Inland SoCal publications like the *San Bernardino Sun*, which included in its December 17th, 1945, issue the article "Three Injured by Exploding Lamp", citing the officials' testimonies.[49] However, this notion of an accidental explosion is farfetched, if not Fontana's egregious attempt to curtail rightful outrage at the fatal Short incident. Further publicity from the Los Angeles NAACP, Black California newspapers, and progressive activists, exemplified with Myra Tanner Weiss, helped unveil the insidious truths behind December 16th, 1945. From Weiss's 1946 pamphlet, one is made privy to the fact that those who vehemently asserted the Shorts' deaths as an accident comprised of individuals like Joe Glines and "Tex" Cornelison, people who previously issued warnings,

[46] Ibid.
[47] Weiss, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana," 8.*
[48] Special Staff Correspondence, "Three Injured by Exploding Lamp," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 17, 1945.
[49] Special Staff Correspondence, "Three Injured by Exploding Lamp."

outright threats, to the Short family in the weeks leading up to the fatal house burning.[50] Likewise, in the Sentinel's January 10th, 1946 issue, the "Kerosene theory" concerning the Short incident is flatly denied, emphasizing the NAACP's consultation with arson expert Paul T. Wolfe.[51]

Title Cover of Weiss's Pamphlet Vigilante Terror in Fontana.[52]

News Article Header for Sentinel's January 10th, 1946 issue.[53]

Undoubtedly, Fontana's attempted coverup of the severity of the Shorts' deaths unsettled O'Day H. Short's allies. Such allies included *California Eagle's* Charlotta Bass and SWP's Weiss,

[50] Weiss, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana," 9.*
[51] "NAACP Brands Fontana Fire as Incendiary; Kerosene Theory Flatly Denied By Arson Expert," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, January 10, 1946, 1.
[52] Weiss, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana: The Tragic Story of O'Day H. Short and His Family*."
[53] "NAACP Brands Fontana Fire as Incendiary."

and they consequently staged mass, grassroots demonstrations throughout the Inland Empire. From Fontana to San Bernardino, these protests demanded government investigations into not just the deadly Short debacle, but potential Ku Klux Klan activity in Fontana and greater Southern California.[54] From such explicit local public pressure, Los Angeles's Attorney General Robert W. Kenny assured an, "independent and thorough" probe into "the mysterious fire" on February 13th, 1946 .[55] Furthermore, the Short family's deaths even garnered attention from the White House; in the *Sentinel's* April 18th, 1946 issue, it is revealed that director of San Bernardino's USO, W. Burdette Hockaday, traveled to Washington D.C to bring awareness of the demand for justice in Fontana among local SoCal residents to President Truman and U.S Attorney General Tom Clark. [56]

"W. Burdette Hockaday […] planned to leave the Burbank airport Friday night for Washington, where he will present to President Truman and US attorney General Tom Clark the demand of San Bernardino central council for a federal investigation into the vigilante threats and disastrous fire in Fontana, December 16th of last year […]"[57]

What the O'Day H. Short's Story Reveals about the Postwar Black Californian Experience

Beginning with an examination of O'Day H. Short's story is undeniably painful. Indeed, spotlighting the racial taunting and inevitable horror the Black Californian man and his family endured demonstrates that Fontana, the Inland Empire, and Southern California overall were susceptible to the antiblack, anti-minority sentiments that plagued predominantly white suburbs nationwide in the immediate Postwar period. Like many Black Californians in the Postwar era,

[54] "Grace E. Simons, "Attorney General Kenny Urged to Push Probe of Fontana Fire," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, January 31, 1946, 8.
[55] "R.W. Kenny Probing Fontana Fire Deaths," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, February 13, 1946, 23.
[56] "Fontana Probe Plea Taken to Pres. Truman," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 18, 1946, 1.
[57] "Fontana Probe Plea," 1.

Short merely pursued a chance at the "good life"—one where past hardship was erased and subsequently replaced with homeownership, socioeconomic security, and—above all—a nurtured family. Yet, evidently this desire rarely went easily fulfilled for African Americans; while the Postwar fruits were advertised as in abundance and accessible for all, the potential scenario of integrated neighborhoods and workplaces fostered much anxiety in many white Americans, as it challenged their established social status as the dominant racial group. Therefore, even in Southern California's budding, virtually untapped Inland suburbs, white anxiety towards marginalized communities' presence was prevalent, and O'Day H. Short unfortunately exemplifies this reality.

Undoubtedly, the Short family murder is indicative of the many violent crescendos amid the Postwar racial housing struggle in the Inland Empire and greater Southern California. Sadly, as the period progressed, African American homeowners and workers faced a SoCal region rife with blatant discrimination and prejudice. As Hudson notes, the Inland Empire and Southern California experienced a bizarre resurgence in racial hostility and Klan activity following the war.[58] Consequently, Black Californians and other marginalized communities were disproportionately targeted for their presumed social misdeeds. Their crimes? Daring to inhabit traditional "white spaces", desiring civil rights, and partaking in Postwar socioeconomic prosperity—acts that dismayed many of their white, prejudiced counterparts [59]

[58] Hudson, "Burning Down the House," 201.
[59] Hudson, "Burning Down the House," 201.

Negroes Need Not Arrive: Contextualizing Black Angelenos' Racially Influenced Displacement from the Los Angeles Area

Interrogation, housing shortages, racial covenants, deceitfully executed housing policy: all these entities encompassed the overall Postwar social calamity for Black Californians. Los Angeles was a major figurative trailblazer in this Postwar housing struggle; as it was the case for O'Day H. Short in 1945, numerous Black Angelenos were victims to an ongoing housing shortage in Los Angeles. It is certain that an unprecedented influx of migrants to the City of Angels played a part in driving the scarcity in neighborhood homes. However, prejudice and racially exclusionary housing covenants were more accurate contributors to African Americans' displacement into "sub-standard housing" and eventually out of Los Angeles all together. Local SoCal Black voices candidly publicized the ongoing phenomenon. For instance, Jean Simon thoroughly accounts the racially influenced housing predicament in her October 30, 1947 *Sentinel* article "Bias Adds to Crisis in Housing". Simon notably utilizes first-hand accounts to emphasize the matter's gravity.

"Tell them how we're jimcrowed by the County Housing Authority, by FHA-aided housing, and even by the best of them, the City Housing Authority."[60]

A quote from Simon's "Bias Adds to Crisis in Housing." A first-hand account from LA's disenfranchised Black Angelenos

[60] Jean Simon, "Bias Adds to Crisis In Housing," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, October 30, 1947, 9.

Title of Subsection alongside accompanying image from Simon's LA Housing Exposé in the Sentinel.[61]

Indeed, Black Californians were aware of the subordinate social position that was imposed upon them in the Postwar period, rightfully viewing themselves as essentially expelled, or "jimcrowed" out of Los Angeles. Moreover, eye-opening statistics respectively concerning Los Angeles's Black population and production of housing units factually support this personal inference:

"1. The Negro population of Los Angeles has grown from 63,000 in 1940 to approximately 150,000 in 1947, an increase of 87,000 persons"[62]

"2. At the 1940 rate of 3.06 persons per occupied dwelling unit…it would take 28,524 new units of housing available to Negroes to provide homes for the increased population."[63]

"3. According to Dr. George Gleason of the Los Angeles County Committee for Church and Community Co-operation, total additional housing made available to Negroes since 1940 is 6671 units, or less than one-fourth of the amount needed."[64]

[61] Simon, "Bias," 9.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 9-10.
[64] Ibid., 10.

Such data not only helps properly unearth Los Angeles's racial landscape in the mid-twentieth century, but exposes the high-level effort to thwart Black Californians from integrating local LA neighborhoods. As the numbers show, Black Angelenos were a sizable group in the urban enclave. Developing leisure sites and popular culture, the minority group was integral to crafting mid-twentieth century Los Angeles's status as SoCal's active, luxurious, modern mecca.[65] Preexisting racial bias was the overwhelming factor that drove LA's housing scarcity for lifelong Black Angelenos. Notably, this Postwar housing largely relied upon government aid from the state and national levels; in 1947, the city and greater county of Los Angeles provided 2,872 units, whereas there was 2,799 private housing units that, coincidentally, utilized FHA loans.[66] Hence, Los Angeles's historic racial denial of its African American inhabitants from federally-funded housing is further illuminating; the unfortunate phenomenon is representative of SoCal public officials prioritizing the maintenance of traditional, biased social norms concerning Black inferiority over advancing the newfound, professed national creed of equal opportunity in housing and other markers of socioeconomic success. It is these prevailing norms that resulted in numerous Black Californian families having "no place to go" in the immediate Postwar period.[67] Whereas white Americans following World War II returned to a land that welcomed them with affordable, safe homes, African Americans in LA were forced to resort to grave, "sub-standard" living conditions: trailers, tents, overcrowded segregated "ghettos", the list goes on.[68] Black Californian contemporaries and their allies of the mid-twentieth century were not meek in expressing their

[65] A more in-depth analysis of Black Angelenos' historic leisure sites can be found in: Alison R. Jefferson, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites During the Jim Crow Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020).
[66] Simon, "Bias," 10.
[67] Simon, "Condemned by Housing Shortage," in *"Bias Adds to Crisis In Housing," Los Angeles Sentinel, October 30, 1947*, 9.
[68] Simon, "Bias," 10.

frustrations concerning this unjust and unequal treatment; Jean Simon eloquently rebukes public officials' apathetic, silent nature towards the glaring unfair housing policies:

"The facts about the banning of Negro citizens of Los Angeles from public housing and from private housing aided by FHA loans on the…basis of race, are a public disgrace for which every public official who is not actively fighting the policy must share responsibility." [69]

With Los Angeles having a clear, persistent commitment to undermining and discriminating against its historic Black populace, one might wonder the means African Americans utilized to combat, or at the very least endure, the unequal, exclusionary social landscape. One clear method was building their own separate, economic independent communities free of the Jim Crow dogma that plagued the region; scholars like Alison Rose Jefferson in *Living the California Dream* affirm that such instances of Black Californian community-building exemplified not only Black Angelenos' explicit resistance to social exclusion, but the group's desire to, "…achieve a fuller participation in American society." [70]

Jefferson's further insights on Black Californians' historic experiences are thought-provoking and relevant, wisely prioritizing the instances of African Americans asserting their autonomy and greater agency amid LA and greater SoCal's overwhelming oppressive, racial subjugation in the twentieth century. Yet, considering the housing crisis that plagued LA's Black and minority populaces, it can be said that Black Californians' asserting clear agency and activism was insufficient in overcoming the systematic prejudice that controlled LA's living spaces in the early Postwar era. Indeed, even when separate Black Californian enclaves were crafted, as Hudson

[69] Simon, "Bias," 10.
[70] Alison R. Jefferson, "Introduction," in *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites During the Jim Crow Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), Kindle, 13.

notes, fully escaping the state's color line to establish freedoms in housing and finances proved to be virtually impossible, exemplified with other Black-only communities like Allensworth.[71] Hence, it is evident that many African Americans slowly became disillusioned with Los Angeles's unfair housing market and greater practices. Such disappointment consequently drove native Black Angelenos to leave Los Angeles all together, rather than salvage lives in the city.

