

**Centre City Development Corporation  
Downtown San Diego  
African-American Heritage Study**

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# **I. UNDERTAKING INFORMATION/INTRODUCTION**

## **A. Introduction and Project Contract Information**

This project is the result of a contract awarded by the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC) to Mooney & Associates in September 2002. CCDC issued a Request for Qualifications on January 14, 2002, held a pre-submittal conference on January 29, 2002, and received the Statement of Qualifications on February 28, 2002. The contract was subsequently awarded to Mooney & Associates in September 2002 and work immediately began to document the history of African-Americans in the study area as defined by CCDC.

The overall goal of the project was to provide CCDC, the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency, the San Diego Planning Department, and the Historical Resources Board with the information and documentation to make informed and reasonable decisions regarding the historic and cultural significance of buildings, structures, and places in the CCDC study area and to seek designation of important buildings as applicable. This study had its roots in suggestions by Mr. Gil Johnson in 1993 that such a study should be completed. Over the years it became clear to CCDC that as downtown San Diego began to undergo rapid growth and redevelopment, there was a need and an opportunity to document the history of African Americans in the community and to acknowledge their contributions to the history of the area as a whole.

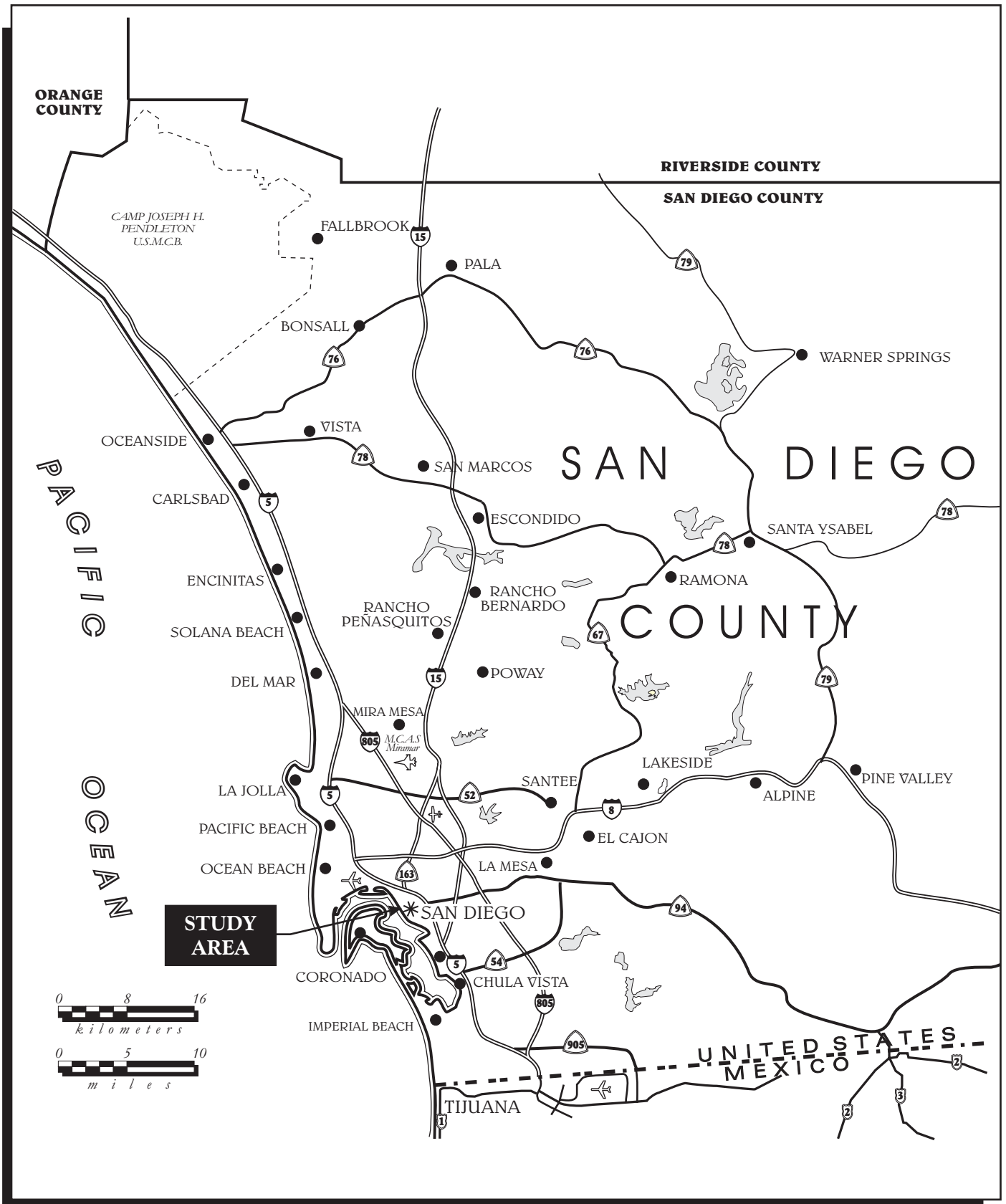
## **B. Project Location**

### **1. Rationale for Project Area Selection**

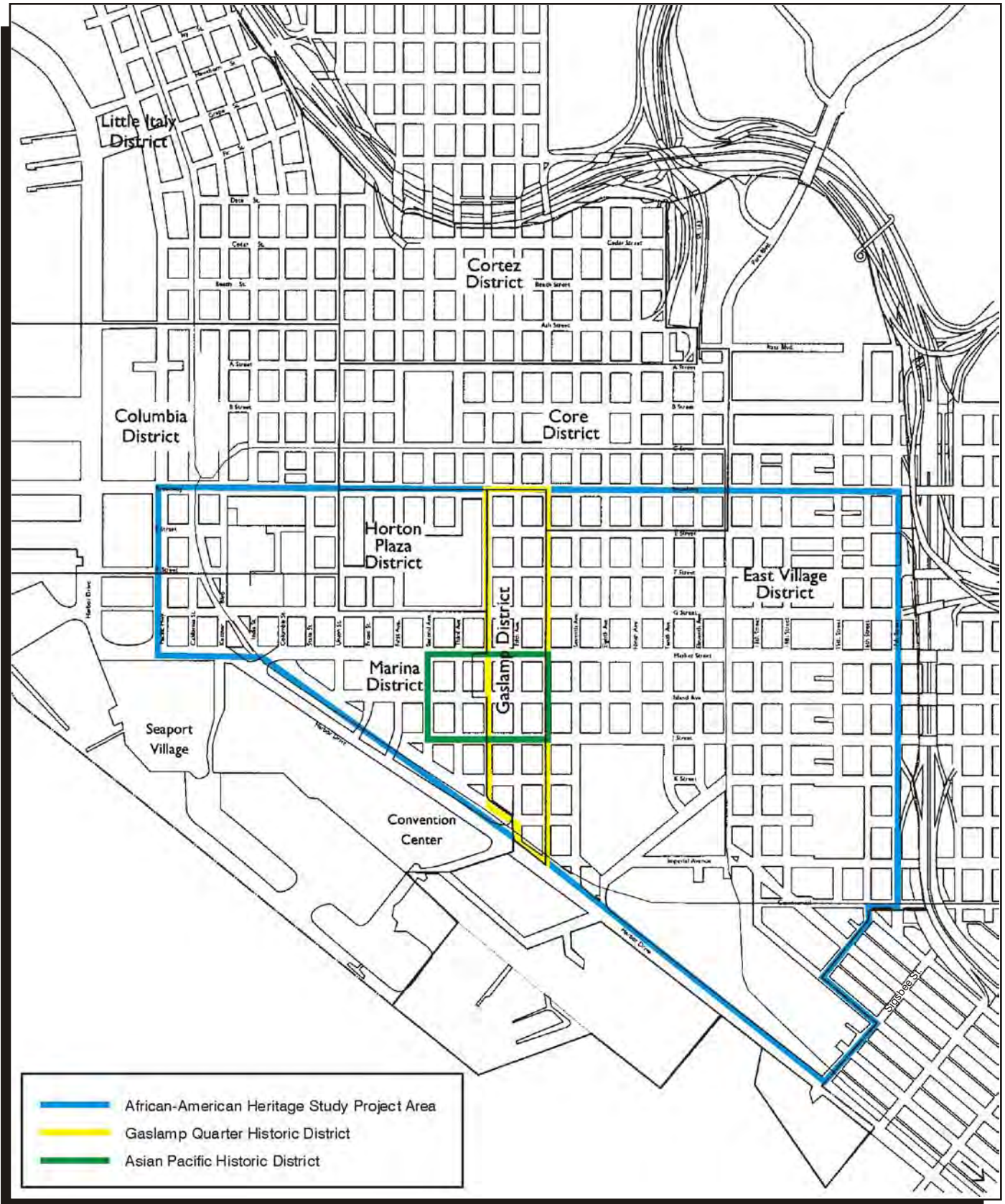
The project area, or study area, is located in the downtown area of the City of San Diego and was dictated by Centre City Redevelopment Project area boundaries and by the smaller sub-units within the overall boundary (Map 1). The emphasis of the study was to examine the buildings, environment, and cultural landscape of the project area within the context of African-American history and culture. Specifically, the study focused on the East Village Redevelopment District, the Gaslamp Quarter, the Marina Area, and the southern Core Redevelopment District. In general, this area is bounded on the north by Broadway Street, on the south by Harbor Drive, on the east by 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and on the west by Pacific Highway (Map 2). This study unit was also selected because of the rapid changes and redevelopment that are occurring in the area and the obvious need to better document the African American community in the area.

### **2. Constraints within the Project Area**

There were three overriding constraints to research and documentation in the Project Area. The first constraint was the fact that the vast majority of the African-American population currently lives in, and relates to, neighborhoods and communities not directly associated with the study area. The African-American community that once thrived in downtown San Diego circa 1880-1950 is more than fifty years removed from the heyday of the downtown Black experience and this poses unique



**Regional Location Map**  
Map 1



problems in terms of ascribing importance to the older community and as regards the memories of the older community and of the events that took place there.

A second constraint is one that is common to virtually all redevelopment or urban projects; the landscape has changed drastically in the past fifty years. In this context, the buildings or places that may have once held importance to the Black community or that would best represent a contiguous District have been removed or substantially altered. In this case, it is difficult to develop a true sense of time and place on a large scale. As discussed in later sections of this report, this constraint led to the development of discontinuous thematic districts that reflect the people and the community and is not necessarily represented by standing buildings.

A third constraint posed by the study is that the African American community, as are the Latino and Asian communities, are substantially under represented in the “traditional” histories and historical sources for the area. As is discussed throughout this report, the history of minority communities in downtown San Diego, and elsewhere, is perhaps more subtle, and more obscured than the history of the white, Anglo-Saxon population, but it is no less complex, rich, and evocative.

## **C. Objectives of Project**

### **1. Examine Potential for African-American Thematic Historic District**

A primary goal of the research and documentation was to develop a database from which decisions could be made regarding the establishment (if warranted) of an African-American Thematic Historic District within the East Village Redevelopment District, the Gaslamp Quarter, the Marina Area, and the southern Core Redevelopment District (See map 2). As discussed in detail later in this report, thematic historic districts reflect distinct historical and cultural events and patterns rather than architectural styles or visual objects. In the case of an African-American Thematic Historic District, emphasis would be placed on those buildings, places, and contexts that reflect the role of African-Americans in San Diego’s history, in the development and maintenance of an African-American community, and in the artistic, religious, and cultural structure of the African-American community. Within these broad themes, sub-themes of community life, economics, music, civil rights, gender, and other topics can be developed to provide a framework for both developing, and assessing the importance of people and places within any proposed District.

### **2. Provide African-American Historical Context for Area Redevelopment Projects**

This study focuses on African-American history and culture within the context of the development of portions of downtown San Diego. While the role and context of other ethnic and racial groups were by no means ignored, and in fact could not be ignored given the interwoven nature of the African American, Latino, and Asian American communities, the emphasis was on persons of African-American descent, their history, their cultural heritage, their role, and the places that would be important to them.

In some instances, such as the Howard “Skippy” Smith Pacific Parachute Building on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, it is largely the role and contributions of this Black entrepreneur in the war effort that makes the building important. In contrast, the Frey Building on Market Street had already been deemed as an important resource and the overlay of African American importance to the building only amplifies and enhances its value to several communities. The recognition of the role of the Crossroads Jazz Club, also on Market Street, in the local and state music scene and in African-American social life is in addition to the building’s more obvious architectural importance. To determine the context, the documentation must reveal that persons of some importance in the Black community lived in, operated, or owned a given building; that the building was of particular significance or meaning to African-Americans; that events important in the history of African-Americans took place there; or that African-Americans hold a particular building or place in reverence. In addition to standing buildings, documentation can reveal the location of buildings or sites (such as parks or meeting places) no longer standing that were of historical importance to the African-American experience in downtown San Diego.

## **II. AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY IN DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The project area is located in the intensively urban and metropolitan locale of the City of San Diego. Specifically, it is comprised of developed areas of the downtown Centre City planning area as well as areas currently undergoing redevelopment, including the Gaslamp Quarter and the East Village. Communities and neighborhoods beyond the study area (Sherman Heights, Logan Heights, Golden Hill, Frontier) are discussed only in a general context as they may relate to the study area. The study area once comprised a large and varied African-American community, changing in location over time.

With different waves of migration shaping the community during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, African-Americans in San Diego experienced and contributed to the growth of the city, and were at once part of and distinct from the histories familiar to us today. The following discussion is divided into two parts; an overview of the history and development of the African-American community in San Diego and a separate discussion of several men and women important in the development and daily life of the Black community. The list of important Black men and women is by no means comprehensive for all of San Diego; it focuses on the study area and on the persons, events, and places that best depict the African-American experience in the downtown area between 17<sup>th</sup> Street and the harbor and Broadway south to Harbor Drive.

### **B. DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN SAN DIEGO**

#### **1. Spanish Colonial and Mexican-Era San Diego**

The presence of people of African descent in the San Diego area precedes the development of the present downtown area, dating to the Hispanic settlers who founded the Presidio de San Diego in 1769. The first “European” community in California, these settlers, and their successors reflected a multitude of racial backgrounds. Individuals from a diversity of ethnic and racial backgrounds were participants in the earliest days of Spanish colonialism in southern Alta California. Spain itself was, at the time of its colonial expansion, not long out of the seven centuries of cultural and demographic mixing under the rule of the north African Moors (Vigil 1973:1-2). By the time of the development of Spanish colonial settlements in California, there had been more than seven generations of racial and ethnic blending.

The complexities of definitions of identity in Spain and its New World colonies are clear in the 1790 census of the Presidio de San Diego. Of the 90 adults at the presidio, at least 45 were noted as mixed blood. The categories listed included *mulatto* and *colores quebrado* (both groups recognized as persons of African ancestry in the complicated Spanish colonial identity system), as well as other labels indicating some portion of African heritage. Originating from Cuba, the West Indies, and Africa, these individuals played a significant role in the settlement and colonization of southern California (Carrico 2003, see also Mason 1978:17, Weber 1974:3). Processes of intermarriage between Native Americans, Spanish, and those of African descent precluded the creation of a



separate Afro-Spanish identity in early Spanish and Mexican California. The multi-ethnic character of the land was personified in Pío Pico, a Californio of Mexican, African, Indian, and Italian descent who served as the last Governor of Mexican California (Gray 2002:68, San Diego Historical Society 2004a).

American citizens of African descent began arriving in California in the later years of the Mexican era. Such migrants often arrived as sailors or accompanying military officers and government officials as servants, but their small numbers and diffusion throughout the state precluded the establishment of a “black community.” (Lapp 1979:1-3). Following the American takeover of Alta California in 1846, the influx of non-Hispanic people and culture steadily increased. Anecdotal tales of gold rush success and a growing confidence that the new California territory would not join the slave states began to attract free African-Americans in larger numbers, though primarily to northern counties (Lapp 1979:4).

In major California cities, newly arrived African-Americans served predominantly in service, food, and menial occupations, although Black businessmen were increasingly successful in large urban centers like San Francisco (Lapp 1979:25). The population in Mexican-era California differed from other areas of the U.S. as a result of the influence of Spanish and Mexican colonialism as well as encroaching Russian settlement using otter trade to facilitate its way southward. In San Diego, African-American Allen Light, an otter hunter and naturalized Mexican citizen born in Philadelphia, resided with Richard Freeman, a fellow African-American from the eastern U.S. who joined the settlement within what is now Old Town in 1847.

Freeman, who was a shipmate of Richard Henry Dana on the ship *Pilgrim*, purchased the one-story Ponciano property that came to be known as the Freeman-Light house in what is now Old Town. In later years, Freeman and Light purchased another home across the street from the Whaley House and Freeman served as the small village’s unofficial postmaster until 1850. Freeman died in 1851 and Light subsequently disappears from the historical record, yet these two represent the early presence of African-Americans in the settlement of Mexican-era San Diego (Ramsey and Lewis 1980:59).

## **2. Early American-Era Settlement**

The entrepreneurial drive of American Easterners looking west for fresh markets and the development of new transportation routes covering large distances increased tension between the United States and Mexico and erupted into the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. The Hispanic Period of San Diego officially ended with the transfer of Alta California to American control under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. African-Americans helped shape American-era California from its incipient days, comprising part of Frémont's Bear Flag Party (Berkeley Interracial Committee 1945:1). Slavery as an institution was outlawed in California's first state constitution adopted in 1849, although there was ambiguity regarding white slave owners' rights to bring slaves into the new territory. By 1850, the total California population of 92,597 included less than 1000 African-Americans and persons of African descent (Savage 1976:12). Most were located in the mining towns of Northern California as a result of the gold rush. The ethnic and cultural blend of the African-American population has been categorized in 1850 as:

nearly one thousand blacks from north and south of the Mason-Dixon Line as well as a foreign-born population of Afro-Latin Americans from Mexico, Peru, and Chile and a significant population of Jamaicans (Taylor 1998:83).

In 1850, the San Diego County census records only eight African-Americans in a total population of 798 individuals. This no doubt represents an under reporting given the tendency of African-Hispanics to be listed as white or as Mexican rather than as Black. During the course of the decade, however, the black population doubled and began to shift to other parts of the state (Ramsey and Lewis 1980:59).

The City of San Diego was incorporated in 1850 and was led by a group of politicians reflecting both the city's Hispanic heritage and American association. San Diego's coastal settlement at the drainage of the San Diego River had been the hub of the city's trading and transportation activity since the establishment of the presidio by Spanish colonists. Moving down from Presidio Hill by the mid-1820s, the population began to focus within the adobes and small wooden structures at the pueblo of San Diego, in what is now Old Town (Romero in Nasatir 1967). This tight-knit community served local needs but offered little to the outside world. The shift from Mexican enclave to American city after 1848 changed all of this and opened up opportunities to African-Americans from throughout the hemisphere.

In March 1850, the entrepreneurial eyes of William Heath Davis, José Antonio Aguirre, Miguel de Pedorena, William C. Ferrell, Andrew B. Grey, and Thomas D. Johns fell on new opportunities, and together they purchased 160 acres at the foot of today's Market Street in an effort to move the center of the town closer to the harbor to increase trade potential. Only two months later, Oliver S. Witherby, William H. Emory, Cave J. Coutts, Thomas W. Sutherland, Agostin Haraszthy, Juan Bandini, José M. Estudillo, Charles P. Notell, and Henry Clayton purchased 687 acres in the area to become known as Middletown between Davis' investment and the Old Town settlement. However, "[e]fforts to relocate the city at New Town foundered because of this lack of business, opposition from Old Town residents, and the lack of water and fuel. By 1853 most of the community's residents lived in Old Town or La Playa with New Town nearly abandoned." (Hughes 1975:11). It would not be until the mid-1860s that the town of San Diego as we now know it began to blossom from the flat coastal plain on San Diego Bay.

### **3. African-Americans and the Early Settlement of Downtown, 1860-1880s**

In 1860, the African-American population in California remained at little over 1% (Taylor 1998:76). Four persons of African descent, again probably an underreporting, are present in the 1860 San Diego census, listed as follows:

Thomas Smith, cook, born in Bermuda  
John Williams, cook, born in Manila  
Jefsee Torres, born in North Carolina  
Anna Freeman, born in California

For this same period, Palmer (2001:43) notes the presence of two cooks, a miner, and a servant. It would appear, given the gender of the two individuals whose occupations are not provided, that

Torres was the miner and Freeman the servant. Freeman is the only one listed as Black and the others are Mulatto. It is interesting to note, too, that Smith originated in Bermuda and Williams in the Philippines, reflecting the far-flung origins of the early African descendants who came to San Diego. This pattern of geographic diversity in the Black population would continue well into the twentieth century.

By 1865, four State Conventions of the Coloured Citizens of California had occurred with the aim of gaining full citizenship (Ramsey and Lewis 1980:61). Following the end of the Civil War, the Reconstruction era (1865-1877) saw the emergence of Jim Crow laws institutionalizing segregation in southern states. While constitutional guarantees of full citizenship had been enacted less than a decade before, by the later years of Reconstruction, African-Americans in the south were experiencing increasing restrictions on their opportunities in education, employment, and civic life. Migration to northern states, in particular Kansas, was one response, though nearly 90% of the country's African-American population remained in southern states (Encarta Africana 2003).

In the post-Civil War years, freemen and Blacks recently freed from the shackles of slavery came to San Diego for the same reasons others did, to start a new life, to find economic gain, and, although not always realized, to experience the supposed freedom offered by the western frontier.

The alleged openness of the West and of the frontier may have been overstated by noted historian Frederick Jackson Turner, but in relative terms, the west offered a modicum of freedom and opportunity when compared to the South. As a result, Black settlers and émigrés in this period came largely from the South and settled throughout San Diego County. It has been suggested that the rural back country was an attraction to Black pioneers because of the availability of cheap land and the sparse population. Rural areas also offered a degree of isolation and anonymity not available in urban areas.

Julian was particularly hospitable for African-Americans in part because southerners comprised less than 30 percent of the adult population (LeManager 1992:145) with over 66 percent of the adults coming from the north or northeast United States or Europe. Certainly Julian did support a Black population including Albert and Margaret Robinson (owners of the Robinson, now the Julian, Hotel). Albert Robinson hailed from Illinois (Great Register 1894-1895), stood five foot six inches, and was forty nine years of age in 1894. J. Green worked for Drury Bailey at the Julian livery stable in the 1870s. Mr. Green was known as hard working, thrifty, and a man who would loan local whites a dollar or two to tide them over. Local legend has it that the friendly ghost of Albert Robinson still walks the property at the Julian Hotel checking on the rooms and the guests (Carrico 1991: 84-90). Coleman Grade and Coleman Creek were named for Fred Coleman, an African-American who had worked the gold fields of the north and "is said to have known gold when he saw it (LeManager 1992: 145)." A settlement later known as the Little Klondike near Barona Mesa and southeast of Ramona was comprised largely of free slaves and Blacks who settled there after the Civil War.

Regionally, post-Civil War migration of all ethnic groups, including African-Americans, was still felt most strongly in Northern California (Lapp 1979:18). African-American veterans of the Civil War did migrate to San Diego, including Amos Hudgins (barber), Walker Davis, Thomas Miller

Jackson, William Laws (cook), James Lilley, Alexander Luckett (laborer), Edmund Marshall (laborer), Samuel Nickens (waiter), Robert Tillman and George Robinson (Palmer 2001:46).

In 1869, gold was found in San Diego by African-American Fred Coleman, who panned gold from present-day Coleman creek southwest of Julian (Cogdell DjeDje and Meadows 1998: 5). Coleman had come to San Diego County from the northern California gold mines, and resided with an Indian family (Pourade 1966:53). That same year, Alonzo Horton's New Town development by San Diego Bay began to flourish. The focus of new development shifted to today's downtown area and, by 1871, San Diego's municipal offices were relocated to Horton's New Town, signaling the beginning of the decline of the old settlement to the north. The 1870s saw the total population of San Diego double, subsequently quadrupling in the 1880s (McKanna 2002:9). In the 1880 census, only three African-American individuals are noted in central San Diego, Alexander Smith, Henry Holly Brown, and a boarder, Martha, whose surname is unknown (Palmer 2001:45).

#### **4. African-Americans and New San Diego, 1880s-1900s**

The general population boom continued and, by 1890, there were at least 289 persons listed in the federal census of San Diego as “Colored” or “Negro.” Sixty-three of the listed African-Americans resided in downtown San Diego. Cheap labor, both skilled and unskilled, had been a problem in San Diego going back to the 1850s. Indian labor filled a large part of the labor needs but by the 1880s the majority of the Kumeyaay Indians had been placed on reservations in relatively remote portions of the county. Blacks filled some of the void and they brought a variety of skills to the labor force. By the late 1880s, simple Victorian-style cottages were being built along 16th and 17th Avenues for the working class (Tinsley and Moomjian 2001a:3). At the time, commercial growth was centered around Main Street.

Population growth was aided in 1885 with the laying of lines for the California Southern Rail (a subsidiary of the Atcheson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad line) in San Diego (Tinsley and Moomjian 2001a:3). Migrants were drawn to the city creating temporary settlements like the area called Squattersville near the Santa Fe Depot at Kettner and D (Broadway) Street, in the mid-1880s (Tinsley and Moomjian 2001a:2). New Town's Stingaree district, famous for the vices of prostitution and gambling, experienced its first major raid on February 9, 1885, when it was described by the city Mayor as “crowded with whites, blacks, women, and Chinamen” (Brandes 1986:10). By 1888, it is clear that women of all races were involved in the activities that made the Stingaree district notorious as a place of sin and bawdiness (Brandes et al. 1986:14, 18).

At the same time, other social and cultural developments were creating the foundation of San Diego's African-American community. In 1887, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church became the first organized Black religious institution in San Diego (Cogdell DjeDje 1998: 126-127). Following two years later was the Calvary Baptist Church, and Bethel AME a year after that (Palmer 2001:45). These churches were located north of Broadway (D) Street and beyond the Project Area. The oldest Black church in the United States, the AME church provided not only spiritual guidance but was also “inseparable from practical matters of liberation” in its commitment to fighting prejudice (Ramsey and Lewis 1980:61). As is well documented throughout the history of African-Americans in the United States, the role of the church and the pulpit in advocating social

justice and equality stands out. Other social institutions supporting the African-American community began to rise. In 1899, the Violet Club, an elite African-American women's group, was founded. A similar group, the Acme Social Club, followed after the turn of the century (Meadows 1998:249). These groups also supported Black choirs and gospels groups continuing a long heritage of African American vocal expression.

The 1890 census lists 289 African-American residents in the City of San Diego, though City Directory listings show only 63 (Harris 1974:93). In general, city directories under report persons of all race and ethnic groups particularly youth and transients. Of these directory listings, the concentration of the African-American population was located between Ash and Market, down to and bounded on the east by 8<sup>th</sup> and on the west by State (Harris 1974:98).

Often, places of residence were also places of business, as in the case of George R. Millen (also recorded as H. Milne), a San Diego blacksmith who worked and lived on K between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets in New Town (Palmer 2001). Millen was raised in the state of Georgia by a French family following the death of his parents, and went to Mexico in 1846-47, arriving first in California in 1852. He visited a second time, and stayed on his third visit in c.1887, building first, as he testified in an inquest regarding the death of his sister, “on Second and I, in front of the Russ Lumber Company, and there I had some misunderstanding or other, the real estate men were disposed to take advantage of me, and I moved my building” to 1840 K (Palmer 2001:35-6).

Other African-Americans during the late nineteenth century rented downtown properties open to Blacks, often with a high turnover rate, or lived with employers on their property. This was especially true for those in service positions such as cooks, laborers, servants, and housekeepers (Cogdell DjeDje and Meadows 1998:5; see also Fikes 1978a, 1978b). Often these live-in servants and workers would not have been listed in the city directories and may not have been noted in the official census.

As the African-American community began to grow, several Black owned or managed businesses sprung up to serve the African-American community, and in some cases the larger white population as a whole. These included the Walter Meadows watch shop and Edward Anderson's IXL (I Excel) Laundry. Henry H. Brown operated a barber shop at 509 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 1895 and 1897 and over the next sixteen years he owned or worked at several barber shops on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and possibly on I (Island) Street. Other examples include George Millen and Daniel Fry (St. Julian Blacksmith Shop) who operated blacksmith shops in downtown near Market Street. Amos Hudgins, a relative of Howard “Skippy” Smith who is discussed later, also operated a barber shop and reportedly cut the hair of local White dignitaries such as Alonzo Horton. Like much of California, by the end of the nineteenth century, however, African-American entrepreneurial activities with white patronage were limited to service-related enterprises like “tonorial, boot black, livery, restaurant/catering, and drayage businesses” (Ramsey and Lewis 1980:67-68).

With improvement in their economic status during the 1890s, some African-Americans began outward settlement from the downtown area to the east and to "more expensive urban neighborhoods" like Logan Heights (Cogdell DjeDje and Meadows 1998:5). It was at this time, in 1897, that a suit was filed on behalf of Mr. Edward Anderson, owner of the newly opened IXL

Laundry. Mr. Anderson and his wife were not admitted to the lower floor sections of the Fisher Opera House and sued for a violation of their civil rights under California civil codes. Anderson went on to become one of the most successful businessmen and entrepreneurs in early San Diego.

## **5. African-Americans in the Growing City, 1900s-1920s**

A new wave of African-American migration into southern California began in the early 1900s. Influenced by the opportunities of railway work in Los Angeles, the demise of the Southern cotton economy, and amongst increasing racial tensions in the South, many African-Americans came to southern California and took service jobs as domestic and transportation workers. (Cogdell DjeDje and Meadows 1998:4). Not only was race a factor at the time, but within that, dynamics of gender difference were also present: “Because her husband annoyed her, Mrs. Kirven, a lady of color, *living on G Street, near Third*, drew a big .44 calibre British Bulldog revolver and took a snapshot at him. Luckily, she was a woman, and as women are seldom known either to throw a stone or shoot a pistol straight, the husband escaped unscathed [italics added]” (San Diego Union, 11 March 1903 in Parker 1992:10).

Businesses and social and civic groups continued to blossom. In 1903, master jeweler Walter Meadows opened shop on G Street in downtown after migrating from Chattanooga, Tennessee (Meadows 1998: 245). Soon after the turn of the century, Fidelity Lodge #10 of the Prince Hall Masons was established, including as its members the foremost African-American community members of the day. The Prince Hall Masons emerged in 1847 out of the earlier African Lodges, the result of the admission of fifteen African-American men, including Prince Hall, into a lodge composed mostly of Irish soldiers stationed in Boston Harbor in 1775. After departure of the Irish soldiers, the group was refused recognition by American Freemasons, and they were instead given an English charter in 1784 as African Lodge No. 459. Mr. Edward Anderson, local Black entrepreneur and civic leader, was a Prince Hall Mason.

While the qualifications of candidates for initiation to the Freemasons (Mastermason.info 2003) indicate only that an initiate must be a man, un mutilated, of mature age, and free born - not a slave, or one born in slavery - the Prince Hall Masons developed as a significant organization for early African-Americans who were, though not explicitly outlawed from the Freemasons by race, the subject of discrimination, and the Prince Hall lodges remain an important African-American association with a long tradition (Mastermason.info 2003, Carnes 1991).

High profile figures like George Washington Woodbey also began to arrive in San Diego. Woodbey, an active socialist as well as a Baptist minister, came to the city in 1902. Born a slave in Tennessee in 1854, Woodbey was initially an active Republican as were most African-Americans. He ran for the positions of Lieutenant Governor and Representative in Nebraska on the Prohibition ticket, and later became the minister of San Diego’s Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Woodbey was eventually removed as pastor because of his sermonizing on socialism - this is at same time that labor unions were gaining momentum - and for his involvement in early free speech struggles in 1912 when the city restricted street corner speeches (Palmer 2001:48-49).

Between 1915 and 1920, African-Americans increasingly moved out of southern states in response to a number of events, including a collapsing cotton industry, Mississippi Valley flooding, and growing industrial opportunities in the North linked to the start of World War I. In combination with the man-power requirements of World War I, immigration restrictions enacted by Congress also produced new labor shortages, and thousands of African-Americans moved west in search of available opportunities. As elsewhere in the nation where relatively new communities of African-Americans developed, a new black middle class arose that spurred the establishment of unions, social and fraternal orders, churches, and community welfare organizations. In 1916, the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) built a thriving congregation in San Diego (Cogdell DjeDje 1998:126-127).

Influential African-American newcomers continued to shape the growing city. John and Rebecca Craft arrived from Kentucky in 1910 and both were involved in promoting the African-American community in San Diego and racial equality in general (Madyun 1988:1-2). Rebecca Craft was active in Democratic Party politics. An activist for fair housing and employment practices, she founded the Women's Civic League early in the twentieth century (Madyun 1988:2). John not only owned a successful cleaning business but became the N.A.A.C.P. San Diego chapter president in 1932. The children and grandchildren of the Crafts continued their legacy of social responsibility including Cecil Steppe, past president of the Urban League.

Efforts for racial equality gradually led to at least limited success in San Diego in the early 1900s. The second decade of the twentieth century saw African-Americans in the police force. In 1915, Reginald Townsend became the first full-time African-American officer in the San Diego Police Department. Three years later, John Cloud followed, retiring as sergeant thirty years after he began his service.

For many African-Americans in this era, Front and F was the "residential area within the downtown sector" (Ritchey in Carlton 1996:2). In 1919, the San Diego and Eastern Arizona Railroad was completed, causing commercial and rail line speculation in what is now East Village (Tinsley and Moomjian 2001a:4). Not only did the railroad to San Diego facilitate jobs for African-Americans, but it can also be cited as a reason for the growth of the population as employees settled with families or retired in the area, creating a "new generation of western blacks who replaced the generation of gold-rush blacks" (Lapp 1979:27).

Unionization of laborers on the East Coast, which initially vehemently excluded African-Americans, also pressured migrants out of large eastern and midwestern cities and to southern California (Lapp 1979:27). As in other rail-linked cities, like Oakland to the north, "train travel grew and the job of Pullman porter was filled exclusively by Blacks. Businesses focusing on the Black middle-class were established while African-American nightclubs featuring nationally renowned jazz musicians attracted a mixed clientele from throughout the Bay Area. Churches, fraternal organizations, children's homes, and other community-service organizations abounded." (Praetzellis 2001:6).

## **6. The African-American Community in Urban San Diego, 1920s to World War II**

The two decades between 1920 and 1940 reflect a large increase in the African-American population in San Diego growing from almost 1,200 individuals in 1920 to more than 4,400 in 1940 (United States Census 1920; 1940). For the nation, for San Diego, and for the Black population, these two decades witnessed drastic upheavals in the economic picture, in civil rights, and, as a new decade began, Americans stood uneasily on the brink of war.

By 1920, restrictive covenants led to a shift in African-American residential settlement from the center to the southeast area of downtown San Diego (Meadows 1998: 246). Over the course of the decade, the city's African-American population grew from 997 in 1920 to 2,723 in 1930 (Harris 1974:100). Businesses, fraternal organizations, and social and civic groups continued to flourish. The Black community drew strength from a positive leadership, from solidarity, and from a White populace that largely ignored them as long as, in the vernacular of the time, the Blacks knew their place.

In 1924, the San Diego Race Relations Society was established, followed in 1925 by the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters - the first African-American labor group to receive American Federation of Labor charter (Ramsey and Lewis 1980:70). Still, African-Americans who grew up in San Diego began to make their mark in the decades prior to World War II. Bert Ritchey was born in San Diego in 1909 to parents who migrated from Illinois and Kentucky at the turn of the century. Ritchey, a multi-talented athlete at San Diego High School, attended USC on a football scholarship in 1927 (though the Trojans refused to play him - he was taken by the school only to prevent his playing for opposing teams) and later joined the San Diego police force in 1935. Ritchey went on to obtain his law degree and practiced for two decades, while remaining active in the civic arena on the boards of the Children's Hospital, YMCA, and San Diego Stadium Authority (Carlton 1996).

Published in the 1925-26 Colored Directory, a short essay entitled "Growth of the Colored Population" provides a poignant contemporary view of San Diego's African-American community and is worth examining at length:

The growth of the colored population of San Diego has shown a rapid increase in recent years and colored citizens may be found in all walks of life. In business and professions, merchants, mechanics, and men of leisure.

The race is represented in educational institutions, and churches of all denominations.

Fraternal societies of colored people are numerous and many fine homes and business establishments are owned by members of the race.

The outstanding feature is the New Douglas Hotel Building. Built in November 1924, by Geo. A. Ramsey and the late Robert Rowe, representing an expenditure of \$100,000.00, which stands as a monument to the enterprise of the colored people of the city. This hotel is owned and controlled by members of the race.

San Diego's colored population will reach about 4000 at the present time.

Plans are now under way for the erection of a new Baptist church, to cost about 50,000.00 dollars, also for a colored Masonic hall and Elks' Rest.

It is predicted that the colored population will be doubled in the next two years.



By 1926, the African-American population began a slow shift to the southeast. Although the downtown area maintained a high density of African-American residents, the highest is aggregated below Market to the waterfront and between 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and San Diego Street and Beardsley and Crosby Streets to the southeast (Harris 1974:101). As recalled by local sports hero, police officer, and attorney Bert Ritchey:

In those days blacks lived throughout the city. They lived downtown, say from Sixteenth to Twelfth Street – the only concentrated area was in the Logan Heights district from Thirtieth to Thirty-second, from Ocean View to Logan Avenue, a small area. I would say twenty-five or thirty families lived there and that was the most concentrated district, but there were blacks living all over, East San Diego, North Park (Ritchey in Carlton 1996:6).

A national resurgence of Klan activity in the 1920s saw branch activity throughout the county (Larralde and del Castillo 2000:2). While primarily targeting Mexican immigrants and Jews, the atmosphere toward all minorities began to chill. Coinciding with the Great Depression, overt racism and segregation gained a stronger foothold in southern California generally, and in San Diego specifically. The beginnings of the Black migration and relocation out of downtown began as a result of the anti-Black attitudes and regulations of the era after 1930.

Southern California began attracting more African-American migrants after Los Angeles held the first Western Convention of the N.A.A.C.P. in 1928 (Lapp 1979:34). In San Diego, successful African-Americans owned and operated businesses like the Douglas Hotel and Creole Palace. Later, the Crossroads Jazz Club, the Club Romance, Club Royale, and Moonglow hosted famous jazz musicians in the 1920s through the 1950s, as well as showcasing local dancers and entertainers, that created a vibrant African-American nightlife in the downtown area. Situated between the larger venues offered by Los Angeles and the somewhat wilder clubs south of the border in Tijuana, San Diego served as both a stopping point between the two more prominent venues and as a training ground for new talent hoping to break into those markets.

While still barely 2% of the total state population, African-Americans created a post-depression population boom in San Diego of more than 1000 new residents between 1930 and 1940 (Lapp 1979:39). The Great Depression led to migrations of Blacks and poorer Whites from the South, with large cities in the North and on the West Coast serving as magnets. Further the policies of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal led to the creation of jobs in the urban center of San Diego and in the communities to the east. No doubt family connections and word of mouth about the climate and somewhat moderate racial attitudes of San Diego fostered Black movement into the area. By 1940, the downtown area, for the first time, contained fewer than 2% of the city's African-American population (Harris 1974:102). While the heaviest concentration was now located east of 20<sup>th</sup> Street, the present-day East Village area still maintained a higher density than areas like Logan Heights further east. Downtown would remain a place for Blacks to come to dine and dance, but the lack of a residential base and the commercialization of the city's core combined with at least some level of separatism, offered little to the growing African-American community to the east.

In the decade before the outbreak of World War II, African-Americans led by Rebecca Craft of the Women's Civic League and others continued the fight for equal rights. Largely through the efforts of Mrs. Craft, the Women's Civic League, and the San Diego Race Relations Society, a second Black officer joined Officer John Cloud on the San Diego Police Department (Madyun 1988). Jasper Davis, a Black dishwasher at the La Jolla Country Club who was originally from Imperial Valley, began his twenty-three year career on the police force in 1931.

Mrs. Craft was also influential in the hiring of the first full time Black teacher, Lorraine Van Lowe, at Memorial Junior High in 1942. Three years later, the San Diego School District hired its second full time Black teacher, William B. Payne. Mr. Payne's acceptance at the largely white Pacific Beach Junior High School was not as smooth and uneventful as had been Ms. Van Lowe's. In spite of some local opposition, the school board supported Mr. Payne's position. William B. Payne later taught at San Diego High School where, after twenty-three years of service, he moved into administration at the college level. One of the senior authors of this document had the unmistakable privilege of having taken a class from Mr. Payne at San Diego High, little realizing his important role in San Diego history. Mrs. Fannie Payne provided an oral interview for this report.

With the start of World War II, migration to California accounted for 3.5 million new inhabitants in the state, including a 272 percent increase in the state's African-American population. San Diego was one of the major recipients of this influx, both in general and in terms of African-American migration (Taylor 1998:251-252). Employment opportunities for African-Americans expanded with wartime efforts. Dennis V. Allen, President of the San Diego Race Relations Society, set up assembly line jobs at defense contractors Convair and Ryan (Meadows 1998:246). Consolidated Aircraft alone "employed 1000 of the 1200 black San Diego aircraft employees at the height of war production in 1945" (Taylor 1998:255).

African-American stunt pilot and entrepreneur Howard "Skippy" Smith opened his Pacific Parachute Company, sewing and packing parachutes for the military. Smith's business earned the title of "Top Black Owned Business in the United States" in 1943 from the National Negro Business League. In addition to his White workers, Skippy Smith hired Blacks, Asians, and Filipinos continuing the decades old pattern of non-Whites working in labor positions. Racial equality did not always extend beyond the work place. African-American personnel at Naval Air Station San Diego, and across the United States, endured segregated facilities. The Naval Athletic Field had its own African-American band, the "Melomen," who also played at War Bond drives in downtown. On the bright side, hundreds of the 3,500 Black soldiers stationed at Camp Lockett in the hills near Campo rode the train or hitched rides into San Diego for rest and recreation. Even though they noted the overall segregation of the times, several reported in oral interviews completed for a history of Camp Lockett, that they found San Diego to be less repressive than some other towns. According to an interview with Mr. Johnny Williams, at least a few of these Buffalo Soldiers made their way to the Douglas Hotel and to the bright lights of San Diego. On 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Island behind what is now the Horton Grand Hotel, Archie Moore gave sparring lessons. According to Tom Hom, Archie Moore would show young Chinese boys how to punch a bag and to bob and weave.