Another Great Migration? Black Angelenos' Postwar Exodus to the Inland Empire

As the Postwar era and greater mid-twentieth century progressed, essentially an exodus of Black Angelenos to neighboring Southern Californian areas occurred. Of the numerous SoCal regions to occupy, the Inland Empire became a common destination for the minority group; indeed, this Black migration from Los Angeles to the IE began around the mid-twentieth century, and gradually continued into succeeding decades. According to research from UC Irvine's Anila LiShen Romious, from 1940 to 2000, approximately 235,495 African Americans moved to the Inland Empire, with the group's LA population steadily declining in the same period.[72] Historical accounts further indicate the subtle Black Angeleno exodus in the 1940s and 1950s; *The Sentinel's* March 20, 1952, article "'Paradise' at Highland Tract in Fontana" reveals that a considerable amount of former Black Angelenos were moving into Fontana's Highland Haven, a, "new, well-planned sub-division for Negroes." [73]

"The fourth group of homes is now under construction…with most new owners migrating from the Los Angeles area"[74]

[71] Hudson, "Introduction," 11.
[72] Angila LiShen Romious, "An Investigation of Black Mobility from Los Angeles County to the Inland Empire, 1940-2000," (master's thesis, University of California, Irvine, 2009), 1, https://www.academia.edu/9014869.
[73] "'Paradise' at Highland Tract in Fontana," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, March 20, 1952, A5.
[74] "'Paradise,'" A5.

Dave Thayer, Highland Haven's tract manager, provides a frank yet thought-provoking assessment of the situation:

"He feels that the success…is due largely to the fact that it is designed to meet the pocketbook of the average wage earner. Another point which is of vital interest to the economic minded is the fact that Kaiser Steel and other industries in the Fontana area are providing thousands of new jobs."[75]

With its growing suburbanization, ample industry jobs, and relatively untapped nature, many Black Californians deemed Southern California's Inland cities as "Paradise"—the place to be for young African Americans seeking the Postwar aspiration of stable working to middle-class life. Furthermore, like O'Day H. Short and his family, Black Californians' substantial move to the Inland Empire was emblematic of a personal attempt to escape the explicit white social dominance and racial Subjugation that plagued their native LA home. The blossoming suburban region not only seemingly promised an opportunity for vital community-building, but a chance for African Americans to finally experience the American Dream that their white counterparts were accustomed to. However, such ambitions were quickly obstructed, as the same racial discrimination that Black Californians faced in the City of Angels followed them into the Inland Empire.

The Inland Empire's Questionable Black Origins and Inevitable Faces with Postwar Housing Discrimination

Although the Inland Empire witnessed a fresh influx of Black Angelenos in the Postwar period, the vast SoCal region was no stranger to African Americans' presence. Scholar Bryon R.

[75] Ibid.

Skinner's 1983 *Black Origins in the Inland Empire* reveals and subsequently explores the historical Inland roots of Black Americans during the mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century. Indeed, past Black migration to the Inland Empire did not solely originate from Los Angeles. Skinner reveals a lesser, unbeknownst yet pivotal exodus of Black Americans from Salt Lake City, Utah to Inland Empire's San Bernardino on March 14th, 1851.[76] This mid to late nineteenth century migration especially highlights a significant role slavery and Mormonism played in orchestrating Black mobility:

> *"Slavery and Mormonism were the forces that in 1851 brought Elizabeth Flake and 25 other blacks to San Bernardino; the history of this city and its black community was an outgrowth of those forces."*[77]

Black Mormon enslaved people and their enslavers were the main demographic of this historic Inland migration. This aspect to the early African American IE wave thereby indicates that dubious, even outright negative, racial implications permeated SoCal's Inland region decades before the Postwar moment. Slavery not only exploited African Americans but entrenched racism within society that continues to this day. Similarly, Mormonism is notorious for its contentious relationship with race, particularly African Americans, with the Church historically relegating its Black followers to subordinate positions.[78] Alongside this troubling background, San Bernardino's white residents held antiblack sentiments amid the mid-nineteenth century. Even with such a small Black population, their presence nevertheless concerned some local whites of the era.[79] Likewise,

---

[76] Byron R. Skinner, *Black Origins in the Inland Empire* (San Bernardino: Book Attic Press, 1983), 23.
[77] Skinner, *Black Origins*, 1.
[78] More on this Mormonism's relationship with African Americans can be found here: O. Kendall White and Daryl White, "Integrating Religious and Racial Identities: An Analysis of LDS African American Explanations of the Priesthood Ban," *Review of Religious Research* 36, no. 3 (1995): doi:10.2307/3511536.
[79] Skinner, *Black Origins, 43.*

newspapers like the *San Bernardino Daily times* promoted nativist, anti-black opinions, notably opposing Black suffrage;[80] their December 17th, 1876, article on the suffrage matter candidly asserted that, "so long as a massive ignorant foreigners and Negroes have the power to control our elections […] so long will politics be debased."[81] Such troubling racial attitudes prevailed in San Bernardino beyond the nineteenth-century, ultimately lingering well into the later Postwar years. For instance, in 1963, San Bernardino City Council and Mayor Donald Mauldin held a public meeting concerning the city's "alleged racial discrimination problems";[82] featuring statements from the local NAACP, San Bernardino admonished for having, "[…] alleged discrimination in hiring, insurance, interest rates and financing and de facto segregation in public schools." [83] Therefore, despite the Inland public sphere seemingly providing Black Californians an escape from blatant discrimination in the mid-twentieth century, the mid to late-nineteenth century history of the region's San Bernardino ultimately proves that such an optimistic perspective was far from reality. Unfortunately, the Inland Empire was not a "blank slate" for Black Californians; IE cities might have attracted Black populations, but just like Los Angeles, questionable racial norms permeated the region, galvanizing certain local bigoted, white actors to impede the minority group from fair treatment and opportunity in matters of social integration, most frequently in housing.

Postwar Inland Empire: A Hidden Jim Crow Battleground?

Considering O'Day H. Short in Fontana or San Bernardino's Black Mormon slave roots, the Postwar Inland Empire undeniably posed to be a region that maintained a discriminatory mindset against Black Californians and greater minorities. Such discrimination often translated

[80] Skinner, *Black Origins, 45.*
[81] Ibid., 44.
[82] "San Bernardino will Sift Racial Matters," *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1963, 28.
[83] "San Bernardino," 28.

into practices of terrorism; for instance, Ku Klux Klan cross burnings, phenomena conventionally associated with the South, surprisingly plagued the Inland Empire. These burnings targeted the region's marginalized communities, Black American and Jewish American homeowners especially. Such antiblack and anti-Jewish cross burnings respectively occurred in Big Bear[84] and Palm Springs[85] in April 1946—the events strangely happening within three weeks of each other.[86] Fontana too was home to a cross burning in December 1960; the event triggered racial violence at Fontana High School between white and Black teenagers.[87] Cross burnings were a definite symbol of Jim Crow's stranglehold on twentieth century American society; hence, many within the Postwar Inland Empire, amid growing suburbanization and desirable industry jobs, subscribed to the racist, bigoted ideology.

From Riverside to Victorville: Inland Empire's Postwar Racial Intimidation and "Shameful" Housing Discrimination Exposed

Alongside explicit, racially hostile indicators of Jim Crow's impact, negative racial attitudes greatly swayed many Inland cities' housing practices. A glaring example of this phenomenon is in Riverside. Indeed, akin to San Bernardino, Postwar Riverside was a diverse city with an integral Black community already established in the late nineteenth century. *Our Families, Our Stories* explores this historic Black presence in the Inland city from 1870s to the 1960s; the city's African American pioneers like Robert Stokes, originally from Georgia, were drawn to

[84] "KKK MENACES NEGRO HOMES: KLANSMEN THREATEN NEGROES," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 4, 1946, 17.
[85] "Cross Burns at Palm Springs," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 25, 1946, 1.
[86] The Sentinel connects these two IE crossing burnings to the KKK's backlash to the LA/SoCal fair housing crusade in: "BURNING CROSS LINKED TO L.A. RACE HOUSING FIGHT: Klan Symbol Fired at Home of Family Battling Restrictions," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, May 16, 1946, 1.
[87] "Mass Meeting Probes Fontana School Clashes," Los Angeles Sentinel, December 22, 1960, 4A.