## **7. African-Americans in Post-World War II San Diego**

Following World War II, African-American employment rates dropped to pre-war levels, with war-related opportunities shrinking and some firms who hired African-Americans during the war failing to do so afterward (Hewes 1946:12-13, see also Meadows 1998:246). Discharged African-American servicemen settled in San Diego (Gogdell Dje Dje and Meadows 1998:7, see also Cheshire 1984), and Imperial Avenue became the center of San Diego's African-American community (Madyun 1988:1). A report at the time noted that "Restaurants, hotels, and dance pavilions have established fairly well defined color lines in San Diego. Although the refusal to serve Negroes is not maintained with uniform rigor in all institutions, yet Negroes and other colored people in general refrain from patronizing them" (Hewes 1946: 20). The Hewes document (1946: 20) cited a field report on racial relations:

With the exception of the Negro-operated Douglas Hotel in the downtown district, hotels in San Diego are closed to Negroes...Restaurants follow a mixed policy with some of them refusing service outright, others employing various devices to make the Negro guest feel unwelcome; and a few others serving without distinction. Most of the Negroes feel that in general they are not wanted in the downtown restaurants, and thus avoid going to them...Dance halls have an effective ban against Negro pleasure-seekers.

The post-war years saw the beginning of social and racial unrest in San Diego, with anti-discrimination movements spotlighting local businesses that refused to hire or serve African-Americans. In March 1946, nine businesses in San Diego were listed as employing no Blacks and were boycotted by many in the African-American community who honored the slogan "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" (Hewes 1946:30). This action led to at least two of the businesses immediately changing their hiring practices followed by other commercial interests.

The equality movement gathered momentum in spite of the reluctance of some African-American leaders to push the issues and the efforts of some whites to paint the movement with the brush of red communism. A report on race relations of the time noted that the local Black churches and political leadership were not yet a driving force in pursuing racial equality and social justice (Hewes 1946) but that appeared to be changing. Over the next few years, direct political action included several restaurant sit-ins and hotel boycotts led by Jack Kimbrough, president of San Diego N.A.A.C.P. in 1948 (Palmer 2001). That same year, Johnny Ritchey, brother of Bert Richey, broke the color barrier in the Pacific Coast League. Johnny Ritchey signed with the San Diego Padres and was a hometown favorite.

The San Diego Urban League was established in 1953. Alpha L. Montgomery, later to serve as only the second Black Superior Court judge, was a co-founder of the Urban League. In the 1950-1960 era, Mr. Montgomery worked hard for the Urban League as its general counsel. By 1950, African-Americans constituted 4.5% of the city's population and the area east of 20<sup>th</sup> continued to have the highest concentration of African-American residents (Harris 1974:104). African-American owned businesses and those catering specifically to the African-American community flourished until integration in 1950s-1960s, when competition from white-owned businesses moved them out of

downtown or put them out of business (Meadows 1998: 271, n.18). Increasingly, downtown San Diego was not a home to Blacks, Asians, or Whites, and with the gradual fall of segregation, the stores and commercial interests served its customers regardless of race. By 1960, African-Americans had grown to 6.8% of the population of San Diego, with up to 80% of the community located in what is now East Village and Southeast San Diego (League of Women Voters of San Diego 1965:10-11).

As occurred in other urban areas during the second half of the twentieth century, the construction of Interstate 5 east of 17<sup>th</sup> Street cut off much of the African-American community from the downtown core to the west and severed much of the association of San Diego's African-American community with these former residential and commercial areas (Praetzellis 2001:6). The research and outreach undertaken as part of the CCDC African-American Downtown History Project has provided an opportunity to recapture the role of African-Americans in the growth and development of what has become the flourishing metropolitan City of San Diego and to recognize the African-American community's origins, experiences, and vibrant history in the downtown area.

## **C. SKETCHES OF PERSONS IMPORTANT IN THE DOWNTOWN AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY**

### **1. Business Leaders**

*Edward W. Anderson*

Certainly one of the dominant men in the community from 1900 to 1930 was Edward W. Anderson. Mr. Anderson was born in 1870 in Kentucky and moved to San Diego during the early boom of the 1880s in 1885. In 1887, Mr. Anderson and his wife were refused seating on the main floor of the Fisher Opera House in downtown San Diego. When offered seats in the so-called "colored section" section of the balcony, Anderson sued the owner of the opera house. Although winning in a lower court, Mr. Anderson never collected the monetary damages owed him. According to the Great Register for 1894-1895, Mr. Anderson, was five foot six inches in height, a registered Republican (as were most eligible Black voters of the era), and listed as a laundryman. In 1895 his mailing address was listed as 908 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Mr. Anderson and his wife resided in the study area briefly although their primary place of residence was at 3990 Market Street. His first foray into the business world was in 1888 as the owner and operator of the IXL Laundry. Mr. Anderson and his wife initially operated the laundry out of a small building at 546 Seventh Avenue just south of Market Street, then known as M Street. In 1905 he moved the laundry to a new location at I (Island) and Tenth where it remained until he sold the operation in the 1930s. The laundry served the Black community and the citizens of San Diego as a whole. This is evidenced by the advertisements in the various city directories from 1890 to 1910 and in the San Diego Union newspaper where Mr. Anderson advertised at a time when very few Black owned businesses sought to advertise in these publications.



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Automobiles, Photo NB 438-A

Perhaps just as important as his IXL Laundry, Mr. Anderson was also the operator, and apparently sometimes the owner, of the San Diego Rubbish Company and the Economy Paper Company. The collection and disposal of rubbish, trash, and garbage in San Diego circa 1908-1919 was a fiercely debated and politically volatile issue. Until 1918, trash collection was performed by private operators under permit to the city. Customers paid the collectors a set fee for removal based on the number of trash cans, dead animals, or other listings. From 1908 until 1918 Edward W. Anderson owned and operated the San Diego Rubbish Company.

With offices on D Street (later Broadway), Mr. Anderson developed a reputation as a man who could and would ensure that the streets, curbs, and back lots of San Diego were kept clean. A San Diego Union article of the period noted that Mr. Anderson and his firm were noted for their service to the city and for keeping the community clean. In 1919, the citizens of San Diego voted to establish municipal trash collection with the funding coming from property taxes. While E. W. Anderson left the trash collection business, his firm still maintained a few special customers as late as 1920.

In the 1920s, Mr. Anderson lent his name to an enterprise that still thrives today, the Anderson-Ragsdale Mortuary. In the mid-1930s, Mr. Anderson was active in ensuring that the YMCA served the needs of Black youth as well as Asians, Latinos and Whites and worked to build a facility that would serve the African-American community. He was assisted by James P. Tate, the owner of Tate's Funeral Home and a competitor of Anderson.

A photograph of Mr. Anderson adjacent to the mortuary circa 1947 depicts a prosperous, well-dressed man in his seventies (see Plate 1 on previous page). Mr. Anderson died in 1950 and was eulogized as a man who served his community and his city. Mr. Hartwell W. Ragsdale purchased the old Anderson Mortuary from Mrs. Anderson and changed the name to Anderson-Ragsdale Mortuary. The site of Anderson's original IXL laundry is now (2004) a paved parking lot.

### *Charles Gadson*

One reflection of the self-sufficiency of a community is the presence of stores and shops that serve the broader needs of the ethnic or cultural settlement. Charles Gadson's confectionary store at 1415 Market Street was such a shop. From at least 1920 to 1938, Mr. Gadson owned and operated Gadson's Confectionary Shop serving the community candies, sodas, and a variety of sundries. According to oral interviews, during Prohibition, Mr. Gadson, like many savvy entrepreneurs, also provided either the ingredients for making alcoholic beverages or sold the beverages themselves. While officially, "dry" during Prohibition, San Diego maintained a thriving underground of persons and businesses that supplied wine grapes, sugar, fruit, and distilled alcohol to willing patrons. Gadson advertised in the Colored Business Directory in 1926, but apparently not in the city wide business directory.

The Gadson Confectionary Store is gone but the Charles Gadson residence still stands at 470 17<sup>th</sup> Street.

## *George Ramsey*

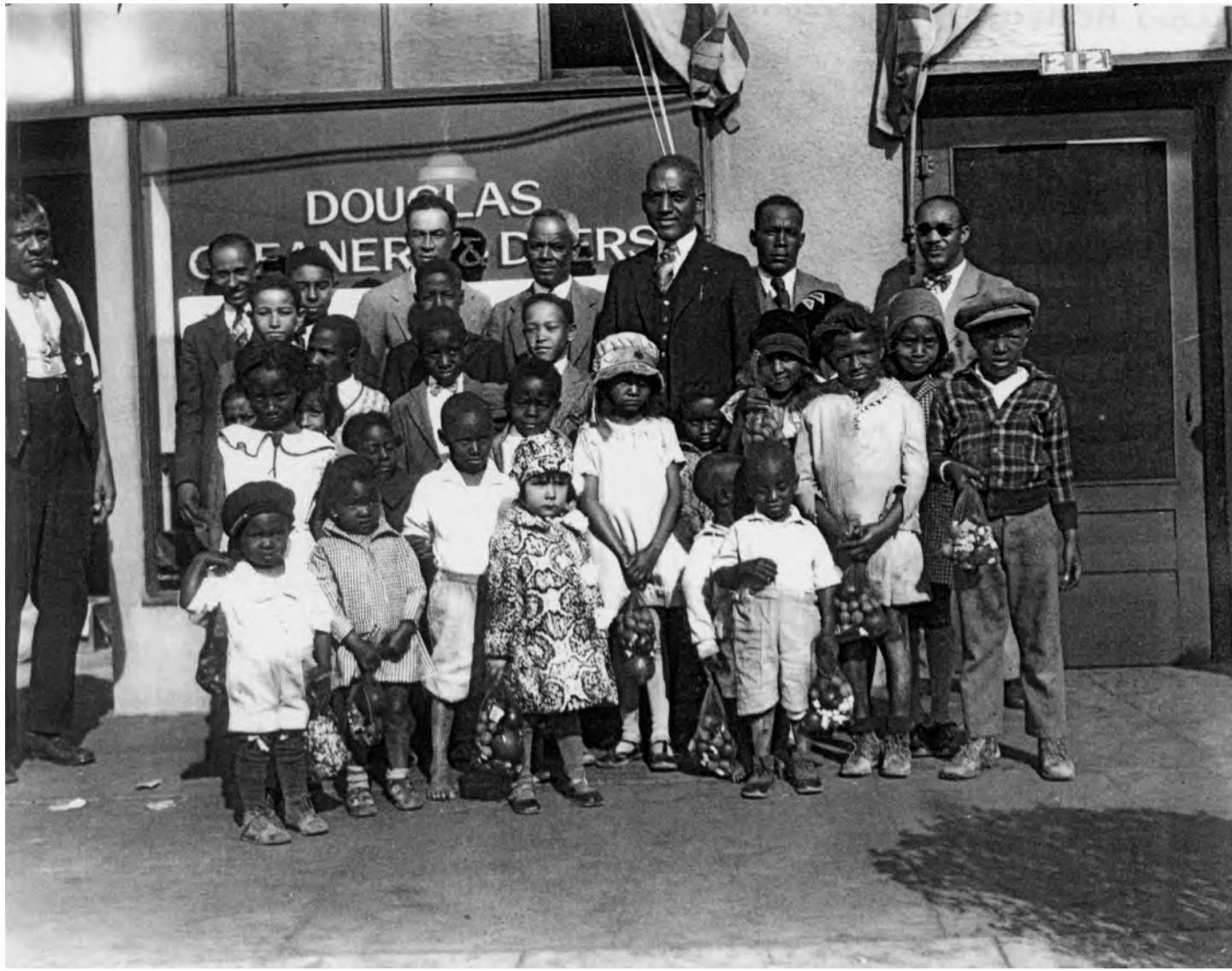
Known in the local press as the unofficial mayor of “Darktown,” or the mayor of the colored community, George A. Ramsey had a long and colorful career in San Diego. Twenty-four year old Mr. Ramsey arrived in San Diego around 1913 as a valet for Herbert Snow, the developer of the Wonderland amusement park, and he may also be the George Ramsey listed in 1915 directory as a news dealer. He apparently worked at a variety of jobs until about 1916 when he went into business owning and managing cafes, bars, and lodging houses and later the famous Douglas Hotel. Mr. Ramsey first shows up in local records as living at several addresses in downtown San Diego. By 1917 he is noted as the manager of the Creole Café/Creole Palace (a predecessor to the more famous Creole Palace of the 1924-1950 era). In August of 1917, Ramsey defended his business practices at the Creole Cafe stressing to the City Council that he was wrongly accused of allowing Black girls to dance in scanty attire and assured the Council that he did not allow indiscriminate mingling amongst the Black and White clientele (San Diego Union 1917a: 5). That same year, the San Diego Union (1917a: 1) reported that George Ramsey told the City Council that the city needed a Black fire company, something that would soon become a reality. As war clouds swarmed over Europe, Ramsey also noted that he was interested in forming a Black only regiment of men to defend San Diego’s coastline and that the training of such troops would begin soon.

Mr. Ramsey apparently developed a relationship with Anna B. Brown, an enterprising African-American lady in her own right. A business venture of Brown and Ramsey referred to in early city directories (1917-1920) as associated with George A. Ramsey and Anna B. Brown includes the Yesmar Hotel (Ramsey backwards), later the Anita Hotel at 422 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In the 1920s and through the 1940s, the area around 422 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue was an ethnic mixture of Black, Asians, and Latinos. During the early 1920s George A. Ramsey apparently spent a great deal of time involved in the horse racing industry at Caliente in Tijuana and may have maintained a residence south of the border.

By 1924, Mr. Ramsey had developed a business relationship with Robert Rowe, a white businessman and husband of Mabel Rowe, a Black or possibly mulatto woman. Ramsey and Rowe developed the idea to build and operate a hotel, restaurant, and club that would serve the Black community. As noted in an article written by Mr. Ramsey in the 1925-1926 Colored Directory, the Douglas Hotel was developed by, and for, colored people. In part, the Douglas Hotel and the Creole Palace nightclub within the hotel may have been partially in response to the problems encountered by Ramsey with the police and City Council in the 1917-1920 period.

Robert Rowe died before the opening of the Douglas Hotel on Thanksgiving Day 1924. The hotel and night club went on to become not only a huge success; it came to symbolize the Black community in both positive and negative ways. George Ramsey married Mabel Rowe, the widow of his deceased business partner and resided within the hotel, although other addresses are also associated with Mr. Ramsey. Mr. Ramsey’s brother, Alphonso (Al), worked at the Douglas Hotel in several capacities including manager of the Douglas Grill, the Douglas Cleaners, and the men’s clothing store. In 1929 Alphonso Ramsey is listed as the manager of the DeLux Hotel on Sixth Avenue. Al Ramsey also owned or managed several lower class hotels in the community and was reputed by some, including Ray Brandes, noted local historian, to be “King of Coke Friends” and a noted drug dealer.





SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, People, UT People (No Photo #)





SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, People, UT People (No Photo #)



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Theaters, Photo Sensor 7-317

**Hotel Douglas Interior - George A. Ramsey, Front Row Right,  
Mabel Rowe Ramsey, Front Center, March 15, 1930**

(Brandes et al. 1986:20-21). Whether this is true or based on White apocryphal stories to besmirch Black merchants, is uncertain. In his reports, Brandes offers no insights into the allegations against Al Ramsey. There is little in the overall history of Al Ramsey to suggest any involvement in drug dealing although he may have been involved in liquor sales during prohibition as well as prostitution. In the years just before the Douglas Hotel was shut down, Al Ramsey continued to manage the clothing store and was an influential figure in the Black community.

From its opening in November 1924 until the 1950s, the Douglas Hotel and the Creole Club provided high quality lodging for Blacks who could not book a room at San Diego's segregated hotels. It provided a lively nightlife for persons of all races, and offered an opportunity for several local Blacks to manage or operate thriving businesses. Located within the hotel building was a laundry, a billiard hall, a small café, and other shops including some operated by Asian businessmen.

The nightclub associated with the Douglas Hotel has received the most attention, in part because of its documentation, but also because a racy, Black owned club with late night shows stands out in the history of San Diego. Name performers such as Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and others reportedly played at the Creole. Local musicians and entertainers comprised the majority of the venues at the Creole and included such artists as Rennie Raines and others. As shown in staged photographs of the time, the dancers, orchestra, and singers of the Douglas Hotel and Creole Club embodied attractive, well-dressed, and sexy performers. Over the years, the acts changed to reflect tastes and talent. One of the more popular shows was the "90 Minutes in Harlem," which showcased the style of blues and jazz for which the clubs of Harlem are justifiably famous.

It is clear that the Douglas Hotel was more than a hotel and nightclub and that George A. Ramsey was more than a businessman and club owner. Besides offering employment to large numbers of Black performers, service staff, shop workers, and others, the Douglas Hotel and Mr. Ramsey stood out as an example of Black success. Upon his death at the age of 72 in January 1963, the *San Diego Union Tribune* remarked that George Ramsey was "for years known affectionately as 'mayor of San Diego's Harlem'..." and that he had served his community well.

#### *Walter G. Meadows and Walter W. Meadows*

In the late 1800s and well into the 1900s, watchmakers and craftsmen who repaired watches were highly regarded. Before there were throw away watches on plastic bands, America and the world depended upon on well-crafted time pieces that were often handed down to succeeding generations. Walter G. Meadows, a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, moved to San Diego circa 1900 where he apprenticed to his father Walter W. Meadows, originally from Georgia, at his shop at 514 Fifth Street, and his mother Hattie at her optical shop at 528 Fifth Street. Both parents were master jewelers and were estranged later in life. In 1909, Walter W. Meadows, the father, was listed in the Great Register as being sixty years of age, living at 528 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and being six feet in height, a relatively tall man for period.

By 1912, Hattie, who was then no longer living with her husband, along with her son, Walter G., opened a jewelry store at 745 Sixth Street and developed a customer base as Hattie Meadows and Son. Four years later the son moved the shop to 418 G Street and became the sole owner.



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Theaters, Photo Sensor 7-140





SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Theaters, Photo Sensor 7-178-A



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Theaters, Photo Sensor 7-134



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Theaters, Photo Sensor 7-143



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, People, Photo 81:11622





SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Children, Photo 81:11633

**Nadine, Jevna, Walter G. Junior, and Sylvia Meadows**  
**Children of Walter G. Meadows**

Plate 10

Watchmaking was a family tradition with the Meadows, making them a unique African-American family in San Diego's history. Unfortunately, none of the Meadows' stores or shops have endured.

### *Howard "Skippy" Smith*

Along with George Ramsey, Howard "Skippy" Smith is one of the most flamboyant figures in early African-American history of the area. In the less than ten years that Skippy Smith lived in San Diego, he gained a prominence far beyond that short tenure.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1913, Howard Smith's father was a professor at the Tuskegee Institute, and "Skippy" left to play professional baseball in Birmingham and New Orleans, even playing alongside the remarkable Satchel Paige for a short time (Shaheed 2003; Schmidt 1996). Contrary to some accounts, Skippy Smith was not a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen and did not learn to fly through military action. Instead, Skippy's path to the skies was self-made, and reflects a time when one could learn to fly by being a journeyman and through taking relatively informal lessons.

Skippy Smith jumped out of planes before he was licensed to fly them, and he had registered as a parachute jumper to earn money for flight lessons. In Los Angeles, Smith met Mack "Skip" Gravely and the two became the well-known exhibition jumping team of "Skip and Skippy." As part of the immensely popular Hollywood Airshow, Skip and Skippy barnstormed throughout the West. Gravely was killed in 1939 during a jump when his parachute failed to open. The following year, Skippy Smith left the show, settling in San Diego, where he became a drop-tester, parachute packer, and later inspector at the Standard Parachute Company (Shaheed 2003; Schmidt 1996).

Eager to run his own enterprise and having impressed the company's president, Colonel C. E. Fauntleroy, Smith received the subcontract for pilot chutes from Standard Parachute. Using his savings, Smith, then 28, teamed with comedian Eddie "Rochester" Anderson who was Jack Benny's sidekick on the radio and later on television, and formed the Pacific Parachute Company at 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, that opened March 26, 1942. The opening was a festive affair replete with religious leaders, city and state representatives, and labor representatives, and it was dedicated to his fallen partner Mack Gravely (Downs 1943:96-97, San Diego Union 1942). "Negro guardsmen, the white paratroopers and others staged the official dedication in the workroom of the plant itself, where 20 white and colored women worked on pilot parachutes, bomb 'chutes' and flare 'chutes' under a subcontract from the Standard Parachute Co. of this city" (San Diego Union 1942). Pressured to hire only African-Americans, Smith refused. As remembered by his nephew, Smith said "I came from Birmingham, Alabama where everyone is prejudiced and I'm not going to do the same thing." Instead, he employed one of the few integrated work forces in San Diego (Shaheed 2003). This work force included Filipinos, Asians, Whites, Latinos, and Blacks. In search of funding for the business, Skippy Smith also refused to include investors who advocated segregation of the work force. Smith's racial and social equality extended into management as well; he insisted on giving opportunities to female workers to fill management positions.

Pacific Parachute Company produced nearly 50,000 parachutes during its first year in business, and won the National Negro Business League's Spaulding Award as the number one African-American

business in 1943 (San Diego Union 1942; Schmidt 1996; Los Angeles Tribune 1943). Smith brought a certain amount of glamour to an otherwise drab enterprise. A handsome, self-assured man, Skippy could transform a photo opportunity into a personal success as in the image of Skippy giving the fighter Joe Louis a tour of the factory or his appearance in a promotional piece for the Walker Department Store. Smith's achievements in the racial and social climate of the 1940s were amazing, not only for his entrepreneurial drive and success at a time when many other African-Americans were limited to menial jobs, but for his insistence on an integrated, and predominantly female, workforce. As with many defense-related endeavors, the demand for parachutes declined as the air war wound down. The company had planned to begin manufacturing sports shirts, but the Pacific Parachute Company closed its doors at 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in 1944. Smith went north to Los Angeles to start another company, according to his nephew Agin Shaheed (Shaheed 2003). Always an entrepreneur, Smith invented toys, ran donut shops and snow cone businesses, and sold Christmas trees (Shaheed 2003).

Skippy Smith's success became the subject of a program in the New World A' Comin' radio series. "Parachutes for Democracy, "produced in November 1944 in cooperation with the Citywide Citizen's Committee of Harlem, dramatized Smith and Anderson's efforts in establishing and operating the first black-owned defense enterprise. Broadcast on New York-based WMCA, the New World A' Comin' program ran from 1944 to 1957. Inspired by nationally-known black journalist Roi Ottley, the series incorporated the work of other well-known African-Americans like actor Canada Lee and the music of Duke Ellington, who wrote the show's theme. A groundbreaking civil rights effort, the program eventually broadened its focus to also highlight the issues and experiences of other minorities in the United States (Smith 2001).

### *Anna B. Brown*

Mrs. Anna B. Brown, is a person who appears throughout the annals, history, and oral interviews of the time period. At various stages in her life, Mrs. Brown worked as a business partner in Brown and Ramsey (1917), was the proprietor of the Brighton Hotel at 431 Market Street, managed several boarding houses, and owned or operated hotels in the Third/Fourth and Market area including the Yesmar (Ramsey backwards) Hotel and the Anita Hotel (which was the Yesmar Hotel renamed). Reputedly, Mrs. Brown also operated at least one or two brothels in the downtown area. Tracking the whereabouts and business dealings of this Black entrepreneur is difficult given how often she moved and the multitude of partnerships and businesses in which she was involved. Anna B. Brown represents the largely self made African-American woman of the times who, along with Mabel Rowe, possibly her rival for the affections of Mr. George A. Ramsey, became a force in Black economics and downtown business. According to Mrs. Kathleen Harmon, Anna Brown and Mabel Rowe were friends and occasionally business partners.

### *Florence H. Zolicoffer*

Far from the sometimes mean streets of lower Market Street, the world of Anna B. Brown, and the so-called Stingaree District, several Black women worked diligently to further their races' cause and to instill a sense of community in the growing African-American population. Florence H. Zolicoffer was one of many such Black women.



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, People, Photo 96:19521

The so-called Colored Directories of the 1920-1930s were an important means by which Black businesses advertised their presence, and were a source for potential consumers to learn of the stores and businesses that were Black owned or catered to Black customers. Many of the directories were compiled and published by out of town firms, including a company from Los Angeles, but for several years the San Diego directories were produced by Mrs. Florence Zolicoffer and her husband Edward. Mrs. Zolicoffer, who first appears in local Black directories in 1926 with her husband Edward, was active in social organizations and church groups. She also served as a conduit for local news, events, and daily affairs. The Zolicoffers lived outside of the study area at 421 29<sup>th</sup> Street for more than twenty-three years. Although there are no buildings or structures in the study area that can be associated with this influential couple, their role in fostering businesses and furthering community pride, as well as providing future researchers with insights into the Black community of the 1920-1930s, marks them as important individuals in Black history.

### *Norman Baynard*

A professional photographer and musician who was involved in the development of the Douglas Hotel, Norman Baynard was an influential and important figure in the Black community in the 1925-1940s era. Mr. Baynard opened his own Baynard's Photo Studio (beyond the current study area) and specialized in capturing the images of Black weddings, social events, children, and special occasions. The Baynard photographic collection at the San Diego Historical Society offers a clear glimpse into the Black history and culture of pre-World War II San Diego and the early Civil Rights movement. Several photographs used in this study came from the camera of Norman Baynard.

## **2. Barbers, Beauticians, and Salon Owners**

### *C.C. Hubbard*

Another example of shops and stores that served the African-American community were the hair salons and barber shops. The requirements for personal hygiene and grooming in the Black community were most often met by African-Americans. Several hair salons and barber shops were established to meet the growing population of Black men and women. These salons carried products that were specifically marketed to Blacks including gels, creams, straighteners, and combs. As early as 1917, Mrs. Edith Malone had founded the Poro College in St. Louis for the express purpose of training Black hairdressers in the techniques and styles then in fashion amongst Blacks. Over the next forty years, the college graduated thousands of professional hairdressers, including singer Chuck Berry, who graduated from the college in 1950. One of the early graduates of Poro College, Mrs. C. C. Hubbard moved to San Diego and brought her knowledge and skills to the Black community. She opened her shop on 16<sup>th</sup> Street in the 1920s and served the needs of her community for more than 20 years. Her shop was advertised in the Colored Directories of the time and had a large and faithful clientele. As was often the case in ethnic neighborhoods and commercial districts, the doctors' and dentists' office were often located in the same buildings as the hair salons and barber shops. Dr. Jack Kimbrough maintained an office next to the Whithubbard salon.





SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, People, Photo NB 00000[59]

The Whithubbard shop is gone, but other examples of early Black owned hair salons and barber shops still exist in the study area, particularly in the area of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets.

### *Amos Hudgins (Hutchings)*

A resident of Coronado, Amos Hudgins, sometimes spelled Hutchings, first appears in city directories in 1893 as a barber with a shop at 2358 K Street. Over the next seven years, Hudgins worked out of shops at 564 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 1315 F Street, and 1336 D (Broadway) Street. There is no evidence that he owned any of these shops, but according to some researchers (Maydun and Malone 1989), important white men such as Alonzo Horton and George Marston were among Hudgins' customers. Mr. Hudgins, was forty-eight years of age in 1892, declared himself to be a native of Missouri, stood five feet ten inches tall, and reported that he was a barber living at the K Street address (Great Register 1892-1894). In an oral interview for this project, Johnny Williams and Agin Shaheed provided similar details and Mr. Shaheed noted that an eighty-four year old granddaughter of Amos Hudgins is still alive and might have additional information on the Hudgins family.

### *Ket Hawkins*

Prior to coming to San Diego, Mr. Ket Hawkins operated barber shops in Oakland and San Francisco. Ket Hawkins was known as one of San Diego's favorite barbers beginning in 1915 and working until the 1930s. Mr. Hawkins owned the Star Barber shop at 308 Market Street, a few doors down from the Pastime Pool Hall owned by Chandler Davenport, and one block east of the Douglas Hotel. A veteran of military service, Mr. Hawkins was active in the American Legion, Post 310 and other civic organizations.

## **3. Sports Figures**

Black sports figures are perhaps the most visible Black persons in the non-African-American world. Within the Black community, sports leaders not only instilled pride and reflected the universal desire for athletic excellence, but many of the leaders transcended the playing fields and boxing rings to represent their people in other venues. The two persons discussed below are only a small cross section of the Black sports community and represent two of the most prominent figures for the time period under study. Most importantly, they were members of the community within the study area.

### *Bert and John Ritchey*

William and Daisy Ritchey raised two sons who rose to prominence in the Black and non-African-American communities. Bert Ritchey gained attention as a star football and baseball player at San Diego High School. Several of his sports records stood for decades and as late as the 1960s Bert Ritchey was still held as role model to White and Black student athletes. Bert Ritchey lived as a youth at Front and F Streets in what was then (1908-1916) a residential enclave within the downtown area, and later lived at 848 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In 1925, Ritchey began an illustrious high school athletic career that included football and track. Upon graduation from high school in 1927, Bert Ritchey earned a full football scholarship to the University of Southern California. In spite of his





SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Sports, UT 84 (No Photo #)



**Minor League Padre Players,  
John Ritchey is on the Far Right, March 24, 1943**

Plate 13

skills, the coach of the football team, who rarely played Ritchey, later admitted that he was offered the scholarship as a way of keeping the stellar player from playing against USC.

After graduation, Mr. Ritchey returned to San Diego and became a police officer. By 1935 Black police officers were still uncommon and Ritchey had his share of racism and resistance. Officer Ritchey was known for his honesty and fairness both on the police beat and in his personal life. Deciding to work within another more rewarding aspect of the legal system, Bert Ritchey attended law school and passed the California bar in 1964 facilitating his retirement from the police department. Although his law office was located outside of the study area on Imperial Avenue, Mr. Ritchey served his community as both a legal advocate and as a role model.

Few families are blessed with one great athlete; the Ritcheys had two. Bert's younger brother John followed in his footsteps, playing for Post 6, which won the national American Legion Championships in 1938 and 1941, and then starring at San Diego High School. John Ritchey turned professional as a catcher. One year after the Brooklyn Dodgers broke the color barrier in professional major league baseball with the signing of Jackie Robinson, the minor league San Diego Padres signed John Ritchey to a contract in March 1943. Ritchey's contract was the first for a Black minor league professional (Swank 1997; Williams 2003:B-4; Rowe 2004:E-1). Born in January 1923, John Ritchey led the Negro League with a .369 batting average in 1947 while playing for the Chicago American Giants. Reportedly, John Ritchey and other African-American players from the Padres frequented the Baseball Inn at 465 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1948-1949. In a recent ranking of the most influential and important baseball figures in San Diego history, Johnny Ritchey was ranked in the upper one-half of seventy-five persons above Rollie Fingers. There are plans for the San Diego Padres to celebrate the achievements of John Ritchey including the placement of a bust of him within the ballpark.

#### **4. Social, Professional, and Religious Leaders**

##### *Reverend George Washington Woodbey*

The Reverend Woodbey was a powerful and controversial figure of his time. Of all of the Black leaders in pre-1950 San Diego, Reverend Woodbey played the most prominent role in the national scene. Reverend Woodbey came to San Diego in 1910 and stayed until 1918. As the leader of the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church congregation, Reverend Woodbey preached a gospel of socialism and religion. His views were a little extreme for the conservative Black community in San Diego, and he left the area in 1917. In later years Reverend Woodbey gained fame as an author, fiery lecturer, and contender for the vice presidential nomination on the Socialist ticket. It would be many years before San Diego was again home to such an outspoken advocate of social and economic justice.

##### *Dr. F. C. Calvert*

Dr. F. C. Calvert, along with fellow Black physician F. T. Moore, administered to the medical needs of the Black community during the 1920s and 1930s from his offices at 636 Market Street in the old Masonic Hall. Dr. Calvert was a graduate of the University of Michigan and became a well-



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Churches, NB 1995

respected member of the professional community in San Diego. During the 1930s, Dr. Calvert served on several community groups and committees for race relations. The Masonic Hall and Dr. Calvert's medical office are no longer standing.

## **5. Firemen, Policemen, and Public Servants**

San Diego was slower than some cities and more rapid than others, to hire Blacks for positions of responsibility and authority. Black police officers became common only after the 1960s. When Bert Ritchey became an officer in the 1950s, he followed a proud and distinguished line of Black officers. The first Black police officer was hired in 1915. Another Black officer would not be on the force until 1918. In 1925, Reginald Townsend became the first full time Black police officer. John Cloud and Jasper Davis were two Black officers of long standing in the 1925-1938 and 1931-1954 periods respectively.

Black fire fighters joined the force in 1917, followed by the establishment of Hose Company No. 19 in September 1919 that was stationed at Oceanview Boulevard and 36<sup>th</sup> Street. Later, a Black fire battalion No. 17, operated first out of a station at 17<sup>th</sup> and Palm and later at 30<sup>th</sup> and Oceanview. Timothy Willams, Sandy Baker, John Cross, and Joe Smith were Black firemen in Hose Company No. 19 in 1936 where they worked under white officers.

## **6. Ordinary African-Americans in San Diego**

### *Joseph "Uncle Joe" Moore*

Joe Moore lived at 716 Third Street in 1917 and, according to a 1917 San Diego Union newspaper article about him, had been a resident of San Diego since 1886. Mr. Moore maintained a large vegetable garden on the northwest corner of Third and G Street. A janitor by trade, Joe Morgan became somewhat of a revered local character because of the success of his garden and his outgoing attitude. One newspaper article proclaimed, "Colored Janitor Grows Remarkable Vegetable; Garden Near Heart of the City." In newspaper accounts of the time, Mr. Moore was treated with respect and even a touch of reverence for his gardening abilities. There is no heavy overtone of patronizing in articles about this interesting figure in downtown's history. The exception to this is the use of the term "Uncle" which, while it might appear endearing, was an appellation of the era applied by Whites to Blacks in much the same way as "Aunt" or "Auntie" or "Mammie," and it carried a certain amount of condescension.

### *Reuben Williams/Reuben the Guide*

For several years between 1890 and 1903, Reuben Williams was a fixture on the streets of San Diego, Point Loma, and Tijuana. From his outpost at Fifth and Broadway, Reuben would don his oversized sombrero, pull on a brightly colored serape, and take willing tourists on a tour to Tijuana or to the Point Loma Lighthouse, which was then known as the old Spanish Lighthouse. The mode of transportation was a three seated surrey pulled gingerly by two mules. Customers on the ride to Tijuana could pay one dollar which gave them the right to stay in the surrey as it crossed the Tijuana River, for seventy-five cents you got out and walked along side the vehicle, and those paying only



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Fire Department, Photo 3019



fifty cents were expected to get out and push (Madyun and Malone 1989:104, 106). Mr. Williams lived in a cottage at Second and E Streets with his wife Aldama, who was from a well-known Tijuana family. Reuben Williams died in 1903.

### *William H. Lodine*

Under the headline “Negro Pioneer Is Removed To Hospital,” the *San Diego Union* reported the illness, and ultimately death of an early African-American settler in San Diego (San Diego Union 1909:10). According to the newspaper account, William H. Lodine came to California as the personal servant of Captain Matthew Sherman. The news article remarked that Lodine had been in town for twenty-five years which would mark his arrival in circa 1874. In fact, he may have been a resident since as early as the mid-1860s when Captain Sherman was stationed in San Diego at the old Army barracks on lower Market Street. His name appears in early directories including the one for 1887. Lodine lived in a small house at California and Redwood that was provided for him by Captain Sherman even after Sherman’s death. Lacking the pension from Sherman that had been halted after his death in 1898, Lodine worked at odd jobs to support himself and was an active street preacher and aid to local church missions that served the homeless and poor. When William H. Lodine passed away at the age of 95 on December 29, 1909, the newspaper obituary called him one of the best-known mission workers in the city, but also used the patronizing and somewhat pejorative label “Uncle” in the second headline. Mr. Lodine is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery not too far from Captain Matthew Sherman, after whom Sherman Heights is named.

### *John W. Moore*

Clearly an independent man who remained active in his advancing years, John W. Moore lived along the waterfront in the 1897-1917 era. As implausible as it may seem, John Moore fought one of the largest companies in the United States at the time and won. Mr. Moore sued the Santa Fe Railroad in 1915 and gained a settlement from the railroad in 1917 (San Diego Union 1917b:1). The suit involved property upon which Moore had built a house on stilts near the tidelands and then filled in the soils around it to improve the property. The railroad claimed that the land was part of their right-of-way, and Mr. Moore and his attorneys, Lewis Kirby and Herbert Ellis, maintained that his land rights preceded the railroad. Through a compromise, the railroad paid Mr. Moore \$500.00, or approximately an average worker’s salary for a year and a half. When the newspaper erroneously reported that Mr. Moore was a freed slave and had fought for the Union forces in the Civil War, he demanded a retraction. As Moore noted in a letter to the editor, “I was born in Ireland, baptized in the Catholic church in Liverpool, England and landed in the United States at seven years of age. I am a veteran, having fought in the United States navy during the Civil war. I thank you very much for printing this correction for me” (San Diego Union March 1917c:5).

### *Benjamin and Cordelia Virginia Caddles*

The Caddles lived at 359 Ninth Avenue and Benjamin Caddles operated a shop at 738 Fifth Street where he worked as both a tailor and bootblack. In the early 1890s, a movement to purchase land in Mexico and establish African-American communes appealed to many Blacks in the West who sought further opportunities than those offered in the United States. Benjamin Caddles invested two hundred dollars in the Afro-American Colonization Company of Mexico in 1891 and hoped to either

profit from the investment or perhaps relocate south of the border. Meanwhile, Cordelia became caught up in the religious fervor that ran its course through southern California. In spite of Benjamin's efforts to stop her, Mrs. Caddles held seances, attended faith healings, and developed a relationship with a mysterious Black spiritualist. Increasingly, Cordelia began to feel that spirits and evil forces moved throughout her small cottage and cold gusts pierced her thin clothing. Tragedy struck the Caddles household in April 1895 when Cordelia killed herself by drinking carbolic acid. Benjamin Caddles left the San Diego area, and according to some, left the evil spirits and his wife's ghost in the Ninth Street cottage (Carrico 1991:7-12). The site of the Caddles home was most recently a parking lot for a plastics company and has recently been graded as part of the Petco Ballpark construction.



### **III. HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND THEMES**

#### **A. Description and Background of Thematic Interpretation**

Determining the significance of historic properties and resources is guided at the federal level by the criteria for eligibility to the National Register. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register constitutes part of the federal government's efforts to identify and preserve important historic and archeological resources. The National Park Service, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, administers the National Register and provides interpretive guidelines and structures for documenting and evaluating historic properties.

Historic contexts and themes are used to organize and interpret information regarding historic resources. The significance of a resource is evaluated according to how well it represents its historic context. As defined by the National Park Service, historic contexts "are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear. Historians, architectural historians, folklorists, archaeologists, and anthropologists use different words to describe these phenomenon such as trend, pattern, theme, or cultural affiliation, but ultimately the concept is the same" (National Park Service 2002: V, 1). Conceptually related to the National Register criteria for significance, as outlined in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 as amended (16 USC 470 et seq.), a historic context may relate to:

1. An event, a series of events or activities, or patterns of an area's development,
2. The life of an important person,
3. A building form, architectural style, engineering technique or artistic value, based on a stage of physical development, or the use of a material or method of construction that shaped the historic identity of an area, or,
4. A research topic.

Such contexts are organizational frameworks for identifying and evaluating resources according to historical themes within a local, regional, or national context, framing the way in which properties are unique or representative of past phenomena (National Park Service 1997: II, 2). These definitions are echoed in the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation's understanding of a historic context as "an organizational format which groups information about related historical resources based on theme, geographic limits, and chronological period," with the theme referring to "the subject or topic of historical study" (Office of Historic Preservation 1995:11). Specific themes help to bring a property's significance into focus and link properties to identified historical trends, which clarifies how a property is a product of its time and how it illustrates unique, representative, or pivotal aspects of our history.

Adopted in 1936, the National Park Service's original framework for thematic understanding of historic resources "was conceived in terms of the 'stages of American progress' and served to

celebrate the achievements of the founding fathers and the inevitable march of democracy” (National Park Service 2003). While subsequent revisions provided updated formatting and organization, it was not until 2000 that a more culturally inclusive, broadly framed, and interdisciplinary perspective was institutionalized. Today, themes are understood as the background historical processes identified through scholarly research that are an important cumulative result of individual developments, such as the growth of social and ethnic groups, technological developments of transportation or electrical networks, or patterns of agricultural settlement (National Park Service 2002: V, 2).

Themes often reflect the historic development of communities, relating to “the occupation of a prehistoric group, the rise of an architectural movement, the work of a master architect, specific events or activities, or a pattern of physical development that influenced the character of a place at a particular time in history. It is within the larger picture of a community’s history that local significance becomes apparent”(National Park Service 1997:II, 3). In this vein, both Ethnic Heritage and Social History constitute major themes of significance recognized by the National Register.

## **B. Local Theme and Sub-Themes**

This study, constructing a picture of the African-American community’s history in downtown San Diego and its remaining presence in the City’s landscape, makes apparent these properties’ collective significance at the local level. According to the National Park Service, “a local historic context represents an aspect of the history of a town, city, county, cultural area, or region, or any portions thereof. It is defined by the importance of the property, not necessarily the physical location of the property” (National Park Service 2002: V, 4). For instance, while collections of buildings associated with African-Americans may be found in other locales throughout the state or nation, the importance of the potential district discussed here relates to the particular manifestation of the African-American community in the City of San Diego and therefore will be discussed in the context of its local significance.

Within the broad historic context of African-American Heritage, the resources discussed below are linked through the historic theme of the development and maintenance of the African-American community between 1860 and 1960 in downtown San Diego, California. Sub-themes that weave together to form the whole of the community’s experiences in the downtown area and serve to organize the wealth of historic information yielded by the present study consist of:

1. Early African-American Pioneers,
2. African-American Entrepreneurship,
3. Religious, Civic, and Social Life, and
4. African-American Residential Life and Community Growth.

## **1. African-American Pioneers of Downtown San Diego**

This sub-theme is a means of identifying and recognizing those individuals whose lives and endeavors in the early decades (circa 1860 to 1900) of the downtown area made them significant contributors to the growth and development of the African-American community and to the city as a whole. While this sub-theme may incorporate and echo elements of the remaining sub-themes, such as entrepreneurial success or civic and religious leadership, it serves to highlight those early residents who helped New Town grow into the thriving city it is today. Examples may include such notable individuals as Walter Meadows and Edward W. Anderson.

## **2. African-American Entrepreneurship in Downtown San Diego**

This sub-theme encompasses the broad range of African-American participation in the commercial development of both the African-American community and the downtown area. Recognizing the influence of important enterprising individuals and businesses as well as less well-known enterprises and establishments that specifically served the African-American community, this sub-theme provides the opportunity to bring to light the commercial life that linked together African-Americans in downtown San Diego. This sub-theme is particularly important in African-American and minority history because of the discrimination and obstacles faced by non-white enterprises and business owners. Examples of successful African-American entrepreneurs may include George Ramsey, Mabel Brown, Skippy Smith, and Lillian Grant as well as other African-American owner-operators whose names have been obscured by the passage of time.