Riverside and the greater IE in the 1870s due to the region seemingly providing opportunities for Black people—a situation virtually nonexistent in Strokes' native Jim Crow South home.[88]

"[…] Robert Stokes, patriarch of Riverside's African American pioneers, came West first, in the 1870s."[89]

"*He came to Riverside, a place where his children would have an opportunity, a chance they wouldn't get in that Southern Town."* [90]

It is safe to say that in these early days of Riverside's Black settlement (between 1880 to 1945), inequalities and hardship did not deter the group from community building. As prewar Jim Crow laws restricted Black memberships to local white social organizations, the Riverside African American community established its own, "active religious social and political organizations"—institutions that fostered local Black leadership, upheld collaboration, and African American values.[91] Similarly, these beginnings were simultaneously humble and multiracial, as Black Californians often worked alongside Mexican Americans as farm laborers and road builders.[92] Local Black entrepreneurs and small businessowners like David S. Stokes and Oscar Harris began to emerge, with the former employing forty African American and Mexican Americans as garbage collectors. [93]Indeed, Riverside's historic Black community provided a richness to the Inland city akin to Los Angeles. Yet, as the Postwar era arose, the minority group, like in many other SoCal areas, was essentially barred from accessing the local advancements in fair, federally funded

---

[88] "Our Fathers Came First: 1875-1945," in *Our Families, Our Stories: From the African American Community Riverside, California 1870-1960*, ed. Richard R. Esparza, H. Vincent Moses, and Celena Turney (Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1997), 5.
[89] "Our Fathers Came First: 1875-1945," 5.
[90] Ibid. "Southern Town" refers to Georgia.
[91] "Our Family—Our Community: 1890-1945," in *Our Families, Our Stories*, 9.
[92] "By the Sweat of Our Brow: Work 1880-1945," in *Our Families, Our Stories*, 7.
[93] "By the Sweat," 7.

housing and labor. Within the community, Black veterans especially bore the brunt of unfair housing policy in Postwar Riverside. As *Our Families, Our Stories* states: "*They Came Marching Home—To Segregation.*" [94]

In the 1950s, Riverside notably constructed housing projects that not only had government-backing but prioritized the military. For instance, On June 8th, 1954, Congress passed legislation that authorized the sale of Riverside's government housing project Canyon Crest Homes to University of California, Riverside (UCR).[95] UCR's acquisition of the Riverside project signaled a prioritization of young veterans, with the university affirming their intention of using the 275-unit project for, "student housing, with veterans given preference."[96] Likewise, on April 27th, 1957, Riverside once again sought the construction of another military housing project in California.[97] This time, local Riverside firms Son Gold Inc. and Inland Empire Builders submitted a $7,334,520 bid to construct 590 housing units at the Travis Air Force Base under the 1955 Capehart military housing bill [98]. Undeniably, Riverside's housing actions indicate the G.I Bill's national influence on Postwar public policy; the 1944 bill prioritized "giving back" and subsequently integrating World War II vets (G.Is) into Postwar society with education, job training, and—most importantly—affordable housing .[99] However, ultimately Riverside's altruism concerning housing the troops only favored and incentivized a certain military group: white veterans.

Consider the case of 26-year-old Black war veteran Willis Boyd Junior. Bother of Los Angeles Rams star Bob Boyd, in 1956, the new veteran faced vast local resistance from 73 property

---

[94] "They Came Marching Home—To Segregation: Post War Riverside 1945-1960," in *Our Families, Our Stories*, 17.
[95] "Riverside Housing Bill Passes House," *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1954, 16.
[96] "Riverside Housing Bill," 16
[97] Riverside Firms Contract for Military Housing Project," *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1957, G13.
[98] " Riverside Firms," G13. Article notes that Travis Air Force Base is, "just south of Sacramento.".
[99] "For an additional, more in-depth discussion on the G.I Bill check out: Gregory L. Schneider, "The G.I. Bill," Bill of Rights Institute, accessed March 15, 2022, https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/the-gi-bill.

owners when he sought a home in a Riverside white suburban neighborhood.[100] Consequently, as the *Sentinel* notes, The Riverside Planning commission revoked Boyd's once-approved building permit, and ultimately the veteran's lawsuit against the Inland city's council was futile.[101] Following this discrimination, Boyd surrendered in his Riverside justice crusade, frustrated with the Inland city's blatant disregard and "ignorance" .[102] Boyd's lawyer, Los Angeles's Rufus Johnson, eloquently articulates this disillusionment:

"We don't want to subject our children to the ignorance and prejudice of the neighborhood. There are other places to live where people aren't so ignorant and prejudiced."[103]

Willis Boyd Jr.'s experience in Riverside's housing market is emblematic of the grave inequities and hypocrisies within the Postwar Inland Empire—entities that disproportionately affected the SoCal region's minorities. Boyd initially went through Riverside's legal system and lawfully acquired a housing permit, yet local white backlash was powerful enough to impede the Black veteran's right to housing and broader property ownership.[104] Indeed, even when Fair Housing Laws were gaining traction, and Postwar social policies were meant to work in a fair, impartial manner, ultimately local private, often white, civilians could galvanize enough opposition to essentially override higher-level officials' actions. Private citizen resistance to fair public housing indeed flourished in Postwar Riverside. Consider for instance the city's Property Owners Association; throughout the 1950s, this organization was notorious for its opposition to local low-rent public housing;[105] the citizen-led group even protested Riverside City Council for

[100] "Vet Scores Riverside 'Ignorance'," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, February 16, 1956, A1.
[101] "Vet Scores Riverside 'Ignorance'," A1.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] This "right to housing" is a newfound concept in the postwar period, influence from FDR New Deal-era policies.
[105] "PROTEST MEETING CALLED ON RIVERSIDE HOUSING," *Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 1952, 14.

its refusal to put the public housing issue on the fall ballot June 25th, 1952.[106] Moreover, that same year another civilian-led committee formed in Riverside: Citizens Against Creeping Socialism, a group that equated "low-rent public housing" to "[…] forms of Socialistic government trends."[107] Hence, be it a specific opposition to Boyd's move or the general distaste for affordable, public housing, Riverside's white residents thereby ensured that Black Californians could not advance in socioeconomic gains through adequate homeownership in the Postwar years.

The Inland Empire's unfair treatment of Black GIs and Californians continued into the 1960s. On January 11th, 1962, the Sentinel, with the aid of realtor and fair housing champion Coler V. Banker, exposes San Bernardino County's Victorville for its "shameful housing discrimination", in which of the several thousands of federally funded homes built within the past twelve years in the town, only 49 were made available to African Americans.[108]

"Accompanied by prominent realtor Coler V. Banks […] the SENTINEL discovered that although several thousand new homes have been built in the area with the assistance of Federal funds […] only 49 in 12 years have been made available to Negroes!"[109]

Similarly, Black GIs that were stationed in Victorville's George Air Base[110] and understandably desired homes nearby were forced two options: either reside in "tobacco-road" dilapidated shacks or seek "suitable housing" in San Bernardino and Riverside—two cities that are as far as 40 miles away from Victorville. [111]

---

[106] "PROTEST MEETING CALLED ON RIVERSIDE HOUSING," 14.
[107] "Group Maps Drive Against Socialism: Committee to Fight Riverside Public Housing Project," *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1952, 34.
[108] "Victorville's Shameful Housing Exposed: GIs Face Shameful Housing," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, January 11, 1962, A1.
[109] "Victorville's Shameful Housing Exposed,"A1.
[110] The George Air Base operated between 1941-1992.
[111] "Victorville's Shameful Housing Exposed,"A1.

These numerous cases of racial discrimination in housing and the greater SoCal public sphere ultimately unveil a hidden truth about both the Inland Empire and Southern California overall: the region's people and mores were not exempted from the duplicitous, biased nature that nationally pervaded mid-twentieth century Postwar America. Black Californians were driven to the space under false pretenses; the blossoming residential neighborhoods, abundance of industry jobs from Henry J. Kaiser's Steel Mill, local towns professing their lack of Jim Crow—all these qualities enticed African Americans to move Inland, accustomed to Los Angeles's established racial prejudice and ongoing housing scarcity. Thus, emerged this image of a modern, Postwar IE rife with fair, equal housing and opportunity unlike anywhere else. However, Black Californians were ultimately in for a rude, unfortunate racial awakening. Local white resistance, both grassroots and federal, to an integrated, minority prosperous IE tarnished the SoCal Region's potentiality to be a space truly welcoming to African American life. The American South is conventionally typified as the main, single perpetrator of explicitly antiblack, Jim Crow ideology in the mid-twentieth century. However, the South was not alone in systematically oppressing the nation's marginalized, exemplified with the IE; be it O'Day H. Short's death in Fontana, cross burnings, or the discrimination of Black Veterans in Riverside and Victorville neighborhoods, the Inland Empire was home to discrimination analogous to Birmingham, Alabama. This general mistreatment in housing and other social venues in SoCal and the IE persisted in the Postwar years. Yet, as O'Day H. Short's death indicated, Black Californians and their allies never accepted their crusade for equality to be ill-fate.

Chapter 3:
Charlotta Bass, William Bryon Rumford, and the Diverse, Disgruntled Masses: How Collective Demands for Progressive, Civil Rights Reform Challenged SoCal's Black Housing Struggle

"After World War II, Blacks increased their voice for fair treatment by petitioning the government and private industry. Black newspapers transmitted messages of anti-colonialism and total integration. This meant economic, political, and social equality."[112]

Quote from Rachel Grant's "'The White Side of the Fence:' Charlotta Bass and the Wesley Robert Wells Case, 1947-1954."

Despite how daunting the racially adverse Southern Californian landscape was, the Black Californian community and its allies were not quiet in their opposition towards the biased norms that impacted socioeconomic practices like housing and labor. Social activism and grassroots mobilization thus became integral efforts for Black Californians to not only express their anger about the ongoing injustice, but subsequently alter the problematic Jim Crow social order that tainted Southern California's promising vision. Such a vision presented the region as the epitome of the newfound abundance of accessible, indiscriminate wealth and opportunity that graced Postwar America. The Black Press was undeniably an essential player in propagating and amplifying this vast opposition to SoCal's ongoing minority social subordination. For instance, consider the story of LA's Civic Center Evictees, an event the *Sentinel* thoroughly chronicled in their May 5th, 1949, issue.

[112] Rachel Grant, "'The White Side of the Fence:' Charlotta Bass and the Wesley Robert Wells Case, 1947–1954," *Media History* 27, no. 4 (2021): 527, doi:10.1080/13688804.2021.1947214.

The Significance of Los Angeles's Civic Center Evictees

In May 1949, Los Angeles planned to construct two civic centers located around "[…] East First, North San Pedro, East Main, and East Market Streets."[113] These centers encompassed a new police administration building and health center, entities seemingly meant to further advance the people's safety and wellbeing[114]. Yet concurrently this project came at the expense of LA's historic minority, nonwhite populace. Alongside African Americans, the civic center plans consequently triggered the forced evictions and subsequent displacement of thousands of Japanese, Filipino, and Mexican American family tenants.[115]

"Removal of the large families will be necessitated […]" [116]

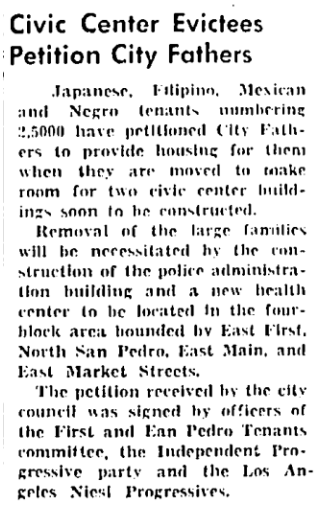
Quote from the Sentinel's May 5th Article "City Civic Center Evictees Petition City Fathers."