## **3. Religion, Music and Culture in Downtown San Diego's African-American Community**

This sub-theme incorporates those people, places, and activities that shaped religious, civic, and social life for members of the African-American community in the downtown area. It is clear that not all people were involved in all pursuits that might fall within the realm of this sub-theme. However, recognizing the diversity of experiences that gave texture to the lives of ordinary African-Americans in the downtown area makes visible all those who shaped not only the African-American community but also the city itself. Several prominent examples include the Bethel A.M.E. Church, the Masonic Hall, and the Douglas Hotel/Creole Palace.

## **4. African-American Residential Life and Community Growth in Downtown San Diego**

Residential patterns reflect and influence the interactions between individuals and groups. Where African-Americans lived and moved over time in the downtown area speaks volumes regarding the community's growth, development, and coherence. In the context of this sub-theme, individual residences and residential patterns reflect the historical circumstances impacting downtown San Diego's African-American community. This sub-theme may include segregated hotels or housing units that were known or classified as "black only" or predominantly occupied by African-Americans.

## **IV. METHODS**

### **A. Community Involvement and Outreach**

This project relied not only on historical research, but on the enthusiasm and involvement of San Diego's African-American community. Long-time residents of the city including Revered George Walker Smith, James and Leila Sampson, Fred R. Taylor, Ben Cloud, Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Fonzi Thomas, Agin Shaheed, Moses Martin, Effie Primas, Mr. Leon Williams, and Earl Davis were contacted and provided oral interviews relating to the experiences of African-Americans in San Diego as well as buildings and sites significant to them throughout their lives. In addition, communication and contact with civic and religious organizations allowed the community to share in the shaping and direction of the project, as well as to contribute directly through sharing family histories, anecdotes, memories, and even photographs and documents relating to the history of African-Americans in downtown San Diego. Flyers and presentations were shared with local churches and pastors, with organizations such as the Catfish Club, the Irving Jacobs Center, the African-American Genealogical Association, the California Preservation Foundation, and at the Centre City Development Corporation's Sixth Annual San Diego Multicultural Festival 2004.

### **B. Archival and Documentary Research**

Mooney & Associates conducted extensive research of primary and secondary documents relating to the history of African-Americans in downtown San Diego. In addition to previous research, report, and publications that document downtown historic properties and African-American contributions in San Diego, Mooney & Associates staff examined the following records and collections:

- San Diego Historical Society
  - ▶ Vertical Files
    - Churches, Streetscapes, Clubs, Hotels, Businesses, Education, Black History/Culture
  - ▶ "Streetscapes" Photograph Folder
  - ▶ "Hotels" Photograph Folder
  - ▶ Baynard Photograph Collection
  - ▶ "Drawings" Folder, Photograph Archives
  - ▶ Collected Oral Histories, Oral History Database
- San Diego County Tax Assessor's Office
  - ▶ Assorted Building Records
  - ▶ Assorted Property Index Records
- San Diego County Recorder's Office
  - ▶ Birth Records
  - ▶ Death Records
  - ▶ Marriage Records
  - ▶ Selected Grant Deed Records

- San Diego County Superior Court
  - ▶ Divorce Records
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection, Los Angeles Public Library
  - ▶ San Diego, March 1887
  - ▶ San Diego, 1888
  - ▶ San Diego, 1906
  - ▶ San Diego, 1920-1956, vol. 1: 1921
  - ▶ San Diego, 1920, Dec.1950, vol.1: 1921-Aug. 1950
  - ▶ San Diego, 1921; Republished 1956
- California Room of the San Diego Public Library
  - ▶ San Diego City Directories, 1901-1960
  - ▶ San Diego City Phone Directories, 1900-1956
  - ▶ City of San Diego Census, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910
  - ▶ Vertical Files
  - ▶ Union-Tribune Newspaper Index
  - ▶ Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-36
- National Archives, Laguna Niguel Branch
  - ▶ City of San Diego Census, 1920 and 1930
- County of San Diego Sewer and Water Operations
  - ▶ Sewer Records
  - ▶ Water Records
- Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
  - ▶ Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926
- Private Collections
  - ▶ Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego
- Genealogy.com
  - ▶ Individual Name Searches
  - ▶ Social Security Index
- Museum of Making Music, Dan Del Fiorentino, Curator
  - ▶ Oral Interviews
- Gaslamp Quarter Association
- Gaslamp Historical Association
- Office of Maria Burke Lia

This study strove to overcome the limitations of available data when searching for the often obscured details of African-American history in San Diego. City directories, for example, are of limited accuracy in that the incorporated information was collected voluntarily in door to door surveys resulting in a “hit or miss” sampling of the total population. The 1890 and 1926 editions proved particularly useful to this project in identifying “colored” residents of the city. Similar conditions apply to census data, and one can assume that the same vagaries in voluntary response to census takers and questionnaires applied then as now. Like the 1890 and 1926 editions of the city directories race is included in census data, providing another starting point for identifying African-American individuals as well as properties associated with members of that community in the city. Once identified as African-American in newspaper accounts, oral histories, census data, or colored directory information, individuals were traced by name through other documents to reveal such

information as their occupations, places of business, and places of residence over time as well as in rarer cases, their marriages and deaths.

### **C. Field Research**

Mooney & Associates made field visits to each identified resource to verify its presence and to photographically document standing properties. Digital photographs of all properties are on file at Mooney & Associates. A full survey of the project area was conducted to locate all vacant lots, newly vacated parcels, and parking lots in order to document the location of potential subsurface archaeological sites.

## V. IDENTIFIED PROPERTIES

The current study identified 16 standing contributing resources and 21 non-standing associated sites for the proposed Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District. Section A addresses the 16 standing buildings and Section B examines African-American associated properties that are no longer standing. Section C identifies locations with archaeological potential situated within the study area.

### A. Contributing Resources, Proposed Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District

Table 1 illustrates the sixteen standing resources that have a significant association with the contributions and experiences of African-Americans in downtown San Diego between 1860 and 1960. A history and full discussion of significance for each building follows. Not necessarily intended to represent a complete and final determination, this list represents previous research, as well as the findings of the extensive research conducted as part of this study, which carries the hope that further research into African American history in San Diego and identification of historically significant African American-associated properties will continue.

**Table 1. Standing Resources**

RESOURCE NAME	ADDRESS	SUB-THEME
Brighton Hotel	431 Market Street	B, D
Carter / Vine Hotel	1401 J Street	B, D
Clermont Hotel / Coast Hotel	501 7th Avenue	B, C, D
The Coliseum Athletic Club	1485 E Street	C
The Crossroads Tavern	345 Market Street	C, D
Gem Café	1433 Market	B
Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers	858 16th Street	B, D
Grant Rooms Hotel	633 5th Avenue	B, C, D
Hotel New York / DeLuxe Hotel	520 6th Avenue	B, C
Ideal Rooms and Ancillary Businesses	540-546 3rd Avenue	B, D
Latonia Hotel	919-923 Island Avenue	D
Lillian Grant Properties	1431-1437 J Street	B, D
Pacific Hotel	506 5th Avenue	D
Pacific Parachute Company	627 8th Avenue	B, D
Simmons Hotel / PE Robinson Hotel	542 6th Avenue	B, C
Western Hotel / Star Hotel	522 7th Avenue	D

A: Early African-American Pioneers  
 B: African-American Entrepreneurship  
 C: Religious, Civic, and Social Life  
 D: African-American Residential Life and Community Growth





# Brighton Hotel

## 431 Market Street

The Timken Building (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 34) once housed the Brighton Hotel, run and resided in by Mrs. Anna Brown, an African-American businesswoman whose various activities associate her with numerous properties in the downtown area. Historically, the two-story building constructed in 1894, and first known as 1331 H Street, consisted of retail shops on the first floor with rooms on the second. The 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map records “lodgings above” the first floor’s stores, restaurants, saloon, and shooting gallery.

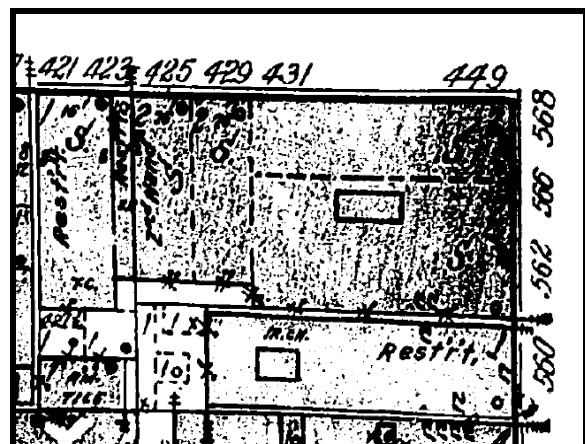
(DIRECTORY—Continued)	
Bomar, Mrs. Edna.....	628 S. 33rd St.
Brown, Mrs. Anna.....	431 Market St.
Brown, Mr. B.....	669 Front St.

Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926:21

Known as the Brighton from 1916 onward, these second-story rooms housed Anna Brown between 1924 and 1927 while she was serving as the rooms’ proprietor, the latest in a long line of female proprietors managing the Brighton since its opening (San Diego City Directory 1924, Colored Directory 1926). She departs the hotel after this tenure and is not listed in City Directories for the next two years.

Anna B. Brown is first documented in San Diego in 1912 in the City Directory of that

year. She is not listed in subsequent years, but reappears in 1917 as a business partner of Mr. George Ramsey at the Yesmar (Ramsey backwards) Hotel, later known as the Anita Hotel (see entry for Yesmar Hotel/Anita Hotel, 422 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue). While it is assumed that this Ramsey, listed as proprietor, is the California-born African-American George Ramsey who arrives in San Diego in 1913, a Caucasian George Ramsey of different age and state of origin is also listed in the Census at 431 Market in 1920. Anna B. Brown resided at and served as manager of that property until 1923 (City Directory 1917-1923). Following her years at the Brighton Hotel, it is possible that Mrs. Brown was the proprietor of furnished rooms at 610 Island. However, this is inconclusive, as the City Directory only lists “Anna Brown,” and no middle initial for the duration of the her tenure



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 63

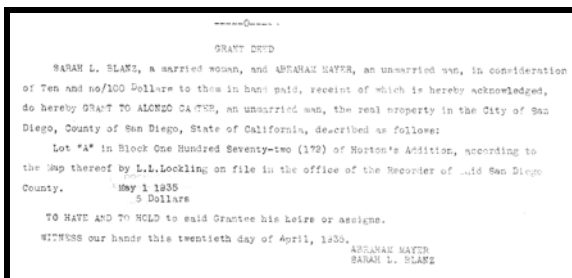
there lasting until 1936. After this year, Anna Brown has not been found in Census or City Directory information through the 1940s. Though no African-American residents of the Brighton could be identified in directory or

Censuses listings and no further information was found on any of the earlier female proprietors, the Brighton Hotel was certainly associated with one of the most visible African-American women in early San Diego.



## Carter / Vine Hotel 1401 J Street

The Vine/Carter Hotel at 1401 J Street was constructed in April 1912 and opened in 1913 as the Enid Furnished Rooms. Sarah Mayer, listed in San Diego City Directories as a married woman, and Abraham Mayer, listed as an unmarried man, owned and managed the property. The name changed to the Vine Apartments by 1928, and in May 1935, the property was purchased by unmarried African-American Alonzo Carter. The 1934 City Directory lists Alonzo Carter and Kath Carter, later recorded as Katie, as occupants at the Vine Hotel. However, Alonzo and Katie do not appear in the 1930 Census, suggesting that they arrived in San Diego not too long before Alonzo's purchase of the property.

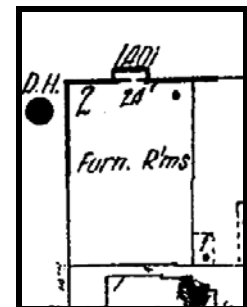


1935 Grant Deed, San Diego County Recorder's Office, Book 399, pg. 177

As of 1935, Alonzo Carter is listed in City Directories as the owner, with Katie listed with him. By 1936, a C. D. (later identified in directories as Clarence D.) and Ruth Carter, presumably relatives, are also recorded with

Alonzo and Katie as occupants of 1401 J Street in the 1935-36 Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California. Alonzo Carter is also listed in the directory as an owner of Carter and Wall, though no further information on this enterprise has been found in Colored Directories or Census information.

The property remained in the Carter Family for the next sixteen years housing a variety of tenants, visitors, and managers. The building was vacant in 1938, though a year later 1401 J Street re-opened as "Furnished Rooms" in 1939, with owners Alonzo and Katie living down the street at 1431 J Street. The two were married by 1940, when they are listed as husband and wife in a Grant Deed to the Corporation of America, trustees for Bank of America. At this time, they are next door at the 1405 building, and by 1941 are a few blocks away at 1226 J Street. During these years, Mrs. Ruby (Rubea) Washington, a young African-American woman from Alabama who appears first in the 1930 Census, is listed in City Directories as the property manager of 1401 J Street.



1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 68

Though the City Directories and Property Index do not record either of the transactions with the bank, in January 1942 the Carters received the property back and renamed it the Carter Hotel. In this year, Clarence D., presumably the C. D. of 1937, is again listed as occupant; it is likely that Alonzo and Katie are also at the property as they still own the lot, are not listed at another location, and appear occasionally in City Directories as the property managers. The hotel is listed in the 1946 San Diego Phone Directory, though not specifically identified as a segregated hotel.



1954 San Diego County Telephone Directory, pg. 233

In 1954 and 1955, however, the Carter/Vine now known as the Fourteenth and J Hotel, is listed in the San Diego County Phone Directory as "Colored Only." Oral interviews with long-time African-American residents of San Diego confirm the relationship between the 1401 J Street property and segregation in San Diego, noting that by this point in time, the hotel was identified as a "colored" hotel due to its location, ownership, and as a result of de facto segregation in San Diego. In response to a question about black owned and patronized hotel in the downtown and East Village areas, Fonzie Thomas, a resident of San Diego since 1912, independently identified the Vine Hotel as a "colored" hotel (Thomas 2003).

By June 1949, Alonzo and Katie deeded the property to Katie's name alone. In 1950, Alonzo and Katie are listed as occupants of

1405 J Street, and on March 8, 1951 Katie Carter, listed as an unmarried woman, deeded the property to Elizabeth Goodwin, a married African-American woman, and moved first to 22nd Street and later to 2242 Moore. Elizabeth Goodwin maintained the property as the Carter Hotel until 1956, when she changed the name to the 14<sup>th</sup> and J Hotel.

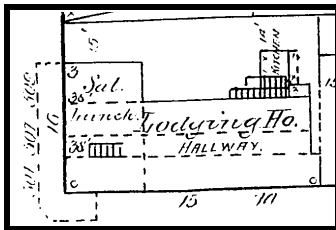
The Vine/Carter Hotel reflects elements of the African-American community's historical and economic development in downtown San Diego. The operation of the hotel during the period of racial segregation in San Diego represents the successful establishment of an African-American owned, operated, and patronized business enterprise in the city as well as the development of community-based businesses for African-Americans. Additionally, it marks the residence and business of a successful African-American entrepreneurial family, represented by Alonzo and Katie Carter, in the downtown area. The African-American owners of the property, the Carter Family and Elizabeth Goodwin, represent thirty-one consecutive years of African-American ownership of the property during a time when it was difficult for African-Americans to own a home or a business. The Vine/Carter Hotel's relation to the African-American experience of segregation in San Diego is also corroborated in interviews with long-time African-American residents of the city who identified the Vine Hotel, as the property was known upon purchase by Alonzo Carter, as a "colored" hotel. This property was determined on October 23, 2003 to be a significant individual resource under City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criterion A for its association with the African-American community in San Diego (Historic Resource Number 632).



# Clermont Hotel / Coast Hotel 501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue

The Clermont/Coast Hotel at 501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue was designated by the City of San Diego Historic Resources Board under criterion A, for its significance in association with segregation and San Diego's African-American community, on December 20, 2001. Extensive research conducted by the Office of Maria Burke Lia (Moomjian 2000, 2001) and the Gaslamp Black Historical Society (Huff 2001) has brought the history of this structure to light.

In 1887-1888 the building was known as the Occidental Hotel (Moomjian 2001:10). The 1887 Sanborn Fire Map listed the building as lodging, with a blacksmith shop and a



1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 11

woodworking and painting shop to the east, and the Diamond Feed and Livery Yard to the north (rear). The

1888 Sanborn Fire Map listed the hotel as a lodging house, and to the east were a junk store, blacksmith, and lodgings, while to the north (rear) were the Diamond Feed and Livery Yard, and a carriage and hay and seed shop. During 1889-1895 the hotel was known as the Union House, though it was

called the Clermont House by 1901 (Moomjian 2001:10).

The 1906 Sanborn Fire Map listed the hotel as a tenement and lodging, and to the East were a blacksmith and painting shop, a shoeing shop, and a wagon repairing shop. To the North was Lyles and Frisbee Hay and Grain. The 1921 Sanborn Fire Map listed the building as lodgings, with vacant lots appearing to the East and North (rear of the hotel). Mamie, possibly of mixed race, and Eugene Deburn purchased the property in 1922. Blacks were able to stay at the hotel during their ownership, though the *Colored Directory* of 1926 does not list any occupants at this address (Huff 2001:12).

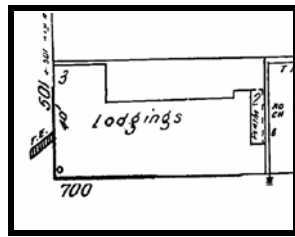
On May 15, 1923 owner W. Merritt, applied for water service from the Operating Department of the City of San Diego, for a \$100 fee. Various individuals owned the building over the next decade, and the 1935-36 Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, lists the following African-American residents of the hotel: Henry



San Diego County Telephone Directory (1945-1950)

McWilliams, Jimmy Montgomery, John Price, and Charles Runnels (Moomjian 2001, Appendix B). Charles T. Robinson purchased the property in 1938 and cemented its reputation as a black segregated hotel (Huff 2001:13). He transferred the property to Gerda Robinson in 1941; she held it for five years.

More importantly, City Directory research by the Gaslamp Black Historical Society shows that beginning in 1945 and continuing through 1950, the San Diego County Telephone Directories list the Clermont Hotel as a “Hotel for Colored People.” Beginning in 1951 and continuing to 1953, the San Diego County Telephone Directory lists the Clermont Hotel as a “Hotel for Colored People Under New Management by Rae L. Reid.” In 1954 the listing changes to read “Perm & Transient \$1.00 Day & Up, Management by Rae L. Reid” in the San Diego County Telephone Directory. By 1956, the Clermont Hotel now has an ad in the San Diego County Telephone Directory, rather than a single line.



1950 Sanborn fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 65



1956 & 1957 San Diego County Telephone Directory, pg. 244

This ad remains the same in the 1957 San Diego County Telephone Directory. The property was renamed the Coast Hotel by 1961, as indicated in that year’s San Diego City and County Directory. On May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1963 the City of San Diego Utilities Department had to renew service and replace valves and the meter at this address. The work order lists the property address only, and not the name of the hotel. The 1965 San Diego County Telephone Directory lists it as the Clermont Hotel again, with only a single line entry; it is no longer identified as a “Hotel for Colored People.”



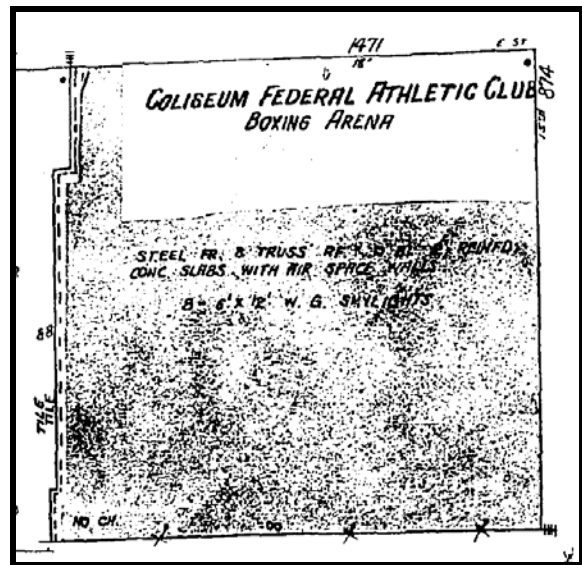


# The Coliseum Federal Athletic Club 1485 E Street

This structure, currently a Jerome's Furniture Warehouse, was originally constructed in 1926. The architect, John S. Siebert was a well known architect who designed several noteworthy institutional buildings. As described by Tinsley and Lia, the building is a Spanish Eclectic style, with a massed, square floor plan. It was constructed specifically for use as a spectator arena and sports center. Mr. Frank S. Higgins and Tommy G. Landis, major figures in the local sports promotion business, leased the building and staged boxing matches and sports events. At the time, this arena was only the second boxing venue in San Diego (after the Dreamland Athletic Club at India and Market Streets) and was second only to the old Balboa Stadium in seating capacity. The patrons sat on wooden opera chairs brought in from Chicago and on bleachers. Sellouts, and they happened often in the Coliseum's heyday, saw over 3000 fans fill the massive structure.

In April 1938, a three alarm fire burned the interior of the coliseum inflicting \$35,000 of damage. While the building was being repaired (April-August 1938), fights were staged on a ring set up at Lane Field, near the foot of Broadway Street and home of the Pacific Coast League Padres.

The interior was quickly reconstructed as shown by an article in the August 30, 1938 San Diego Union (1938a). One of the first matches in the grand re-opening was between local favorite Archie Moore and Johnny Romero, described as a Mexican southpaw (San Diego Union 1938b). Mr. Moore fought well into the 1950s with many of his bouts taking place in the Coliseum. Other notable



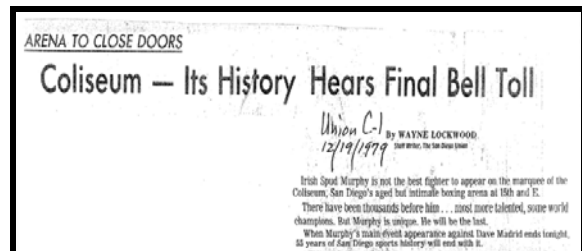
1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 53

African-Americans who fought at the Coliseum include Ken Norton, a local product, and Joe Louis who fought an exhibition match here.

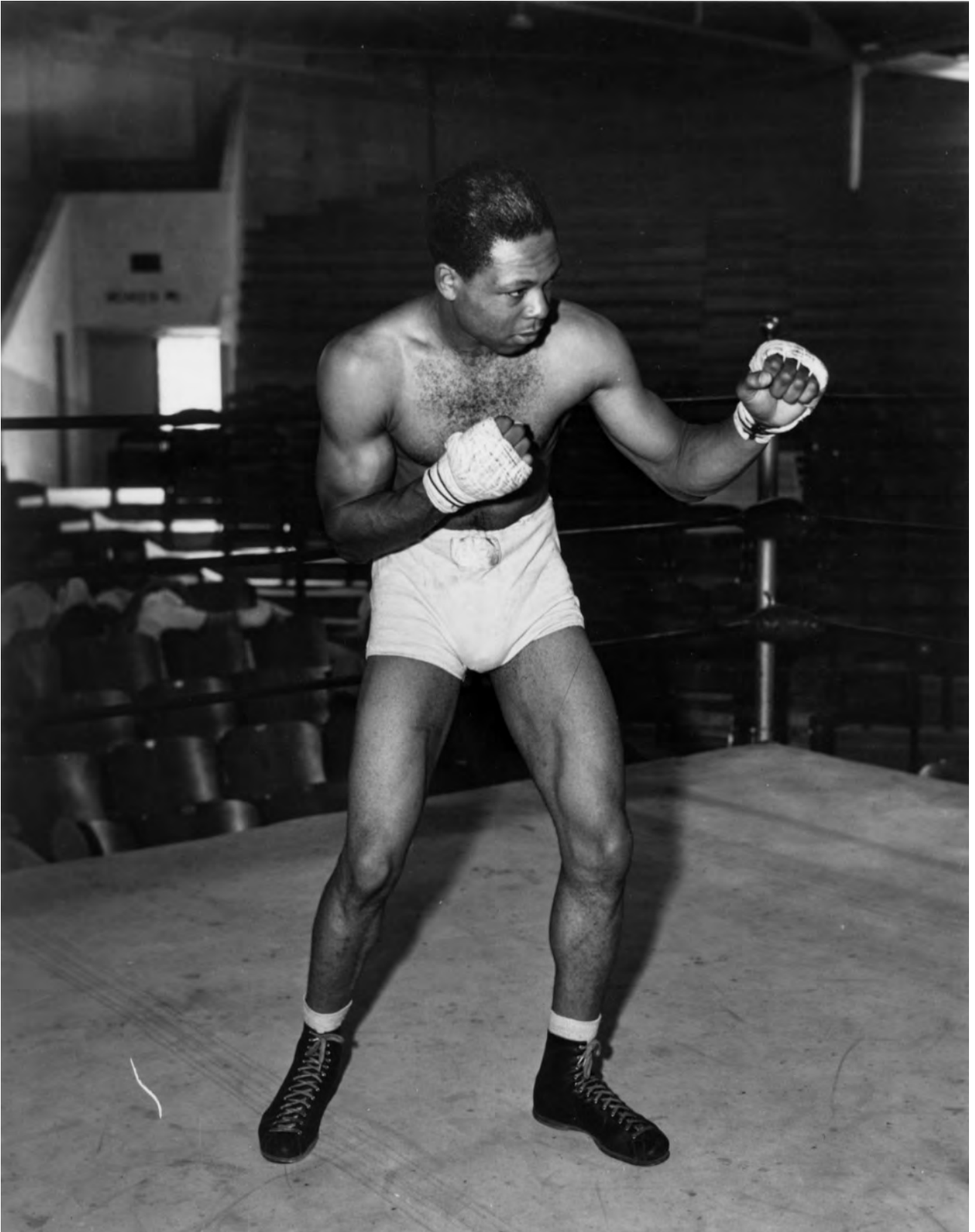


Based on newspaper accounts and oral interviews, the Coliseum was a focal point for local sports and the cafes and bars in the neighborhood, including Jacob and Mary Barras' Ringside Café at 1489 Market Street, that formed a sports network of hard drinking, cigar smoking men. Besides being a venue for professional fights, the Coliseum also served as a club for training and cultivating amateurs. Mr. Linn Platner, a friend and backer of Archie Moore, was well known for forming and operating the Coliseum Amateur Association in 1936. Thomas Whelan, the city district attorney, and later a judge, who was known to be both a hard drinking sports enthusiast and a supporter of civil rights (see the Richardson interview), served as the legal advisor to the Amateur Association (San Diego Union 1936). The father of a future mayor and city council member, Jerome O'Conner, worked as the instructor in charge of the amateurs.

With the increase of televised boxing and the emergence of Los Angeles and Las Vegas as preferred boxing venues, the Coliseum fell on hard times in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The building ceased to operate as a sports venue in 1979 with Irish Spud Murphy fighting the last bout in the venerable building (San Diego Union 1979). The Navarro family purchased the building in the 1970s and after the failure of the boxing venue to garner enough revenue, turned the expansive building into a Jerome's furniture warehouse.



The San Diego Union December 12, 1979: Section C:1



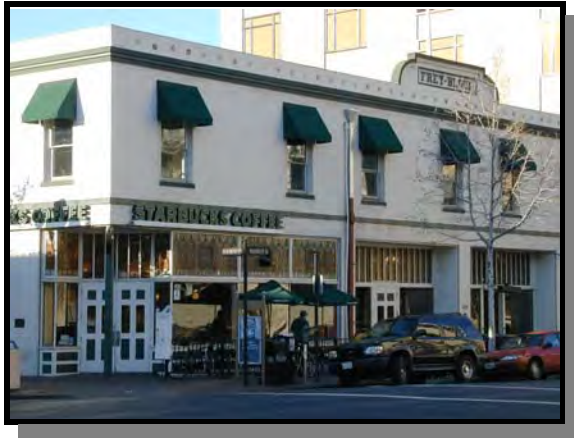
SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Sports, UT People (No Photo #)



**Archie Moore, "the Mongoose"**

**August 11, 1939**

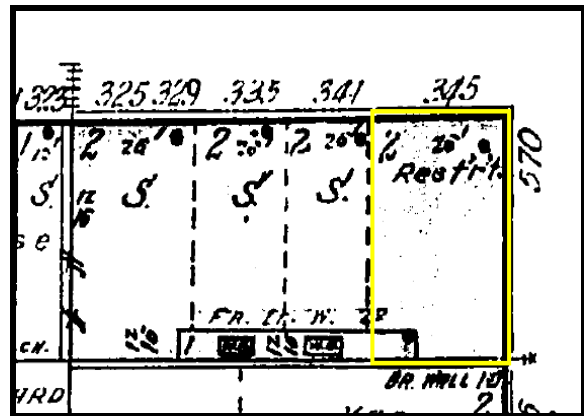
Plate 16



# The Crossroads Tavern 345 Market Street

The ownership of this parcel has been extensively researched, and the present Frey Building (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 81), was constructed 1910-1911 (CETA-Gaslamp 1979b). The space at 345 Market first opened as a saloon under John Snyder between 1912 and 1913, and later Marco Tomasevitch (aka Michael Thomas) between 1913 and 1920. From 1921 to 1923, the property at 345 Market was a speakeasy under Tomasevitch, and was closed down by authorities. It reopened as a second hand store from 1927 to 1931, and housed a number of enterprises over the next two decades, including a Chinese restaurant, a bar supply store, a cabinetmaker, billiards halls, and a Filipino Recreation Hall before becoming the Crossroads Tavern in 1959 (San Diego City Directories 1927-1959). It would remain the Crossroads through 1986, reputedly hosting Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong as well as local African-American jazz luminary Walter Fuller. The Crossroads

catered to all San Diegans, carrying the city's jazz roots late into the century and showcasing San Diego's own jazz legends. Well remembered by residents of the city, the Frey Building holds a plaque which reads "Home of the Crossroads, the oldest live jazz club in San Diego."



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 63

# Gem Café

## 1433 Market Street

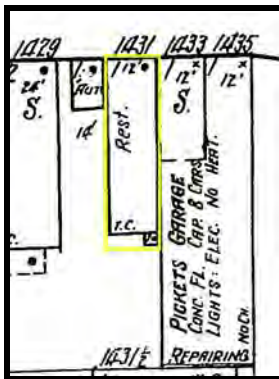


Located on the same block as Gadson's Confectionery (see entry for Gadson's Confectionery/Toilet Store, 1415 Market Street), this long rectangular one-story building was in place and serving as a restaurant as early as 1921 when it appears on the 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map as 1431 Market Street. The 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map displays the building's current address, 1433 Market Street.

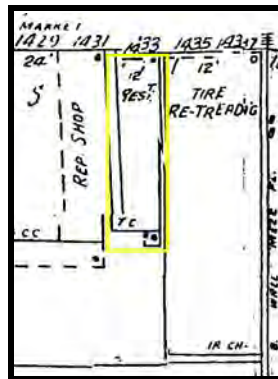
Hattie T. Payne, the Gem Café advertised in the 1935-1936 Colored Directory "Meals at All Hours - Sandwiches of All Kinds." A popular eating establishment that also catered



Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-36:33



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 68

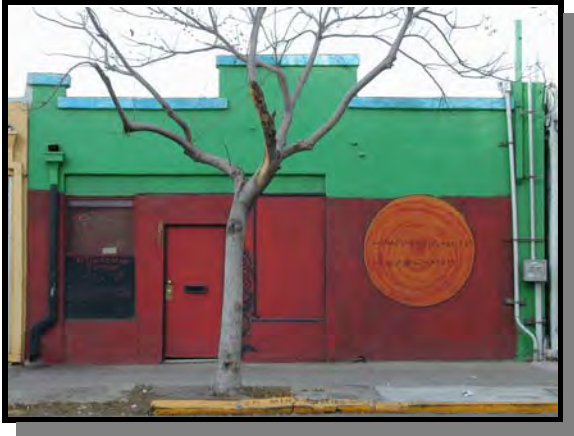


1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 68

African-American couple Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Allen operated the Kingery Clyde restaurant at this address for a year in 1925-1926. The restaurant went through various proprietors from 1926 until 1933, but housed the Gem Café from 1933 through 1936 (City Directory 1926-1936). Run by African-American Mrs.

parties, the Gem Café offered dinner for 25 cents, as well as a selection of cigars, cigarettes, candy, ice cream, and soft drinks. At the Gem Café, according to the 1936 Colored Directory's Who's Who, "You can always be assured of being satisfied with the meals the way you want them" (76).

After Mrs. Payne, the building continued to operate as a restaurant under various proprietors, including C. N. Trent and Mrs. E. R. Zanka, neither of whom has yet been identified as African-American. Today the building remains a restaurant, La Botana Taco Shop. This unassuming building was one of the many shops and restaurants run by and catering to African-Americans in San Diego, as part of a once vibrant downtown community that helped shape the city.

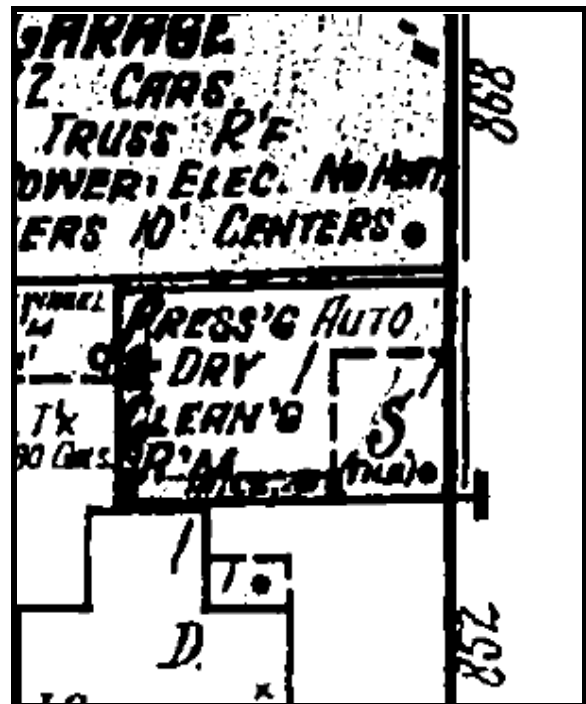


## Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street

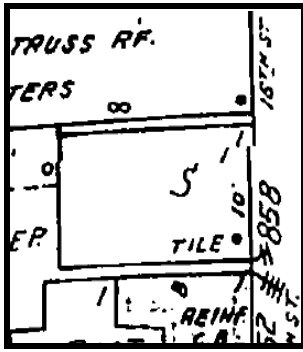
The building presently standing at 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street once housed the cleaning and drying operation of African-Americans Charles and Emma Goodwin. Before occupying 858 16<sup>th</sup> street, Charles W. Goodwin, from Texas, operated a laundry store at 903 University Avenue (San Diego City Directory). Emma, born in Kansas and possibly arriving alone in San Diego as a married woman under the surname of Samuels, was the proprietor of The Yokum, another African-American associated property (see entry for The Yokum, 1131 H Street/215 Market Street). The Goodwins were married and residing together at The Yokum by 1915. In 1917, Charles Goodwin moved his business downtown, to 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street, where it would remain for the next fifteen years. The Goodwin's resided at, and also continued to operate, the Yokum hotel until 1920, when the couple moved to a residence at 1514 F Street.

In 1906, based on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, there is no building occupying the space at 858 16th Street. In 1921, the Goodwin's store is depicted. The complex facility included concrete floors, electric power, steam presses, and electric irons. The facility spanned the length of the parcel, with a one-story building along the street front housing the shop, which was divided from the cleaning operation by a frame partition. This segment

of the complex had a one foot firewall above the tile roof. Goodwin Cleaners and Dryers continued to operate at this address through 1932 when it is listed in the Colored Directory of that year. The next year, in the midst of the Great Depression, the property becomes vacant, and Charles and Emma have split and are residing at two separate addresses east of downtown. No Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers is mentioned in the City Directory.



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 53



1950 Sanborn Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 53

In 1950, the footprint of the building and complex are the same, though the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map no longer shows the partition between the shop and the rest of the rectangular building along the street. The

structure at 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street had its interior ceiling and walls replastered in 1955, and the exterior also appears to have been plastered. The current arrangement of windows on either side of the offset door matches the original location of the storefront area delineated on the 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. This unassuming building is one of the few standing remnants of the once vibrant area of downtown businesses operated by, and serving African-Americans in San Diego.

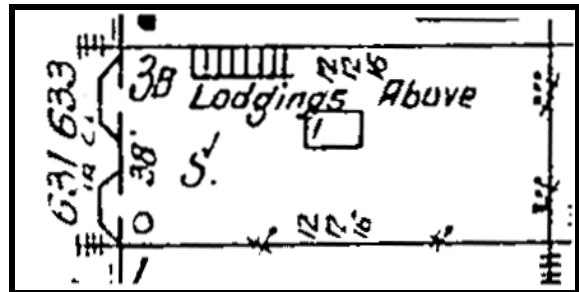


# Grant Rooms Hotel 633 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue



The Grant Rooms Hotel in the historic Yuma Building (San Diego Historical Site Board Register No. 74) was the home to African-American renters and lodgers as early as the 1920s, including newcomers to San Diego from all over the country. The Yuma, a three-story brick Italianate-Baroque Revival building whose first story was constructed in 1882 with the upper floors added in 1888, housed commercial and retail businesses on its first floor including an Asian imports retail store in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The second and third floors originally housed office space until a 1901 conversion. The building's construction and ownership history, as well as its early contributions to San Diego's infamous "Stingaree" red-light district, have been

extensively researched and presented (see, for example, CETA-Gaslamp 1979c and Carrico and Flanigan 2003).



1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 34

The strong connection between the Grant Rooms Hotel and the African American presence in downtown San Diego, however, has only recently been revealed. First opened as furnished rooms named the "Santa Ysabel"

PLACE OF BIRTH	NAME	RELATION	BIRTH DATA	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF BIRTH			MOTHER, FATHER OR NATIVE LANGUAGE OF FOREIGN BORN	LITERATURE, ETC.	OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY		DEPARTMENT	REMARKS
						COUNTRY	STATE	CITY			INDUSTRY	DEPARTMENT		
52	Rebush, L. L.	Wid	1874	5' 10"	Wagoner	USA	Illinois	Springfield	English	Wagoner	Wagoner	Wagoner	52	
53	L. Frank, Linn	Widow	1875	5' 10"	Wagoner	USA	Illinois	Springfield	English	Wagoner	Wagoner	Wagoner	53	
54	Richard, Linn	Widow	1875	5' 10"	Wagoner	USA	Illinois	Springfield	English	Wagoner	Wagoner	Wagoner	54	

1930 United States Census



between 1901 and 1905, the lodgings on the building's upper floors opened as the Grant Rooms (also called "The Grant") in 1910 and lasted until at least 1950 as indicated by City Directories, though at various times it was recorded simply as furnished rooms under its proprietors' names.

African-American renters and lodgers at the property are listed in the 1930 Census and 1936 Black Directory. More importantly, as of 1925, a Mrs. Carrie De Frantz is listed in the San Diego City Directory as the proprietor of the Grant. While her name has appeared in research dating back to the original recordation of the Gaslamp Historic District in downtown San Diego, research conducted as part of this project located Carrie De Frantz in the 1930 Census. Aged 42 in 1930 and hailing originally from Maryland, Mrs. De Frantz was listed as "neg" or negro, a piece of information that puts the Yuma Building and its Grant Rooms in a new light in terms of downtown San Diego's history. City Directory listings reveal that Mrs. De Frantz (also Defrance) managed the Grant Rooms for twenty years. In conjunction with the renters documented through the 1920s and 1930s, this highlights the presence of African-Americans in central locations as well as the role of African-American women in managerial



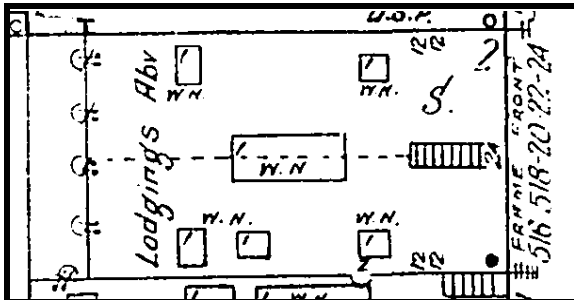
Source: Unknown Date, [www.gaslampquarter.org](http://www.gaslampquarter.org)

positions in the downtown area through much of the twentieth century. At the time of Mrs. De Frantz's tenure at the Grant, the first floor retail shops housed such businesses as cigar shops, barbers, a restaurant, and a men's furnishings store.



## New York Hotel / DeLuxe Hotel 520 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

The New York Hotel has a deep history with San Diego's African-American community and its network of business movers and shakers. This 1887 building, recognized as Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 69, was constructed as a two-story frame front building with addresses spanning from 516 to 524. The floors were built twelve feet high, with the first floor housing two stores with lodgings being located above.



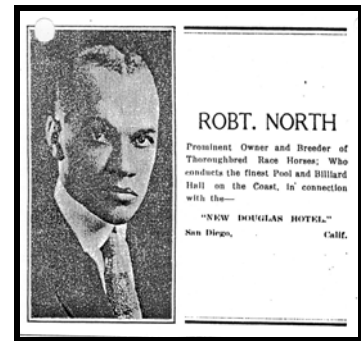
1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 34

By 1920, the property gained a firm association with San Diego's growing African-American community. In that year, African-American Robert North and his wife, Helen, become proprietors of the hotel, listed simply as furnished rooms. In 1924 and 1925, the couple reside at 164 17<sup>th</sup> but remain proprietors of the rooms, now known as the DeLuxe Hotel. The following two years, Robert North is listed twice in the City Directory, once at the Douglas Hotel and again with Helen at both the DeLuxe and their

residence on 16<sup>th</sup> street. While remaining proprietor of the DeLuxe, North - a "prominent owner and breeder of thoroughbred race horses" - opened a pool and billiards hall at the newly opened Douglas Hotel, advertising his new enterprise in the 1926 Colored Directory (24).

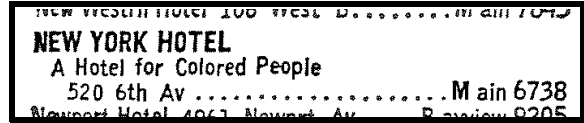
The Norths retain proprietorship of the DeLuxe until 1928. The following year, another well-known African-American in San Diego, Al Ramsey, takes the reigns before turning management of the property over to Mrs. Fern Martin, an African-American woman from Iowa. Mrs. Martin, age thirty four in 1930 according to that year's Census, is listed as the proprietor of the hotel in the 1930 Census, the 1931 City Directory and the 1931-1932 Colored Directory. Robert North is still listed at the DeLuxe in the 1931-1932 Colored Directory, his occupation listed as "horseman."

Briefly named the Havana Hotel in 1933, the hotel becomes the Alcaraz Rooms in 1934. Numerous residents are listed in the



Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926:34

City Directory: Petrona Everett (1943), George Joe (1935-1936), Mrs. Fay Scott (1937) and Thomas Martin (1938). It is currently unknown whether any of these individuals are African-American.