It is noteworthy that the policy surrounding this infrastructure required the largely minority inhabitants to be removed. LA and greater SoCal policymakers in this era had little consideration for people of color's grievances, as this plan did not provide the minority evictees with any viable solutions to their newfound vulnerable, insecure position. This prevailing apathy towards bettering minorities' socioeconomic wellbeing amongst SoCal's higher-ups could have easily demoralized the region's marginalized communities. Yet rather than understandably flounder amid this legalized hostility, people of color mobilized. The same Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, and Black

[113] "NEGRO SEEN AS 'SCAPEGOAT' IN NEW RENT LAW ISSUED FROM WHITE HOUSE: City Civic Center Evictees Petition City Fathers," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, May 5, 1949, B1.
[114] "City Civic Center Evictees," B1.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.

tenants that feared eviction petitioned Los Angeles's City Fathers to provide them with new housing following their inevitable move. The Sentinel article notes:

"Japanese, Filipino, Mexican and Negro tenants numbering 2.5000 have petitioned City Fathers to provide housing for them when they are moved to make room for two civic center buildings soon to be constructed."[117]



Civic Center Evictees Petition City Fathers

Japanese, Filipino, Mexican and Negro tenants numbering 2.5000 have petitioned City Fathers to provide housing for them when they are moved to make room for two civic center buildings soon to be constructed.

Removal of the large families will be necessitated by the construction of the police administration building and a new health center to be located in the four-block area bounded by East First, North San Pedro, East Main, and East Market Streets.

The petition received by the city council was signed by officers of the First and San Pedro Tenants committee, the Independent Progressive party and the Los Angeles Nieal Progressives.

Clipping from the discussed Sentinel Article "City Civic Center Evictees Petition City Fathers" ; includes the quote mentioned above.

Furthermore, these tenants were not the sole actors in facilitating this proposal. The *Sentinel* highlights the allyship minorities received from local organizations like the Officers of the First and San Pedro Tenants committee and the Independent Progressive Party, who supported their plan.[118] Ultimately, the Civic Center debacle unveils two significant features of the protest towards SoCal's Racialized housing struggle: The phenomenon's diverse, multiethnic nature, and the influence progressive and socialist mores had within collective mobilization.

[117] Ibid. (The City Fathers refers to LA's City Council).
[118] Ibid.

The Multiethnic Implication of the Resistance Towards SoCal's Unfair Housing Practices

As seen with O'Day H. Short, Willis Boyd Jr., and Coler V. Banker, African Americans were recurrent victims of the explicit racial subservience and violence that encompassed Postwar SoCal housing discrimination. Although, it must be recognized that mid-twentieth century Southern California possessed an established populace of both nonwhite and nonblack ethnically diverse individuals, both before and during the Postwar years. For instance, in 1950, Los Angeles County's 217,881 Black Angelenos lived alongside their Mexican, Chinese, and Japanese counterparts that grew in numbers. The latter two groups encompassed 9,187 and 36,761, respectively.[119] Similarly, these people of color were no strangers to white resistance when attempting to racially integrate neighborhoods. Akin to Black Veterans, Mexican and Japanese war veterans too faced rampant obstruction in their quest for fair, safe housing in SoCal's white localities following World War Two.[120] Hence, it is irrefutable that the Postwar Jim Crow racial order was so inescapable and paradoxically indiscriminate towards nonwhite people, that it expanded a diverse, coalition between Black Californians and the region's overall marginalized. Lynn Hudson attests to this Postwar reality:

"A wide coalition of Japanese, Mexican, Catholic, and Jewish Americans, joined with other black and white Angelenos to fight for fair housing, equal employment, and racial justice."[121]

[119] "Historical Census Records of Racial/Ethnic Groups, Los Angeles County, California," Los Angeles Almanac, accessed March 15, 2022, https://www.laalmanac.com/population/po20.php. (Mexicans only counted in 1930 census, were 167,024)
[120] Hudson, "Burning Down the House," 201.
[121] Hudson, "Epilogue: Remembering (and Forgetting) Jim Crow," 255.

"Colored Commies:" A Worrisome National Love Affair with Socialism impacts SoCal's Progressive Activists

Indeed, growing calls for fair housing and greater civil rights amongst Black people and minorities often suggested a consideration of socialist ideals. Dismayed with the domestic disregard for their livelihoods alongside desiring the fruits of fair labor and universal property rights, numerous African American intellectuals were drawn to socialism's socioeconomic ideals of collectivism. Such an ideal warried the Postwar United States, a power that professed the wonders of individualism and capitalism. For instance, in its November 20th 1947 issue, the Sentinel highlights San Diego Representative Charles K. Fletcher's high-level decree of public housing as "socialistic".[122] Such a verdict notably came after a two-day federal hearing on the local housing shortage that affected the region.[123] Consequently, the *Sentinel* explicitly attested Black Californians' willingness to adhere to socialism to secure needed housing for the community. The 1947 article eloquently professed:

"If it takes what Mr. Fletcher is pleased to call 'socialism' for Negroes' to secure housing, it is a safe bet that most Negroes will be quite willing to accept some of that socialism in return for a roof over their heads." [124]

National aversion to the notion of Americans succumbing to socialism, an "un-American" theory, akin to their Soviet rivals coupled with the existing qualms with minorities translated into a new Red Scare. This mid-twentieth century explicit war on Communists is exemplified with the expansion of notorious federal organizations like the House Committee on un-American Activities

[122] "Socialism and Housing," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, November 20, 1947, 7.
[123] Socialism," 7.
[124] Ibid

(HUAC). Consequently, African Americans with progressive leanings greatly endured the impact of HUAC and larger anticommunist sentiments in the Postwar period. In July 1951, House committee Mary S. Harkward named 230 people in the Washington area as "Reds"[125]; of this vast amount, more than twenty were "Negroes", including high-ranking, white-collar Black contemporaries like Eugene Holmes, a professor at Howard University; Mrs. Enda Robinson, an active figure in the Progressive movement; and Mrs. Maria Richardson-Harris, who worked with the Civil Rights Congress .[126] Clearly, Black Americans who subscribed to liberal, then-unorthodox beliefs concerning socioracial equality were deemed as menacing to the national Postwar social order of capitalism and white superiority.


Federal Agent Bares List of Negro Reds

Special to the Los Angeles .... SENTINEL

News Clipping of discussed Sentinel Article, featuring its title.

Southern California was ultimately no exception to this ongoing national attack on Black socialist, liberal figures. California's State Senate Committee on un-American Activities was the state-level equivalent to the federal-level HUAC.[127] Likewise, the organization routinely investigated "possible Communist activities" within the state, most notably probing Los Angeles's Housing Authority in September 1952.[128] This probe included the committee subpoenaing the

[125] "EXPOSE NEGRO COMMUNISTS IN NATION'S CAPITOL: Federal Agent Bares List of Negro Reds," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 26, 1951, B1.
[126] "Federal Agent Bares List of Negro Reds," B1
[127] "'REDS IN HOUSING' PROBE CALLS LOCAL WOMAN: Jessie Terry to Appear Housing Probe," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, September 25, 1952, A1.
[128] "REDS IN HOUSING," A1.

agency's nine employees to appear for a hearing. Among these nine workers, Mrs. Jessie L. Terry stands out;[129] the Black woman was renowned in Los Angeles's Black, progressive circles, being recognized as a vital civic and social leader.[130] Terry championed Black equality, active in numerous important LA groups such as the Southeast Symphony Association—groups that further fair housing, racial integration, and broader social justice. [131]

Photo of Mrs. Jessie L. Terry, from the Sentinel's September 25, 1952 Issue "'Reds in Housing' Probe Calls Local Woman."

"Mrs. Terry is the only Negro to serve on the Housing committee and her name appears on the bronze plaque hanging in all housing projects owned by the city" [132]

[129] "REDS IN HOUSING," A1-A2."
[130] Ibid., A2.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.

Given Terry's clear commitment to African American progress within LA and SoCal overall, the state-level effort to undermine her efforts and character as "Red", thereby suspicious, represents the alliance between state and federal forces to delegitimize Black Californians' political mobilization in Postwar SoCal. However, these elite attempts to impede the "Red activity" within Southern California was insufficient. The shared disdain Black Californians and their allies—both white and nonblack—had for the persistence of restrictive housing covenants, discrimination, and racial intimidation within SoCal's LA and IE areas further galvanized key figures to maintain their commitment for progressive, collective ideals. Frankly, little was being done to ensure that Black Californians could rightfully access the Postwar fruits of secure housing and greater socioeconomic acceptance without facing prejudice or violence. Progressive activists thus viewed socialism as the vital piece to effectively solving the puzzle that was a just Postwar public sphere for African Americans and marginalized communities overall in the Sunshine State.

Similarly, Jessie L. Terry's significance in local SoCal Black politics further highlights the active role minority, progressive women had within the movement against local housing and greater racial discrimination. Of these many women, there is one who best epitomizes this pioneering dissidence within mid-twentieth century socioracial politics, exemplifying the controversially socialist, radical, and most importantly diverse, elements of the Postwar SoCal Black housing movement: California Eagle's Charlotta Bass.