San Diego County Telephone Directory, 1949:234

In 1940, the hotel assumes its current designation, the New York Hotel. The proprietor, Kumigaru Shimamota, operated the New York Hotel at 551 4<sup>th</sup> Ave from as early as 1929 until 1931. Between 1932 and 1939, he is still at that address, though the property is simply called Shimamato Kumogiro furnished rooms (City Directory 1932-1939).

In 1942, Robert E. Means manages the hotel with a Mrs. Virginia Donelson also listed as proprietor. Interestingly, Donelson resides at 501 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, the Clermont Hotel (see entry for Clermont/Coast Hotel, 501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue). From 1944 until 1949, the hotel is managed by Mrs. Carrie Bryant. While it is not yet known if Bryant was African-American, during her tenure the hotel is advertised as “A Hotel for Colored People” in the San Diego County Telephone Directory, cementing its long association with the African-American community and with the experience of segregation in San Diego.

The two shops located on the first floor of the hotel building change addresses and occupants frequently over the course of the twentieth century. Only one of the spaces has been positively connected to African-Americans by the current research. Between 1925 and 1926, Mr. Paul DeLoach operated a billiards hall, appearing in the both the San Diego City Directory and the 1926 Colored Directory at this address. By 1927 the property is listed in the City Directory as vacant and is then rented out to a trucking company the following year.

This historic structure, already recognized in different capacities, carries within it the story of African-Americans in the downtown area. Now part of the renewed Gaslamp Quarter, the DeLuxe/New York Hotel represents an oft-neglected part of San Diego’s history, including the complex web of business associations between high-profile members of the historic African-American community.



## Ideal Rooms and Ancillary Businesses 540-546 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

The building located at 540-546 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue first received historical recognition as the Plants and Fireproofing Building (Historical Resources Board site #207-1), a contributing element of the Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District. In April of 2002, Karen L. Huff of the Gaslamp Black Historical Society presented to the Historical Resources Board a report entitled 'Joe Robinson's Place (An Historical Study of the Ideal Hotel and Harlem Locker Club), exemplifying the building's important historical role in the history of African-Americans in the city. The results of this extensive research prompted the Historical Resources Board to amend its original designation, recognizing the Ideal Hotel/Harlem Locker Club/Plants & Fireproofing Building as a significant resource under the City of San Diego criteria A and C. Much of the following discussion is based on the inventory conducted for the creation of the Chinese/Asian Thematic Historic District as well as the research presented in Huff (2002b).

The structure, built in 1912, is a two-story brick and hollow clay tile structure. The ground floor is divided into two store fronts. According to the National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for the Chinese/Asian Thematic District, the storefront is possibly original, including original prism glass transom windows.

The space has long been associated with Joe Robinson, a longtime resident and businessman in San Diego. In 1914, Robinson and his business partner Charles Edwards opened Edwards & Robinson billiards on the ground floor of the building (Huff 2002b:4). In 1914, Joe Robinson is listed in the City Directory with his wife Belle, proprietor of the Rolland Hotel which would become the Yesmar and later the Anita at 422 4<sup>th</sup> (see entry), and Charles Edwards is listed with his wife Beulah. Edwards leaves the billiards the following year and both he and his wife fall out of the directories until 1920, when Beulah Edwards, now a widow,

NAME OF HOUSE	NAME	RELATION	SEX	COLOR	DATE OF BIRTH	CITIZENSHIP	OCCUPATION	SEX AND MARITAL STATUS												LITERACY
								MALES				FEMALES				SOCIETIES				
244	Edwards Beulah	Head	F	W	1874	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Beulah	Daughter	F	W	1901	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Wife	F	W	1874	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Son	M	W	1904	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Son	M	W	1906	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Son	M	W	1908	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Son	M	W	1910	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Son	M	W	1912	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Son	M	W	1914	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Son	M	W	1916	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
	Edwards Charles	Son	M	W	1918	W	Refuse	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single

1920 United States Census



appears in the City Directory classified as proprietor and resident of the Ideal at 546 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue (San Diego Census 1920, City Directory 1920). During the intervening years, Belle Robinson also disappears from the record, and Joe Robinson spends 1918 as proprietor of the Hotel Richmond at 136 F (see entry), and 1919 bootblacking at 228 Broadway. By 1920, he is also living at the Ideal furnished rooms. Other residents recorded in the 1920 Census include:

Eugene Robinson, Pool Room Keeper, age 46, Mulatto, from Texas;

Grant Edism, porter, age 42, Mulatto, from Kentucky.

Charlotte Edwards, age 6, Mulatto, from California, Beulah's daughter.

Madeline La Rue, barber, age 31, Mulatto, from Kentucky.

HA Miran, porter, age 47, Mulatto from Louisiana.

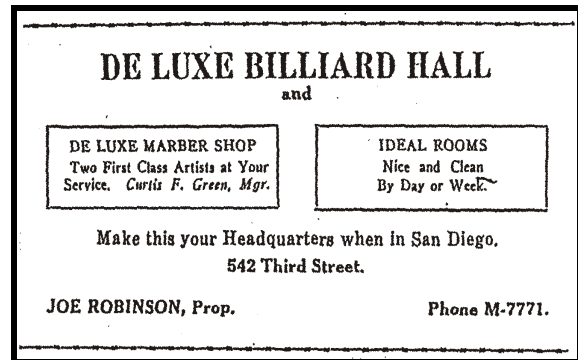
By 1926, Joe Robinson is proprietor of both the De Luxe Billiard Hall and Ideal Rooms, advertising his businesses in the 1926 Colored Directory. By that time, Joe Robinson and Beulah Edwards had married, with the 1926 Colored Directory listing the following residents:



Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926

Mr. Joe Robinson  
Mrs. Beulah Robinson

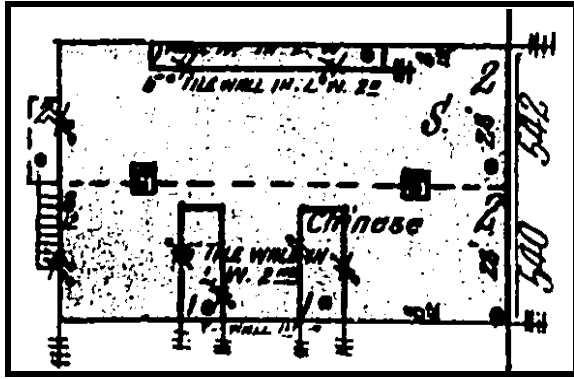
Mr. Garrett Allen  
Mr. W.A. Hayden  
Mr. Roosevelt Wilmes



Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego

Six years later, the 1932 Colored Directory published an advertisement for Robinson's businesses, and describes the endeavors and their proprietor:

The De Luxe Billiard Parlor and Barber Shop, located at 542 Third Street, is one of the city's popular amusement places. Joe Robinson, the proprietor, is another pioneer citizen and has lived in San Diego for 22 years. He has been in business for 16 years. He also carries a complete line of cigars, tobacco, and cold drinks. Mr. Robinson has a large patronage and always extends fair and courteous treatment to all. He owns a large, modern rooming house, known as the Ideal Rooms, of which Pete Bias is manager. Mr. Robinson owns his beautiful modern home at 303 South Bancroft Street. He is a hundred percent member and booster of the N.A.A.C.P.



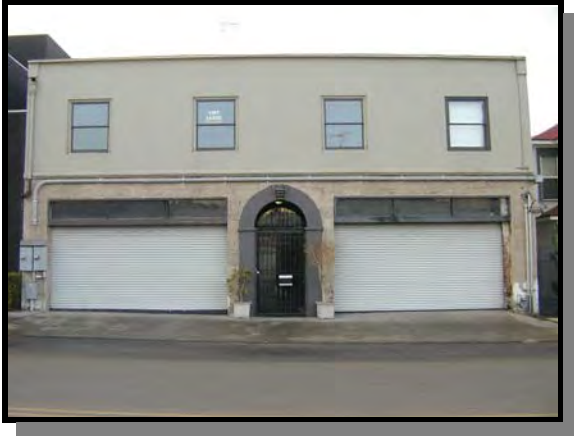
1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 62

The 1932 Colored Directory also lists ten African-American residents, including a butcher, city employee, car washer, and Navy personnel. African-American residents and businesses continue to occupy the building through the 1930s (see Huff 2002b). By 1939, the Harlem Locker Club occupies the former location of Robinson's billiard hall at 542 3<sup>rd</sup>, though Joe Robinson continued residing at and managing the property. Providing African-American servicemen with locker and sanitary facilities, the Harlem

Locker Club was owned and operated by Mattie Johnson for over 15 years (Huff 2002b:14). In 1941 and 1942, while still in charge of the Ideal, Robinson also managed the Douglas Hotel at 206 Market (see entry), and eventually turned management of the Ideal Rooms over to African-American Madeline La Rue. In 1944, Joe and Beulah Robinson purchased the building with prominent African-American businesswoman Mrs. Mable Rowe (Huff 2002b:14). The building was sold by the Robinsons and Rowe to Ming Tom in 1950.

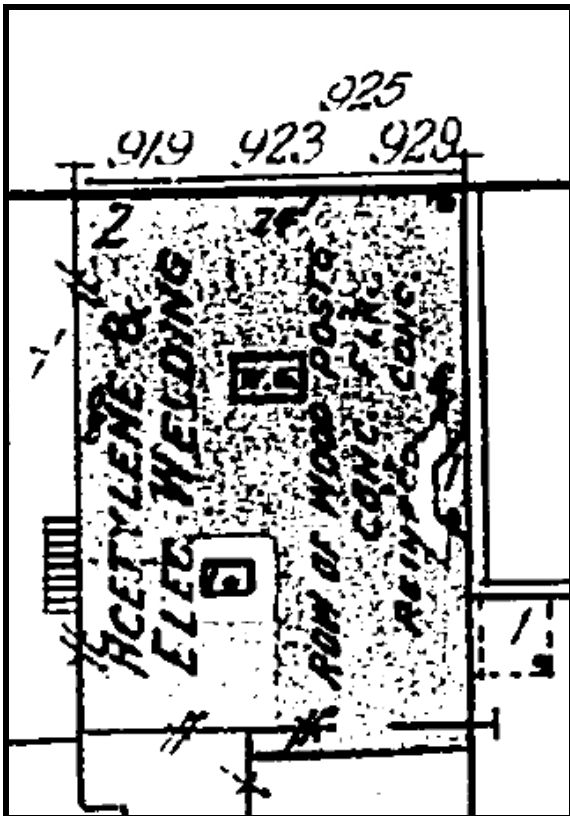


Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-36, pg. 27



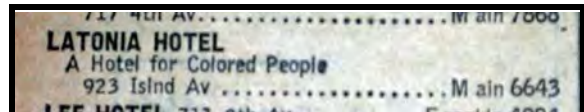
# Latonia Hotel 919-923 Island Street

The entire building at this address served as an acetylene and electric welding operation as late as 1921 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map). The second floor of the building opened as the



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 66

Latonia Hotel in 1925 (Office of Maria Burke Lia 2003, City Directory 1922-1926). It continued to be advertised as simply “furnished rooms” from 1931 to 1936, when it was again advertised as the Latonia. While never listed either by name or address in the various directories of colored residents and businesses in San Diego, the Latonia is listed in the 1949 San Diego County Telephone Directory as “A Hotel for Colored People” (San Diego County 1949:234; Colored Directory 1926, 1932, 1936; Huff 2001:35). The property remains the Latonia Hotel until 1955, and is vacant by 1960. Though no



1949 San Diego Telephone Directory, pg. 234

information on African-American residents of the property could be found in Directory or Censuses listings, the 1949 advertisement for the Latonia speaks to its role both historically and symbolically as a standing representation of the reality of segregation in twentieth-century San Diego.



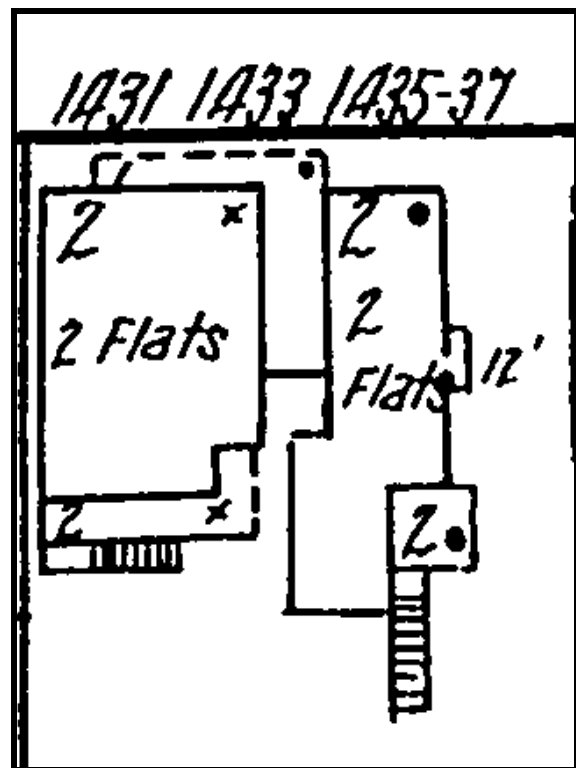


## Lillian Grant Properties 1431-1437 J Street

1437 J Street is commonly referenced within a larger framework of properties that include 1431-1437 J Street. While these properties were built at different times, they became a complex of buildings owned by African-American businesswoman Lillian Grant. Construction of the property was completed on April 18, 1912, with Walter S. and Annie Broderick, early land speculators and developers, listed as the owners. This property was a rooming house, historically called the Broderick Apartments. Property tax records indicate Lillian Grant was assessed taxes on 1437 J Street in 1942, which infers her ownership of the property as early as 1941; some information suggests Lillian Grant acquired the property as early as 1940 (Heller 2003, Moomjian and Palmer 2002:2).

Lillian Grant was born in Lafayette, Louisiana in 1914. An African-American woman of Creole descent, she moved from Louisiana to San Diego in 1932 (Huff 2002a:17). She owned and maintained a number of income properties, a rare situation for Black women during this time period. She did her best to maintain racially integrated housing during a time of segregation. She is said to have held money for local African-Americans, primarily her tenants, during segregation, when bank services were limited to blacks. While not

conclusively documented, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, and other jazz musicians are said to have stayed at the house as well (Huff 2002a:11). Grant proceeded to acquire all of 1431-1463 J Street in 1943 as a real estate investment, and Mrs. Grant's J Street properties were the largest continuously owned black housing unit in downtown San Diego (Huff 2002a:5). Lillian Grant



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 68

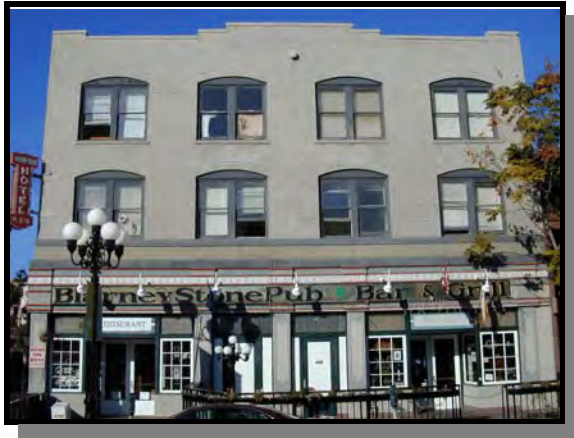
continued to list 1437 J Street as her primary residence until her death in 1994.

In December 2002, the property was deemed historically significant by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board as exemplifying Folk Victorian architecture and as reflecting the diverse social, cultural, and economic history of San Diego the late 19<sup>th</sup>

and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (1890-1953), and in particular the history of African Americans. The determination of the buildings' architectural significance was overturned by the San Diego City Council in April 2003, though the significance of the site under City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criterion A (community history) was upheld.

IN HORTON'S ADD.		INDEX TO PROPERTY IN THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFOR						DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY							
Line No.	TO WHOM ASSESSED	TO WHOM ASSESSED	TO WHOM ASSESSED	TO WHOM ASSESSED	TO WHOM ASSESSED	TO WHOM ASSESSED	METES AND BOUNDS	Lot or Sec.	Bl. or Trp. South	Range or East or West	ACRES	Unit	Prop.	Sold for Taxes	Arbitrary Number
	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944									
88	MALLEN DOROTHEA W.														
89	MERCEDES TX						UND + OF E + LOTS								1
90	MC KEENEY EDW.														
91	D 836 11TH AVE														
92	D D CALTY						W + LOTS			K & L	172				2

1939-1944 Property Tax Records, San Diego County Assessor



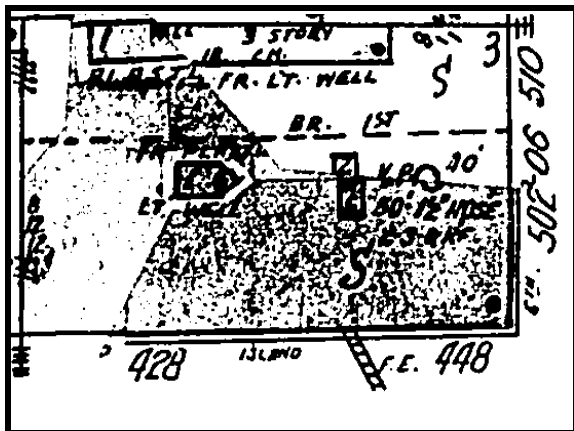
# Pacific Hotel

## 506 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

The history of this parcel begins when the block (Lot G, Block 95) was purchased from Alonzo Horton by William Llewelyn in 1869. The ownership history of the structure (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 21) has been associated primarily with Japanese proprietors and businesses and is included in the Asian Pacific Thematic District (CETA-Gaslamp 1979d). In 1914, the Hotel Pacific, operated

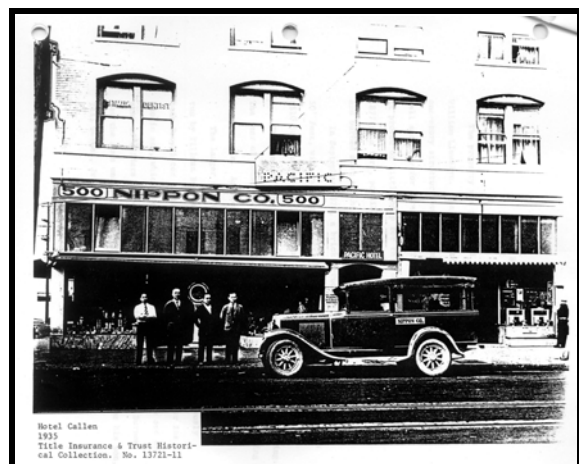
Hotel, Hoya W. Green, a janitor, Mrs. N.E. Gardener, a restaurant cook, and Pearl Naole, a private chauffeur.

The hotel was also advertised in the 1936 Directory of the Colored Residents with the invitation 'Welcome All!' Two years later, the San Diego Colored Directory lists seven residents: Leo Davis, a prize fighter; Cabot Garner, a cook; F. W. Green, a laborer; Harvey Bolder, a clinic worker; Consuelo Jenkins; Mrs. Ermor Garner; and Robert Jenkins. Five African-American residents are also present in 1936, including the F. W. Green listed in 1932. Businesses in the building also catered to the African-American community, including dentist Dr. Isamu Takeda. Located in the hotel from as early as



1950 Sanbron Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 63

by M. Hada, became the first hotel to operate at this address (LaBarre 1995:17). However, its association with African-Americans is also far reaching. Operating as the Pacific Hotel from 1926 to 1941 under the management of H. T. Tsumagari, the hotel housed African-American residents throughout the 1930s. The 1930 Census lists three residents of the



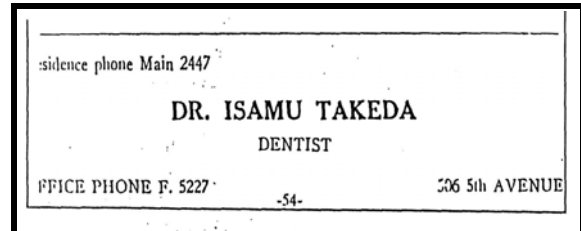
Source: San Diego Historical Society

1926 until 1941, Takeda advertised his services to African-Americans in the 1931-1932 Colored Directory.

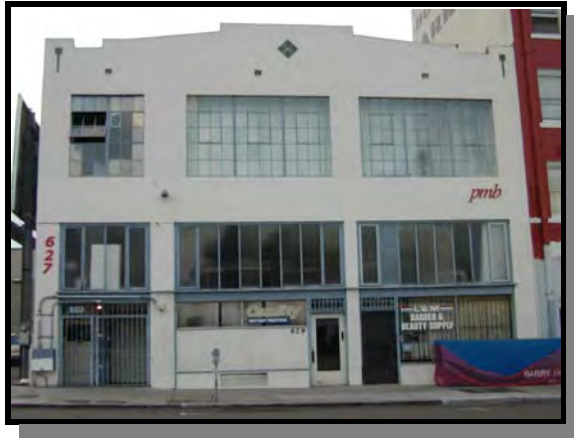
In 1942, the hotel and store fronts were vacant, as the FBI closed the building and interned the Japanese who owned it. The same year the San Diego Federal Saving and Loan purchased the property. In 1943 the hotel reopened with its current name, the Hotel Callan (CETA-Gaslamp 1979d).



Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-1936, pg. 24



Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1931-1932, pg. 54

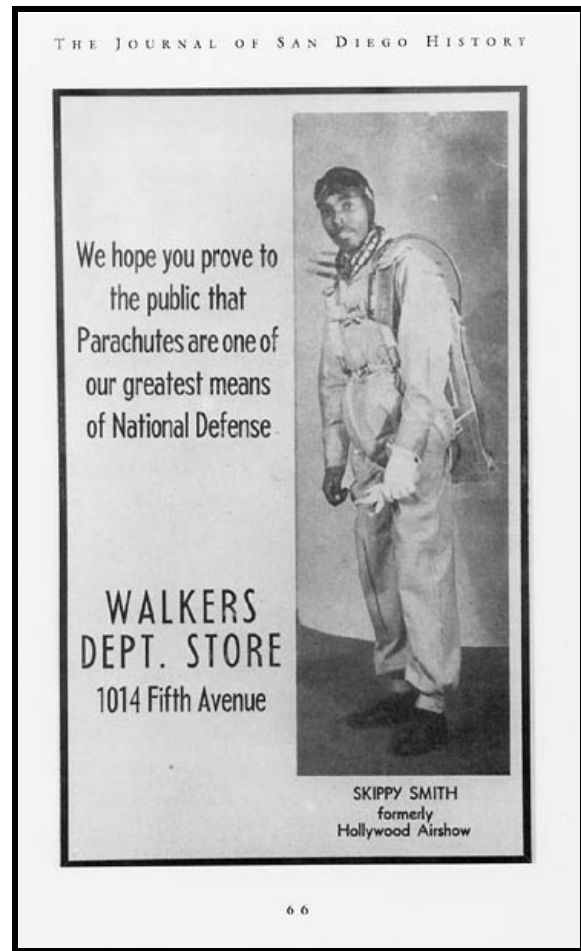


## Pacific Parachute Company 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue

The building standing at 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue represents one of the highlights of African American entrepreneurship in San Diego and California. Built in c.1940, the present building was the home of the Pacific Parachute Company, owned and operated by Howard “Skippy” Smith. Born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1913, Howard Smith’s father was a professor at the Tuskegee Institute, and “Skippy” left to play professional baseball in Birmingham and New Orleans, even playing alongside Satchel Paige for a short time (Shaheed 2003; Schmidt 1996). Smith came to San Diego from Los Angeles, where he had registered as a parachute jumper in order to earn money for flight lessons. In Los Angeles, Smith met Mack “Skip” Gravely and the two became the well-known exhibition jumping team of “Skip and Skippy.” Gravely was killed in 1939 during a jump when his parachute failed to open, and Skippy Smith left the show the following year while in San Diego, becoming a drop-tester, parachute packer, and later inspector at the Standard Parachute Company (Shaheed 2003; Schmidt 1996).

Eager to run his own enterprise and having impressed the company’s president, Colonel C. E. Fauntleroy, Smith received the subcontract for pilot chutes from Standard Parachute. Using his savings, Smith, then 28, teamed with comedian Eddie “Rochester”

Anderson and formed the Pacific Parachute Company at 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, opening March 26, 1942 amidst religious leaders, city and state representatives, and labor representatives, with a dedication to his fallen



Courtesy of San Diego Historical Society



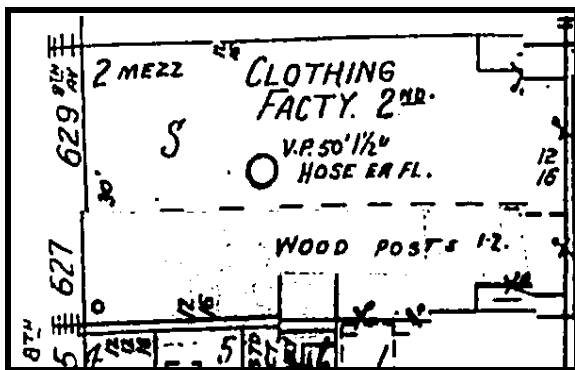


SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, African Americans, Book 2, Photo 96:19518-2

**Howard “Skippy” Smith, Center, and His Integrated Staff Inside the Pacific Parachute Company, 1943**

Plate 17

partner Mack Gravely, see Figure 17 (Downs 1943:96-97, San Diego Union 1942). “Negro guardsmen, the white paratroopers and others staged the official dedication in the workroom of the plant itself, where 20 white and colored women worked on pilot parachutes, bomb ‘chutes’ and flare ‘chutes’ under a sub-contract from the Standard Parachute Co. of this city” (San Diego Union). Pressured to hire only African Americans, Smith refused. As remembered by his nephew, Smith said “I came from Birmingham, Alabama where everyone is prejudiced and I’m not going to



1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 50

do the same thing.” Instead, he employed one of the few integrated work forces in San Diego (Shaheed 2003).

While the building itself had problems with water service ten times over the course of that year, the factory produced nearly 50,000 parachutes during its first year in business, and won the National Negro Business League’s Spaulding Award as the number one African American business in 1943 (San Diego Union 1942; Schmidt 1996; Los Angeles Tribune). Howard “Skippy” Smith brought a certain amount of glamour to an otherwise drab enterprise. A handsome, self-assured man, Skippy could transform a photo opportunity into a personal success as in the image of Skippy giving the fighter Joe Louis a tour of the factory. Smith’s achievements in

the social climate of the 1940s was amazing, not only for his entrepreneurial drive and success at a time when many other African Americans were limited to menial jobs, but for his insistence on an integrated, and predominantly female, workforce. As with many defense-related endeavors, the demand for parachutes declined as the war wound down, and while the company had planned to begin manufacturing sports shirts, the Pacific Parachute Company closed its doors at 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in 1944. Smith went north to Los Angeles to start another company, according to his nephew Agin Shaheed (Shaheed 2003). Always an entrepreneur, Smith invented toys, ran donut shops, snow cone businesses, and sold Christmas trees (Shaheed 2003).

Skippy Smith’s success became the subject of a program in the New World A’ Comin’ radio series, “Parachutes for Democracy,” produced in November 1944 in cooperation with the Citywide Citizen’s Committee of Harlem, dramatizing Smith and Anderson’s efforts in establishing and operating the first black-owned defense enterprise. Broadcast on New York-based WMCA, the New World A’ Comin’ program ran from 1944 to 1957. Inspired by nationally-known black journalist Roi Ottley, the series incorporated the work of other well-known African Americans like actor Canada Lee and the music of Duke Ellington, who wrote the show’s theme. A groundbreaking civil rights effort, the program eventually broadened its focus to also highlight the issues and experiences of other minorities in the United States (Smith 2001). Sadly, the Pacific Parachute Company’s tenure at the 627 8<sup>th</sup> Street facility is not recorded in the San Diego City Directories, which perhaps in deference to wartime secrecy, lists the property as vacant in 1942 and 1943, obscuring this fantastic entrepreneurial success and contribution to both the United States and to racial equality.





SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, African Americans, Book 2, Photo 96:19521-1/OP 16444-1

**Eddie “Rochester” Anderson, Howard “Skippy”  
Smith, and Colonel C. E. Fautleroy at  
the Pacific Parachute Company, c. 1943**

Plate 18



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### PROGRAM

Mrs. John Craft, Chairman

### ENTERTAINMENT

Gabriel Verdin  
Julia Hampton, Inspection Herminia Gonzales, Night  
Nadine Collins, Day

### DECORATIONS

Viola Sample  
Carmen Romero, Final Meadow Harris, Night  
Viola Frank, Day

### REFRESHMENT

Cora Damm  
Marjorie Jackson, Night Mary Shade, Final  
Lorene Beasley, Day

### PRESENTATION

Wanda Williams, Day  
Elsie Matthews, Night Placida Vaca, Final

EMPLOYEE'S FIRST

ANNIVERSARY



PACIFIC PARACHUTE COMPANY

March 27, 1943

San Diego, California

## DEDICATION

The Employees of the Pacific Parachute Company affectionately dedicate this First Anniversary celebration to Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, and Howard "Skippy" Smith, founders of our organization and to the sacred memory of the late Mac "Skip" Gravelly, who was a member of the parachute jumping team, "Skip" and "Skippy".

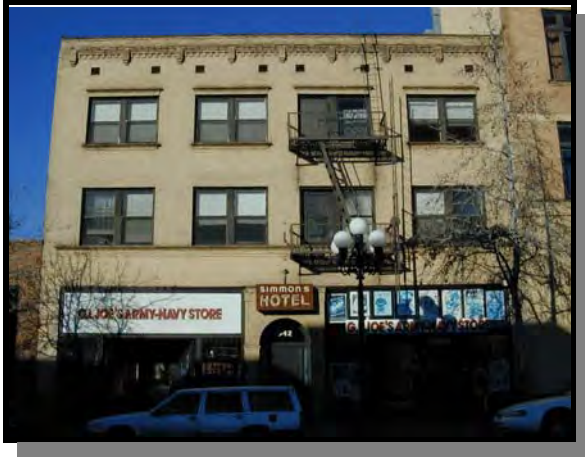
## PROGRAM

Pledge of Allegiance..... Lt. Johnson  
"God Bless America"  
Invocation..... Rev. John Bunyan Smith  
Greetings..... Mrs. Craft  
Mistress of Ceremonies  
Presentations to Supervisors from their Departments  
Presentation of "Minute Man T Flag"..... J. A. Jackson  
Representative of U. S. Treasury Dept.  
Vocal Solo..... Earline Johnson  
Introduction of Herman Warren, Superintendent  
Original Poem, "Hemmers' Agony"..... Lena Koch  
(Dedicated to Skippy)  
Plant Song, "Pacific Parachutes in the Air"..... Elsie Paige  
Sung by Earline Johnson and Mrs. Paige  
(Dedicated to Skippy)  
Remarks..... Howard "Skippy" Smith  
Introduction of Visitors..... Floyd C. Covington  
City Council..... Harley Knox  
Representative of Los Angeles..... Mrs. Jessie Terry  
U. S. Housing Committee  
Representative of San Diego..... Rev. Charles H. Hampton

### HONOR GUARDS

Woman's Ambulance and Transport Corps of California  
Parachute Troop are Serving as Honor Guards

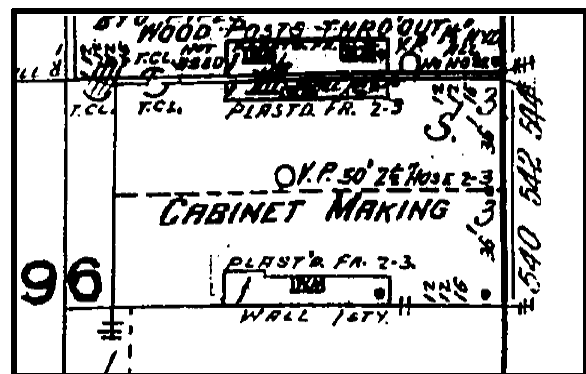




## Simmons Hotel / PE Robinson Hotel 542 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

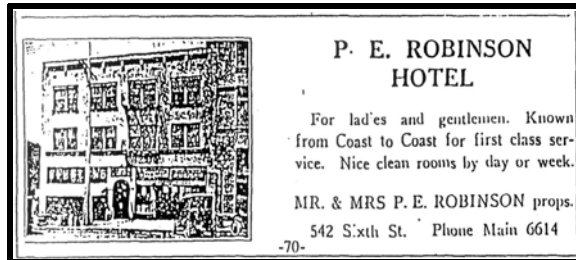
The Simmons Hotel at 542 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 71), was built in 1906 as a three-story brick structure with two stores located on the first floor and lodgings on the second and third floors (CETA-Gaslamp 1979e). Known as The Burbank in 1907, the accommodations on the upper floors became the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Rooms the following year; from 1909 to 1918, the property was known as The Prescott. Most importantly, the year after it becomes the Vandome (also Vendome) in 1919, African-American Robert North becomes the rooms' proprietor. Clearly asserting his proprietorship and, thereby, a connection to African-Americans migrating to and residing in downtown San Diego, North changed the name of the rooms to Hotel North in 1921. While North himself relocated his business endeavors in 1922 to furnished rooms that would later be known as the Hotel DeLuxe (see entry for Hotel DeLuxe, 520 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue), he handed management of 542 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to African-American Peter E. Robinson. A further indication of the network of African-Americans operating downtown establishments, Robinson himself previously ran the furnished rooms at 1039 K Street, the Young Inn (see entry for Young Inn, 1039 K Street).

Mr Peter E. Robinson and his wife, Betty, operate the hotel from 1922 until 1937. One of the rooms' most famous residents among the many African-American migrants to San Diego was Mr. John Craft. Recorded as having living at the property in 1926, Mr. Craft was the President of the local chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. in the 1930s, and was listed as a resident along with the Robinsons and a Mr. Charlie Oslin. By 1930, a variety of African-American individuals, most serving in the occupations commonly available to African-Americans at the time - including porters, maids, janitors, and bootblacks - live at the property. Notable is a Mrs. Rubea Washington, who later appears as manager of the Carter Hotel at 1401 J Street from 1939 to 1941 (see entry for Carter/Vine Hotel, 1401 J Street). According to City Directories, a



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 64

number of these residents stayed at the hotel over the course of the next two decades.

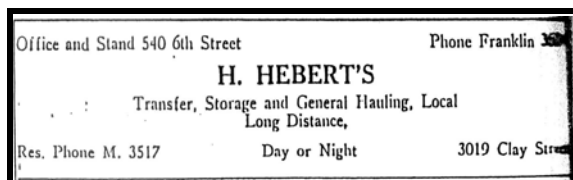


Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, pg. 70

According to the 1931-32 San Diego Colored Directory:

Mr and Mrs PE Robinson, proprietors of the Robinson Hotel at 542 Sixth Street, are San Diego's pioneer citizens, having lived in this city for the past 25 yrs. The Robinson Hotel is widely known from coast to coast for its clean, spacious rooms and its homelike atmosphere. Mr and Mrs Robinson have been found to be square, honest and strictly business-like in all their dealings. Mr and Mrs Robinson are members of the Baptist Church (82).

African-American businesses also occupied the first floor commercial space. In 1926 (San Diego City Directory) and 1932 (Colored Directory) H. Hebert, who is also profiled in the 1932 Colored Directory's Who's Who,



Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, pg 8

occupied an office and stand at 540 6<sup>th</sup> Street. His transportation and storage business had been in operation at the building since 1922, opening three years after his arrival in the state. As advertised in the 1932 Colored Directory:

This makes the tenth year that the Hebert Transfer and Express Line has been in operation. Mr. Herman Hebert, the proprietor, is a well known, respected business man of the city, having operated a first-class hotel in San Diego before entering this business. He has lived in California the past 13 years. Mr. Hebert is strong in fraternal circles, and is a member of the Masons, American Woodmen and is on the board of the directors of the new Y.M.C.A. He is a loyal member of A.M.E Zion Church. Before coming to California, Mr Hebert was the man who pushed and saw to the completion of the beautiful, modern Masonic Temple in Kansas City, Mo. This temple is a credit to the Negro Masonic organization of the world (78).

In 1938, Lucille Simmons, an African-American born in Kentucky in 1894, takes control of the rooms and changes its name to the Simmons Furnished Rooms and to Hotel Simmons in 1944. Simmons arrived in San Diego in 1934. A successful businesswoman, Lucille Simmons eventually purchases the property in 1948 from long-time owner W.E. Kier. Mrs. Simmons retains and resides at the hotel until her death in February, 1964 (San Diego County Recorder 1964).

Much of the history of this building is known, yet while names and dates may be gleaned from documents, it is clear on deeper investigation that this building's past is

intimately connected with African-Americans for much of the twentieth century. Operated, and eventually owned, by African-Americans from the early decades of the century, it not only served as a residence open to African-Americans, but was the site of long-running, successful business enterprises with a high profile in the city.

STATE FILE NUMBER		64-023088		<b>CERTIFICATE OF DEATH</b> STATE OF CALIFORNIA—DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH	
1a. NAME OF DECEASED—FIRST NAME		1b. MIDDLE NAME		1c. LAST NAME	
LUCILLE		M.		SIMMONS	
3. SEX	4. COLOR OR RACE	5. BIRTHPLACE (STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY)	6. DATE OF BIRTH		
Female	Negro	Kentucky	Nov. Jnk. 1894		

San Diego Recorder 1964



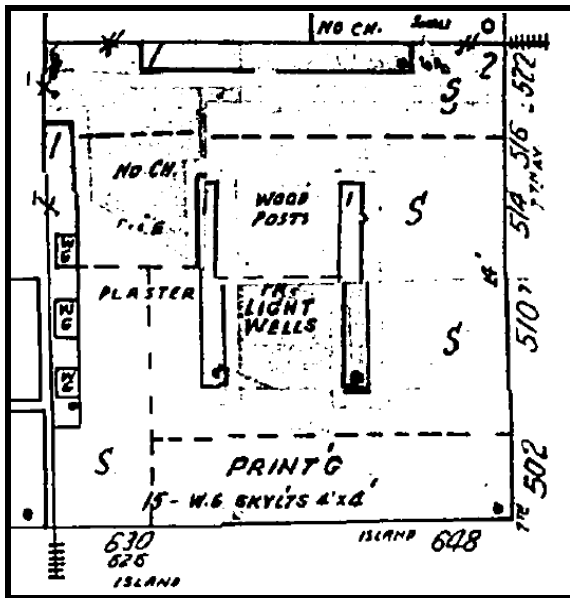
# Western Hotel / Star Hotel

## 522 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Built on the block that once housed the San Diego Feed Yard, the building at 522 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue was constructed c.1914, when the San Diego City Directory advertised the newly established structure as a “New Building, Fireproof and Strictly Modern.” By 1920, the Western had numerous African-American lodgers, all male. They represent a cross-section of the many African-American

migrants who traveled to San Diego in the first decades of the 1900s:

Ingram S. Cox, age 24, born in Mississippi,  
 Thomas S. Docky (Dockery), age 44, born in Illinois, dining car waiter,  
 Marshall Jackson, age 25, born in Georgia, dining car waiter,  
 Sylvester Joll (?), age 23, born in Tennessee, railroad porter,  
 Clarence Little, age 31, born in Georgia, Pullman porter,  
 Edward Mason, age 24, born in Kansas, taxi cab chauffeur,  
 James Mitchell, age 44, born in Georgia, hotel porter,  
 Sylvester Smith, age 17, born in Virginia, bootblack (he would go on to become a local fight promoter),  
 Harrison Thompson, age 38, born in Louisiana, billiard room operator,  
 Edgar White, age 41, born in Ohio, railroad porter,  
 Alger Wright, age 20, born in North Carolina, apartment janitor, and  
 Clyde Wright, age 28, born in Georgia, dining car waiter.



1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 64

A decade later, seven new African-American residents are at the Western, primarily porters and janitors (San Diego Census 1930). The property changed hands soon after and no further African-American residents have been identified at the rooms. The hotel changes names frequently, often operating as furnished rooms under the moniker of its proprietors. It becomes the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Hotel in 1939 and maintains that name until it changes to the Star Hotel after 1950. Like many residential hotels in the downtown area, the Western

housed working-class African-American migrants in the early years of the twentieth century.



1914 San Diego City Directory, pg. 51



## B. African-American Associated Sites

While the buildings discussed above are existing pieces of the past that represent the African-American presence, successes, and experiences in downtown San Diego, a number of properties significant in the history of the community and its members are no longer standing. These sites are presented here to provide a complete picture of African-Americans in the downtown area, as well as to motivate recognition of the importance of these locations. As above, a history and full discussion of significance for each site follows.

**Table 2. Non-Standing Sites**

SITE/LOCALE NAME	ADDRESS	SUB-THEME
Bethel A.M.E. Church	1647 Front Street	A, C, D
Douglas Hotel and Ancillary Businesses	202-210 Market Street	B, C, D
Gadson's Confectionary/Toilet Store	1415 Market Street	A, B, C, D
Griffin's Barber Shop/Our Barber Shop	615 3rd Avenue	B, C, D
IXL Laundry (1897-1905)/(1905-1910)	546 7th Avenue/Corner of 10th and I	A, B, C, D
Jasmine Hotel	1107 Market Street	D
Masonic Hall/Dr. Calvert's Office	636 Market Street	B, C, D
Meadows' Jewelry	418 G Street	A, B, D
New Deal Pool Room	311 Market Street	C, D
Our Dairy Lunch and Tea Room	746 3rd Avenue	B, C, D
Panama Hotel	502 6th Avenue	B, D
Raphael's Beauty Parlor	252 16th Street	B, C, D
Richmond Hotel	136 F Street	B, D
Rose Park	Between 11th, 12th, Island, and J	C, D
Second Baptist Church/First Street Baptist	115 B Street	A, C, D
Star Barber Shop	308 Market Street	B, C, D
Whithubbard Beauty Shop	320 16th Street	B, C, D
Yesmar Hotel/Anita Hotel	422 4th Avenue	B, C, D
Yesmar Hotel/Padre Hotel	620-636 3rd Avenue	B, C, D
The Yokum	1131 Market Street	D
Young Inn	1039 K Street	B, D

- A: Early African-American Pioneers
- B: African-American Entrepreneurship
- C: Religious, Civic, and Social Life
- D: African-American Residential Life and Community Growth

# Bethel A.M.E. Church

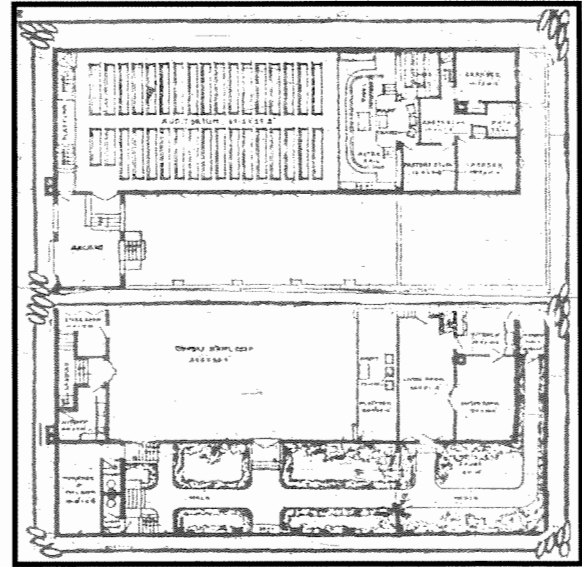
## 1647 Front Street

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1887, making it the oldest African-American church in San Diego (Bethel Memorial A.M.E. Church 2004, Colored Directory 1932:92). The congregation was organized by a visiting minister, Reverend John Handy, and first met at the home of Solomon Johnson, a prominent member of the African-American community in San Diego. Mr. Johnson was originally from Evansville, Indiana and migrated to San Diego in the late 1880s. It is thought that Solomon had been a slave of Governor Cave Johnson in Tennessee before moving west. His main occupation in San Diego was coachmen for E.S. Babcock, builder of the Hotel Del Coronado. As a leader in the African-American community, Mr. Johnson founded many social organizations and introduced a chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. to San Diego (Madyun and Malone 1989).



1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 67

The church built its first house of worship in 1888. This small, single-story board and batten structure on stilts was moved twice before being relocated to the church's long-time home at 1647 Front Street in 1896 (San Diego Union 1911, Bethel Memorial A.M.E. Church 2004). The church grew quickly and, having outgrown its original building, commissioned architect Irving Gill to design a new facility in 1911. One of San Diego's most well-known



San Diego Union October 30, 1911

and inventive architects, Gill is responsible for the design of ten San Diego churches, the plans for the U.S. Grant Hotel, stabilizing the ruins of the Mission San Diego de Alcalá, as well as many other architectural landmarks in the city of San Diego (San Diego Historical Society 2004b). The plans for the new church matches the structure depicted on the 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, and the new building, "attractive and distinctive in its simplicity of design," housed the congregation until 1939 (San Diego Union 1911). The Bethel A.M.E. pastors resided onsite in the parsonage, and the historic church advertised in Colored Directories through the 1920s and 1930s. Bethel A.M.E. was listed in the 1931-32 colored directory as the largest colored Methodist church in San Diego with 280 members (Colored Directory 1932:92).

In 1939, the congregation moved to a new building at Commercial and Hensley; with the

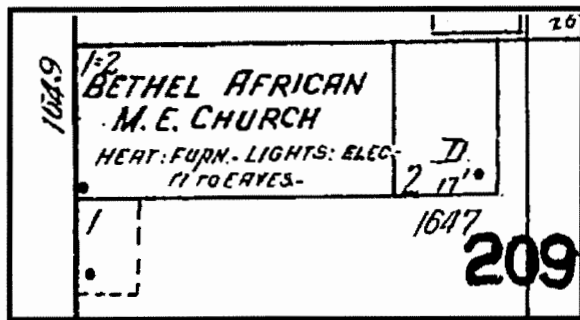
original building being occupied by Trinity Church as late as 1950. The 1911 structure designed by Gill was thought to have been demolished in 1962 for the construction of Interstate 5, but a portion of the church was moved two miles away and is now owned by a motorcycle club (SD Union Tribune 2000). Presently, the church, known today as Bethel Memorial A.M.E., is located at 31<sup>st</sup> and K Streets where the congregation has grown to over 1,800 members (Bethel Memorial A.M.E. 2004).



Source: Hines 2000:145

The church was the basic social institution for the much of San Diego's African-American community. In addition, Bethel A.M.E.

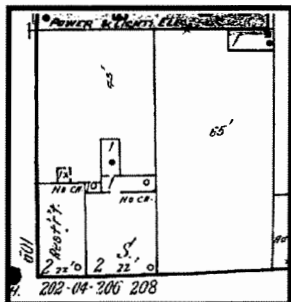
pastors were vocal advocates of civic involvement, particularly with regard to local elections (San Diego Union 1909, 1913). Bethel A.M.E. was also instrumental in addressing racial issue in San Diego through hosting racial forums promoting such ideas as broadening educational opportunities for African-Americans and hosting national N.A.A.C.P. officials like Dr. William Pickens. At Bethel's downtown home, Pickens delivered his internationally famous lecture, "The Life of Abraham Lincoln," addressing issues of segregation (San Diego Union 1930).



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Vol. 1. Sheet 9

# Douglas Hotel and Ancillary Businesses 202-210 Market Street

Even before there was a Douglas Hotel at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Market Street, the area had been an enclave of residences and small commercial shops for the African-American community (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1887, 1888) that included a saloon, a rooming house, and a billiards parlor. By the turn of the century and into the early 1920s, this section of “lower” Market Street (previously H Street) formed the northern edge of the Black community sometimes referred to as “Darktown.” The 1920 Census lists eleven residents of 204 Market Street and several adjacent shops and stores serving the Black neighborhood. From circa 1915 to 1922, Mrs.



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1.  
Sheet 47

Emma Holmes (later Emma Brown) operated a boarding house at 204 Market Street on the site of the future Douglas Hotel. In that sense, the corner of the block where the Douglas Hotel once stood at 2<sup>nd</sup> and

Market had a history of African-American ownership and operation for more than fifty years, one half of a century.

George Ramsey, known as the unofficial mayor of the colored community, arrived in San Diego in 1910, and worked at various jobs until he began owning and managing lodging houses. His movements in the early years are somewhat obscure because he rarely

appears in official documents, and there were often two or three George Ramseys in town. Ramsey may have owned part of the Yesmar Hotel on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and been a business partner with Anna B. Brown.

Built by George Ramsey and Robert Rowe, Caucasian, in 1924; they wanted to build and operate the Douglas as a hotel, restaurant, and club that would serve the black community. Mr. Rowe died before the hotel’s opening on Thanksgiving Day, but the establishment became a huge success and his wife Mabel became part owner. In the 1926 Colored Directory, George Ramsey provided an eloquent explanation of why he and his friend and partner Robert Rowe built the Douglas Hotel. Ramsey wrote:

First, I want to say that I have always had in mind just such a place for our people, but little did I dream that it would come as soon as it did. So now for the story.

The late Robert Rowe and myself were walking down Market street, and at the corner of Second and Market, where now stands the Douglas Hotel Building, we noticed a big sign which read, “This property for sale at a bargain.” We looked at it and passed on, not paying any more attention to it. That evening it seemed as though I could not get that sign from before my vision, so I made up my mind to investigate it. The next morning I walked to the above mentioned corner and read the sign again and

took a note of the agent that was handling it and proceeded to his office, and before I left, I had bought the lot. I left the office at once and consulted Robert Rowe. At once we formed a partnership and agreed to erect a hotel building to be second to none, for our people. We at once engaged an architect to draft plans; after they were completed we turned them over to Mrs. Mabel Rowe, wife of Mr. Rowe, for her approval, and right here I want to say that she deserves as much credit as Mr. Rowe and myself. When things looked a little dark it was her kind words of encouragement that kept us in the go-gettem spirit. Her work in selecting and arranging the furniture, and etc., and constantly on the job doing all that was in her power to make our dream come true.

We had planned on opening November 26<sup>th</sup>, which fell on Thanksgiving Day, although one week from then it looked very doubtful. It was then that we summoned the contractor and offered him a bonus if he would rush things by putting on a double crew, which he did, and here is where Mrs. Rowe again played a very prominent part, by furnishing coffee and lunch to the men and keeping them all in good humor. On Thanksgiving morning we opened our doors for business and before noon we had a full house. The Consaul Construction Company also deserves much credit and has our very best wishes for all their future undertakings.


The people of San Diego have given us generous support, for which we are very grateful.

We will continue to improve to meet the demands of the public and to make the Douglas Hotel a

place where you will like to stay (60 & 62).

The 1926 Colored Directory contains several advertisements and other information regarding the property. The directory contains the photo of Robert North, "prominent owner and breeder of thoroughbred race horses; Who conducts the finest Pool and Billiard Hall on the Coast, in connection with the New Douglas Hotel" (Colored Directory 1926:34)."

Page 36 of the directory contains the photos of the owners of the Douglas Hotel, Mrs. Mabel Rowe, and George. A. Ramsey. Page 38 contains an obituary for Robert Rowe by his wife Mabel, with a poem and his photo. There is an advertisement in the directory for the Hotel Douglas Barber Shop at 208 Market Street, A.T. Brown, manager and an ad for the Douglas Billiard Parlor, Leon Lewis, manager. The 1930 Census lists 31 residents of 206 Market Street at the Douglas Hotel.




THE LATE ROBERT ROWE

**In Memory**  
By Mrs. MABEL ROWE.

<i>Nothing but deariness, All I have has gone; Lamentations, sorrows; All I have has gone; Time, oh, you cruel thief, Full tears, and bring relief; Break, heart, you need of grief, All I have has gone;</i>	<i>Bright sun you anger me, All I have has gone; Blue sky, you mock my plea, All I have has gone; Green is the north and fair, Blow the summer air I see that empty chair, All I have has gone.</i>
---	---

*Even you flowers won't grow,  
All I have has gone;  
Dear home, they make you so,  
All I have has gone;  
I loved you, I loved you best;  
God keep my last request,  
And may his soul in peace rest,  
All I have has gone.*

Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926



Phone Main 4742 Box Main 748

**HOTEL DOUGLAS  
BARBER SHOP**

208 Market Street  
CLASCO, LIGHTNING SERVICE  
Lather and more interesting  
A Specialty

A. T. Brown, Manager  
San Diego, Cal.

---

**Douglas Billiard Parlor**

FINEST EQUIPPED POOL HALL  
IN CALIFORNIA

"WE SOLICIT YOUR PATRONAGE"

LEON LEWIS, Manager

Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Theaters, Photo Sensor 7-39





**DOUGLAS HOTEL**  
2ND AND MARKET STREETS

*You Will Appreciate the Comfort  
and Hospitality.*

DAY OR WEEKLY RATES

---

GEO. A. RAMSEY

AL. RAMSEY

---

**DOUGLAS NITE CLUB**  
"SAN DIEGO'S MOST POPULAR  
NITE CLUB"

*Two Vaudeville Shows Nightly*  
11:30 P.M. and 1:30 A.M.

Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, Pg. 95

In the depths of the Great Depression, the make up of the Douglas Hotel and its associated businesses changed. The 1931-32 Colored Directory contains a full-page advertisement for the Douglas Hotel and the Douglas Nite Club, with photos of George A. Ramsey and his brother Al Ramsey. The 1932 Colored Directory contains several advertisements for the property. The first is for Douglas Pool Hall at 210 Market Street, Dudley M. Spencer and Edward (sic) Greenwood, proprietors. The second is an advertisement for the Douglas Barber Shop at 208 Market Street, Pearl Wilkerson, proprietor, and Delma

— For Service —  
**THE DOUGLAS BARBER SHOP**  
Pearl Wilkerson, Prop.      Delma J. Long, Mgr.  
208 MARKET STREET      SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, Pg. 6

Share Your Leisure Time All Through The Winter  
and Summer Time at

**THE DOUGLAS POOL HALL**

Five billiard and pool tables at your service all the time. Cigars, cigarette  
Candies and Cold Drinks. Try our service and we assure you a good time.  
Dudley M. Spencer and Edward Greenwood props. We give employment  
five men the year round.

PHONE MAIN 6850      210 MARKET STREET

-68-

Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, Pg. 68

J. Long, manager. The third is for the Douglas Sweet Shop at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Market, Al Ramsey, proprietor. The directory also contains a "Who's Who" section with a paragraph about the Douglas Billiard Parlor, naming the proprietors and other facts about the parlor (80). This section also contains a paragraph about Al Ramsey and the Douglas Sweet Shop, and George Ramsey and the Douglas Hotel and Nite Club. The article says the night club opened in March, 1930.

The 1935-1936 Colored Directory contains an advertisement for the Douglas Pool Hall at 210 Market Street, Edward Greenwood, proprietor. There is also an advertisement for the Style Art Beauty Shop, located at 208 market Street, with Euzerlla Hardy as, the proprietor. This directory contains a "Who's Who" section with a brief paragraph about the Douglas Barber Shop and its proprietor, Mr. Pearl Wilkerson (78).

**Douglas Sweet Shop**  
Soda Fountain Service.  
Hot and Cold Lunches.  
Cigars   Stationery   Sundries  
AL. RAMSEY, Prop.  
Second and Market Streets.      Phone Main 7602

Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, Pg. 83

The Douglas Hotel was open from 1924 until the 1950s and contained a laundry, café, billiard hall, and other shops. It provided high quality lodging for Blacks and nightlife for people of all colors. The Douglas Nite Club, or Creole Palace as it was also known, hosted performers such as Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and local artists such as Walter



Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California. 1935-36, Pg. 82

Fuller, Froebel Brigham, and Rennie Raines. In a retrospective of George Ramsey's life, one writer

noted that Paul Robeson, Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Clarence Muse, Hattie McDaniel, and the Mills Brothers also performed there.

Ironically, in later years, the hotel and night club suffered from racial integration and it lost its unique appeal as an African-American club. In the early years of the 1950s, the hotel and club still held some luster, and Blacks from the eastern sections of town still came for the music and dancing including, future city councilman George Stevens (Stevens 2003).

The 1950 and 1956 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show a hotel with a restaurant and beer parlor inside located over the entire corner of Market and 2<sup>nd</sup>, with the lobby at 206 Market. In January 1950, Mrs. Mabel Rowe had the Public Works Department-Sewer Division investigate some water damage done to the hotel and the night club due to heavy rains. The once grand hotel, along with many other buildings south of Market Street, was

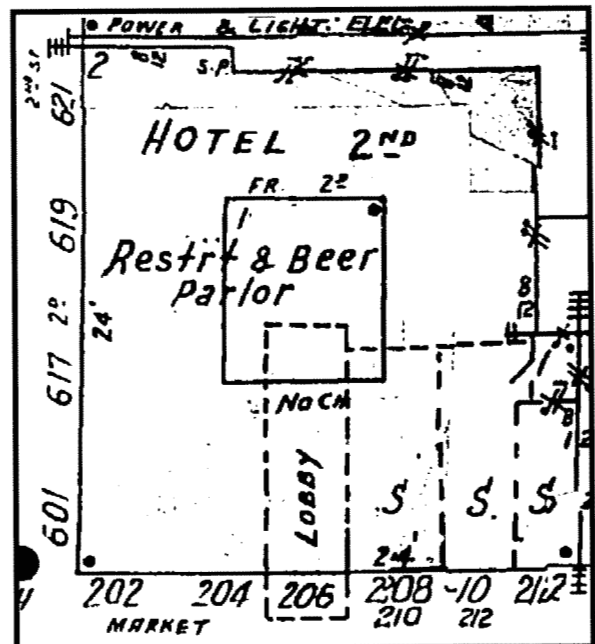


1928 Aerial of the Douglas Hotel  
Source: San Diego County Cartographic Services



1945 San Diego County Telephone Directory, pg. 249

beginning their slide into oblivion. By the late 1970s and into the 1980s, the hotel was reported to be a flop house and a low class hotel (San Diego Union 1991). Ironically, as the old hotel fell into disrepair and faced demolition, there seemed to be a reappraisal of the hotel's rich heritage and once grand stature.




1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 47

At one time the Creole Palace was known as the Harlem of the West. In later years, newspaper articles (Los Angeles Times 1984) picked up on this label and mistakenly applied it to the Black community centered on Market Street or to the Black neighborhood that existed downtown. Based on the usage of the time and on oral interviews, the occupants and inhabitants of the area did not use the term Harlem of the West for the community.

George Ramsey died in January, 1963, almost forty years after he opened the Douglas Hotel, and received eulogies in the local press (San Diego Union Tribune 1963). His death certificate listed him as employed in public relations for the Caliente Race Track, divorced and seventy-three years of age (San Diego County Recorder 1963). In 1984, plans were made to demolish the Douglas Hotel and, as part of the revitalization of downtown, build residential units. In 1985 the Douglas Hotel building was demolished (San Diego Union 1991). Subsequently, the demolition of the Douglas Hotel came to symbolize the loss of structures and places representative of the downtown African-American community.

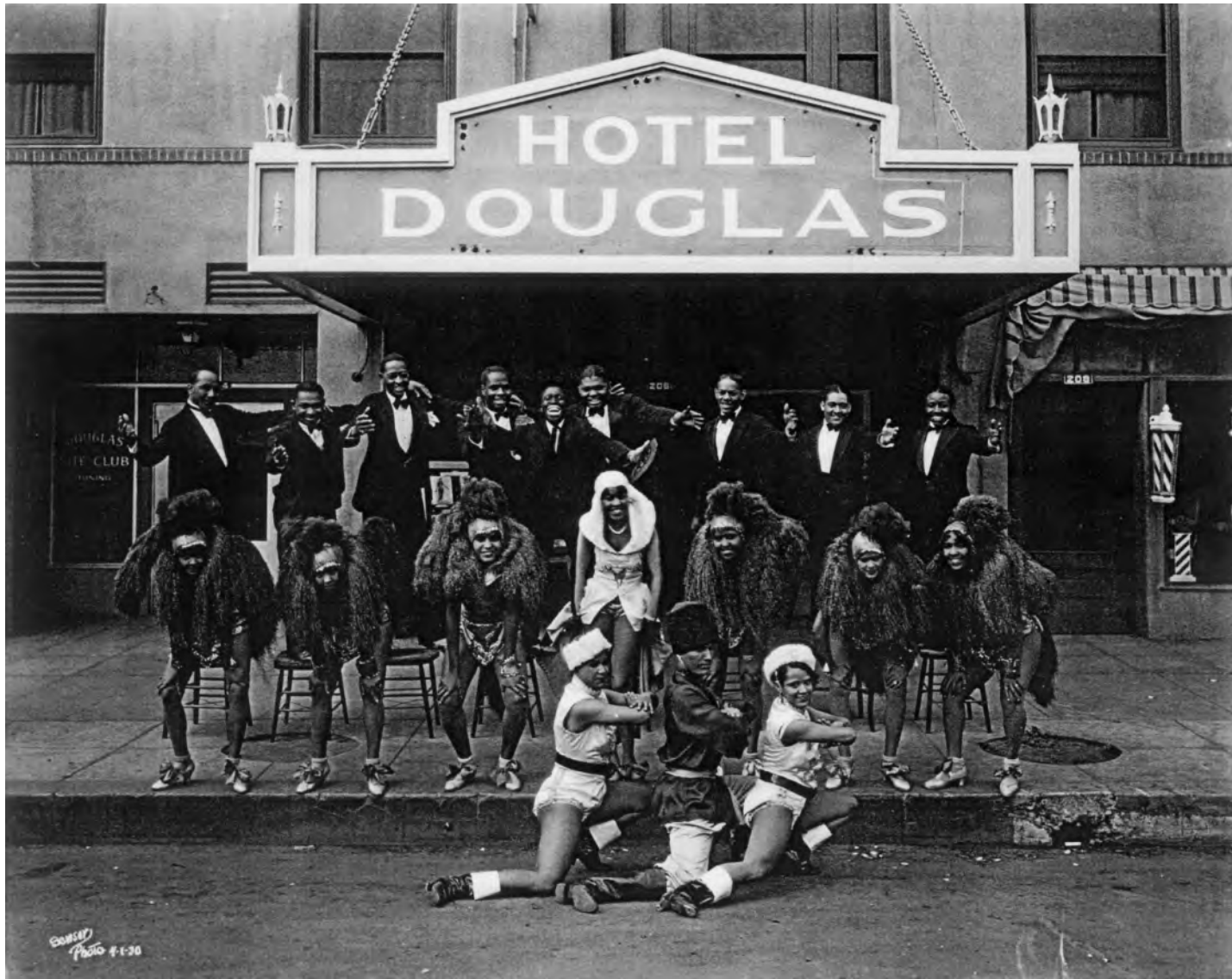
# G. A. Ramsey Dies Of Cancer; Negro Leader

George A. Ramsey, for years known affectionately as "mayor of San Diego's Harlem," died of cancer yesterday in Mercy Hospital. He was 72.



Ramsey, who rose from a valet in 1913 to become owner of a racing stable, hotel and night club, was a leader of San Diego's Negro community.

San Diego Union Tribune, January 21, 1963



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Theaters, Photo Sensor 7-316

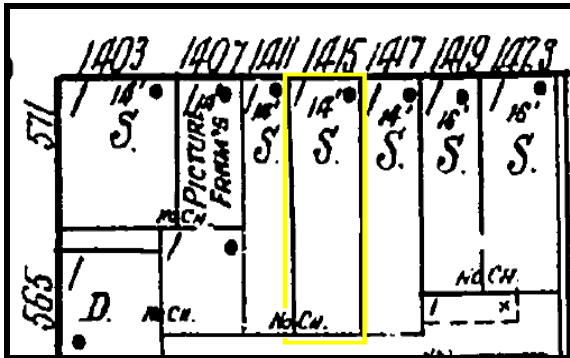
# Gadson's Confectionary / Gadson's Toilet Store

## 1415 Market Street

1415 Market Street originally housed the long-running business of successful African-American entrepreneur Charles Gadson. Gadson, from Florida, and his wife Belle (sometimes listed as Callie), from Mississippi, married in 1921, the same year they came to San Diego (San Diego Census 1930, San Diego County Recorder 1935). Living first at 342 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Charles and Belle moved to 2761 I Street in 1922. In those two years, Gadson began his career in San Diego first as

Gadson assisted in the store, and also supplemented her husband's income by working as a maid at the Hotel El Cortez (City Directory 1928, 1933-1935).


By 1932, Charles Gadson was listed in the Who's Who Directory of the San Diego Colored Directory as one of the city's prominent businessmen, the entry noting that his store had "the most complete stock of hair preparations, toilet articles, such as powder, creams, soap, etc., on the Pacific coast." The renamed Gadson's Toilet Store, still operating at 1415 Market, also had a soda fountain located inside and still stocked various sundry items. Gadson and his business appeared again in the Who's Who of the 1935-1936 Colored Directory (74). The 1935-1936 Black Directory also lists Alfred Gumbs at 1415 Market Street, perhaps working in Gadson's Store (41). The year 1937 marked the last year that Gadson's store was listed in the City



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 68

a porter then as a janitor, working in the kind of manual labor jobs available to African-Americans at the time. In 1923, however, 29 year-old Gadson opened his store at 1415 Market Street among the small storefronts that lined the block. The shop prospered and Gadson took out a half-page advertisement in the 1926 Colored People's Business Directory, urging customers to visit his shop, which supplied candies, soft drinks, and other personal items. During Prohibition, Gadson showed his business savvy by either selling ingredients for alcoholic beverages or the beverages themselves (Thomas 2003). Belle

Phone M 6336    1415 Market St.



## Gadson Confectionery

### Candies

Toilet Preparations, Soaps, Etc.  
PoGo Rouge Headquarters  
and  
Sayman Agency  
Magazines—Papers

~~~~~  
We make deliveries.  
~~~~~

CHAS. GADSON, Proprietor

Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926, Pg. 46



Directory, though the commercial activity of the store continued under various other proprietors.

Although Gadson's shop remained at 1415 Market Street for the fourteen years of his proprietorship, the Gadsons themselves changed residences several times. In 1927-28, they resided at 535 14<sup>th</sup> Street, then at 1685 Logan Avenue the following year. In 1930 the Gadsons moved to 470 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and then to 1727 L Street in 1931. In 1933 they moved again, this time to 2619 Imperial Avenue. In 1934, the Gadsons began living separately, with Charles moving to a rented apartment 2749 Market Street, and Belle returning to their previous residence on L Street. Belle Gadson passed away on July 29, 1935, seven days after having a hysterectomy operation. At the time of her death, she was living with her sister Felicia Proctor and was divorced

When speaking of prominent San Diego business men, we think of C. C. Gadson as being one of the first of our group to enter the field in this city; he has had an established business at the same location for the past 10 years. Mr. Gadson handles the most complete stock of hair preparations, toilet articles, such as powder, creams, soap, etc., on the Pacific coast. All these articles are standard brands and can be bought at wholesale or retail prices. There is also a soda fountain, where all soft drinks are served. The Race papers and magazines may be bought here also. Mr. Gadson is a member of the Elks, Old Fellows and K. of P., and is highly respected by all races. Mrs. Gadson is a very efficient assistant in the store.

Colored Directory, 1931-1932. San Diego. Pg. 82

from C. C. Gadson (San Diego County Recorder 1935).

After his shop closed in 1937, Charles Gadson appears only sporadically at various addresses and occupations throughout the city. Despite this, Charles Gadson remains an important African-American figure in early San Diego, serving the self-sufficient community through his successful business enterprise and representing the potential successes awaiting migrants to the growing city.

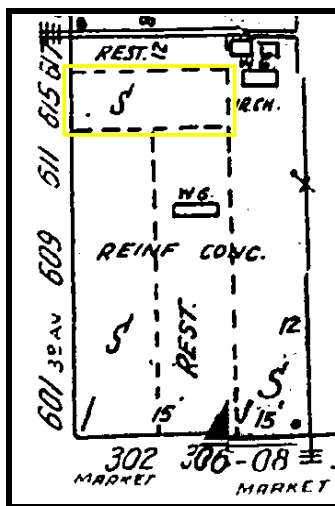


# Griffin's Barber Shop / Our Barber Shop

## 615 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

615 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue housed businesses with strong connections to San Diego's historic African-American community. Between 1918 and 1920, the shop was one of the locations of prominent early businessman Walter W. Meadows' watchmaking business (City Directory 1918-1920; see entry for 418 G Street, Meadows Jewelry). By 1922, the address was the location of James H. Griffin's barbershop, which had been in operation in the shop next door at 611 3<sup>rd</sup> for the previous three years. The 615 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue shop was to be Griffin's location for the next seven years.

Working and residing at various addresses in the downtown area before setting up shop at 615 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Griffin had been serving as a barber in San Diego since as early as 1914 when, at age 48, he worked in Tasso Moore's shop at 658 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue (City Directory 1914-1923). After establishing this business at 615 3<sup>rd</sup>, the migrant from Georgia, as well as his son James, Jr. and his son's wife Leanna, resided together at various addresses outside

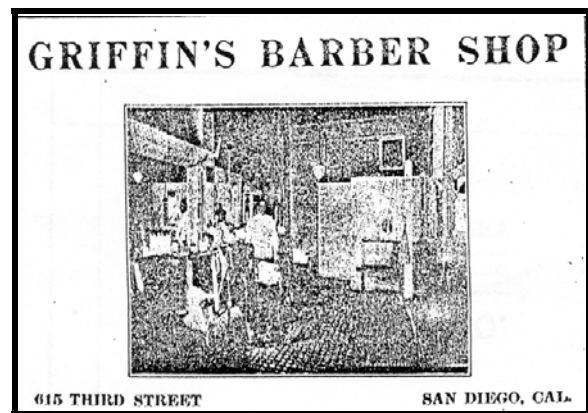


1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 48

of the city core (City Directory 1924-1928). Though the 1920 Census shows the elder Griffin to be married, there is no indication of his wife's presence in San Diego.

In 1924, James H. Griffin, Jr. began working

with his father at the barber shop, and in 1926 an advertisement for Griffin's Barber Shop appears in the Colored People's Business Directory (65). In 1928, the first year in which his father's name does not appear in the



Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926, Pg. 65

City Directory, James Griffin Jr. is listed as continuing to work as a barber at the shop. By the following year, however, the shop at 615 3<sup>rd</sup> had been purchased by Mrs. Margaret Chance and neither he nor his wife's name appear in the City Directory. Margaret Chance operated the barber shop for two years, turning the business over to another barber in 1931. By 1932, the business' name had changed to Our Barber Shop, as it was advertised in the 1931-1932 San Diego Colored Directory (48). Later that year, 615 3<sup>rd</sup> was operating as a cigar store, with African-American William McDonald as the proprietor. Mr. McDonald continued to operate the cigar store until 1935. As indicated on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the property continued to do commercial business until the 1950s.

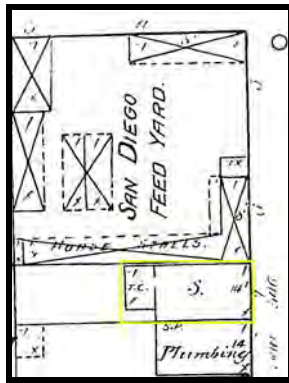
# IXL Laundry

## 546 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue

### Corner of I Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Born in 1871 in Kentucky, Edward W. Anderson became one of the dominant African-American men in San Diego in the early 1900s. In 1897, Anderson's IXL Laundry first appears in the San Diego City Directory, located

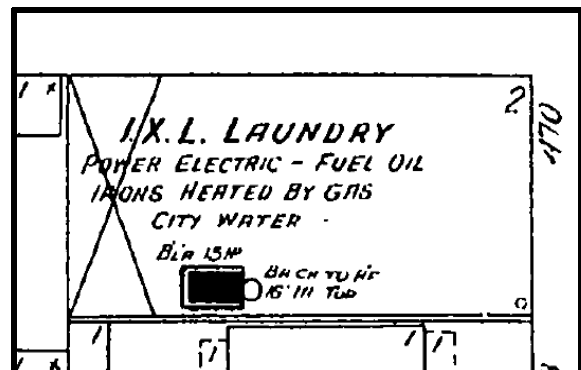
in a one-story building at 546 7<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to the San Diego Feed Yard (see following page). Mr. Anderson and his wife also resided at this address until 1901, when they moved to 428 10<sup>th</sup> Street.



1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 11

In addition to opening the laundry service, 1897 also marked another important event in the Andersons' lives. On an evening out, Mr. Anderson and his wife were refused seating on the main floor of the Fisher Opera House in downtown San Diego, on the grounds that the color of their skin would disturb other patrons. Mr. Anderson sued the manager of the opera house, John C. Fisher, and in a settlement in the lower courts, was awarded \$150 in the only lawsuit of its time to challenge racial discrimination (San Diego Union 1897). However, on appeals to higher courts, the settlement was reversed, and despite Mr. Anderson's best efforts to continue with the suit, he never collected the monetary damages owed him, and the case was apparently dropped in 1899 (Carlton 1977:161).

In 1905, Edward Anderson had a hand in cleaning smoke-damaged uniforms after the explosion of a Navy gunboat in July 1905 (Carlton 1977:123). That same year, Anderson moved both his family and business to the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and I (Island) Streets. This new location allowed the continued success of the business, providing Mr. Anderson with enough profit to place advertisements on the top of every fifth page of the 1905-1908 San Diego City Directory as well as every fourth page in 1906, and to employ up to 35 people (San Diego Colored Directory 1932:76). At both locations, Anderson's IXL Laundry served San Diegans of all races until the laundry was purchased by Nelson Snyder in 1910. The operation of IXL Laundry was only one part of Edward Anderson's involvement in the African-American community of San Diego. He was a member of Fidelity Lodge #10 of the Prince Hall Masons, one of the city's earliest African-American fraternal organizations that had as its members the foremost citizens of the day. Anderson also played a monumental role in the early waste



1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 23



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Business, Photo 81:11039



**IXL Laundry, 546 7th Avenue, 1890s**  
**(The Original Photograph is Mislabeled as “10th St. and Island”)**

management industry of San Diego. He served as the manager and superintendent of the San Diego Rubbish Company, beginning in 1912 (City Directory 1912). In 1917 to

CLASSIFIED BUSINESS DIRECTORY. 681

# I X L LAUNDRY

NONE BETTER

GROWN FROM THE SMALLEST  
TO ONE OF THE LARGEST ON  
THE MERITS OF ITS WORK

**S. W. Cor. 10th and I Sts.**

E. W. ANDERSON, Prop.

Phone Main 526                      Home Phone 1526

1907 San Diego City Directory, Pg. 681

1919, he is listed as both the manager of San Diego Rubbish, as well as the proprietor of the Economy Waste Paper Company. The collection and disposal of rubbish, trash, and garbage in San Diego circa 1908-1919 was a fiercely debated and politically volatile issue. Until 1918, trash collection was performed by private operators under permit to the city. Customers paid the collectors a set fee for removal based on the number of trash cans, dead animals, or other listings. With offices on D Street (later Broadway) Anderson developed a reputation as a man who could and would ensure that the streets, curbs, and back lots of San Diego were kept clean. In 1919, the citizens of San Diego voted to establish municipal trash collection with the funding coming from property taxes, and Mr. Anderson left the trash collection business in San Diego, although as late as 1920 his firm still maintained a few special customers. However, he did maintain involvement in the rubbish hauling business, holding the contract for collection in the city of Coronado in 1932 (Colored Directory 1932:76).

In 1932, Mr. Anderson's biography in the "Who's Who" of the San Diego Colored Directory also mentions his hog ranch business, and his involvement in community organizations; "He is treasurer of the Elk and Masonic lodges; a member of the Interracial Alliance, N.A.A.C.P., and an official of the Y.M.C.A., recently organized." (Colored Directory 1932:76). Later, Mr. Anderson was a rancher, cattleman and stock raiser from 1935 to at least 1941 and by 1945 he had lent his name to an enterprise that still thrives today, the Anderson-Ragsdale Mortuary on Imperial.

Edward Anderson, listed as a retired hog rancher, passed away on August 11, 1950 (San Diego County Recorder 1950) and was eulogized as a man who served his community and his city. He had come to San Diego as a young man with almost no money, and through his business savvy and "devotion to the uplift of his race" he won "the esteem and admiration of the people" (Colored Directory 1932:76).

1917—SAN DIEGO CITY DIRECTORY—1917 25

**GARBAGE—HARDWOOD LUMBER—HOSPITALS**

## SAN DIEGO RUBBISH CO.

OFFICE, 716 MARKET ST.

Home 1773                      Phones                      Main 1473

Official collectors of garbage and city refuse.  
Incinerators of dead animals and waste matters of all descriptions

E. W. ANDERSON, Supt. and Manager

---

## ECONOMY WASTE PAPER CO.

Highest Prices for Old Papers and Magazines

716 MARKET STREET

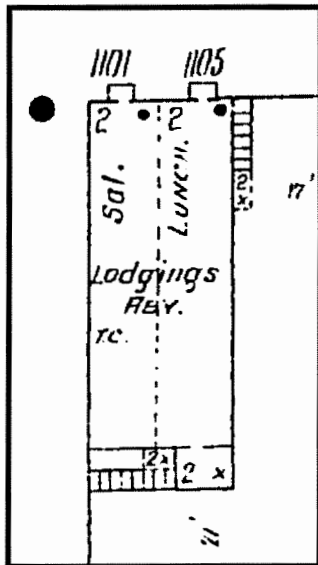
Home 1773                      Main 1558

1917 San Diego City Directory, Pg. 35

# Jasmine Hotel

## 1107 Market Street

The Jasmine Hotel was an early, though short-lived, residential hotel operated by and resided in by African-Americans. In operation by 1908 under the proprietorship of David Mucker, by 1910 the Jasmine housed 19



1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 32

African-American employees and residents, based on United States Census data. Listed at the hotel are the following people: the Muckers, David and his wife Caroline; John W. Clark, laborer, and his wife, Fannie; Lulu Thompson, hotel

cook, and her husband, Scott Thompson, painter and decorator; George Brown, barbershop porter; James Davis, saloon porter; Fred Manning, bootblack; Isabell Blake, housemaid; Louise Denman, hotel chambermaid; Gus Edwards, bootblack; Elizabeth Harrison, housemaid; Marian Hodge, cook; James R. Lypin (?), porter; Harry Martin, saloon porter; Loyd R. Mercedes, cook; Roy J. Smith, engineer; and Caesar R. Taylor, porter. By 1911, the hotel is no longer listed in City Directories.

Although the street address for the Jasmine Hotel is not depicted in the 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, it is likely that the saloon and restaurant shown on the first floor of the building are located at 1101 and 1105 respectively, and the hotel, upstairs, is designated as 1107.

NAME OF PERSON	RELATION	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION	OCCUPATION	EDUCATION
Mucker David	Head	W. B. 65 5'11 1/2	Proprietor Hotel	Colo
Caroline	wife	W. B. 65 5'11 1/2 2 1	none	none
Thompson Scott	boarder	W. B. 43 5'11 1/2	Painter & decorator	H 10 20 yrs ya
Thompson Lulu	boarder	W. B. 27 4'11 1/2 1 1	cook Hotel	H 7 1/2 yrs ya
Clark Fannie	boarder	W. B. 62 5'11 1/2 2 1	none	none
Clark John H.	boarder	W. B. 65 5'11 1/2	laborer common	H 4 1/2 yrs 25

1910 United States Census

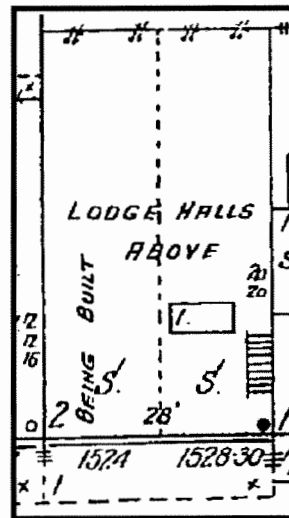


# Masonic Hall / Dr. Calvert's Office 636 Market Street

The Masonic Hall at 636 Market was the hub of fraternal and civic activity, hosting a diversity of the most important organizations in the African-American community. In the early years of the 1900s, Fidelity Lodge #10 of the Prince Hall Masons was established, including as its members the foremost African-American community members of the day. The Prince Hall Masons emerged in 1847 out of the earlier African Lodges, the result of the admission of 15 African-American men, including Prince Hall, into a lodge composed mostly of Irish soldiers stationed in Boston harbor in 1775. After departure of the Irish soldiers, the group was refused recognition by American Freemasons, and they were instead given an English charter in 1784 as African Lodge No. 459. While the qualifications of candidates for initiation to the Freemasons (Masonic Landmark Eighteenth) indicate only that an initiate must be a man, un mutilated, of mature age, and free born - not a slave, or one born in slavery - the Prince Hall Masons developed as a significant organization for early African-Americans who were, though not explicitly outlawed from the Freemasons by race, the subject of discrimination. The Prince Hall lodges remain an important African-American association with a long tradition (Mastermason.info 2003, Carnes 1991).

Another important African-American fraternal organization, The Knights of Pythias, was officially organized in San Diego as P. L. Dunbar No. 2 by J. W. Calvin on December 5, 1908. The bonds of these fraternity and sorority organizations helped cement social and business connections between successful

members of the African-American community, including prominent organization members like George A. Ramsey (Balboa Lodge No. 38, F. & A. M.) and Clementine McDuff (No. 598, I.B.P.O.E. of W.), Charles and Belle Gadson (P.L. Dunbar Lodge No. 2, Knights of Pythias and Household of Ruth, No. 5833, G.U.O. of O.F, respectively), and Walter G. Meadows (Isis Temple, No. 102, A.A.O.M.S.).



1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 34

Only one block east of the white Masonic and Odd Fellows hall stood the “colored” Masonic Hall at 636 Market. The building was under construction in 1906, as indicated on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of that year which label the property, then on the 1500 block of H Street, as “being built,” with stores on the first floor and the lodge halls on the second. By 1926, at least 15 lodges serving African-American men and women were meeting regularly at the hall, including the Fidelity Lodge No. 10 F. & A. M. which gave the lodge its name, Balboa Lodge, Mt. Moriah Chapter of the Royal Arch Masons, Ruth Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star, C. E. Graves Tabernacle, San Diego Lodge, Mount Olive Temple, Goddess of Hope Temple, P. L. Dunbar Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, Negro Women’s Council,



**LODGE DIRECTORY**

**FIDELITY LODGE NO. 10, F. & A. M.**  
Meet 1st and 3rd Friday  
W. N. Galbreth, W. M. M. Warner, Sec.

**BALBOA LODGE NO. 38, F. & A. M.**  
Meet 1st and 3rd Wednesday  
G. A. Ramsey, W. M. Frank Boutte, Sec.

**MT. MORIAH CHAPTER NO. 4**  
Royal Arch Masons—1st Monday

**RUTH CHAPTER NO. 11, O. E. S.**  
2nd and 4th Monday

**C. E. GRAVES TABERNACLE NO. 4**  
1st and 3rd Tuesday

**SAN DIEGO LODGE NO. 5, U. B. F.**  
2nd and 4th Thursday

**MT. OLIVE TEMPLE NO. 6, S. M. T.**  
2nd and 4th Thursday

**GODDESS OF HOPE TEMPLE NO 15, S. M. T.**  
3rd Thursday

**P. L. DUNBAR LODGE NO. 2, K. of P.**  
2nd and 4th Friday

**NEGRO WOMEN'S COUNCIL**  
1st and 3rd Sunday

**SISTERS OF THE HELPING HAND CLUB**  
1st and 3rd Saturday

**QUEEN OF THE BAY TENT NO. 6**  
1st Saturday

**W. D. RICH PALATIUM NO. 3**  
**G. U. O. of O. F. EXCELSIOR LODGE NO. 10364**  
1st and 3rd Thursday

**HOUSEHOLD OF RUTH NO. 5833**  
1st and 3rd Wednesday

**CLEMENTINE McDUFF NO. 598, I. B. P. O. E. of W.**  
1st and 3rd Monday  
G. A. Ramsey, E. R. Frank Boutte, Sec.


All lodges meet at Masonic Hall, 636 Market St.

Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926. Pg. 6

Sisters of the Helping Hand Club, Queen of the Bay Tent, W. D. Rich Palatium, Household of Ruth, and Clementine McDuff. Other groups like the San Diego Consistory, Elks, American Woodmen, Isis Temple, Excelsior Lodge, Poinsettia Court, Herriions of Jericho Salome Court, Nautilus Temple, C. F. Graves Tabernacle were also meeting at the hall by 1932.