Meet Charlotta Bass: Forty Years of Groundbreaking Activism

"Bass […] challenged racism and white supremacy from her vantage point as a journalist, editor, and socialist […][133]

Quote from Hudson's West of Jim Crow

Photo of Charlotta Bass, courtesy of californiamuesum.org and Southern California Library for Social Studies & Research.[134]

Like Jessie Terry, Charlotta Bass's name may not have the same national recognition as fellow Black women like, say, Rosa Parks or Fanner Lou Hamer. However, Charlotta Bass's actions in the Postwar SoCal socioracial landscape were just as trailblazing and noteworthy as her

[133] Hudson, "Introduction," 6.
[134] "Charlotta Bass," *Southern California Library for Social Studies & Research*, n.d. https://www.californiamuseum.org/inductee/charlotta-bass.

more mainstream Black activist contemporaries. Recently, scholars such as Regina Freer and Rachel Grant have helped highlight and contextualize Bass's twentieth century importance on the state and national scale. It took a few short decades before native Black Californians encountered the African American woman's fierceness and vigor. Born Charlotta Amanda Spears on February 14, 1874, in Sumter, South Carolina, Mrs. Bass was the sixth out of eleven children from her parents, Hiram and Kate Spears.[135] Charlotta strengthened her passion for local journalism in her early adulthood, as in 1894, she moved to Providence, Rhode Island with her brother to work for the city's black-owned newspaper, *Providence Watchmen* .[136] Rhode Island was not Charlotta's last destination however, as following her physician's advice, she relocated to Los Angeles, California in 1910 for health reasons .[137] This early twentieth century Californian migration spurred Charlotta's gradual rose into stardom, amongst not just the local, Black Californian community but greater Southern California. Her role in spearheading the African American newspaper, *The California Eagle*—colloquially dubbed "the people's paper"—is especially inspiring.[138]

Originally named the *Advocate*, for two years Bass worked on the Black SoCal publication alongside founder John J. Neimore, before his death in 1912.[139] Notably, right before his passing, Neimore began making arrangements for Charlotta to take over the paper, likely recognizing the Black woman's talent and expertise in hard-hitting journalism.[140] Thus, beginning in May 1912, "[…] Charlotta Spears [Bass] became the owner of the weekly publication~~..~~ ".[141] Such a new

---

[135] "Charlotta Bass (U.S. National Park Service)," NPS.gov (U.S. National Park Service), accessed March 16, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/people/charlottabass.htm.
[136] "Charlotta Bass", https://www.nps.gov/people/charlottabass.htm.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Grant, "'The White Side of the Fence:'," 528.
[139] Grant, "'The White Side of the Fence:'," 528.
[140] Charlotta Bass", https://www.nps.gov/people/charlottabass.htm.
[141] Grant, "'The White Side of the Fence:'," 528.

leadership position was monumental, as Charlotta became the first African American woman to own a newspaper in the United States.[142] Shortly after inheriting this position, Charlotta hired newspaperman Joseph B. Bass to the publication—a man who eventually became not just the paper's chief editor, but Charlotta's husband.[143] From 1913 onward, under the Bass duo's innovation, the *Advocate*, now renamed *The Eagle*, became, "[…] a vehicle for advancing a range of social justice causes." [144] Such causes ranged from prison reform to organized labor, however Bass's use of the *Eagle* to tackle unfair housing segregation in SoCal was especially pivotal. In her 1960 memoir, *Forty Years: Memoirs from the Pages of a Newspaper,* Charlotta Bass details her decades-long, active effort to admonish restrictive, racial housing covenants and subsequently champion equal housing rights. She writes:

"Paralleling the advance of the Negro masses of Southern California in the ranks of organized labor, another struggle was going on. This was the struggle of the Negro people against segregation in housing, and against restrictive covenants." [145]

Bass's fight commenced only a few years after her migration to LA and becoming the *Eagle's* owner. In Spring 1914, she and the *Eagle* aided Black woman Mrs. Mary Johnson to combat the racial terrorism and white civilian resistance she endured after purchasing a home on

[142] Charlotta Bass", https://www.nps.gov/people/charlottabass.htm.
[143] Komozi Woodard and John S. Portlock, "In the "Fabled Land of Make-Believe": Charlotta Bass and Jim Crow Los Angeles Chapter A," in *The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North: Segregation and Struggle outside of the South*, ed. Brian Purnell and Jeanne Theoharis (New York: NYU Press, 2019), 70, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12fw8q3.5.
[144] Regina Freer, "L.A. Race Woman: Charlotta Bass and the Complexities of Black Political Development in Los Angeles," *American Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2004): 609, doi:10.1353/aq.2004.0034.
[145] Charlotta Bass, "Restrictive Covenants," in *Forty Years: Memoirs from the Pages of a Newspaper* (Los Angeles 1960), 74, https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3177445.

East 18th Street—a white majority LA neighborhood.[146] Bass recalls the infamous night where Johnson experienced invasive, racially explicit mistreatment from her white neighbors:

> ***"****When Mrs. Johnson had left the premises for a few hours one day they entered her home, and when she returned she found her furniture, bedding, kitchen utensils, and other belongings spread out on the front lawn. A crudely hand-painted sign across the nailed-up door read: '****Nigger if you value your hide don't let night catch you here.'****" [147]*

Amid this evening of racist, antiblack adversity, The Eagle instantaneously organized a march of over "a hundred women" to the Johnson home , with one group calling the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office—to no avail initially.[148] However, following hours of protest until midnight, Bass and the women's efforts generated some positive results, with two local sheriffs arriving to Mrs. Johnson's home, removing the racist sign, and safely ushering the woman back into her premises.[149]. Bass details these promising, final developments, writing:

> *"These representatives of the sheriff of Los Angeles County took down the sign from the door, opened the windows and door, and told Mrs. Johnson she could take her furniture back into the house. The unarmed battalion then retired to their own homes with the supreme satisfaction of knowing they had won the battle, that Mrs. Johnson was safely and comfortably housed, and that she could now live in peace in the home of her choice." [150]*

Indeed, Bass's story on Mrs. Mary Johnson is indicative of not just the permanence of racially hostile housing discrimination in SoCal but the grave opposition to the unfortunate

---

[146] Bass, "Restrictive Covenants," 74.
[147] Bass, "Restrictive Covenants," 74.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid., 74-75.

phenomenon years prior to the Postwar era. This early battle was undeniably a success, but as Bass later notes in *Forty Years*, the crusade against restrictive covenants and antiblack, social bigotry was not an easy endeavor, but rather a rocky, often disappointing one.[151] Ultimately, For Bass, the Johnson case further represented that the explicit, racially hostile Jim Crow national social order that engrossed her native Southern, South Carolina home prevailed in SoCal.

> *"The Johnson case, however, was, for thousands of Los Angeles Negroes, the awakening of the realization that just coming to California was neither the answer to nor the end of discrimination in housing, jobs, recreation, hotel and other accommodations for the Negro people in search of liberty and in pursuit of happiness."*[152]

Decades later in 1945, Bass would chronicle the deadly antithesis to the Johnson story that was O'Day H. Short in Fontana. She eloquently dubbed the event as: "[…] an outburst of strong race hatred and bigotry on the part of white supremacists who preach Christianity on Sunday and use the remaining days of the week practicing hate against their neighbors […] (cite")[153]" This unwavering hostility thus guaranteed Bass an inspiring yet grueling quest to fight regionwide bigotry and white supremacy through journalism and grassroots social activism.

Bass continued her racial justice campaign with *The Eagle* well into the mid-twentieth century; at its peak in the 1940s, the publication circulated 17,600 copies .[154] Considering that in 1940, the Black Angeleno population was 171,209, this meant that a quarter of the Black Angeleno community read the source.[155] However, on April 26, 1951, Bass did the unthinkable: she ceased

---

[151] Ibid., 75.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Bass, "A COMMUNITY OUTRAGED," 104. On the same page, Bass attests to Hudson's point about KKK SoCal resurgence, noting how Short's death "…pointed to a resurgence in the Los Angeles area of the Ku Klux Klan."
[154] Freer, "L.A. Race Woman," 609
[155] Grant, "'The White Side of the Fence:'," 528.

her reign over *the Eagle*, publishing her last column that day and subsequently selling the paper.[156] One might ponder: What triggered Charlotta Bass to leave the California Eagle when it was still popular? Did selling the Black newspaper signify Bass surrendering her noble quest for fair housing and racial equality in SoCal? Such questions are valid, but ultimately Bass's departure from the Eagle was emblematic of her amplifying her cause to become a more public, staunchly progressive political figure.

As the Postwar period commenced, Bass quickly prioritized expanding her public involvement in politics, both local and national, to advance her mission. In 1945, she ran for a LA City Council seat to represent the 7th district, which was 45 percent African American.[157] Likewise, in 1950, Bass joined the Progressive Party and embarked upon a Congressional race to represent the Party.[158] This political endeavor, albeit unsuccessful, highlights a key attribute to Bass's strategy: unapologetically committing to socialism and progressivism. As Hudson notes, Bass's statewide challenge to housing discrimination and larger white supremacy's entrenchment came from her viewpoint as not only a journalist and editor, but most importantly a socialist.[159] Hence, the woman favored reform approaches that were socially collective and interracial, but also politically well-organized and institutional. Bass recognized that effectively combating SoCal's discriminatory, antiblack housing practices required intersectionality, as evidently fellow minorities shared the victimization from ongoing segregation. Revisiting this topic in *Forty Years*, Bass wrote:

[156] Freer, "L.A. Race Woman," 609
[157] Freer, "L.A. Race Woman," 609
[158] Ibid.
[159] Hudson, "Introduction," 6.

"[…] the question of restrictive covenants concerns such minorities as Orientals, Mexican-Americans, Indian, the Jewish, Italian […] our discussion of the Negro people's struggle against restrictive covenants applies to the struggle of all minority groups." [160]

In 1945, Bass formed and chaired the Home Protective Association (HPA) to, "[…] help people of color defend their properties and their persons […] " [161] As Bass proclaims, the HPA actively fought to dismantle the restrictive covenants that ruled LA neighborhoods.[162] Similarly, the association further epitomized Bass's simultaneous usage of grassroots mobilization and institutionalization to cement progressive, racial politics into state policy, thereby upsetting white superiority's established sociocultural reign. Undoubtedly, Bass's later actions further certified the woman as "a force to be reckoned with" in SoCal's Black communities. However, in 1952, Bass's reach went beyond the Western state, gaining national recognition as the first Black woman to run and subsequently be nominated for Vice President (VP) for the Progressive Party.[163] Bass received her nomination from actor and fellow progressive activist Pat Robeson, with W.E.B. DuBois notably seconding her as VP.[164]

[160] Bass, "Restrictive Covenants," 74.
[161] Hudson, "Burning Down the House," 202.
[162] Bass, "EPILOGUE," 148
[163] Freer, "L.A. Race Woman," 609
[164] Freer, "L.A. Race Woman," 609

Paul Robeson (Left) and Charlotta Bass (Right).[165]

As a nominated Vice President, Bass reaffirmed to a national audience her commitment to social change and a universal wellbeing free of prejudice. She also emphasized the troubling implications of the paradoxical resurgence in racial hatred following the war against fascism. For instance, in her VP acceptance speech, Bass professed:

"[…] We fought to destroy Hitlerism--but its germs took root right here. I look about me, at my own people, at all colored peoples all over the world. I can see the men who lead my government supporting oppression of the colored peoples of the earth who today reach out for the independence this nation achieved in 1776." [166]

[165] "Paul Robeson and Charlotta Bass, circa 1949," *Calisphere*, 1949, https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/hb5q2nb3q7/.
[166] Bass, "ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF MRS. BASS," 113.