The Masonic Hall was the locus for other activities, as well. The hall held various

banquets including one for African-Americans called to combat in 1917, as well as community meeting and candidates' debates during local elections (San Diego Union 1917, 1926). In addition, the Masonic Hall held the office of prominent African-American doctor F. C. Calvert. Calvert was a graduate of the

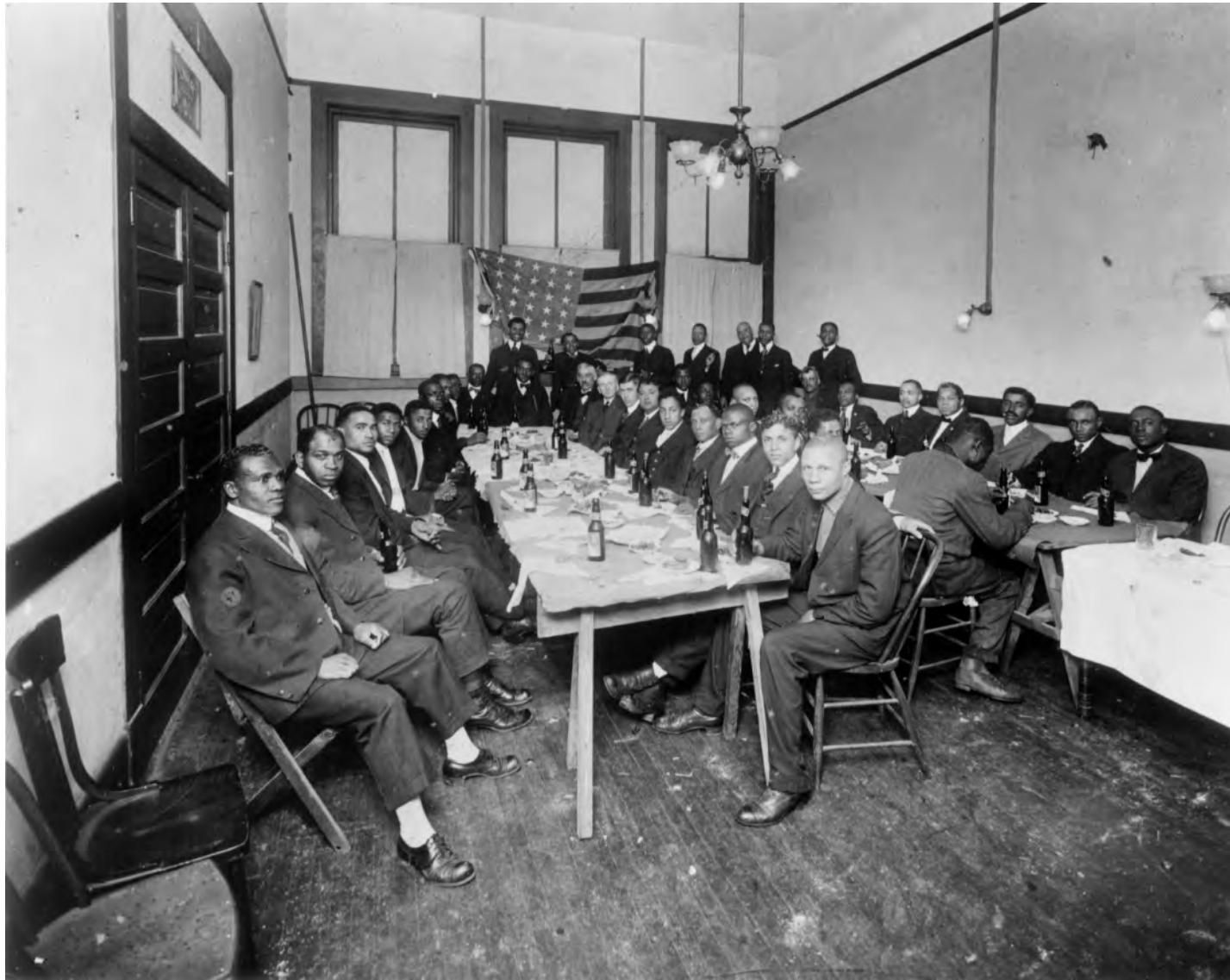


**DR. F. C. CALVERT**  
Physician and Surgeon

Office Masonic Hall, 636 Market Street  
Phones: office, Franklin 4790; Residence Franklin 5937. Hours 10 to 11:30 A.M. 2 to 4:00 P.M. 7 to 8 P.M. Saturday afternoons and Sunday by appointment.

Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, Pg. 87

University of Michigan Department of Medicine and Surgery, practicing ten years in Atlanta before coming to San Diego in 1922. His office at the Masonic Hall is advertised in the 1926 and 1932 Colored Directories, and he continued practicing from that location until 1936, when he moved his office east to 16<sup>th</sup> Street (see entry for 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Whithubbard Beauty Shop/Dr. F. C. Calvert Office). The "Who's Who" list in the 1932 Black Directory describes Calvert as "...one of California's prominent physicians. He belongs to the smart set of the city, is strong in fraternal organizations, belonging to the Odd Fellows, Elks, K. of P.'s, and Masons. He is a real booster in every civic and welfare organization, both physically and financially" (Colored Directory 1932:84). By 1956, the second floor of the building at 636 Market was operating as a hotel.



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Buildings, Photo 81:11632

# Meadows Jewelry

## 418 G Street

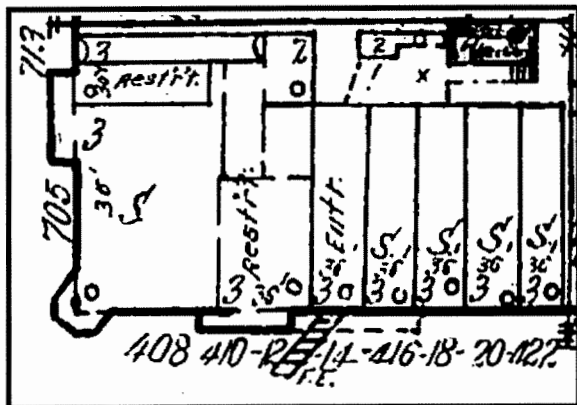
Walter George Meadows' jewelry shop at 418 G Street was one of the great African-American business enterprises in early San Diego. A pioneering migrant to the growing city, ten year-old Meadows first appears in the 1900 Census, the son of Walter William Meadows, a watchmaker born in Georgia in February 1853, and Hattie Meadows of South Carolina. Born in Tennessee in 1889, Walter George attended school in San Diego and, in 1906 at the age of 17, began to assist his father at the watchmaking store he opened at 528 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

In 1910, the family moved to 1625 E Street (1627 according to the Census), and all three Meadows are listed as jewelers in the City Directory. However, in 1911, Walter William is not listed and Hattie and her son, Walter George move the business to 745 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and renamed the business 'HW Meadows & Son.' In 1912, Hattie begins a new, second venture: furnished rooms, located at 1130 E, which she keeps through the following year. In 1914, Walter George is listed for the first time with his wife, Pearl, whom will be at his side until his death in 1943. Hattie, Walter George and Pearl continue to reside together at the site of the business, 745 6<sup>th</sup>, until 1915.

In 1916 Walter George opened up his shop at 418 G Street, where it remained until his death in 1943 (Ancestry Plus 2004). Located on the first floor of a long rectangular shop front along G Street, Meadows' jewelry store sat between other commercial enterprises including shops and a restaurant. Residing at various addresses within and outside of the downtown area, the Meadowses had four children by 1920 - three girls, Nadine, Sylvia, Verna and a little boy, Walter G., Jr.

Walter William Meadows, an early member of the city's Prince Hall Masons Fidelity Lodge No. 10, continued watchmaking at different locations until 1920, his last year in either the City Directories or the Census (see entry for 615 3<sup>rd</sup>). In that year, he worked and resided with a French watchmaker, listed as his companion in the San Diego Census, while his wife lived separately and regarded herself a widow. Walter William Meadows died in San Diego in 1926 at the age of 70 (San Diego County Recorder 1926). Hattie continues to be involved in Walter George's store from 1918 to 1920, working as a saleswoman while also pursuing work as a dressmaker at home (City Directory 1918-1920, San Diego Census 1920). Hattie continues to appear sporadically throughout the 1930s, as a clerk at her son's store in the 1931 City Directory, and in the 1932 and 1936 Colored Directories.

For nearly three decades, Walter George Meadows, master jeweler, served the African-American community in downtown San Diego. Raised in San Diego, Meadows spent his life establishing a prosperous business and family roots in a city that he helped to develop and that would see momentous change after his death in 1943.



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 48



SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, African Americans, Book 2, Photo 81:11626

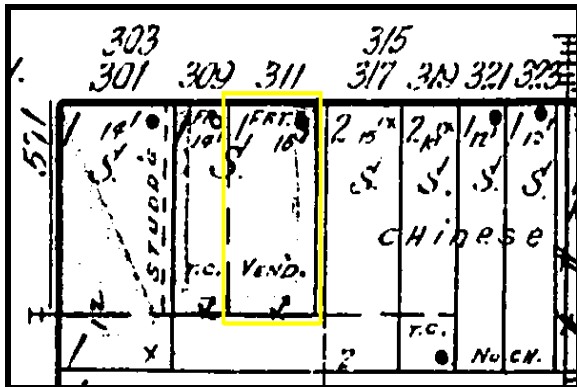




SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, People, Photo 81:11628

# New Deal Pool Room 311 Market Street

The building at 311 Market Street, former site of the New Deal Pool Room and Edison Grant Billiards, was constructed sometime prior to 1921, when the two-story brick-veneered structure first appears on the Sanborn Fire



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 63

Insurance Maps. The pool hall was in an area that supported a mix of Asian and African-American residents and businesses. Many of the businesses operated by African-Americans were in buildings owned by Chinese and Japanese landlords. The New Deal Pool Room was owned and operated by African-Americans Robert Simpson and Chandler Davenport between 1934 and 1935, opening in the former “Quon Henry Cigar Shop” (San Diego City Directory 1933). While little is

known about Robert Sampson, Chandler Davenport migrated to San Diego with his wife Jessie. Originally from Illinois, he was 34 when he opened the New Deal Pool Room, after serving for a year as the proprietor of the Pastime Pool Hall in 1932 (see entry for Yesmar Hotel/Padre Hotel, 620-636 3rd Avenue). Advertising, albeit belatedly, in the 1936 Colored Directory, Simpson and Davenport proclaimed, “When at Leisure, drop in at the...NEW DEAL POOL ROOM...311 Market Street. We carry a complete line of cigars, tobaccos and cold drinks.” By 1936, 56-year old African-American Edison Grant had taken over the billiards hall under his own name. Living in



Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-36, Pg. 36

San Diego since at least 1920, Grant, listed in the Census as a “mulatto” from Kentucky, operates the business until 1940 when the property is vacant (San Diego City Directory).

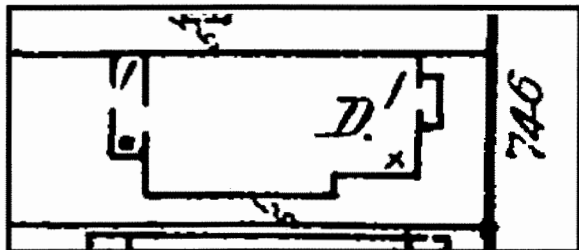


# Our Dairy Lunch and Tea Room

## 746 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

746 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue was the former site of Our Dairy Lunch and Tea Room, “San Diego’s only Colored Cafeteria,” opened in 1930 by 37-year old Mrs. Margaret W. Chance. Mrs. Chance, originally from Tennessee, established roots in Coronado, and first appears in the San Diego City Directory in 1929. That year, she served as proprietor of Our Barber Shop, a shop previously owned and operated by another African-American couple, the Griffins (see entry for Griffin’s Barber Shop/Our Barber Shop, 615 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue).

Prior to arriving in San Diego, Margaret Chance had operated a cafeteria in Los



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 47

Angeles, in that city’s famed African-American local of Central Avenue (Colored Directory 1932). According to her advertisement for Our Dairy Lunch and Tea Room in the 1932 Colored Directory, “Mother’s cooking has nothing on ours” (Colored Directory 1932:68). The 1933 City Directory still lists a restaurant at 746 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, though the proprietorship has been handed over to Mrs. Rita W. Harper. The

Mrs. M. W. Chance, prop.	We Cater to Private Parties
Stop where the home fire burns at	
<b>OUR DAIRY LUNCH AND TEA ROOM</b>	
Where you can get home cooked food the way you want it—How you want it and When you want it. Private dining rooms. Tea Service 3 to 5. Mother’s cooking has nothing on ours.	
746 THIRD STREET	SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

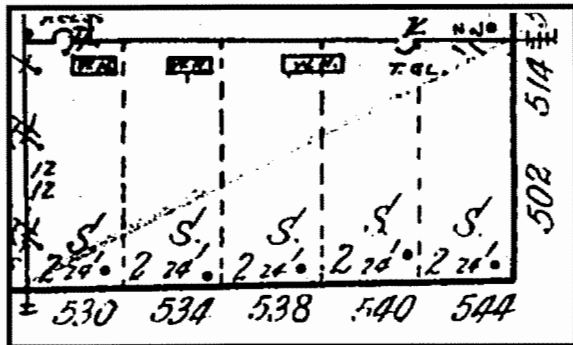
Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, Pg. 68

following year, the property is vacant. The 1936 Colored Directory lists Margaret Chance still residing in Coronado, at 279 A Street, though research conducted for this study has not located her subsequent to this.

# Panama Hotel

## 502 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

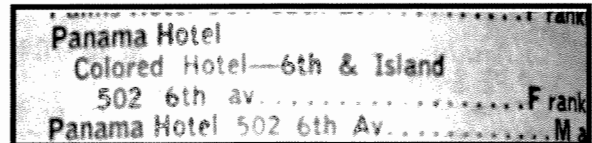
The Panama Hotel, previously located at 502 6<sup>th</sup> Street, served African-Americans in San Diego over the course of two decades. Located on the same block as the Simmons Hotel and directly adjacent to the New York



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Vol. 1. Sheet 64

Hotel (see entries for Simmons Hotel/Robinson Hotel, 542 6th Avenue and De Lux Hotel/New York Hotel, 520 6th Avenue), the Panama Hotel was open as early as 1926. The hotel lodged African-Americans by 1930, though likely earlier, as shown in the Census of that year when eight African-American lodgers are listed: Clarence L(?) (name illegible), owner of a shoe shine stand;

Gueller(?) Mar(?) (name illegible) and Bernie Pyles, both private family chauffeurs; Francis McHenry, a private nursemaid; Richard Thomas Peutt and Dan Wilson, general laborers; William Luke Stanley, a janitor; and George Tyler, a hotel porter. Dan Wilson and Richard Thomas Peutt were still at the location two years later (Colored Directory 1932). The African-American presence at the hotel in the 1930s is solidified by the mid-1940s. Under the proprietorship of Alice Lincoln, whose race has not been determined, the hotel was advertised in the City Telephone Directory as a colored hotel in 1945 and 1946.



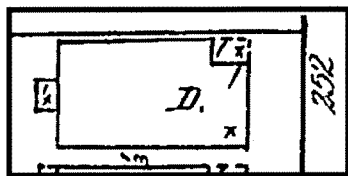
1945 & 1946 San Diego County Telephone Directory

Though now demolished, the Panama Hotel sat in the midst of other hotels catering to African-Americans and forming an enclave of lodging rooms serving African-American visitors and migrants to the city.

# Raphael's Beauty Parlor

## 252 16<sup>th</sup> Street

This location was the site of Raphael's Beauty Parlor, operated by African-American entrepreneur Mrs. Ruby Raphael. Born March 15, 1899 in Georgia, Ruby Raphael became



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 79

one of San Diego's most successful and long-lived businesswomen (San Diego County

Recorders Office 1974). She and her husband, Luther D. Raphael, were renters at 344 16<sup>th</sup> Street from as early as 1920 until 1926, when they purchased the rectangular one-story dwelling at 252 16<sup>th</sup> Street in place since at least 1888 (San Diego City Directory 1926; San Diego Census 1930; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1888-1950). Mr. Raphael was employed for



Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, 1935-1936, Pg. 77

many years with the City Operating Department, alongside Mr. Ocie Hubbard. Hubbard, Luther Raphael's fellow officer in the City Colored Employees Social And Aid Club, was married to hairdresser Eleanora

Hubbard (see entry for 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Whithubard Beauty Shop and Dr. F. C. Calvert's Office).

Ruby Raphael opened the beauty parlor out of her home in 1927. Mrs. Raphael was credited as the only African-American to graduate from the celebrated Maison De-Beneux institution (Colored Directory 1932:84). While not a graduate of Poro College, she specialized in marcel waving and Poro



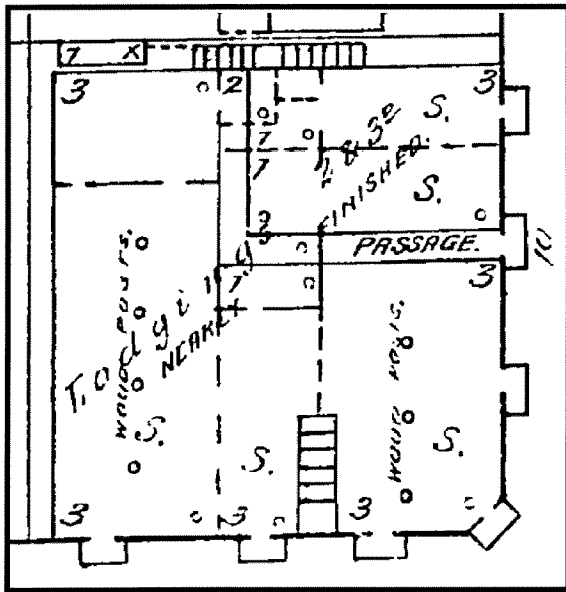
Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-1936, Pg. 65

treatments. Her beauty parlor was "equipped with all the latest modern devices for beauty culture work" (Colored Directory 1936:74). As a skilled practitioner in hair care, Ruby Raphael was not only a successful entrepreneur in San Diego, but also served to shape emerging fashion trends for African America women in the late 1920s and 1930s. Outside of her business, Raphael was a member and Daughter ruler of the Elks (Colored Directory 1932:84). Ruby Raphael practiced her craft for four decades, and died in San Diego in September 1974 (San Diego County Records Office 1974).

# Richmond Hotel

## 136 F Street

The Richmond rooms, built atop a first floor commercial space, were completed c.1888 when the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map depicts “lodgings nearly finished” at the address. By



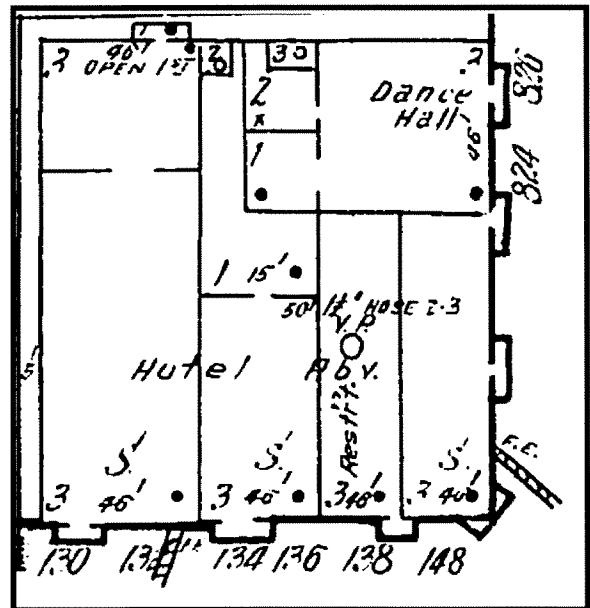
1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 18

1906, the mappers record the rooms as tenements. Downtown addresses shifted c.1913, and the hotel adopted its current address, with 136 F Street listed as a hotel above a store and restaurant on the 1921 Sanborn.

The first City Directory listing for the rooms at the Hotel Richmond appears two years later, with Ada M. Crow as the proprietor. She remains proprietor until 1911 when Mr. and Mrs. George and Mary Smiley take over management of the property. They remain until 1915-1916 when African-American Jessie W. Gordon is listed as proprietor. In a January 5, 1917 San Diego Union article in

which he had been arrested for throwing items at his wife, Mr. Gordon is referred to as a “colored hotel man.” Mrs. Gordon later appeared in court declaring that “he made her a promise, somewhat in the nature of a New Year’s resolution, that he would never again throw things about the house or raise a rumpus in her presence.” The case was dismissed (San Diego Union 1917a).

In 1917, African-Americans William Collins and Joe E. Robinson (spelled Robison after 1940) are the proprietors of the Hotel Richmond. Joe Robinson previously served as proprietor of the Rolland Hotel as well as Robinson’s Billiards (later De Lux Billiards) at the Ideal Hotel building 542 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue (see entry for Ideal Hotel/De Lux Billiards, 542-546 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue). Collins and Robinson would manage the Richmond until 1919; Robinson



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 47

## Rumpus Quietus, New Year's Resolution

Never Again Will He Throw  
Things at Wife, Promises  
Colored Hotel Man.

Within a block of the downtown police station is the Richmond Hotel, operated by J. W. Gordon, colored. It was several days ago that Mrs. J. W. Gordon visited the police station and asked that her spouse be placed in durance vile because, she alleged, he had cast bric-a-brac about the house at her and in other ways disturbed her peace of mind.

A warrant was issued for the arrest of Gordon, the husband and hotel proprietor, and, in due course of time, he was arrested. Bail was deposited by him and he was cited to appear yesterday morning in police court in answer to his wife's charges. The case was called early on the morning calendar.

Mrs. Gordon, the wife and complainant, appeared in court yesterday. She declared that he made her a promise, somewhat in the nature of a New Year's resolution, that he would never again throw things about the house or raise a rumpus in her presence. She recommended to the court that the case be dismissed, and it was.

San Diego Union January 5, 1917

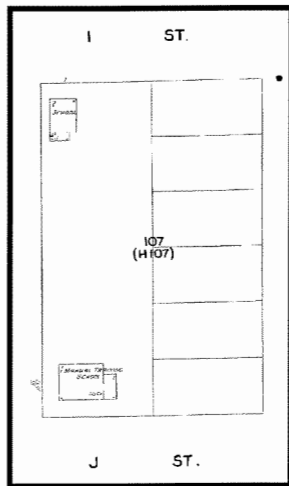
would go on to become proprietor and later owner of the Ideal Rooms while, in 1926, Collins co-ran the Pastime Pool Hall and Lunch Counter at 626 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue (see entry for Yesmar Hotel/Padre Hotel, 620-636 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue). As a further example of the interconnected network of African-American entrepreneurs downtown, Robert North, who would go on to become one of the city's prominent African-American hoteliers, horse racing backer, and businessmen, resided at the Richmond for a year in 1917 (see entry for De Luxe Hotel/New York Hotel, 520 6th Avenue).

The Hotel Richmond is no longer listed in City Directories as of 1924, though the 1950 and 1956 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps still shows rooms, by then the Tower Hotel, at the address. Demolished for the construction of Horton Plaza, the former Hotel Richmond was one of the early residential hotels open to African-Americans, attracting migrants to the city and providing entrepreneurial opportunities through proprietorship. An early enterprise of successful merchant Joe E. Robinson and a starting point for entrepreneur Robert North, the Hotel Richmond is associated with some of early twentieth-century San Diego's pioneering businessmen.

# Rose Park

## 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, Island, J

Next to the Arden Dairy, Rose Park was a city-owned park occupying the block between 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, Island and J Streets, on the western edge of a concentration of African-American residences. The park offered horseshoe pits, slides, and a softball diamond over whose high fence “all of these guys were always trying to hit the ball over to Arden Dairy” (Martin 2003).



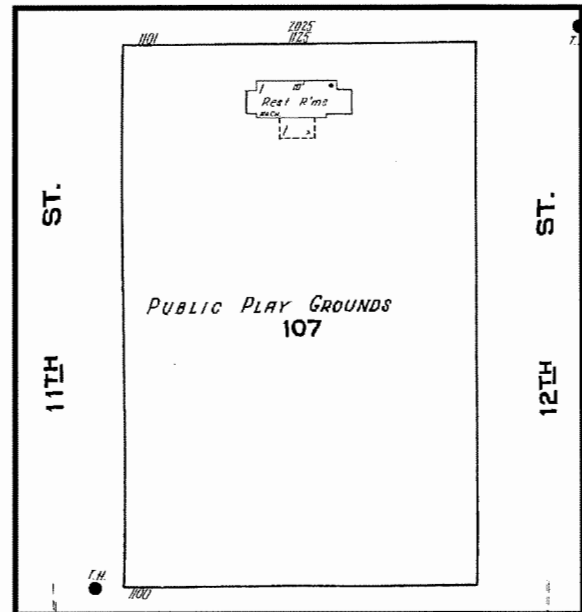
1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 24

By 1906, the block was empty save for a two-story school at the corner of I and 11<sup>th</sup> and a one-story manual training school at the corner of J and 11<sup>th</sup>. The park was formed in 1909 by the Playground Association, a newly formed group comprised of local citizens who subsequently raised

money to purchase Rose Park (Amero 2003a). The park was always open to all San Diegans, as in the 1914 invitation by City Playground Superintendent Frank P. Marsh “extended to all young men in the city who have their evenings free to participate in the games and other athletics and gymnastics at the Rose park playgrounds, corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and I Streets, which are thrown open to general public use on Monday and Saturday evenings from 7 to 9:30 o’clock at no expense to participants. The playgrounds have well-lighted ball diamonds and gymnasiums” (Amero 2003b). A 1915 photograph of the park shows the variety of entertainment to be had, including swings, tennis and handball courts, gymnastic

horses, sand lots, and a softball field (see following page).

By 1921, the park is identified as “Public Play Grounds” on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, with a set of restrooms centered at the north end of the park along I Street. As recalled by long-time African-American resident Eleanor Addison, second cousin of Bert and Johnny Ritchey, niece of George Ramsey and daughter of Al Ramsey, “[t]hey called it Rose Park, yeah Rose Park Playground at Island and J...12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. It was that whole block there and the blacks would all go to that park. And the kids would all play ball” (Addison 2003). By 1950, a brick and tile community hall was



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 67

built at the corner of I and 12<sup>th</sup>, though within six years that structure was a store, with a small office built along 12<sup>th</sup> Street as well as an auto parking lot and garage at the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and J.

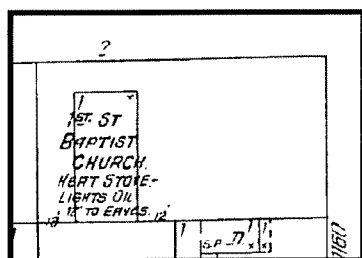




SOURCE: San Diego Historical Society, Parks, Photos 5752 and 5752-1

# Second Baptist Church (First Street Baptist) 115 B Street

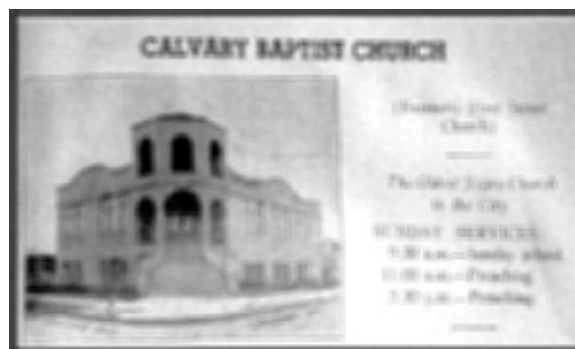
The southwest corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and B was the site of the Calvary Baptist Church, originally called the Second Baptist Church when it first assembled in 1889 (Colored Directory 1932:92). The congregation was organized by a visiting minister, and its earliest meetings were held at private residences between the downtown and waterfront areas. The church often hosted itinerant pastors or had its services led by leading males in the congregation. The average Sunday school attendance was 53 (Carlton 1977:170). The church had settled at its first permanent location at First and B Streets shortly after 1900 (Calvary Baptist Church 2002). The 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the location of the church, 13 feet east of the centerline of the block. The rectangular one-story, front-gabled building had oil lamps and was heated by a stove and housed the congregation for two and a half decades.



1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

An early permanent pastor of Second Baptist, G.W. Brown, had the honor of presenting President Benjamin Harrison with a printed folio on the behalf of the City of San Diego's African-American community (Calvary Baptist Church 2002). As today, the church served the

community in many ways. In 1920, the church hosted a Race Problem Forum. Reverend G.R. Reed, president of the Pacific Slope Baptist Convention and President of the San Diego branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People spoke



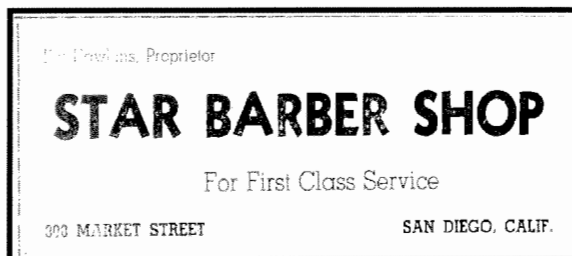
Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-1936, Pg. 79

at the site (San Diego Union 1920). Over the course of the decade, under the ministry of Reverend J.H. Brown, the congregation grew from 65 members in 1928 to 400 members in 1932 (Colored Directory 1932:92). By 1936, Calvary Baptist is advertised as the "Oldest Negro Church in the City" (Colored Directory 1936:79).

In 1926, the congregation built a new facility at the corner of Crosby and Julian, and changed its name to Calvary Baptist, where it remains today. The congregation's home at the southwest corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and B Street anchored the early African-American community downtown, providing spiritual and civic foundations for the growing population.

# Star Barber Shop 308 Market Street

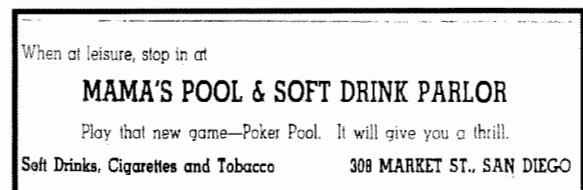
African-American Ket Hawkins, listed in both the 1932 and 1936 Colored Directories as one of the city's most popular barbers, was the proprietor of the Star Barber Shop for fifteen years. Before arriving in San Diego, Mr. Hawkins operated shops in Oakland and San Francisco. He was an ex-service man having held an office as vice-commander in Dennis T. Williams Post 310, American Legion. Mr. Hawkins first appears in the San Diego City Directory in 1925 and at his shop at 308 Market Street in 1926.



Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-36

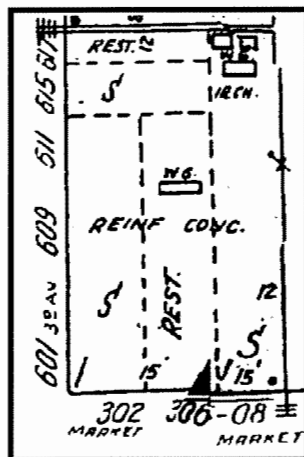
Griffin's Barber Shop/Our Barber Shop, 615 3rd Street).

Ket Hawkins appears in the San Diego city Directories at 308 Market along with Watanbe Kichiji billiards for the duration of his occupation. It is assumed, however, that Watanbe Kichiji billiards (also known as Mama's Pool & Soft Drink Parlor as advertised in the 1932 and 1936 Colored Directories) is located at the adjacent space at 306 Market on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; this address never appears in the City Directories.



Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego, California, 1935-36

The building that houses 308 Market, located on the corner of Market and Third Ave, first appears on the



1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 48

appears on the 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. It was a reinforced concrete, one-story building that contained a restaurant at 306 Market as well as three shops - two on Market and one on Third that housed African-American barber James Griffin's shop (see entry for

By 1931, the manager of the Star Barber Shop is Lew Brady, a sixty-five year old African-American from Kansas, who is praised as knowing the barber shop game from every angle (Colored Directory 1932:86). However, it appears that Mr. Brady departs from the Star Barber Shop to work at the I.T. Barber shop located at 542 3<sup>rd</sup>, downstairs from the Ideal Rooms (see Ideal Rooms 540-546 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue).

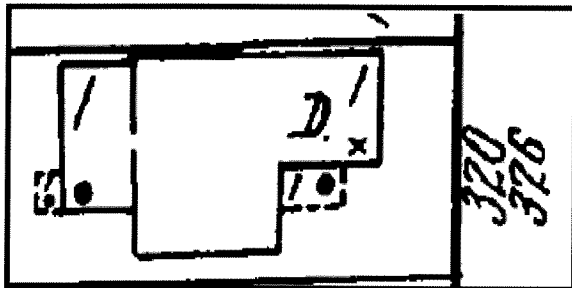
Hawkins and Kichiji continue to occupy 308 Market until 1942, when the business is replaced by Warren Justin Billiards. Mr. Hawkins' long proprietorship of Star Barber Shop is yet another example of the thriving businesses catering to African-Americans in the downtown area.

# Whithubbard Beauty Shop

## 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street

This address is the former site of the Whithubbard Beauty Shop, operated by Mrs. Eleanora E. Hubbard. Eleanora (also known as Ella) Hubbard and her husband, Ocie, were born in Texas and married in 1920, at ages 25 and 29, respectively (San Diego Census 1930). Mr. and Mrs. Hubbard first appear in the San Diego City Directory in 1921. At this time, the couple was living at 658 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Ocie (who at times went by the initials C. C.) was working as a laborer. The following year, the Hubbards moved into a rented room at 633 16<sup>th</sup> Street. In 1923, Mr. Hubbard began working for the City Operating Department at a job he would continue until at least 1943, when he ceases to appear in the City Directories. Also working for the city at this time, and later serving as a fellow officer of the City Colored Employees Social and Aid Club with Hubbard, was Luther D. Raphael whose wife also ran a beauty parlor (see entry for 252 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Raphael's Beauty Parlor).

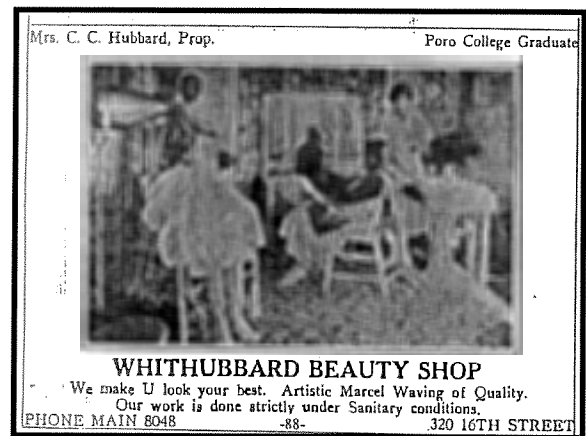
In 1926, the Hubbards moved into a single story residence that they purchased from African-Americans Thomas and Rebecca Johnson at 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street (San Diego Census 1930). Also residing with them are two children, Lucile (age 14) and Margery (age 15)



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sol. 1. Sheet 68

Dixon who are listed as stepdaughters, presumably Mrs. Hubbard's children from a previous relationship.

In 1928, Mrs. Hubbard opened the beauty parlor out of their home at 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Eleanora Hubbard was a graduate of Annie Malone's Poro College, and was trained not only in African-American hair-care



Colored Directory, 1931-1932. San Diego, Pg. 88

techniques, but also in deportment and appearance, and in business as a Poro Systems assistant. Poro College opened in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1917. Mrs. Malone, an extremely successful businesswoman in the line of African-American hair care products and early African-American philanthropist, opened the college as "the first cosmetology school geared toward training specialists for African-American hair" (African-American Publications 2001).

Mrs. Hubbard's successful beauty shop proved her skills as a businesswoman, earning her an appearance in the 1932 San Diego

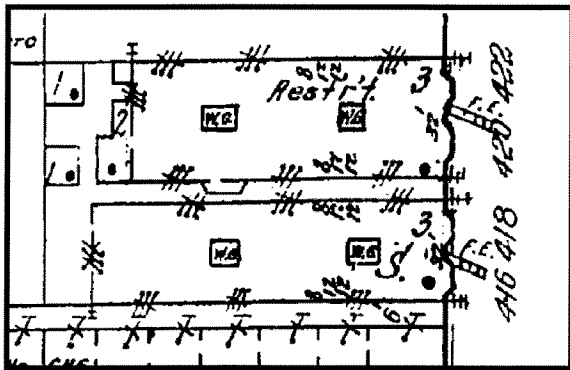
Colored Directory's "Who's Who" list, which notes her being one of the few suppliers of "desired shade of face powders and cream," (Colored Directory 1932:76). Mrs. Hubbard was probably influenced and encouraged in her business by her acquaintance and likely competitor Mrs. Ruby Raphael, another successful beauty parlor operator. Unfortunately, Mrs. Hubbard disappears from the City Directory records in 1933. The beauty parlor at 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street operated for one more year under the new name of Channie M. Dixon beauty shop, possibly run by one of the Dixon children noted in the 1930 Census, though by 1935 it was no longer in operation.

Mr. Hubbard continued to reside at 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street until 1943, though sometime between 1937 and 1939, he moved to the rear of the property at 320 ½ 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The front of the property was rented out to various individuals during these years, most notably Dr. F.C. Calvert, the prominent African-American physician. Dr. Calvert had his office here from 1935 to 1940, and prior to moving to this address had practiced from his office in the Colored Masonic Hall (see entry for 636 Market Street, Masonic Hall). A variety of people occupy the buildings at 320 16<sup>th</sup> from the 1940s onward.

# Yesmar Hotel / Anita Hotel

## 422 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

The Yesmar Hotel, one of the two Yesmar Hotels, had a long and varied history. According to Ray Brandes, William Olsen commissioned the building for construction in 1911 and upon his death, the property went to his wife Jacobine and his daughter Rosie Olsen Cohn (Brandes et al. 1986:8). 422 Fourth Ave was built in 1911, and first appears on the Sanborn Maps in 1921 listed as restaurant and apartments. It was a three



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol. 1, Sheet 63

story, 20 room, brick building with wooden floors on a concrete foundation located in the Chinatown and Stingree District. This district was “close to the wharves, near the docked boats....here were the itinerant fisherman and others: the undesirables, the opium traders, saloons and their occupants, prostitution and other activities” (Brandes et al. 1986:4). In fact, Brandes et al. reports that only one year after its construction, the San Diego Union Tribune of November 11, 1912 shows this property as being part of a prostitution raid, and it is for this reason that this hotel and others are often referred to as the “Raid Hotels” (1986:9).

According to the Colored Directory, 422 Fourth Ave was a rooming house operated by H. C. Bowles in 1913, which could mean that the Olsen/Cohn family still owned the building and Bowles managed it, or that by 1913 the building had been taken over by Bowles or others. In 1914 and 1915, according to the San Diego City Directory, 422 4th Avenue is known as the Rolland Hotel and Belle Robinson (see Ideal Rooms and ancillary businesses entry) is listed as the proprietor. By 1917, twenty-four year old George A. Ramsey apparently took over the property naming it the Yesmar Hotel, Ramsey spelled backwards, with a Mrs. Anna. B. Brown (prominent business woman/brothel owner) listed as a resident. George Ramsey may or may not have resided on the premises with Anna Brown from 1918 to 1920. Another George Ramsey (White) is certainly listed as

ramsey EDWIN D (JOSIE), n 2100 HARRISON AV.  
 Ramsey Geo (Ramsey & Brown), h 422, 4th.  
 Ramsey Geo A (Ramsey & Brown), h 422, 4th.

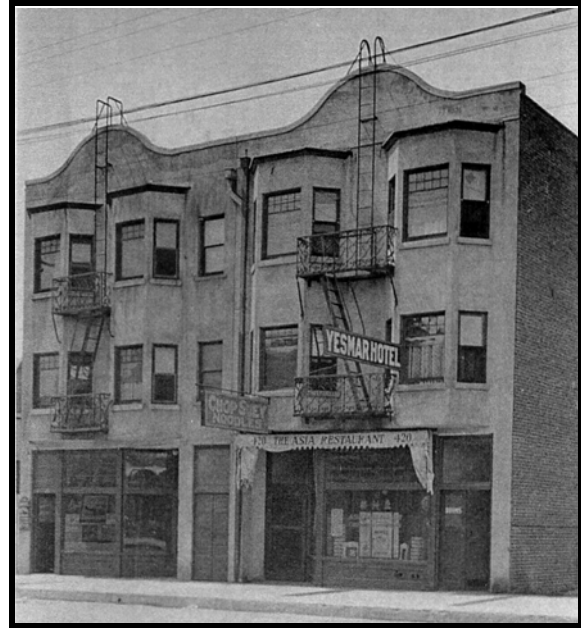
1917 San Diego City Director, Pg. 856y

living at the hotel in 1920 (U.S. Census 1920). It would appear that by 1921, George A. Ramsey has severed his personal and professional relationship with Anna B. Brown and is residing with Rebecca (Rena) Ramsey on 13<sup>th</sup> Street. By 1925, George A. Ramsey is no longer living with Rebecca (Rena) and is ensconced in his own hotel—the soon to be famous Douglas Hotel on Market Street.

According to Brandes et al., George Ramsey was “born in 1891, died in 1963...He was the



leader of San Diego's Negro Harlem. The Hotel Yesmar (Ramsey spelled backward) was a joke of his. He...would either own or manage a number of hotels in the area south of Market Street and east of First Avenue. He and Robert Rowe built the Douglas Hotel or Creole Palace; each would be married to Mable Rowe Ramsey, and George may have been the first black man to run for city council seat, but he withdrew from the race in the 6<sup>th</sup> district in 1939" (1986:8).



Source: Mamie Chan private collection; courtesy of Murray Lee

It is probably no coincidence that with George Ramsey's apparent departure in 1921, Anna B. Brown no longer used the Yesmar Hotel name for the hotel and by 1923 changed the name to the Anita Hotel and continued to reside there until 1924 when she moved to 431 Market Street and became the proprietor of the Brighton Hotel. The 1925 directory does not list any names in association with the Anita Hotel. In 1926, Margaret Smolarek appears to acquire the property.

constructed almost identically as "both were built under the same conditions and ownership." (Brandes et al 1986:8). The Regal had twelve rooms, the Yesmar/Anita, twenty. The Anita/Regal facade has been reproduced as an element of the Horton Grand on Third Avenue.

The Anita Hotel is commonly referenced with its neighboring hotel, the Regal. The hotels were built at approximately the same time and

PLACE OF BIRTH	NAME	RELATION	SEX	RACE	AGE	CITIZENSHIP	EDUCATION	NATIVITY AND MOTHER TONGUE								MOTHER TONGUE			
								FATHER				MOTHER				FATHER		MOTHER	
								Place of birth	Native tongue	Place of birth	Native tongue	Place of birth	Native tongue	Place of birth	Native tongue	Place of birth	Native tongue		
182	W. H. H. H.	Head	M	W	44	U.S.	Collegiate	California	Calif. AC	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California
183	W. H. H. H.	Wife	F	W	37	U.S.	High School	California	New York	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California
184	W. H. H. H.	Child	M	W	11	U.S.	Elementary	California	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California
185	W. H. H. H.	Child	F	W	9	U.S.	Elementary	California	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California
186	W. H. H. H.	Child	M	W	7	U.S.	Elementary	California	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California
187	W. H. H. H.	Child	F	W	5	U.S.	Elementary	California	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California
188	W. H. H. H.	Child	M	W	3	U.S.	Elementary	California	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California
189	W. H. H. H.	Child	F	W	1	U.S.	Elementary	California	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California	English	California

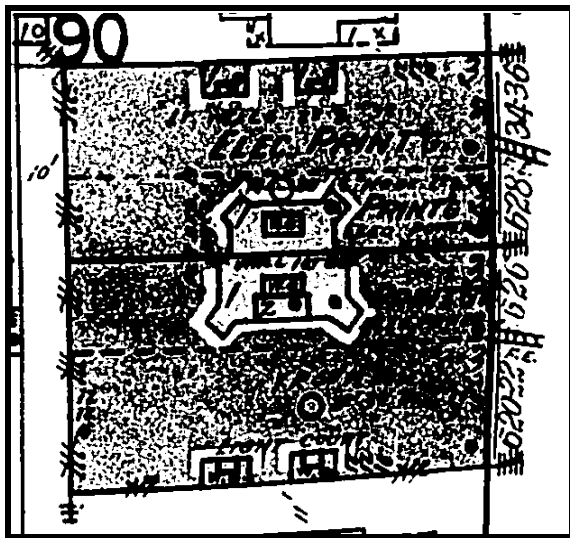
1920 United States Census

# Yesmar / Padre Hotel

## Pastime Pool Hall & Gold Dollar Café

### 620-636 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Appearing on the 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map as an electric printing shop, the structure comprising 620-636 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol.1, Sheet 47

operated for much of its time as two separate three-story establishments with rooms on the upper floors, commercial space on the bottom, and a central courtyard. By 1926, however, African-Americans William Collins and Samuel Reeves had opened the Pastime Pool Hall at 626 3<sup>rd</sup>, one of the two shop spaces on the first floor of the southern building. The hotel above and the adjacent first floor shop, the Mitchell Hotel and a billiards hall, were operated by Italian, Michele Pietropolo. The Pastime continues to operate under Samuel Reeves until 1931, when Lawrence Heidelberg takes control with fellow African-American Chandler Davenport. Still listed as the Pastime in the 1932 Colored Directory, the City Directories refer to the hall as Heidelvury

& Wright. The space is vacant between 1933 and 1938, though Pietropolo's Billiard Hall next door at 622 3<sup>rd</sup> stays in operation until 1938.

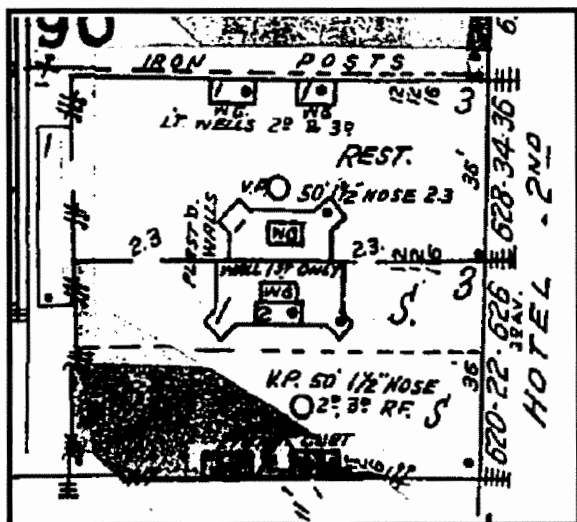
At the northern half of the building, African-Americans M. E. Runyan, followed by Thomas Houze, operate the Gold Dollar Café in the first floor space at 628 3<sup>rd</sup> between 1928 and 1932. The space subsequently lies vacant until 1937-38. The upper floor at 634 3<sup>rd</sup> continues to be occupied by the printer and paper supply business until at least 1930,



Colored Peoples (Revised) Business Directory of San Diego, 1926, Pg. 54

though it has not been subsequently traced. 636 3<sup>rd</sup> comprises the Hotel Victor, operated primarily by Mrs. Rose Gonzales.

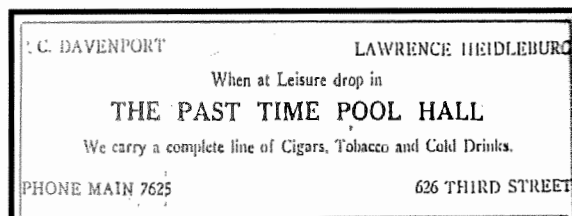
By 1938, the property as a whole had undergone a transformation. Well-known African-American entrepreneur Al Ramsey took control of the property, opening three business: Al Ramsey Billiards at 622 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Yesmar Hotel at 620 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the Padre Hotel



1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 47

at 636 3<sup>rd</sup>. African-American Herbert Kruse, a former resident of the Douglas Hotel (see entry for the Douglas Hotel, 206 Market Street), opens a restaurant in the old Pastime Pool Hall at 626 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1938. By 1941, Al Ramsey had also become proprietor of this restaurant and was operating it under his own name. In 1944 and 1945, it is advertised as

“Al Ramsey Vending Machines,” and later becomes “Al Ramsey Liquors.” In 1947-8, Ramsey advertised the building’s rooms together as the Yesmar/Padre Hotel, though it is not until Al Ramsey leaves the property in the early 1950s that it is consistently known as the Padre/Yesmar. The location of multiple African-American shops, businesses, and hotels for nearly three decades, and associated with high-profile citizen Mr. Al Ramsey during its heyday, the Yesmar Hotel/Padre Hotel was one of the bustling social and residential sites for San Diego’s African-American community.



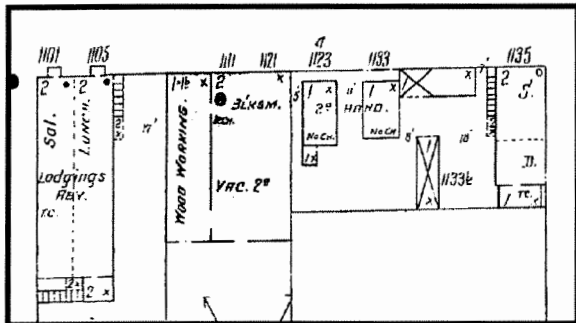
Colored Directory, 1931-1932. San Diego, Pg. 18

# The Yokum 1131 Market Street

The Yokum, a residential hotel, was in operation by 1909, when it is first listed at 1131 H Street in the City Directory, with African-American Mrs. Emma M. Samuels as the proprietor. The 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows numerous structures on the parcel, though no 1131 address or hotel is shown, so the Yokum's exact location remains unclear. The 1910 Census records nine

African-Americans early in the century, including chambermaids, a cook, a waiter, and a laborer.

Emma Samuels, appearing in the 1910 Census as a married woman though without a husband listed, managed the rooms under that name until 1913, when it appears that she married Charles Goodwin, a mulatto born in Texas in 1881 and operator of a laundry store at 903 University Avenue. In 1914, the Yokum's address shifted first to 215 H, and to 215 Market the following year. In 1917, Charles Goodwin moved his clothing cleaners to the downtown area, where it would serve the community for 15 years (see entry for Goodwin Cleaners and Dryers, 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street). Charles and Emma remain at the Yokum, with Emma as manager, until 1919. The Yokum appears to have closed in 1920, when it is no longer listed in the City Directory and the Goodwins move to 1514 F Street, closer to Charles' shop, where they resided until 1932.

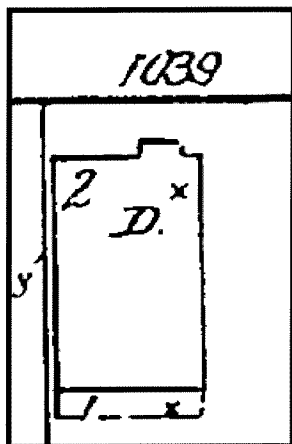


1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 32

African-American residents either lodging, renting, or boarding at 1131 Market Street, and employed in the type of manual labor and service jobs most commonly available to

# Young Inn 1039 K Street

A two-story dwelling at 1039 K Street (1939 K Street prior to 1913) appears on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps as early as 1888, remaining structurally the same through 1950. The dwelling apparently housed rented rooms, as indicated by the 1920 Census which lists nine African-American lodgers living at 1039 K Street. They include William H. Blankenship, railroad waiter, and his hairdresser wife, Ella; Pearl Dickenson, a private servant; Janville(?) Hancock, private



1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Vol. 1. Sheet 78

messenger, and his wife, Minni; Samuel Molcott; George Welch, a laborer, and Peter Robinson, railroad employee, and his wife, Betty. The rooms at the 1039 K Street were only a temporary residence, at least for the Robinsons, who were operating and residing at the Simmons Hotel by 1926 (see entry for Simmon Hotel, 542 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue). Peter Robinson, born in Georgia in 1871, and Betty, born in Alabama in 1876, married at the ages of 17 and 14. Arriving in San Diego c.1907, Robinson served as pastor of Mount Zion between 1910 and 1916, and he subsequently worked as a porter at the Santa Fe railroad station though 1921.

In 1921, John Craft also resided at the rooms. Arriving from Kentucky in 1910 and working his way up through janitorial and porter positions, John and his wife, Rebecca, were both involved in promoting the African-American community in San Diego and racial equality in general (Madyun 1988:1-2). John Craft not only owned a successful cleaning business, but he became the N.A.A.C.P. San Diego chapter president in 1932.

In 1932, the Colored Directory advertises the rooms at 1039 K Street as the Young Chicken Inn, with Georgia Bell Young, 31 years old and from Arkansas, as the proprietor. A cook in 1924 and laundry worker in 1926 (Huff 2002b), Mrs. Georgia Bell Young was operating furnished rooms as early as 1930. While the Census lists the rooms as 1022 K Street, these may in actuality be the Young Inn as no such address is found in either City

Young G B prop Young Chicken Inn .....	1039 K St
Young Chicken Inn .....	1039 K St

Colored Directory, 1931-1932, San Diego, Pg. 74

Directories or on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Georgia Bell Young remains the proprietor in 1936, residing at the Young Chicken Inn with two other African-American women, Miss Hazel Young (relation unknown) and Lacy Williams. A Mrs. Dorothy Steel of undetermined race takes over proprietorship later that year.

## **C. Potential Archaeological Sites**

### **1. Introduction**

The archaeological potential for the project area varies from virtually no potential to high potential. Archaeological potential also varies based on the probability of prehistoric versus historic resources. In general, within the study area, there is relatively low potential for substantial or significant prehistoric sites. The assumed lack of, or paucity of, prehistoric sites is based on the results of previous studies, on the extent to which the downtown landform has been altered, and re-altered over the past 140 years, and on the probability that the areas most likely to have supported prehistoric peoples are along the tidelands. For historic resources, the potential varies based on the early settlement patterns for San Diego, on the type of buildings and structures built and used by early occupants, and on the extent to which the landform has been modified (cut and fill, terraced, topsoils removed).

Areas with little or no potential include parcels that have been severely modified or altered by construction of subterranean features (basements, garages, sub-floors) and have therefore destroyed the original, or historic ground surfaces. A second category of areas with minimal potential is an area that has been previously excavated and had an archaeological study completed for it.

Those areas with the most potential for historic resources are those in which the landform has been minimally altered, there is the known presence of past activities (buildings, wells, privies, or basements that may have been filled with trash), or where previous archaeological studies (usually monitoring) have indicated the presence of resources. In some cases, the previous studies identified and recovered a certain amount of debris and historic material and noted that substantial portions of a site continue under paved areas, or areas not available to the researcher at the time of discovery.

### **2. Areas of High to Medium Potential**

The locations noted and described below are shown on the map that accompanies this chapter (Figure 1). In all instances, the assessment is based on the best available information and may not address previous undocumented disturbances from relic collectors/bottle hunters, utility trenches, or other less than evident impacts.

#### Recorded Archaeological Sites

Historic archaeological sites have been recorded and not fully tested or evaluated between L and Imperial Streets bounded by 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> (CA-SDI-15978); between G and Market Streets bounded by 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> (CA-SDI-16393); and 15<sup>th</sup> Street between Island and J Street (CA-SDI-15645). In each of these instances, previous field work has indicated the presence of significant historic archaeological deposits that may exist under paved areas or other elements of the built environment.

#### Paved Parking Lots With Potential

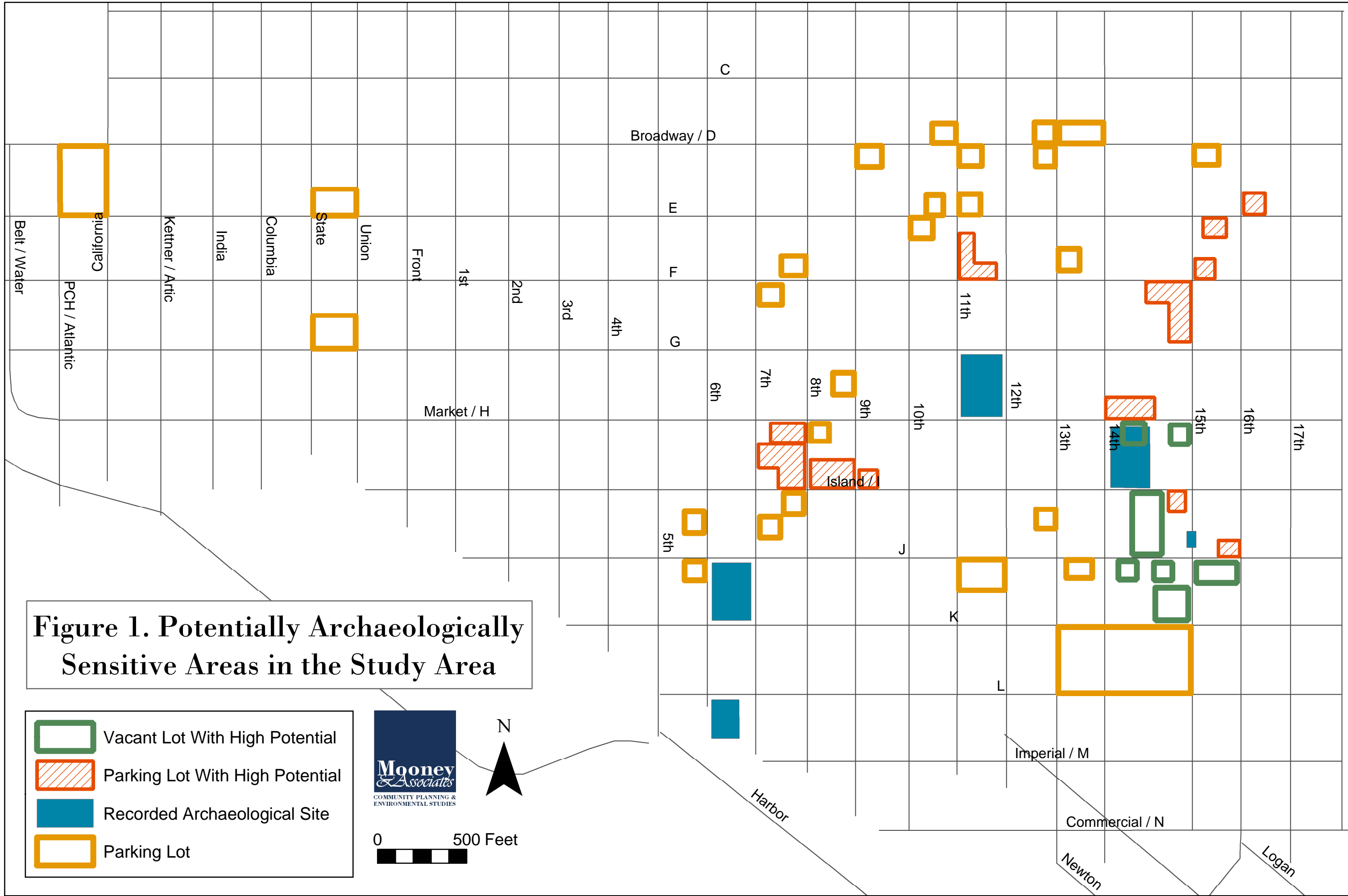
Areas that have not received archaeological excavation and analysis but that may have buried historic resources include paved surface parking lots in the study area. There are concentrations of such lots between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets bounded by Market and Island; between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> just north of Island; between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> just north of F Street; between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> just north of Market; between 14<sup>th</sup>







and 15<sup>th</sup> south of F Street and on the west side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street; between 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets just south of E and just north of F Streets; on the east side of 16<sup>th</sup> Street north of E Street; on the northeast corner of Island and 15<sup>th</sup> Street; and on the southwest corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and J Street. While several other parking lots may have potential for buried archaeological resources, there potential is less than for the lots described above. This second tier of lots is also shown on Figure 1.


#### Vacant Lots or Cleared Areas With Potential


There are several vacant lots or cleared lots in the study area that have potential for buried archaeological deposits. These include the vacant lots behind the Lillian Grant properties south of J between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Street; the lot just west of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and north of K Street; the lot bounded by 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets south of J Street; and two lots south of Market between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets.




**Figure 1. Potentially Archaeologically Sensitive Areas in the Study Area**

	Vacant Lot With High Potential
	Parking Lot With High Potential
	Recorded Archaeological Site
	Parking Lot


  
 COMMUNITY PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES


  
 N


  
 0 500 Feet

## **VI. THEMATIC DISTRICT SUMMARY AND SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION**

### **A. Proposed Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District**

Roughly bounded by F Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Island Avenue and Commercial Street, the Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District represents the surviving remnants and sites of the core of the city's downtown African-American community between 1900 and 1960 (Figure 2). Reflecting the residential, commercial, and institutional development of San Diego's African-American community, the buildings that comprise the district testify to the strong heritage and vibrant life of this once-thriving area.

Persons of African descent participated in the colonization of the San Diego area as part of the Hispanic settlement of southern California, and African-Americans from the eastern and southern United States were present in the Mexican-era Old Town settlement. In the post-Civil War years, freemen and Blacks recently freed from the shackles of slavery came to San Diego for the same reasons others did, to start a new life, to find economic gain, and, although not always realized, to experience the supposed freedom offered by the western frontier. Following the establishment of New Town on San Diego Bay, today's downtown, African-Americans and other area residents began to move into the developing harbor city. Later, the first world war, the Exposition, and the economic boom leading up to the downturn in 1929 led to, and supported, the migration of thousands of African-Americans into San Diego. In the early decades of the twentieth century, San Diego's African-American residents coalesced into a vibrant community, with its own businesses, organizations, and residential concentrations, remnants of which still exist in the city today.

Remaining buildings in the historic district include residences, rooming houses and hotels, black-owned and/or operated businesses, and centers of social life. The area was home to the Masonic Hall of the Prince Hall Masons, which also housed the prominent African-American physician Dr. Calvert and served as a meeting hall for African-American service clubs and formal events. Three early African-American churches were also established in the area, Bethel AME Church, the Church of the Living God, and the Second Baptist Church. Long-running African-American owned businesses like Gadson's Confectionary, Meadows Jewelry, and prominent entrepreneur E. W. Anderson's IXL Laundry were clustered in the downtown core. Still standing today are the buildings that once housed other prominent African-American owned and operated businesses such as Skippy Smith's Pacific Parachute Company, the Clermont/Coast Hotel, the Carter/Vine Hotel, and Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers. African-American owned and operated doctors' offices, shoe stores, cafes, pool halls, barbers, and beauty parlors that catered to the community. Other businesses served as the social hub of the community, representing both the entrepreneurial success and social life of the community. Black-owned and operated establishments like the former Douglas Hotel/Creole Palace and the still standing Crossroads Tavern Building housing the Crossroads Jazz Club hosted famous jazz musicians such as Duke Ellington, and acted as the center of African-American nightlife.



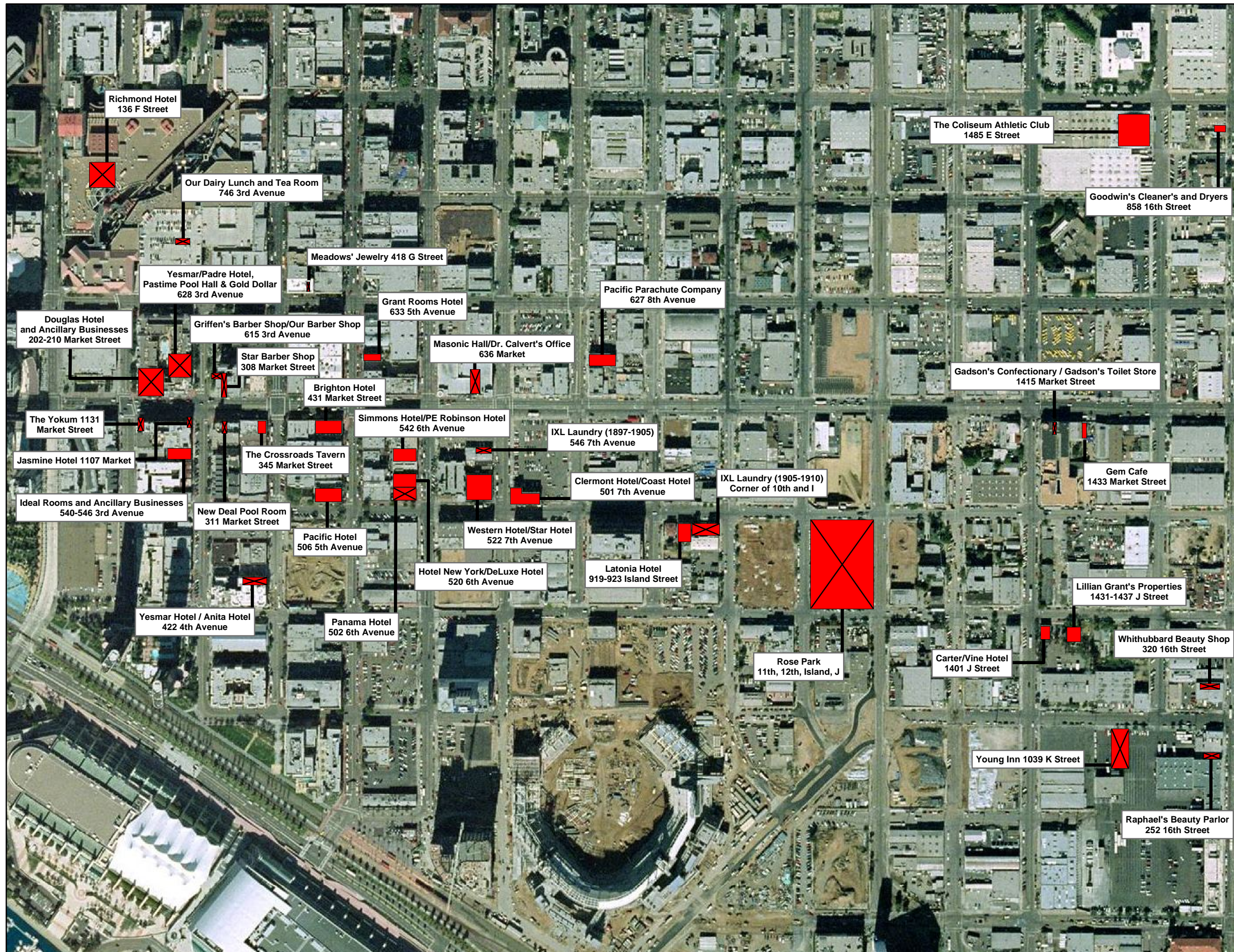

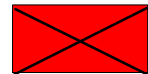
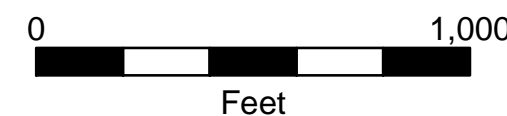


Figure 2.  
Proposed  
Thematic District

**CONDITION**

 Standing

 Not Standing





Desegregation led to the community's relocation to the southeast, and the number of African-American owned, operated, and patronized establishments in the downtown area declined. The downtown area has undergone a great deal of change in the past few decades, and modern development has kept the city a thriving metropolis. This historically important district constitutes an enduring manifestation of the diverse experiences and lasting contributions of San Diego's downtown African-American community.

Contributing resources include, but should not be limited in the future to, the following standing buildings:

- (1) Brighton Hotel, 431 Market
- (2) Carter/Vine Hotel, 1401 J Street
- (3) Clermont Hotel/Coast Hotel, 501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- (4) The Coliseum Athletic Club, 1485 E Street
- (5) Crossroads Tavern, 345 Market Street
- (6) Gem Café, 1433 Market Street
- (7) Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers, 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street
- (8) Grant Rooms Hotel, 633 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- (9) Hotel New York/DeLuxe Hotel, 520 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- (10) Ideal Rooms and Ancillary Businesses, 540-546 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue
- (11) Latonia Hotel, 919-923 Island Avenue
- (12) Lillian Grant Properties, 1431-1437 J Street
- (13) Pacific Hotel, 506 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- (14) Pacific Parachute Company, 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- (15) Simmons Hotel/P.E. Robinson Hotel, 542 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- (16) Western Hotel/Star Hotel, 522 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue,

as well as the following sites and locales:

- (17) Bethel A.M.E. Church, 1647 Front Street
- (18) Douglas Hotel and Ancillary Businesses, 202 Market
- (19) Gadson's Confectionary/Toilet Store, 1415 Market
- (20) Griffin's Barber Shop/Our Barber Shop, 615 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- (21) IXL Laundry, 546 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue (1897-1905)/Corner of 10<sup>th</sup> & I (1905-1910)
- (22) Jasmine Hotel, 1107 Market Street
- (23) Masonic Hall/Dr. Calvert's Office, 636 Market Street
- (24) Meadows' Jewelry, 418 G Street
- (25) New Deal Pool Room/Edison Grant Billiards, 311 Market Street
- (26) Our Dairy Lunch and Tea Room, 746 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue
- (27) Panama Hotel, 502 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- (28) Raphael's Beauty Parlor, 252 16<sup>th</sup> Street
- (29) Richmond Hotel, 136 F Street
- (30) Rose Park, between 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, Island Avenue, and J Street
- (31) Second Baptist Church/First Street Baptist, 115 B Street
- (32) Star Barber Shop, 308 Market Street

- (33) Whithubbard Beauty Shop, 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street
- (34) Yesmar Hotel/Anita Hotel, 422 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- (35) Yesmar Hotel/Padre Hotel, 620-636 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue
- (36) The Yokum, 1131 Market Street
- (37) Young Inn, 1039 K Street

## **B. Regulatory Context**

### **1. National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) & National Register Eligibility Guidelines**

Under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), 36 CFR §60.4 measures the significance of a historic district, site, building, structure, or object by its ability to meet the criteria for nomination to the National Register. Significance can be ascribed to historic resources that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

- (a) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (b) that are associated with the lives of persons significant on our past; or
- © that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (d) that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Further, to be eligible for the National Register, properties must be associated with an important historic context and retain historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance. Five elements are necessary to determine a property or district's significance within a historic context. As recognized by the National Park Service, because "a historic context for a community can be based on a distinct period of development, it might include numerous property types" such as residential, commercial, or industrial as is the case in the proposed Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District (National Park Service 2002:V, 2). Most important to consider is if and how the properties represent the theme the district is meant to convey.



## **2. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) & California Register Eligibility Guidelines**

Section 15064.5 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provides definitions of significance and types of impacts to archaeological and historical resources. As cited in this section, the lead agency shall consider a resource to be 'historically significant' if the resource meets the California Register of Historic Resources criteria for eligibility or is listed in a local historic register or deemed significant in a historical resource survey. According to the California Register criteria, a significant historical resource is one which:

- (a) is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- (b) is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- ©) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- (d) has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Further, CEQA emphasizes that evaluations of resources take into consideration the additional criteria of age, location, context, association, uniqueness, and integrity.

## **3. City of San Diego Significance Guidelines & Historical Resources Board District Guidelines**

As outlined in the City of San Diego's Significance Determination Guidelines under the California Environmental Quality Act (1991), the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board may designate an object as historic if it meets any of the following criteria:

- A. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development;
- B. Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history;
- C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
- D. Is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman;

- E. Is listed on or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the California OHP for listing on the State Register of Historic Resources; or
- F. Is a finite group of resources which relate to one another in a clearly distinguishable way; or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value; or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

As further guidance, the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board Policy 4.1 as amended (April 2002), Historical District Policy on Establishing Historical Districts defines a Thematic Historical District as “a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way by a common theme related to historical context, architectural style, development period, or other characteristics, where visual continuity is not significant and sites are not necessarily located within a geographically definable area.” Historical Resources Board criteria for determining the significance of proposed districts include:

**Common Heritage:** An area associated with groups of existing or former residents who, because of their common employment or heritage have contributed significantly to the City’s development.

**Traditional Activity:** An area or district associated with traditional activity, such as a central market, an educational or transportation facility, wharves, or warehousing.

**Rare Past:** A district which was once representative of common existence during a specific historic era but is now rare or unusual.

**Development Progression:** Neighborhoods or districts illustrating the progressive development of style and changes in architectural and cultural taste.

**Consistent Plan:** Districts illustrating the development of coherent or consistent planning and design, or innovations in planning philosophy.

**Public Works:** Districts which illustrate the development of public works and other significant engineering achievements.

**Features of Daily Living:** Districts which illustrate the details of daily living during a previous period.

**Industrial Evolution:** Districts which illustrate the evolution of an industrial era and its effects on humanity.

Craftsmanship: Examples of workmanship, craftsmanship, artistry, or design which would today be economically infeasible or difficult to reproduce and/or are of benefit to the contemporary community as significant reminders of the past.

Building Groupings: Building groupings where the significance and importance of the individual structures are increased because of their relationship to a grouping or row of other significant structures, which may or may not be of a similar period or design style.

Landmark Supportive: District of quality buildings or sites, often made up of individual landmark structures supported by other structures of somewhat lesser importance.

In the context of this study's focus, the identified properties and the thematic historic district they comprise fall under the criterion of Common Heritage, in particular the contribution of African-Americans to the development of the City of San Diego and specifically its downtown area.

## **C. Evaluation of Proposed Thematic District**

### **1. Identified Contributing Resources**

The individual resources contributing to the proposed Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District are summarized in Table 3 and discussed individually below.

#### **(1) Brighton Hotel, 431 Market**

These furnished rooms in the historic Timken Building (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 34) were operated by African-American Anna Brown (1924 to 1927), a well-known entrepreneur in the city who is also associated with the Yesmar Hotel/Anita Hotel. While it does not appear to merit recognition as a significant individual resource at the national, state, or local level, Anna Brown's role in the complex network of African-American businesses in San Diego combined with the Brighton's place as one of the few residential hotels operated by, and likely occupied by, African-Americans in the early decades of the twentieth century makes it significant as a contributing resource to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

#### **(2) Carter/Vine Hotel, 1401 J Street**

This property was determined on October 23, 2003, to be a significant individual resource under City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criterion A for its association with the African-American community in San Diego (Historic Resource Number 632). The operation of the hotel during the period of racial segregation in San Diego represents the successful establishment of an African-American owned, operated, and patronized business enterprise in the city as well as the development of community-based businesses for African-Americans. Additionally, it marks the residence and business of a successful African-American entrepreneurial family, represented by Alonzo and Katie Carter, in the downtown area. While the property does not appear to meet the criteria for significance at the state or national level, its history and its previous recognition as an individual historic resource by the City of San Diego make it a significant contributing resource to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**Table 3. Identified Contributing Resources**

RESOURCE NAME	ADDRESS	STATUS	INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY DUE TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
Brighton Hotel	431 Market Street	Standing	none
Carter / Vine Hotel	1401 J Street	Standing	Already listed, HRB #632
Clermont Hotel / Coast Hotel	501 7th Avenue	Standing	Already listed, HRB #509
The Coliseum Athletic Club	1485 E Street	Standing	none
The Crossroads Tavern	345 Market Street	Standing	HRB eligible
Gem Café	1433 Market Street	Standing	none
Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers	858 16 <sup>th</sup> Street	Standing	none
Grant Rooms Hotel	633-637 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Standing	HRB #74, HRB eligible
Hotel New York/De Luxe Hotel	520 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Standing	HRB eligible
Ideal Rooms and Ancillary Businesses	540-546 3rd Avenue	Standing	Already listed, HRB #207-1
Latonia Hotel	919-923 Island Avenue	Standing	none
Lillian Grant Properties	1431-1437 J Street	Standing	Already listed, HRB #562
Pacific Hotel	506 5th Avenue	Standing	none
Pacific Parachute Company	627 8th Avenue	Standing	HRB, CR, and NR eligible
Simmons Hotel / PE Robinson Hotel	542 6th Avenue	Standing	HRB eligible
Western Hotel / Star Hotel	522 7th Avenue	Standing	none
Bethel A.M.E. Church	1647 Front Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Douglas Hotel and Ancillary Businesses	202-210 Market Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Gadson's Confectionary/Toilet Store	1415 Market Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Griffin's Barber Shop/Our Barber Shop	615 3rd Avenue	Non-Standing	n/a
IXL Laundry (1897-1905)/(1905-1910)	546 7th Avenue/Corner of 10th and I	Non-Standing	n/a
Jasmine Hotel	1107 Market Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Masonic Hall/Dr. Calvert's Office	636 Market Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Meadows' Jewelry	418 G Street	Non-Standing	n/a
New Deal Pool Room	311 Market Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Our Dairy Lunch and Tea Room	746 3rd Avenue	Non-Standing	n/a
Panama Hotel	502 6th Avenue	Non-Standing	n/a
Raphael's Beauty Parlor	252 16th Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Richmond Hotel	136 F Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Rose Park	Between 11th, 12th, Island, and J	Non-Standing	n/a
Second Baptist Church/First Street Baptist	115 B Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Star Barber Shop	308 Market Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Whithubbard Beauty Shop	320 16th Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Yesmar Hotel/Anita Hotel	422 4th Avenue	Non-Standing	n/a
Yesmar Hotel/Padre Hotel	620-636 3rd Avenue	Non-Standing	n/a
The Yokum	1131 Market Street	Non-Standing	n/a
Young Inn	1039 K Street	Non-Standing	n/a

**(3) Clermont Hotel/Coast Hotel, 501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

Open to the African-American community as early as 1922, and a segregated hotel following purchase by Charles T. Robinson in 1938, this property was advertised as a “Hotel for Colored People” during the 1940s. Its association with segregation and San Diego’s African-American community led to its designation as an individual resource by the city’s Historical Resources Board on December 20, 2001. While it does not appear to meet the National Register or California Register criteria for significance as an individual resource, it constitutes a significant contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(4) The Coliseum Athletic Club, 1485 E Street**

The Coliseum Athletic Club, frequented by boxer Archie Moore, represents a downtown establishment that not only was open to African-Americans but also helped sustain African-American contributions to sports and athletics. While much of the history of this building remains unknown and therefore the resource cannot be argued to be significant as an individual resource under local, state or national criteria, its association with the African-American community and with famed local boxer Archie Moore in particular would appear to make it a significant contributing element to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(5) Crossroads Tavern, 345 Market Street**

Recognized as the oldest live jazz club in San Diego, the Crossroads Tavern reputedly hosted Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong as well as local African-American jazz luminary Walter Fuller after opening in 1959. While not enough information has been found to adequately evaluate its significance at the national or state level, its association with well-known local African-American musician Walter Fuller would appear to make it a significant individual resource under the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criterion A as well as a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(6) Gem Café, 1433 Market Street**

This structure housed two restaurants run by African-Americans, including the Kingery Clyde Restaurant (Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Allen, proprietors, 1925-1926) and the Gem Café (Mrs. Hattie T. Payne, proprietor, 1933-1936). A popular eating establishment under Mrs. Payne, the Gem Café was one of the many now-forgotten shops and restaurants catering to the African-American community in downtown San Diego. While the facts of its history do not make it significant under local, state, or national criteria as an individual resource, it is considered a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(7) Goodwin’s Cleaners and Dryers, 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street**

Goodwin’s Cleaners and Dryers represents an African-American owned and operated business existing at this location from 1917 to 1932. The unassuming building at 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street is one of the few standing remnants of the once vibrant area of downtown businesses operated by and serving African-Americans in San Diego. While not meeting the criteria for eligibility to the National Register, California Register, or City of San Diego Historical Resources Register, it does constitute a significant contributing resource of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(8) Grant Rooms Hotel, 633 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

The Grant Rooms Hotel in the historic Yuma Building was the home to African-American renters and lodgers as early as the 1920s, including newcomers to San Diego from all over the country. In conjunction with the renters documented through the 1920s and 1930s, this property also represents the role of African-American women in managerial positions in the downtown area through much of the twentieth century. While the building has already been recognized as an individual resource as San Diego Historical Site Board Register No. 74, the property designation should be amended to also reflect its significance under City of San Diego significance criterion A as a result of its deep connection with the historic African-American community in San Diego. Further, the Grant Rooms represents a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(9) Hotel New York/DeLuxe Hotel, 520 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

A segregated hotel at mid-century, this property was open to the black community as early as 1920 when Robert North, the property's first African-American proprietor, managed the rooms. Later African-American proprietors included Al Ramsey and Mrs. Fern Martin. This historic structure, already recognized in different capacities, carries within it the story of African-Americans in the downtown area. Recognized as an individual resource as part of the historic Gaslamp Quarter District (Building No. 69), the DeLuxe/New York Hotel represents an oft-neglected part of San Diego's history, including the complex web of business associations between high-profile members of the historic African-American community. As such, the property appears eligible for designation under the City of San Diego significance criterion A as a result of its deep connection with the historic African-American community in San Diego. In addition, the Hotel New York/DeLuxe Hotel represents a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(10) Ideal Rooms and Ancillary Businesses, 540-546 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**

This property was opened in 1914 by proprietor Joe Robison (spelled Robinson in City Directories and advertisements in the Colored Directories until 1940), a pioneering African-American entrepreneur and long-time resident of San Diego. Lasting into the 1950s, the building has been recognized as part of the Chinese/Asian Thematic Historic District, as well as an individual resource on May 23, 2002 under City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criterion A for its association with the African-American community. It is also considered a contributing resource to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(11) Latonia Hotel, 919-923 Island Street**

The Latonia Hotel was a mid-century segregated hotel, advertised as "A Hotel for Colored People" in the 1949 Directory, speaking to its role both historically and as a present day reminder of the experiences of San Diego's African-American community. While not enough information has been found to adequately evaluate its significance as an individual resource at the national, state or local level, its association with segregation in historic context gives it significance as a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(12) Lillian Grant Properties, 1431-1437 J Street**

In October 2002, this property was deemed historically significant by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board as reflecting the diverse social, cultural, and economic history of San



Diego during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (1890-1953), and in particular the history of African-Americans. While this determination was overturned by the San Diego City Council in April 2003, the ownership, residence, and entrepreneurial history embodied by this space make it significant as a contributing resource to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(13) Pacific Hotel/Callan Hotel, 506 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

The ownership history of this structure (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 21) has been associated primarily with Japanese proprietors and businesses (CETA Gaslamp 1979d). However, its association with African-Americans is also far reaching. The hotel housed African-American residents throughout the 1930s, with an advertisement in the 1936 *Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego* declaring the invitation ‘Welcome All!’ It is not uncommon for individual properties in the downtown area to have a diversity of ethnic associations, and while the relationship of the Pacific Hotel/Callan Hotel with Asian residents of the city has been well-documented, its association with the African-American community has not. As such, while the evidence uncovered so far does not suggest significance as an individual resource at the national or state level, the property’s City of San Diego designation should be amended to reflect its significance under the Historical Resources Board’s significance criterion A as a result of its connection with the historic African-American community in San Diego. In addition, Pacific Hotel/Callan Hotel represents a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(14) Pacific Parachute Company, 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

This building standing at 627 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, formerly the Pacific Parachute Company, represents one of the highlights of African-American entrepreneurship in San Diego and California as a whole. Insisting on an integrated work-force, and operating the first African-American owned war plant during World War II, Howard “Skippy” Smith achieved incredible heights in the social climate of the 1940s. Receiving the National Negro Business League’s Spaulding Award as the number one African-American business in 1943, Skippy Smith and the Pacific Parachute Company were, despite the business’ short tenure, deeply important to the war effort and the struggle for racial equality. Given the role of the Pacific Parachute Company in fighting segregation in the workplace and as the first African-American owned business contributing to the United States’ efforts in World War II, it is likely that the Pacific Parachute Company has significance as an individual resource at the state and national levels under California and National Register criteria A and B. It clearly meets the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criteria A and B as an individual resource, and is a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(15) Simmons Hotel/P.E. Robinson Hotel, 542 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

While much of the history of this building has been recognized (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 71), it is clear on deeper investigation that this building’s past is intimately connected with African-Americans through much of the twentieth century. Operated, and eventually owned, by African-Americans from the early decades of the century, Simmons Hotel/P.E. Robinson Hotel not only served as a residence open to African-Americans, but was the site of several long-running, successful business enterprises with a high profile in the city. With the hotel’s rooms under African-American proprietorship from 1919 to 1964 and continually housing numerous African-American residents, this property appears eligible for designation under the City of San Diego significance criterion A as a result of its deep connection with the historic African-American community in San Diego.