Bass's Vice Presidency campaign might not have ended in her holding office, but this monumental event alongside her plentiful regional activism was emblematic of the philosophy she shared with the 1950s Progressive Party: "Win or lose, we win by raising the issues." .[167] Hence, be it her journalism with the *Eagle* or participating in the political arena, Charlotta Bass was a key player in safeguarding social justice advocacy for Black people and larger minority groups in Southern California. Even after receiving the national limelight in 1952, Bass continued her community-based civil rights strategies well into the late 1950s and early 1960s. In these later Postwar years, the Black woman moved from LA to the Inland Empire's Lake Elsinore, where she subsequently transformed the garage of her new IE home into a "[…] community reading room and a voter registration site for local African Americans." [168]

Charlotta Bass's forty years of racial justice service ultimately came to an end following her death in 1969. Yet, Bass's life story ultimately alludes to the reality of the active presence of women, especially Black and progressive, in the Postwar backlash against housing discrimination and racial oppression—an often-unconcealed aspect concerning the Postwar United States. As Rachel Grant candidly writes, "Black women's work in the post-war period set the stage for second-wave feminism and contemporary understandings of intersectionality." [169] Indeed, just like Thurgood Marshall and Harry Belafonte, Black women like Charlotta Bass were crucial to not only uplifting Black and larger minority issues, but ensuring that the fight for socioracial equality was an ongoing, vigilant crusade, one that would not cease until phenomena such as equal housing, labor, and overall living were completely achieved.

[167] Freer, "L.A. Race Woman," 609.
[168] Freer, "L.A. Race Woman," 609.
[169] Grant, "'The White Side of the Fence:'," 527.

Enter William Bryon Rumford: Bass's Contemporary and Father of Fair Housing in 1960s California

Portrait of William Bryon Rumford.[170]

Serving on the California State Assembly from 1948-1966, Rumford emphasized reform on key social issues: fair employment, environmentalism, and—most famously—fair housing.[171] Rumford pioneered California's Fair Housing Act, better known as the Rumford Fair Housing Act.[172] on September 20, 1963, the essential policy became California law, denouncing unjust

[170] "Portrait of William Byron Rumford," *Calisphere*, n.d.https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/tf896nb78r/.
[171] Robert Fikes, "William Byron Rumford, Sr. (1908-1986)," BlackPast, last modified January 26, 2007, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/rumford-william-byron-1908-1986/.
[172] HERBERT G. RUFFIN II, "The California Fair Housing Act [The Rumford Act] (1963-1968)," BlackPast, last modified June 5, 2011, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/california-fair-housing-act-rumford-act-1963-1968/.

housing practices statewide.[173] It declared that: "[…] discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry in housing accommodations is against public policy, and establishes methods of preventing and remedying violation."[174] The Rumford Act is indeed indicative of the many highpoints within the then years-long struggle to safeguard equitable Postwar fruits. However, simultaneously the legislation personified the local pitfalls Black Californians faced in achieving steps towards equality. Such pitfalls came in the form of biased, white Californians who either preached a "colorblind" commitment to property rights, or explicitly desired the maintenance of white neighborhoods. The Rumford Act was no exception unfortunately; it drew mass backlash from local white property owners who felt the fair housing policy infringed on an individual's right to choose whom they want to sell their property to. Local SoCal newspaper *El Sueno Star* highlights such opposition in their September 17th, 1964, issue.[175] The article states: "Opponents of the Rumford Act argue, basically, that the law has "taken from the California property owner his fundamental right of freedom to choose those to whom he wishes to sell or rent his property." [176] Following further intense mobilization from Rumford's critics, in November 1964, the 1963 Fair Housing Act was ultimately removed. Its replacement? Proposition 14, or the "Realtor's Initiative".[177] Proposition 14 famously juxtaposed with the trailblazing Rumford Act, prohibiting, "[…] the State from denying a person the right to rent or sell property "to any person as he chooses. Passage of Proposition 14 would restore that right." [178]Indeed, it is evident that throughout Black Californians' Postwar crusade, whether grassroots or formal, to

[173] *Informational Memo No. 12: Fair Employment Act, Fair Housing Act*, (State of California: Division of Pair Employment Practices, 1963).
[174] "The Great Debate: Rumford Housing Law vs. Proposition 14," *El Sueno Star*, 1, September 17, 1964.
[175] For more on the *El Sueno Star* see: El Sereno Star on Newspapers.com," Newspapers.com, accessed March 18, 2022, https://www.newspapers.com/paper/el-sereno-star/27205/.
[176] "The Great Debate."
[177] "No on Proposition 14: California Fair Housing Initiative Collection," Online Archive of California, accessed March 16, 2022, https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt0b69q1bw/.
[178] "No on Proposition 14," https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt0b69q1bw/.

safeguard fair housing and larger equitable social policy, local white resistance frequently blocked their noble attempts. However, as the 1960s progressed, local white resistance became no match for federal civil rights action. Indeed, the same federal actors that decided *Shelley v. Kraemer* in 1948 were active in championing further innovative social reform in the 1960s. In 1966, the California Supreme Court ruled Proposition 14 illegal, subsequently reinstating the Rumford Act.[179] Likewise, the US Supreme Court expanded on California's recent decision in 1967, affirming that Prop 14 violated not just the Civil Rights Act of 1966, but the Fourteenth Amendment.[180] This 1967 decision consequently influenced the enactment of the 1968 National Housing Act, which prohibited, "[…] housing discrimination by race, color, creed, and national origin." [181] These federal rulings signaled the growth that occurred in housing politics amid the mid-twentieth century. Infamously, *Shelley v. Kraemer* did not unanimously rule unfair housing practices as violating the Fourteenth Amendment, only dubbing judicial-level covenants as unlawful.[182] Yet, almost two decades later, housing discrimination was now deemed as a clear, universal constitutional violation.

[179] RUFFIN II, "The California Fair Housing Act," https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/california-fair-housing-act-rumford-act-1963-1968/.
[180] RUFFIN II, "The California Fair Housing Act."
[181] Ibid
[182] For more information on the inefficiency of Shelley v. Kramer, check out: Yana Kucheva and Richard Sander, see: "The Misunderstood Consequences of Shelley v. Kraemer," *Social Science Research* 48 (2014): 212-233, doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2014.06.007.

Chapter 4:
Epilogue: The Long-Term Significance and Consequences of the Postwar Antiblack, Racial Housing Struggle in Present-Day Inland Empire and SoCal

In highlighting the multifaceted features, events, and figures that define the Postwar IE and SoCal housing struggle, several inferences are produced. For instance, conventional narratives concerning this historical era's housing politics are not only geographically and racially diversified, but ultimately challenged. Unfortunately, far too often the experience of Black Californians in the Inland Empire and Southern California region is omitted from mainstream discussions on the housing and larger socioeconomic boom that overtook the Postwar nation, let alone the racial discrimination that lingered within it. Indeed, if one were to examine solely conventional historical accounts concerning America's Post-World War Two socioeconomic boom, it is likely that one would receive an overly optimistic, capitalistic version of the phenomenon: a tale of wartime production generating an overabundance of accessible stable labor and subsequently affordable, luxurious suburban housing. This account holds evident truths; as Postwar Southern California exemplifies, numerous cities did indeed relish in newfound affluence and social comfort following a harsh economic depression and tumultuous, international warfare. Yet, simultaneously the Postwar SoCal social landscape dispels this narrative. Evidently, the shadows of existing problematic racial norms and larger inequities persisted amid the socioeconomic renaissance, thereby allowing such fruits of fair housing to be essentially unattainable for the region's Black and larger minority populaces. Therefore, pivotal, contemporary works such as *Living in the California Dream* and *West of Jim Crow* are highlighted in this thesis, as these scholarships explicitly showcase the trials and tribulations Black Californians either overcame or endured throughout the era of supposed national prosperity.

Coupled this recent scholarship with academic and historical research, I ultimately unveiled that the mid-twentieth century "Sunshine State" was not an exceptional realm of Postwar modernity and equitable access to housing and larger social opportunities. Rather, the area was an environment rife with the same, inescapable oppression that plagued the overall nation. Indeed, as the tragic yet thought-provoking tales of discrimination in mid-twentieth century SoCal cities like Los Angeles, Riverside, and Fontana indicate, the East Coast-inspired white-majority, racially segregated Levittowns and "Southern-styled" racial hostility unequivocally prevailed within the region's numerous budding boroughs, at the expense of Black Californians. Yet, despite unearthing the many challenges faced in the quest for fair housing and opportunity, this thesis demonstrates that there was overwhelming backlash to the horrific phenomenon throughout the era—backlash that was not only swift but ubiquitous, grassroots, socialist, and multiethnic.

However, although grassroots means were a crucial aspect to the fight for just housing practices in SoCal's Postwar years, it is necessary to recognize that the movement did in fact utilize institutional means with some success. As seen with Bass and especially Rumford, many Black Californians were privy to the effectiveness of partaking in governmental endeavors to elicit meaningful housing reform. This was especially the case as the 1960s commenced—a time where the civil rights spirit unequivocally flourished. Be it the 1963 Rumford Act, ruling Prop 14 as unlawful in 1966, or the 1968 Federal Fair Housing Act, it is amid this apex in civil rights that both Southern California and the overall nation witnessed a "renaissance" in fair housing policy. This legislation ultimately combatted the years-long unfairness against minorities. Evidently, this change in the 1960s would not have occur without the tireless dedication to social justice amongst African Americans, whether statewide or nationwide. The racial group had a clear mission in the

Postwar era: to make the public sphere palatable to their livelihoods and interests; and during that mission, housing was a pivotal issue area to safeguard.

Nevertheless, one should not observe these irrefutable triumphs in just housing in the 1960s and deem the Black Postwar housing struggle as having a definite, positive end in Southern California. Indeed, this fight for safe, secure residencies and larger neighborhoods is far from over. Consider for instance the present-day Inland Empire. At once, highlighting this vast SoCal region's history brings attention to Black Californians' historic, significant presence and discriminatory experiences within the region's many cities. However, this marginalization in housing and the larger public sphere did not dissipate following the Postwar period. In recent years, local IE and SoCal newspapers like *The Press Enterprise* and *Los Angeles Times* emphasize two phenomena that are plaguing the current IE landscape: low wages and the warehouse boom.[183] Such realities are essentially offshoots of the Postwar boom in industry and suburbia entrenching the IE. Yet, this same industrialization and suburbanization that fostered the Inland Empire's growth in the immediate Postwar period is continuing to generate unfair consequences for the region's established minority populaces. In 2019, *Press Enterprise's* Jonathan Lansner reported the Inland Empire's San Bernardino and Riverside counties having the "lowest pay among the 50 largest U.S. counties."[184] Reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics further support Lasner's claim; Orange and Los Angeles counties reported average weekly wages of $1,287 and $1,282 respectively, whereas San Bernardino and Riverside counties had a smaller $931 and $927, respectively.[185]

[183] Johnathan Lansner, "Inland Empire Wages Lowest Among Big U.S. Counties, L.A., O.C. Middle of the Pack," Press Enterprise, last modified September 3, 2019, https://www.pe.com/2019/09/03/inland-empire-wages-lowest-among-big-u-s-counties-l-a-o-c-middle-of-the-pack/.
[184] Lansner, "Inland Empire Wages."
[185] Bureau of Labor Statistics figure found in: Lansner, "Inland Empire Wages."

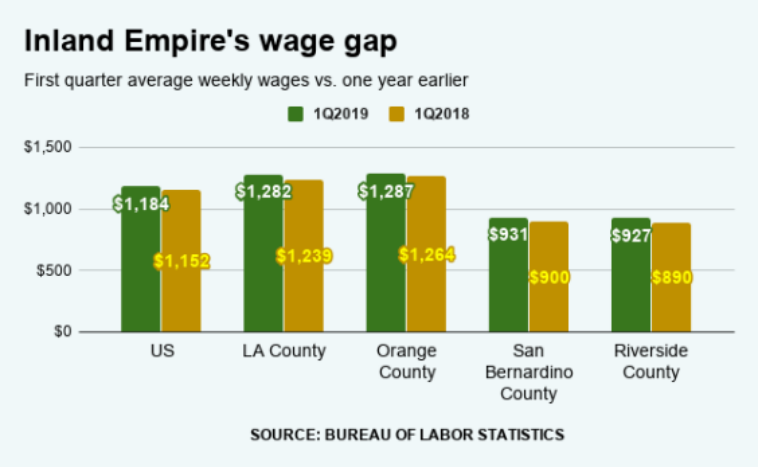


Figure from Lasnser's Article.

Considering this, one might wonder what exactly is worsening these income disparities in the Inlands. The answer? The region's reliance on manufacturing and greater industry. Indeed, the industrial economy that Henry J. Kaiser spearheaded in the late 1940s and early 1950s prevailed in the IE, transforming SoCal's Inlands into the "warehouse and distribution hub." However, with this sector comes not just low pay and grueling working conditions, but the displacement of native, largely minority IE residents. The IE's abundance of industry and affordable housing is inadvertently making the area akin to a "bedroom community" for affluent migrants ;[186] with a median single-family home price of $380,000, native residents from Orange, San Diego, and LA county are moving Inland in droves due to the lower cost of living .[187] Yet, these new arrivals often still retain and subsequently commute to their high-paying jobs.[188] This reality greatly contrasts with the IE's Postwar years, a time when the region's competitive pay and ideal steel employment where perceived as the steppingstones to stable, middle-class life. This past dogma once attracted Black Californians and larger minorities to the region, but now they continue to bear the brunt of

[186] Lansner, "Inland Empire Wages."
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.

large-scale social policy that evidently prioritizes profit over people. The warehouse boom further exemplifies this unfortunate condition.

Undeniably, mega-warehouses for companies like Amazon and UPS are inundating the IE.[189] These developments do indeed generate revenue and jobs, but candidly these are predominately low-wage opportunities, thus leaving native residents in a socioeconomic vulnerable position. In particular, the IE's African American and Latino neighborhoods are suffering the most from this warehouse phenomenon;[190] As Evan Harper and Anna M. Phillips discuss, these warehouses are making minority residential areas crowded, polluted, and generally inhabitable.[191] Of the numerous IE cities, Fontana is the biggest victim of the warehouse boom; Fontana's residents complain about warehouse projects' proximity to their homes, a fact that not only facilitates worsened traffic conditions, but harmful pollution from trucks .[192] Nevertheless, local politicians continue to champion the warehouse dependency despite civil opposition. For instance, Fontana Mayor Acquanetta Warren, colloquially deemed "Warehouse Warren", welcomes the facilities, seeing warehouses as an opportunity to "remake Fontana" to a city that has a plethora of jobs.[193] However, such ambitions clearly do not recognize the personal adverse effects these developments have on IE neighborhoods. Josie Kuhl best summarizes the toil this

[189] Paloma Esquivel, "When Your House is Surrounded by Massive Warehouses," Los Angeles Times, last modified October 27, 2019, https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-10-27/fontana-california-warehouses-inland-empire-pollution.
[190] EVAN HALPER and ANNA M. PHILLIPS, "California Has a New Battle Plan Against Environmental Injustice. The Nation is Watching," Los Angeles Times, last modified November 18, 2021, https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2021-11-18/california-confronts-environmental-injustice-washington-looks-its-way-for-inspiration.
[191] HALPER and PHILLIPS, "California." https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2021-11-18/california-confronts-environmental-injustice-washington-looks-its-way-for-inspiration.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Esquivel, "When Your House is Surrounded by Massive Warehouses."

industry brings to long-term residents in Esquivel's LA Times piece: "Boxed. We're boxed in from either direction." [194]

Ultimately, this current preference for low pay industry jobs and disruptive mega-warehouses in the IE showcases that the legacy of SoCal's Postwar, problematic housing discrimination prevails in the present-day. Decades-old laws that outlaw racialized housing discrimination may be enacted; similarly, Cross burnings and house bombings might not be utilized to harass African Americans out of desirable SoCal boroughs. However, this commitment to these toxic facilities proves that the fight for fair housing goes beyond the ability to purchase property. Indeed, prior and amid the Postwar era, Black Californians and their fellow people of color endured and subsequently combatted blatant bias and violence. Yet, now in an era where policies such as the California Fair Employment Housing Act (FEHA) are cemented, there are still grave issues in housing that are disproportionately affecting these minority groups. Vice President of Policy at the Oakland-based Greenlining Institute Alvaro Sanchez says it best in Halper and Phillips's 2021 LA Times' piece:

"They are the hardest hit and the worst hit, through no fault of their own. It is systemic. There is a history of redlining, disinvestment […] in neighborhoods."[195]

Despite being challenged, the past biased practices from the Postwar era are nevertheless engrained in the twenty-first century Inland Empire and Southern California. Mobilization and publicization from activists undeniably fostered vital reform. However, I find that it is going to take further, immediate action from key government actors to ensure that the historical wrongs of

[194] Esquivel, "When Your House is Surrounded by Massive Warehouses."
[195] HALPER and PHILLIPS, "California Has a New Battle Plan Against Environmental Injustice."

racialized housing discrimination and greater troubling social practices are challenged and ultimately ceased.

Recent developments do indicate that such a need is occurring. On July 23rd, 2021, California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed a lawsuit against Fontana for the city's approval of the Slover and Oleander Warehouse Project—a 205,000 square-foot project that, "…shares a border with a public high school and is located in one of the most polluted areas in the state." .[196] Likewise, in September that same year, Governor Gavin Newsom signed SB 796, a legislation that returned Manhattan Beach's Bruce's Beach to its descendants of Black entrepreneurs Willa and Charles Bruce.[197] This policy action occurred almost a century following Manhattan Beach city officials seizing the Black Californians' Beachfront property in 1924.[198]

Indeed, Southern California will not rid themselves of their troubling, Postwar shadows overnight. However, with explicit federal policy that emphasizes both the undoing of this region's systematic, problematic housing practices and the betterment of people of color, the Black Californian Postwar crusade for an equitable public sphere with accessible opportunities can be feasibly achieved.

---

[196] *Attorney General Bonta Challenges Approval of Warehouse Project in South Fontana Neighborhood Already Overburdened by Unhealthy Air Pollution*, (Oakland: STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, 2021), https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-challenges-approval-warehouse-project-south-fontana.

[197] *Moving to Right Historical Wrong, Governor Newsom Signs Legislation to Return Bruce's Beach to Black Descendants*, (Manhattan Beach: Office of the Governor Gavin Newsom, 2021), https://www.gov.ca.gov/2021/09/30/moving-to-right-historical-wrong-governor-newsom-signs-legislation-to-return-bruces-beach-to-black-descendants/.

[198] "Moving to Right Historical Wrong."

Bibliography

"An aerial view of a suburban community." *Insider / Hulton Archive / Getty*. n.d. https://www.insider.com/vintage-photos-levittown-suburbs-50s.

Attorney General Bonta Challenges Approval of Warehouse Project in South Fontana Neighborhood Already Overburdened by Unhealthy Air Pollution. Oakland: STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, July 23, 2021. https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-challenges-approval-warehouse-project-south-fontana.

Bass, Charlotta. *Forty Years: Memoirs from the Pages of a Newspaper*. Los Angeles 1960. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3177445.

"Charlotta Bass (U.S. National Park Service)." NPS.gov (U.S. National Park Service). Accessed March 16, 2022. https://www.nps.gov/people/charlottabass.htm.

"Charlotta Bass." *Southern California Library for Social Studies & Research*. n.d. https://www.californiamuseum.org/inductee/charlotta-bass.

"The Cleavers from Leave it to Beaver." *LAmag*. n.d. https://www.lamag.com/culturefiles/colonial-street-universal-studios/.

"Corrigan V. Buckley, 271 U.S. 323 (1926)." Justia Law. Last modified May 24, 1926. https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/271/323/.

"El Sereno Star on Newspapers.com." Newspapers.com. Accessed March 18, 2022. https://www.newspapers.com/paper/el-sereno-star/27205/.

El Sueno Star (Los Angeles). "The Great Debate: Rumford Housing Law vs. Proposition 14." September 17, 1964.

Employment and Earnings, May 1955. U.S Department of Labor, May 1, 1955. https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/employment-earnings-60/may-1955-20075.

"The End of World War II 1945." The National WWII Museum | New Orleans. Accessed March 15, 2022. https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/topics/end-world-war-ii-1945.

Esparza, Richard R., H. Vincent Moses, and Celena Turney, editors. *Our Families, Our Stories: From the African American Community Riverside, California 1870-1960*. Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1997.

Esquivel, Paloma. "When Your House is Surrounded by Massive Warehouses." Los Angeles Times. Last modified October 27, 2019. https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-10-27/fontana-california-warehouses-inland-empire-pollution.

Fikes, Robert. "William Byron Rumford, Sr. (1908-1986)." BlackPast. Last modified January 26, 2007. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/rumford-william-byron-1908-1986/.

Freer, Regina. "L.A. Race Woman: Charlotta Bass and the Complexities of Black Political Development in Los Angeles." *American Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2004), 607-632. doi:10.1353/aq.2004.0034.

Gans, Herbert J. "Levittown and America." In *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban*, 63. New York: Pantheon, 1967.

Gebbia, Joe. "Post-War United States." BrainyQuote. Accessed March 15, 2022. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/joe_gebbia_897273.

Grant, Rachel. "'The White Side of the Fence:' Charlotta Bass and the Wesley Robert Wells Case, 1947–1954." *Media History* 27, no. 4 (2021), 525-538. doi:10.1080/13688804.2021.1947214.

HALPER, EVAN, and ANNA M. PHILLIPS. "California Has a New Battle Plan Against Environmental Injustice. The Nation is Watching." Los Angeles Times. Last modified November 18, 2021. https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2021-11-18/california-confronts-environmental-injustice-washington-looks-its-way-for-inspiration.

"Herbert J. Gans "Levittown and America" from The Levittowners (1967)." Department of Urban Design and Planning - University of Washington's GM Forum. Last modified 2008. https://courses.washington.edu/gmforum/Readings/Gans.pdf.

Highsmith, Carol M. "Street in Levittown, Pennsylvania, Near Philadelphia." *Library of Congress*. 2019. https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/highsm.56988/.

"Historical Census Records of Racial/Ethnic Groups, Los Angeles County, California." Los Angeles Almanac. Accessed March 15, 2022. https://www.laalmanac.com/population/po20.php.

Holzwarth, Larry. "Policies and Programs That Molded Society." HistoryCollection.com. Last modified November 8, 2019. https://historycollection.com/policies-and-programs-that-molded-society/17/.

"How Many Americans Died in WW2?" History on the Net. Last modified July 6, 2018. https://www.historyonthenet.com/how-many-americans-died-in-ww2.

Hudson, Lynn M. *West of Jim Crow: The Fight against California's Color Line*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2020. Kindle. muse.jhu.edu/book/78346.

"Human Needs Exploration: Then and Now." NASA. Last modified 2006. https://www.nasa.gov/pdf/162514main_Human_Needs.pdf.

Informational Memo No. 12: Fair Employment Act, Fair Housing Act. State of California: Division of Pair Employment Practices, 1963.

Our Families, Our Stories: From the African American Community Riverside, California 1870-1960, edited by Richard R. Esparza, H. Vincent Moses, and Celena Turney. Riverside: Riverside Museum Press, 1997.

Jefferson, Alison R. *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites During the Jim Crow Era*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. Kindle. https://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9781496201300/

Johnson, Gaye T. *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2013. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520954854.

Kucheva, Yana, and Richard Sander. "The Misunderstood Consequences of Shelley v. Kraemer." *Social Science Research* 48 (2014), 212-233. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2014.06.007.

Lambert, Bruce. "At 50, Levittown Contends With Its Legacy of Bias (Published 1997)." New York Times. Last modified December 28, 1997. https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/28/nyregion/at-50-levittown-contends-with-its-legacy-of-bias.html.

Lansner, Johnathan. "Inland Empire Wages Lowest Among Big U.S. Counties, L.A., O.C. Middle of the Pack." Press Enterprise. Last modified September 3, 2019. https://www.pe.com/2019/09/03/inland-empire-wages-lowest-among-big-u-s-counties-l-a-o-c-middle-of-the-pack/.

"A Levittown community in the 1950s." *Insider and Tony Linck/ Getty*. n.d. https://www.insider.com/vintage-photos-levittown-suburbs-50s.

LiShen Romious, Angila. "An Investigation of Black Mobility from Los Angeles County to the Inland Empire, 1940-2000." Master's thesis, University of California, Irvine, 2009. https://www.academia.edu/9014869.

"The Los Angeles Sentinel Newspaper is Published." African American Registry. Last modified November 12, 2021. https://aaregistry.org/story/the-los-angeles-sentinel-newspaper-begins/.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "'Paradise' at Highland Tract in Fontana." March 20, 1952, A5.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "'REDS IN HOUSING' PROBE CALLS LOCAL WOMAN: JESSIE TERRY TO APPEAR AT Housing Probe." September 25, 1952, A1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "BURNING CROSS LINKED TO L.A. RACE HOUSING FIGHT: Klan Symbol Fired at Home of Family Battling Restrictions." May 16, 1946, 1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Citizens Protest Failure to Probe Fontana Fire." January 31, 1946, 8.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Cross Burns at Palm Springs." April 25, 1946, 1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "EXPOSE NEGRO COMMUNISTS IN NATION'S CAPITOL: Federal Agent Bares List of Negro Reds." July 26, 1951, B1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Fontana Probe Plea Taken to Pres. Truman." April 18, 1946, 1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "John Marshall." February 26, 1946, 7.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "KKK MENACES NEGRO HOMES: KLANSMEN THREATEN NEGROES." April 4, 1946, 17.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Let's Have all the Facts." January 3, 1946, 7.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Mass Meeting Probes Fontana School Clashes." December 22, 1960, 4A.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "NAACP Brands Fontana Fire As Incendiary; Kerosene Theory Flatly Denied By Arson Expert." January 10, 1946, 1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "NEGRO SEEN AS 'SCAPEGOAT' IN NEW RENT LAW ISSUED FROM WHITE HOUSE: City Civic Center Evictees Petition City Fathers." May 5, 1949, B1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "R.W. Kenny Probing Fontana Fire Deaths." February 13, 1946, 23.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Socialism and Housing." November 20, 1947, 7.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Vet Scores Riverside 'Ignorance'." February 16, 1956, A1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Victorville's Shameful Housing Exposed: GIs Face Shameful Housing." January 11, 1962, A1.

Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles). "Violence Threat Against Short Must Not Go Unchallenged: AN EDITORIAL." January 3, 1946, 1.

Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles). "Group Maps Drive Against Socialism: Committee to Fight Riverside Public Housing Project." June 22, 1952, 34.

Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles). "PROTEST MEETING CALLED ON RIVERSIDE HOUSING." June 25, 1952, 14.

Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles). "Riverside Firms Contract for Military Housing Project." April 28, 1957, G13.

Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles). "Riverside Housing Bill Passes House." June 9, 1954, 16.

Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles). "San Bernardino will Sift Racial Matters." July 11, 1963, 28.

"A Map of California." *Lynn M. Hudson's West of Jim Crow*. 2020. https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:9443/chapter/2731788/pdf.

Marshall, Colin. "Levittown, the Prototypical American Suburb – a History of Cities in 50 Buildings, Day 25." The Guardian. Last modified April 28, 2015. https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/apr/28/levittown-america-prototypical-suburb-history-cities.

Moving to Right Historical Wrong, Governor Newsom Signs Legislation to Return Bruce's Beach to Black Descendants. Manhattan Beach: Office of the Governor Gavin Newsom, September 30, 2021. https://www.gov.ca.gov/2021/09/30/moving-to-right-historical-wrong-governor-newsom-signs-legislation-to-return-bruces-beach-to-black-descendants/.

"Nelson Family." *ABC-TV/Kobal/REX/Shuttershock*. n.d. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-8304169/Christopher-Meloni-asking-6-5MIL-haunted-house-belonged-Ozzie-Harriet.html.

New York Times (New York). "KAISER EXPANDING PLANT AT FONTANA." March 7, 1952.

"No on Proposition 14: California Fair Housing Initiative Collection." Online Archive of California. Accessed March 16, 2022. https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt0b69q1bw/.

"O'Day H. Short." *From Vigilante Terror in Fontana*. 1946.

"O'Day H. Short's Wife and Children." *From Vigilante Terror in Fontana*. 1946.

Olito, Frank. "Vintage Photos That Show What Life Was Like in America's First Suburb in the '50s." Insider. Last modified September 14, 2020. https://www.insider.com/vintage-photos-levittown-suburbs-50s#before-the-1950s-people-mostly-lived-in-cities-to-be-close-to-factory-jobs-1.

"Paul Robeson and Charlotta Bass, circa 1949." *Calisphere*. 1949. Los Angeles Daily News Negatives. https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/hb5q2nb3q7/.

"Portrait of William Byron Rumford." *Calisphere*. Kindle. n.d. Collection: California Faces: Selections from The Bancroft Library Portrait Collection. https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/tf896nb78r/.

Rosenberg, Jeremy. "The Birth of Sprawl: How Ending the Great Depression Meant Inventing the Suburbs." KCET. Last modified October 1, 2012. https://www.kcet.org/history-society/the-birth-of-sprawl-how-ending-the-great-depression-meant-inventing-the-suburbs.

RUFFIN II, HERBERT G. "The California Fair Housing Act [The Rumford Act] (1963-1968)." BlackPast. Last modified June 5, 2011. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/california-fair-housing-act-rumford-act-1963-1968/.

Schneider, Gregory L. "The G.I. Bill." Bill of Rights Institute. Accessed March 15, 2022. https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/the-gi-bill.

"Shelley V. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1 (1948)." Justia Law. Last modified May 3, 1948. https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/334/1/.

Simon, Jean. "Bias Adds To Crisis In Housing." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (Los Angeles), October 30, 1947, 9.

Simons, Grace E. "Attorney General Kenny Urged to Push Probe of Fontana Fire." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (Los Angeles), January 31, 1946, 8.

Skinner, Byron R. *Black Origins in the Inland Empire*. San Bernardino: Book Attic Bress, 1983.

Special Staff Correspondence. "Three Injured by Exploding Lamp." *San Bernardino Sun* (San Bernardino), December 17, 1945.

"Street in Levittown, Pennsylvania, Near Philadelphia." Library of Congress. Last modified April 23, 2019. https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/highsm.56988/.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2019. Kindle.

"Trends for Fontana's Future- Fontana in the Context of the Inland Empire." Fontana, CA - Official Website | Official Website. Last modified November 13, 2018. https://www.fontana.org/DocumentCenter/View/26757/Chapter-2---Trends-for-Fontanas-Future.

Weiss, Myra T. *Vigilante Terror in Fontana: The Tragic Story of O'Day H. Short and His Family*. Los Angeles: SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY LOS ANGELES LOCAL, 1946.

White, O. Kendall, and Daryl White. "Integrating Religious and Racial Identities: An Analysis of LDS African American Explanations of the Priesthood Ban." *Review of Religious Research* 36, no. 3 (1995), 295. doi:10.2307/3511536.

Woodard, Komozi, and John S. Portlock. "In the “Fabled Land of Make-Believe”: Charlotta Bass and Jim Crow Los Angeles Chapter A." In *The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North: Segregation and Struggle outside of the South*, edited by Brian Purnell and Jeanne Theoharis. New York: NYU Press, 2019. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12fw8q3.5.