**(16) Western Hotel/Star Hotel, 522 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

This property served as a boarding house for African-Americans employed in various service occupations available to the African-American community - including railroad porters, janitors, waiters, and drivers - through the 1920s and 1930s. While not enough information has been found to adequately evaluate its significance as an individual resource at the national, state or local level, its association with segregation in historic context gives it significance as a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(17) Bethel A.M.E. Church, 1647 Front Street**

Established in 1887, the oldest and most prominent African-American church in San Diego is the Bethel A.M.E., whose congregation included prominent citizen Solomon Johnson. Listed in the 1932 Colored Directory as the "Largest Colored Methodist Church in San Diego" with a membership of 280, the church at 1647 Front Street was designed in 1911 by Irving Gill and the congregation maintained it as its house of worship until 1939; it was later occupied by Trinity Church. The former site of Bethel A.M.E. church represents the early organization of one of the most fundamental institutions of the African-American community in San Diego. While the building no longer stands, this site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(18) Douglas Hotel and Ancillary Businesses, 202 Market**

Established in 1924 by high-profile entrepreneurs George Ramsey and Robert Rowe, the Douglas Hotel was the premiere African-American built, owned and operated business. It served as a social and entertainment center of the African-American community. Demolished in 1985, the former site of the Douglas Hotel is recognized by a commemorative plaque; however, the site is worthy of further recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(19) Gadson's Confectionary/Toilet Store, 1415 Market**

Proprietor Charles Gadson provided a complete stock of toiletry articles and many other household supplies for the African-American community between 1920-1937. An important African-American figure in early San Diego, Gadson made the local African-American community self-sufficient through his successful business enterprise, and he represented the potential successes awaiting migrants to the growing city. While the building no longer stands, this site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(20) Griffin's Barber Shop/Our Barber Shop, 615 3<sup>rd</sup> Street**

615 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue housed businesses with strong connections to San Diego's historic African-American community. Between 1918 and 1920, the shop was one of the locations of prominent early businessman Walter W. Meadows' watchmaking business, and later housed other African-American owned businesses until 1935. While the building no longer stands, this site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(21) IXL Laundry, 546 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue (1897-1905)/Corner of 10<sup>th</sup> & I (1905-1910)**

These sites were the location of the steam laundry business owned and operated by E.W. Anderson. Active in nearly every aspect of the growing municipality, including the first documented lawsuit challenging racial discrimination in San Diego, Anderson was one of the truly pioneering citizens

of the city. While the building no longer stands, this site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(22) Jasmine Hotel, 1107 Market Street**

Run by African-American proprietor David Mucker, the Jasmine Hotel was one of the earliest residential hotels in San Diego, with multiple African-American residents at the property in the first decade of the twentieth century. While the building no longer stands, this site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(23) Masonic Hall/Dr. Calvert's Office, 636 Market Street**

Built c.1906 for African-American Masonic and civic groups, this building also served as the first office of African-American physician and surgeon Dr. F.C. Calvert, University of Michigan graduate and prominent California doctor, until 1936. The Masonic Hall also housed various civic and community events, including local election debates. While the building no longer stands, this site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(24) Meadows Jewelry, 418 G Street**

W.G. Meadows was born in 1889 and by 1900, his father had brought him to San Diego. By 1910 he had learned his father's trade of watchmaking. For nearly three decades, Walter George Meadows, master jeweler, served the African-American community in downtown San Diego. Meadows spent his life developing a prosperous business and establishing family roots in a city that he helped to develop until his death in 1943. While the building that housed the jewelry shop no longer stands, this site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(25) New Deal Pool Room/Edison Grant Billiards, 311 Market Street**

The New Deal Pool Room was owned and operated by African-Americans Robert Simpson and Chandler Davenport between 1934 and 1935. Davenport was the previous proprietor of Pastime Pool Hall (1936). Continuing the African-American presence at the site, Edison Grant ran the business under his name from 1936 to 1940. While the building is no longer present, the site of this African-American operated downtown business and recreational establishment is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(26) Our Dairy Lunch and Tea Room, 746 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**

One of the city's most popular eating places and advertised in the Colored Directories as "San Diego's only Colored Cafeteria," Our Dairy Lunch and Tea Room was operated by proprietor Mrs. M. W. Chance. Chance previously operated a cafeteria on Los Angeles' Central Avenue, and resided in Coronado upon arriving in San Diego in 1929. Although the building is no longer standing, this site of entrepreneurial endeavor deserves recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(27) Panama Hotel, 502 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

The Panama Hotel, previously located at 502 6<sup>th</sup> Street, served African-Americans in San Diego over the course of two decades. Located on the same block as the Simmons Hotel and directly adjacent to the New York Hotel, the Panama Hotel was open as early as 1926 and advertised in the City

Telephone Directory as a colored hotel in 1945 and 1946. Though now demolished, the Panama Hotel sat in the midst of other hotels catering to African-Americans and formed an enclave of lodging rooms serving African-American visitors and migrants to the city. Reflecting the history of San Diego's downtown residential hotels and the segregation experienced by African-Americans living downtown at mid-century, the Panama Hotel site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(28) Raphael's Beauty Parlor, 252 16<sup>th</sup> Street**

This location was the site of Raphael's Beauty Parlor, owned and operated by African-American entrepreneur Mrs. Ruby Raphael, who became one of San Diego's most successful and long-lived businesswomen. The only African-American to graduate from the San Diego's Maison De-Beneux institution, Ruby Raphael practiced her craft for four decades, and died in San Diego in September 1974. While the building is no longer present, the site of this African-American operated business is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(29) Richmond Hotel, 136 F Street**

The Hotel Richmond was one of the early residential hotels open to African-Americans, attracting migrants to the city and providing entrepreneurial opportunities through proprietorship. An early enterprise of successful merchant Joe E. Robinson and a starting point for entrepreneur Robert North, the Hotel Richmond is associated with some of early twentieth-century San Diego's pioneering businessmen. While the building is no longer present, the site of this African-American operated business is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(30) Rose Park, between 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, Island, and J**

Next to the Arden Dairy, Rose Park was a city-owned park occupying the block between 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, Island Avenue and J Street, on the western edge of a concentration of African-American residences during the mid-twentieth century. This centrally located public park was used by the African-American community, and anchored the hotels and social spaces to the west with the residences and local shops to the east. While the park has been developed, the site of this community space is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(31) Second Baptist Church/First Street Baptist, 115 B Street**

This site is the former location of the Second Baptist Church (also the First Street Baptist and, today, Calvary Baptist). Settling here in a relocated house of worship, the congregation played an active role among San Diego's African-American community. Hosting Race Problem Forums as well as national officers of the N.A.A.C.P., the church remained at this location until moving to a new facility in 1926. While the building is no longer present, the site of this African-American religious facility is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(32) Star Barber Shop, 308 Market Street**

African-American Ket Hawkins, listed in both the 1932 and 1936 Colored Directories as one of the city's most popular barbers, was the proprietor of the Star Barber Shop at this location for fifteen years. While the building is no longer present, the site of this African-American operated business is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(33) Whithubbard Beauty Shop, 320 16<sup>th</sup> Street**

This location is the former site of the Whithubbard Beauty Shop, owned and operated between 1928 and 1933 by stylist and "beauty culturess" C.C. Whithubbard, graduate of the premiere black beauty school in the country (1924 to 1936) (Colored Directory 1932:76). Also a residence, the building continued to serve as a salon until 1935; the following year it became the office of prominent African-American physician Dr. F. C. Calvert until 1940. While the building is no longer present, the site of the practices of these two well-respected local African-American residents is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(34) Yesmar Hotel/Anita Hotel, 422 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

This building was operated by famed African-American entrepreneur and owner-operator of the Douglas Hotel, George Ramsey, from 1915 until c.1921 and by African-American businesswoman Anna B. Brown as the Anita Hotel until 1924. While the building is no longer present, the site of this African-American operated business and residence is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(35) Yesmar Hotel/Padre Hotel, 620-636 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue**

The location of multiple African-American shops, businesses, and hotels between 1926 and the early 1950s, and associated with high-profile citizen Mr. Al Ramsey during its heyday, the Yesmar Hotel/Padre Hotel was one of the bustling social and residential sites for San Diego's African-American community. While the building is no longer present, the site represents the residential, commercial, and recreational endeavors of San Diego's African-American community and is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District

**(36) The Yokum, 1131 Market Street**

In existence by 1909 and managed by African-American Emma Samuels (Goodwin) until its closure in 1920, The Yokum served as the residence for multiple African-Americans lodgers during its operation. While the building is no longer present, the site of this African-American operated business and residence is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

**(37) Young Inn, 1039 K Street**

Rented rooms open to the African-American community during the 1920s and 1930s, the Young Inn was home for a time to Peter E. Robinson and his wife, Betty, who later operated the Simmons Hotel as well as John Craft, a successful businessman and N.A.A.C.P. San Diego chapter president in 1932. While the building no longer stands, this former residential and entrepreneurial site is worthy of recognition as part of the African-American Thematic Historic District.

## **2. African-American Thematic Historic District**

The proposed African-American Thematic Historic District in downtown San Diego reflects the residential, commercial, and institutional development of San Diego's African-American community, and the buildings, sites and locales that comprise the district stand as testament to the strong heritage and vibrant life of this once-thriving area. The buildings and sites contributing to the African-American Thematic Historic District encapsulate the experiences of migration,

community-building, and even segregation in San Diego that echoes the experiences of African-Americans throughout the nation over the course of the twentieth century. Many of these locations are also associated with significant individuals in the African-American community, including E. W. Anderson, Howard “Skippy” Smith, and Walter Fuller, among others who remain well-known and well-respected today. Taken together, the resources that comprise the African-American Thematic Historic District are reflective of events and historical trends that shaped all Americans’ history. It is clear that the totality of these resources form a district associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national history, California’s history and cultural heritage, and the history of the City of San Diego. Furthermore, given that many of the historic buildings relating to the African-American experience downtown have been demolished, the value of the proposed district, encompassing standing resources and sites representative of the development of the African-American community, is certainly heightened. As such, the district appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Places, and the City of San Diego Historical Site Register under the respective eligibility criterion A for each register.

In the context of the City of San Diego’s significance guidelines and Historical Resources Board Policy, these resources and sites do constitute a finite group of resources which relate to one another in a clearly distinguishable way by a common theme of the development and contributions of the African-American community in downtown San Diego. The proposed African-American Thematic Historic District would appear to reach significance under the Historical Resources Board guidelines for evaluating districts under both the Common Heritage and Landmark Supportive criteria. The proposed district is clearly associated with and reflects the growth and development of San Diego’s African-American community as well as its contributions to the development of the city itself. In addition, the district is comprised of a number of quality, individual resources, many already recognized as part of the historic Gaslamp Quarter, whose significance in relation to the African-American community is supported by other buildings and sites which made up the fabric of everyday life for African-Americans in downtown San Diego. Because of the nature of the Thematic Historic District, its defining characteristics are considered to be the association of its contributing resources with the civic, religious, social, and economic growth and development of downtown San Diego’s African-American community.

Research was conducted to identify National Register-listed districts associated with African-American history for comparison with the currently proposed African-American Thematic Historic District, in order to adequately contextualize the proposed district and its significance. Table 4 illustrates those districts on the National Register that are built around African-American history.

Particular patterns emerge when examining these districts and the histories they represent. Jim Crow laws in the south, as well as restrictive covenants and generalized discrimination in other areas like San Diego, helped to create geographically distinct and internally viable African-American communities in cities around the nation. Having developed means of self-supporting social, religious, and commercial enterprises, thriving African-American communities began to disperse following desegregation, as in the case of the community of Lincolnville in St. Augustine, Florida where integration “diminished the need for some of the black businesses, which were now forced to compete with better-financed white businesses for customers in the black community.”



**Table 4. National-Registered Districts Associated with African-American History**

<b>DISTRICT NAME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>BOUNDARIES</b>	<b>PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>THEMES/NOTES</b>	<b>BUILDINGS</b>
Fourth Avenue Historic District	Birmingham, Alabama	1600-1800 blocks of 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue North; portion of 300 block of 17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> Streets North	1908-1941	“Heart of Black Birmingham’s social and cultural life”; construction halted with depression; dispersal after end of segregation; also revitalization today	Colored Masonic Temple, Famous Theater and Carver Cinema (for black patrons); Alabama Penny Savings Bank - leading black newspaper building/professional & political center
Smithfield Historic District	Birmingham, Alabama	Bounded by 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, 6 <sup>th</sup> Street, 4 <sup>th</sup> Terrace, and 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	1890-1930	One of earliest black residential neighborhoods; residential segregation; development of class system in black community	Homes of prominent Birmingham African Americans; homes constructed by well-known black architect and black contractor
North Lawrence-Monroe Street Historic District	Montgomery, Alabama	16 specific addresses on Monroe and North Lawrence Streets	early 1900s to mid-1940s	black-owned, black-managed, and black-supported businesses	Newspaper offices, shoe shop, theater, doctors, barbers, morticians, hotels and rooming houses, restaurants, mutual benefit societies
Strivers’ Section Historic District	Washington, D.C.	Bounded by New Hampshire and Florida, 17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> Streets along T, U, and Willard Streets NW	1870s to present (?)	residential; “community of Negro aristocracy” bordering black cultural corridor of U Street; many designed by prominent architects	Frederick Douglass-associated buildings, architect Calvin Brent home, entrepreneur James C. Dancy home
Pleasant Street Historic District	Gainesville, Florida	Roughly bounded by NW 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, NW 1 <sup>st</sup> Street, NW 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and NW 6 <sup>th</sup> Street	Post Civil-War to 1930?	earliest and most important black residential neighborhood	Civic, businesses, church leaders’ residences; previously also black-operated insurance offices; churches; educational institutions
Northwest Historic District	West Palm Beach, Florida	Roughly bounded by Tamarind Avenue, 11 <sup>th</sup> Street, Rosemary Avenue, and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street	1910s to desegregation	city’s segregated black community; residential and commercial core, entertainment center	? - homes, businesses, churches, social clubs, civic groups
Lincolntonville Historic District	St. Augustine, Florida	Bounded by Cedar, Ribiera, Cerro, and Washington & DeSoto Place	1866 to desegregation	residential subdivision established in 1866 in city lease grant	residences of civic and political leaders
Fort Hill Historic District	Macon, Georgia	Roughly bounded by Emery Highway, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street Extension, Mitchell and Morrow Streets and Schaeffer Place	1870-1941	“residential, commercial, and community institutional buildings”	working class and upper-middle-class homes, Burdell School building, schools, churches, stores
Reese Street Historic District	Athens, Georgia	Roughly bounded by Meigs, Finley, Broad, and Harris Streets	late 19 <sup>th</sup> to early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries	“residential, commercial, and institutional development”	schools, residences (other buildings?: “one of the most intact black districts in the state”)
West Hancock Avenue Historic District	Athens, Georgia	Roughly bounded by Hill, Franklin, and Broad Streets and the Plaza Athens	late 19 <sup>th</sup> to early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries	residential, with supporting businesses	primarily modest vernacular residences; associated grocery stores, churches, hospital (still extant?)
Indiana Avenue Historic District	Indianapolis, Indiana	500 block of Indiana Avenue between North, Central Canal, Michigan, and West Streets	early years of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century	remains of a “once-thriving commercial strip”; racially-integrated owners, but predominantly black clientele	former businesses in standing buildings?

Boston African American National Historic Site	Boston, Massachusetts	Northern Slope of Beacon Hill and discontinuous Black Heritage Trail	1800s	“history and architecture of a free black community active during the 1800s in the abolition movement”	Oldest extant black church building in New England; residences of civic, political, abolitionist leaders, schools, meeting houses
18 <sup>th</sup> and Vine Historic District	Kansas City, Missouri	Roughly bounded by 18 <sup>th</sup> Street, Woodland Avenue, 18 <sup>th</sup> Street, and The Paseo	late 19 <sup>th</sup> and early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries	development of black commerce; development of jazz (1920s-1930s)	commercial buildings; jazz - Lincoln Building, Gem Theater, and New Rialto Theater; some residential buildings
Beach Boulevard Historic District	St. Louis, Missouri	Roughly bounded by Beach Boulevard, Necaise Avenue, Seminary Drive, and 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Streets (175 acres)	1790-1940s	Architecture; only some buildings associated with African Americans	shotgun creole cottages; religious & educational building, community organization, churches
Merrehope Historic District	Meridian, Mississippi	Roughly bounded by 33 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue, 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, 14 <sup>th</sup> Street, 25 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 8 <sup>th</sup> Street	“Golden Age” - early 1900s?	“black heritage and progress in Meridian during the city’s Golden Age development”; middle class residences and churches as well as commercial	former black businesses and institutions
Moore Square Historic District	Raleigh, North Carolina	Roughly bounded by Person, Morgan, Wilmington, and Davie Streets; only East Hargett Street area associated with African-Americans	1920s-1930s	“locus of nearly all black businesses and professional services in Raleigh during the first half of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century” Prosperous black business district, hub of black community	buildings of former hotel, banks, real estate/insurance, foundry, retail; some black-built; library
East Wilson Historic District	Wilson, North Carolina	Roughly bounded by East Gold & Academy Streets, Ward Boulevard, Woodard Avenue, Elvie Street, and Railroad & Pender Streets	early-20th century	African-American neighborhood	residential
Sixth Street Historic District	Austin, Texas	Roughly bounded by 5 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , and Lavaca Streets & I-35	late 19 <sup>th</sup> to early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries	black business activity in Austin; reputation as shopping location for community	physician’s office, grocery, other black-operated businesses

(National Park Service 1991). Still, despite the cohesiveness of the African-American communities in cities throughout the country, modern development has taken its toll and most African-American districts consist of discontinuous resources, defined only by rough boundaries.

Like other ethnic landscapes in California and elsewhere, the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District maintains standing buildings from the community's downtown heyday. Communities are comprised of the "social clubs, restaurants, meeting halls, and barbershops" and other small businesses that functioned in the midst of an ethnic enclave like those remaining from the African-American community in downtown San Diego today (Howie 2003:34). Urban renewal projects beginning in the 1960s gave new life to downtown areas, but often at the expense of historic - and in particular ethnic historic - neighborhoods throughout the United States. As in the case of the construction of Interstate 5 through San Diego, freeway development often aided in severing communities from their urban roots, and sometimes even from other geographic areas of their own communities (see, for example, Praetzellis 2001, Howie 2003:36). Recognizing San Diego's downtown African-American community in all its forms through designation of the African-American Thematic Historic District is a beginning step toward reconciling the present with a past that has been too long overlooked.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Downtown San Diego is unlike other African-American historic districts in Atlanta or Harlem, which both have large African-American communities living within their historic districts. For example, Atlanta's district includes historic structures (including a church, visitor center, and memorial) related to Martin Luther King Jr., as well as churches and businesses that continue to serve the African-American community, and a residential neighborhood.

For San Diego the question becomes how to preserve what structures remain, and bring the once vibrant African-American presence in the downtown area back to life. In the Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District, an important step was to identify the buildings related to Asian Pacific history, which this study has done through research and with the help of long-time members of San Diego's African-American community. Another major step was saving the 1927 Chinese Mission church from demolition and converting it into a Chinese Historical Museum (Saito 2003).

Possibilities to explore include:

1. Preserve the major significant buildings within the areas designated as the thematic district. This could include all of the buildings listed as important and significant in the previous section.
2. Increase the signage and outdoor art within the study area to explain and exhibit the rich African-American heritage of the area. Examples might include a more dramatic and visible display and plaque at the site of the Douglas Hotel, the Yesmar Hotel, the existing building that housed the Pacific Parachute Factory, the Vine/Carter Hotel (this interpretive plan is in the works), and at other sites.
3. Make this study or some version of it available on a permanent basis via the internet on the Centre City Development Corporation website, in libraries, and at schools. This will ensure that the information provided in this document is accessible to a larger audience and fulfills an educational need. In addition, place copies of this document as well as archival material obtained as part of the study and future multimedia components such as interactive cd-roms in publicly accessible locations including, but not limited to, the Malcolm X Branch of the San Diego Public Library, the California Room of the San Diego Public Library Central Branch, San Diego State University, the University of San Diego, the University of California San Diego, and the San Diego Historical Society.
4. Develop a brochure and other materials to promote and facilitate a walking or cycling tour of the thematic district and of other buildings and places important in the preservation and interpretation of Black history in the study area.
5. Collaborate with the John Ritchey Foundation, San Diego Padres, and other organizations to develop a more broad based interpretive program with an emphasis on Black players in the minor and major leagues, the connection of the early San Diego Padres with John

Ritchey and desegregation, and to take advantage of the nearly two million people who will visit the ballpark over a given season.

6. Collaborate with other interested organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Convention Center to develop interpretive and educational programs to share the information obtained in this study with not only the broader San Diego community but visitors to the city as well.

## **VIII. GLOSSARY**

African-American- A Black American of African ancestry.

Bootblack- A person who cleans and polishes shoes for a living.

California Register of Historic Resources- Mandated by California Public Resources Code §5024.1, a listing of California's significant historical and archaeological sites.

CEQA- California Environmental Quality Act.

Colored- Interpreted in this study to mean persons of African descent.

Discontiguous- Lacking a connected boundary or edge, not touching or adjacent.

Entrepreneur- A person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture.

Historic Contexts- Patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning within history or prehistory is made clear.

Integration- The bringing of people of different racial or ethnic groups into unrestricted and equal association, as in society or an organization; desegregation.

Jim Crow Laws- Any of the laws that enforced racial segregation in the U.S. South between the end (1877) of the formal Reconstruction period and the beginning of a strong civil-rights movement (1950s).

Mulatto- A person of mixed white and black ancestry.

N.A.A.C.P.- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

National Register of Historic Places- The Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Negro- Historical term for a Black person, or a person with dark skin who comes from Africa or whose ancestors came from Africa.

NHPA- National Historic Preservation Act.



Porro College- The first cosmetology school geared toward training specialists for African-American hair, opened by Annie Malone in St. Louis, Missouri in 1917.

Porter- A railroad employee who assists passengers, or a person employed to carry burdens, especially an attendant who carries travelers' baggage at a hotel or transportation station.

Proprietor- One who owns or manages a business or other such establishment.

Restrictive Covenants- A clause in a contract that requires one party to do, or refrain from doing, certain things. Often, a restriction on a borrower imposed by a lender. Also called covenant.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map- An important record of urban growth and development in the United States during the past one hundred years, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps contain data used in estimating the potential risk for urban structures and includes such information as their construction material, height, and function as well as the location of lot lines. The Sanborn Map Company has been the dominant American publisher of fire insurance maps and atlases for more than seventy years. Founded by D. A. Sanborn in 1867, the firm has issued and periodically updated detailed plans of 12,000 American cities and towns.

Segregation- The policy or practice of separating people of different races, classes, or ethnic groups, as in schools, housing, and public or commercial facilities, especially as a form of discrimination.

Stingaree- Stingaree, or stingray, a fish with a barbed stinger once common in San Diego Bay, the term came to refer to the red-light district in the Gaslamp Quarter.

Thematic District- A finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way by a common theme related to historical context, architectural style, development period, or other characteristics, where visual continuity is not significant and sites are not necessarily located within a geographically definable area.

Theme- The background historical processes identified through scholarly research that are an important cumulative result of individual developments.

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**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_

HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_

Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_

NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

P1. Other Identifier:

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

**a. County:** San Diego

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.

c. Address: City: San Diego Zip: 92101

d. UTM: Zone \* ; NAD \* ; \* mE/ \* mN

e. Other Locational Data: Discontiguous area bounded by F Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Island Avenue and Commercial Street

P3a. **Description:**

Roughly bounded by F Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Island Avenue and Commercial Street, the Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District is composed of discontiguous resources representing the surviving remnants of the city's downtown African-American community between 1900 and 1960. Reflecting the residential, commercial, and institutional development of San Diego's African-American community, the buildings that comprise the district testify to the strong heritage and vibrant life of this once-thriving area. Contributing elements to the district consist of 16 discontiguous buildings; all other properties within the area surrounded by F Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Island Avenue and Commercial Street are non-contributing elements. The contributing elements include buildings that served as residences, rooming houses and hotels, black-owned and/or operated businesses, and entertainment and social centers for African-Americans downtown. Still standing today are the buildings that once housed other prominent African-American owned and operated businesses such as Skippy Smith's Pacific Parachute Company, the Clermont/Coast Hotel, the Carter/Vine Hotel, and Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers. African-American owned and operated doctors' offices, shoe stores, cafes, pool halls, barbers, and beauty parlors catered to the community as did entertainment venues like the Crossroads Jazz Club. Desegregation led to the community's relocation to the southeast, and the number of African-American owned, operated, and patronized establishments in the downtown area declined. The downtown area has undergone a great deal of change in the past few decades, and modern development has kept the city a thriving metropolis. This historically important district constitutes an enduring manifestation of the diverse experiences and lasting contributions of San Diego's downtown African-American community.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP36. Ethnic Minority Property (AA African Americans)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photograph or Drawing: see attached Location Map

P5b. Description of Photo: n/a

P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:** n/a (see attached Primary Forms for Contributing Element information)

P8. **Recorded by:**

Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, Heather Kwiatkowski  
Mooney and Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

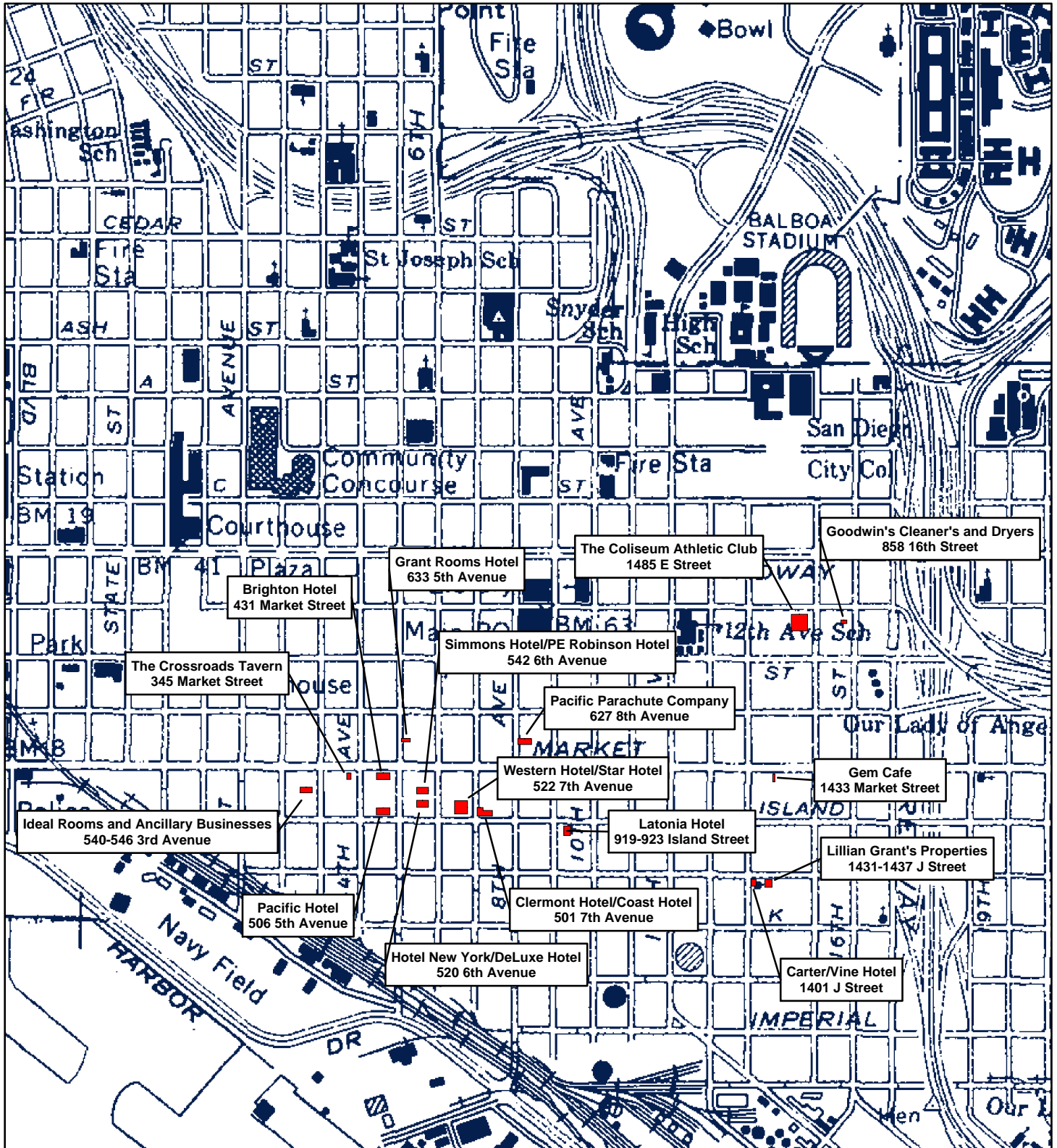
P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:** Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other: Primary Records for Contributing Elements of District

### LOCATION MAP



Page 3 of 22

**Resource Name or #:** Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District

D1. Historic Name: n/a

D2. Common Name: n/a

**D3. Detailed Description:**

The Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District consists of 16 discontiguous contributing elements bound by F Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Island Avenue and Commercial Street. Contributing elements are linked by their significance to and association with San Diego's historic downtown African-American community. Following the establishment of New Town on San Diego Bay, today's downtown, African-Americans and other area residents began to move into the developing harbor city. Later, the first world war, the Exposition, and the economic boom leading up to the downturn in 1929 led to, and supported, the migration of thousands of African-Americans into San Diego. In the early decades of the twentieth century, San Diego's African-American residents coalesced into a vibrant community, with its own businesses, organizations, and residential concentrations, remaining examples of which are recognized as contributing elements to this historic district. Development of San Diego's downtown area has changed the character of the city over the course of the twentieth century and many of the historic properties associated with the African-American community's presence downtown have been demolished. Remaining properties which manifest the diverse experiences and lasting contributions of San Diego's downtown African-American community and are considered contributing elements to the district are:

Brighton Hotel, 431 Market Street, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Carter/Vine Hotel, 1401 J Street, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Clermont Hotel/Coast Hotel, 501 7th Avenue, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
The Coliseum Athletic Club, 1485 E St, HP42. Stadium/sports arena, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
The Crossroads Tavern, 345 Market Street, HP6. Commercial Building, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Gem Café, 1433 Market Street, HP6. Commercial Building, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers, 858 16th Street, HP6. Commercial Building, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Grant Rooms Hotel, 633 5th Avenue, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Hotel New York/De Luxe Hotel, 520 6th Avenue, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Ideal Rooms and Ancillary Businesses, 540-546 3rd Avenue, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP6. Commercial Building, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Latonía Hotel, 919-923 Island Avenue, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Lillian Grant Properties, 1431-1437 J Street, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Pacific Hotel, 506 5th Avenue, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Pacific Parachute Company, 627 8th Avenue, HP6. Commercial Building, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Simmons Hotel / PE Robinson Hotel, 542 6th Avenue, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA  
Western Hotel / Star Hotel, 522 7th Avenue, HP3. Multiple family property, HP5. Hotel/motel, HP36. Ethnic Property - AA

**D4. Boundary Description:** Bounded by F Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Island Avenue and Commercial Street in the downtown area of the City of San Diego

**D5. Boundary Justification:** The boundaries of the district were recognized as those streets which encompassed with 16 discontiguous resources within the broader Centre City Redevelopment Project area consisting of East Village Redevelopment District, the Gaslamp Quarter, the Marina Area, and the southern Core Redevelopment District.

**D6. Significance:** see attached Continuation Sheet

**D7. References:** see attached Continuation Sheet

**D8. Evaluator:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, Heather Kwiatkowski **Date:** May 18, 2004  
**Affiliation and Address:** Mooney and Associates, 9903-B Businesspark Avenue, San Diego, CA 92131

**Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, Heather Kwiatkowski  
**Date:** May 18, 2004

Continuation  Update

**D6. Significance:**

**Theme:** African-American History  
**Period of Significance:** 1900-1960

**Area:** San Diego  
**Applicable Criteria:** A

The Downtown San Diego African-American Thematic Historic District reflects the residential, commercial, and institutional development of San Diego's African-American community, and the buildings, sites and locales that comprise the district stand as testament to the strong heritage and vibrant life of this once-thriving area. The buildings contributing to the African-American Thematic Historic District encapsulate the experiences of migration, community-building, and even segregation in San Diego echoing the experiences of African-Americans throughout the nation over the course of the twentieth century. Many of them are also associated with significant individuals in the African-American community, including E. W. Anderson, Howard "Skippy" Smith, Walter Fuller, among other persons who remain well-known and well-respected today. Taken together, the resources that comprise the African-American Thematic Historic District are reflective of events and historical trends that shaped all Americans' history. It is clear that, taken together, these resources form a district associated with events and activities that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national history, California's history and cultural heritage, and the history of the City of San Diego. Further, given that many of the historic buildings relating to the African-American experience downtown have been demolished, the value of the proposed district, encompassing standing resources and sites representative of the development of the African-American community, is certainly heightened. As such, the district appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Places, and the City of San Diego Historical Site Register under the respective eligibility criterion A for each register.

In the context of the City of San Diego's significance guidelines and Historical Resources Board Policy, these resources and sites do constitute a finite group of resources which relate to one another in a clearly distinguishable way by a common theme of the development and contributions of the African-American community in downtown San Diego. The proposed African-American Thematic Historic District would appear to reach significance under the Historical Resources Board guidelines for evaluating districts under both the Common Heritage and Landmark Supportive criteria. While the integrity of the individual contributing elements varies, with some slated for demolition and others rehabilitated as part of the historic Gaslamp Quarter the proposed district is clearly associated with and reflects the growth and development of San Diego's African-American community as well as its contributions to the development of the city itself. In addition, the district is comprised of a number of quality, individual resources, many already recognized as part of the historic Gaslamp Quarter, whose significance in relation to the African-American community is supported by other buildings and sites which made up the fabric of everyday life for African-Americans in downtown San Diego. Because of the nature of the Thematic Historic District, its defining characteristics are considered to be the association of its contributing resources with the civic, religious, social, and economic growth and development of downtown San Diego's African-American community.

**Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, Heather Kwiatkowski  
**Date:** May 18, 2004

Continuation  Update

**D7. References:**

**Archival Sources**

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Vertical Files: Churches, Streetscapes, Clubs, Hotels, Businesses, Education, Black History/Culture  
Photograph Folders: "Streetscapes," "Hotels," Baynard Collection, "Drawings" Folder  
Collected Oral Histories and Oral History Database
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Selected Building Records and Property Index Records
- San Diego County Recorder's Office Birth, Death, and Marriage Records  
Selected Grant Deed Records
- San Diego County Superior Court Divorce Records
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- California Room of the San Diego Public Library  
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San Diego City Phone Directories, 1900-1956  
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City of San Diego Census, 1920 and 1930
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1979b. Block 081/94, Lot "L," Horton's Addition: Frey Building. On file at the office of Marie Burke Lia.  
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**Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, Heather Kwiatkowski  
**Date:** May 18, 2004

Continuation  Update

**D7. References (continued):**

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**Report Reference**

- Carrico, Richard and Stacey C. Jordan.  
2004. Centre City Development Corporation Downtown San Diego African-American Heritage Study. Submitted by Mooney and Associates to Centre City Development Corporation. May 2004.



**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Brighton Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 431 Market Street; Timken Building (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 34)

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.

c. Address: 431 Market Street City: San Diego Zip: 92101

d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 484960 mE/ 3619290 mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-082-17-00; Horton's Addition, Block 082/95, Lot L

P3a. **Description:** Two story building, first known as 1331 H Street, that was constructed in 1894. It consisted of retail shops, such as stores, restaurants, and a shooting gallery, on the first floor with available lodging rooms on the second. It was associated with Mrs. Anna Brown, a well-known entrepreneur in the city who is also associated with the Yesmar Hotel/Anita Hotel. While it does not appear to merit recognition as a significant individual resource at the national, state, or local level, Anna Brown's role in the complex network of African-American businesses in San Diego combined with the Brighton's place as one of the few residential hotels operated by, and likely occupied by, African-Americans in the early decades of the twentieth century makes it significant as a contributing resource to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Sung Hyun Kim  
6174 Bernadette Lane  
San Diego, CA 92120

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:** Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study.

P5. Description of Photo: View south/southwest.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Vine/Carter Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 1401 J Street, San Diego Historical Site Board Register No. 632

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)  
b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma **Date:** 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) **Unsectioned;** S.B.B.M.  
c. **Address:** 1401 J Street **City:** San Diego **Zip:** 92101  
d. **UTM:** Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485775 mE/ 3619062 mN  
e. **Other Locational Data:** APN 535-373-01-00; Horton's Addition; Block 172, Lot A

P3a. **Description:** Two story building that was constructed in April 1912 and functioned as a lodging complex since it was first opened as Enid Furnished Rooms in 1913. By 1928, it was known as the Vine Apartments. This property was determined on October 23, 2003 to be a significant individual resource under City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criterion A for its association with the African-American community in San Diego (Historic Resource Number 632). The operation of the hotel during the period of racial segregation in San Diego represents the successful establishment of an African-American owned, operated, and patronized business enterprise in the city as well as the development of community-based businesses for African-Americans. Additionally, it marks the residence and business of a successful African-American entrepreneurial family, represented by Alonzo and Katie Carter, in the downtown area. While the property does not appear to meet the criteria for significance at the state or national level, its history and its previous recognition as an individual historic resource by the City of San Diego make it a significant contributing resource to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**

San Diego Rescue Mission  
PO Box 80427  
San Diego, CA 92138

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View south.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Clermont Hotel/Coast Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, San Diego Historical Site Board Register No. 509

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)  
b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma **Date:** 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) **Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.**  
c. **Address:** 501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue **City:** San Diego **Zip:** 92101  
d. **UTM:** Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485173 mE/ 3619211 mN  
e. **Other Locational Data:** APN 535-112-04-00; Block 98, Lot F

P3a. **Description:** Three story building that was built sometime prior to 1887. In 1887, the building was known as the Occidental Hotel and was listed as a lodging house. It continued to function as a lodging facility and by the early 1920s, the building was associated with the African-American community and segregation. A segregated hotel following its purchase by Charles T. Robinson in 1938, this property was advertised as a "Hotel for Colored People" during the 1940s. Its association with segregation and San Diego's African-American community led to its designation as an individual resource by the city's Historical Resources Board on December 20, 2001. While it does not appear to meet the National Register or California Register criteria for significance as an individual resource, it constitutes a significant contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Urban Coast, LLC.  
C/O Untied Real Estate  
811 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
San Diego, CA 92101

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View east.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Coliseum Athletic Club

P1. Other Identifier: 1485 E Street

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.  
c. Address: 1485 E Street City: San Diego Zip: 92101  
d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485872 mE/ 3619635 mN  
e. Other Locational Data: APN 534-354-02-00; Culverwell's Addition, Block 6, Lots 1 thru 4

P3a. **Description:** One story building designed with a Spanish Eclectic architectural influence. Has a massed, square floor plan. Built in 1926 as a spectator arena and sports center, but became especially known for its boxing matches. Frequented by African-Americans and famed local African-American boxer Archie Moore fought often at this establishment. This property represents a downtown establishment that not only was open to African-Americans but also helped sustain African-American contributions to sports and athletics. While much of the history of this building remains unknown and therefore the resource cannot be argued to be significant as an individual resource under local, state or national criteria, its association with the African-American community and with famed local boxer Archie Moore in particular would appear to make it a significant contributing element to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP42 (Stadium/sports arena), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Navarra Family Trust  
3682 Kite Street  
San Diego, CA 92103

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View southeast.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):



**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Crossroads Tavern

P1. **Other Identifier:** 345 Market Street, Frey Building (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 81)

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

**a. County:** San Diego

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.

c. **Address:** 345 Market Street City: San Diego Zip: 92101

d. **UTM:** Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 484884 mE/ 3619290 mN

e. **Other Locational Data:** APN 535-081-17-00; Horton's Addition, Block 081/94, Lot L

P3a. **Description:** Two story building, constructed between 1910-1911. Recognized as the oldest live jazz club in San Diego, the Crossroads Tavern reputedly hosted Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong as well as local African-American jazz luminary Walter Fuller after opening in 1959. While not enough information has been found to adequately evaluate its significance at the national or state level, its association with well-known local African-American musician Walter Fuller would appear to make it a significant individual resource under City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criterion A as well as a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP6 (Commercial Building), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**

Frey Block Association  
1267 Muirlands Vista Way  
La Jolla, CA 92307

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**

Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. **Description of Photo:** View southwest.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Gem Café

P1. Other Identifier: 1433 Market Street

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.  
c. Address: 1433 Market Street City: San Diego Zip: 92101  
d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485817 mE/ 3619293 mN  
e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-153-11-00; Block 174 E½, Lot J thru L

P3a. **Description:** Long rectangular one-story building that was in place and serving as a restaurant as early as 1921. It housed two restaurants run and frequented by African-Americans, including the Kingery Clyde Restaruant (Mr. And Mrs. W. M. Allen, proprietors, 1925-1926) and the Gem Café (Mrs. Hattie T. Payne, proprietor, 1933-1936). A popular eating establishment under Mrs. Payne, the Gem Café was one of the many now-forgotten shops and restaurants catering to the African-American community in downtown San Diego. While the facts of its history do not make it significant under local, state, or national criteria as an individual resource, it is considered a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP6 (Commercial Building), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Market Street Association  
3731 Kingsley Street  
San Diego, CA 92106

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View southwest.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_

HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_

Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_

NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Goodwin's Cleaners and Dryers

P1. Other Identifier: 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.

c. Address: 858 16<sup>th</sup> Street City: San Diego Zip: 92101

d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485967 mE/ 3619637 mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 534-353-05-00; Block 1003.

P3a. **Description:** One-story rectangular building associated with African-American owners, Charles and Emma Goodwin, who opened a laundry service there in 1917. His business remained at this location for the next fifteen years. The unassuming building at 858 16th Street is one of the few standing remnants of the once vibrant area of downtown businesses operated by and serving African-Americans in San Diego. While not meeting the criteria for eligibility to the National Register, California Register, or City of San Diego Historical Resources Register, it does constitute a significant contributing resource of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP6 (Commercial Building), HP36 (African-American property)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Kruegel Howard and Ophelia Trust  
299 Hilltop Drive  
Chula Vista, CA 91910

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View west.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):



**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Grant Rooms Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 633 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Yuma Building, San Diego Historical Site Board Register No. 74

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

**a. County:** San Diego

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.

c. Address: 633 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92101

d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD83 ; 485009mE/ 3619370 mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-094-04-00; Horton's Addition, Block 094/87, Lot North ½ of D

P3a. **Description:** Three story brick Italianate-Baroque Revival building whose first story was constructed in 1882 with the upper floors added in 1888. By the early 1920s, the upper floors were associated with the African-American community as a lodging house operated by Mrs. Carrie De Frantz, an African-American woman. In conjunction with the renters documented through the 1920s and 1930s, this property also represents the role of African-American women in managerial positions in the downtown area through much of the twentieth century. While the building has already been recognized as an individual resource as San Diego Historical Site Board Register No. 74, the property designation should be amended to also reflect its significance under City of San Diego significance criterion A as a result of its deep connection with the historic African-American community in San Diego. Further, the Grant Rooms represents a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District. The lower floors housed commercial and retail businesses.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  
 Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**

Shea Bernard  
633 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View east.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_

HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_

Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_

NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Hotel New York / DeLuxe Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 520 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

**a. County:** San Diego

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.

c. Address: 520 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92101

d. UTM: Zone11 ; NAD 83 ; 485046 mE/ 3619230 mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-083-15-00; Block 96, Lot H

P3a. **Description:** Two story frame front building constructed in 1887. The floors were build twelve feet high, with the first floor housing two stores with lodgings being located above. It was associated with the African-American community, especially Robert and Helen North and Al Ramsey. A segregated hotel at mid-century, this property was open to the black community as early as 1920 when Robert North, the property's first African-American proprietor, managed the rooms. Later African-American proprietors included Al Ramsey and Mrs. Fern Martin. This historic structure, already recognized in different capacities, carries within it the story of African-Americans in the downtown area. Recognized as an individual resource as part of the historic Gaslamp Quarter District (Building No. 69), the Hotel New York/DeLuxe Hotel represents an oft-neglected part of San Diego's history, including the complex web of business associations between high-profile members of the historic African-American community. As such, the property appears eligible for designation under City of San Diego significance criterion A as a result of its deep connection with the historic African-American community in San Diego. In addition, the Hotel New York /DeLuxe Hotel represents a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**

Scott Bloom  
522 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View west.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #: Ideal Rooms and Ancillary Businesses**

P1. Other Identifier: 540-546 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Plants and fireproofing Building, San Diego Historical Site Board Register No. 207-1

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)  
b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.  
c. Address: 540-546 Third Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92101  
d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 484791 mE/ 3619259 mN  
e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-073-08-00; Block 93, Lot J

P3a. **Description:** Two story structure build in 1912. The ground floor was divided into two store fronts. The space has long been associated with Joe Robinson, a longtime resident and African-American businessman in San Diego. It functioned within the African-American community as a billiard club (ground floor) and lodging rooms (upper floor). This property was opened in 1914 by proprietor Joe Robison (spelled Robinson in City Directories and advertisements in the Colored Directories until 1940), a pioneering African-American entrepreneur and long-time resident of San Diego. Lasting into the 1950s, the building has been recognized as part of the Chinese/Asian Thematic Historic District, as well as an individual resource on May 23, 2002 under City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criterion A for its association with the African-American community. It is also considered a contributing resource to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multi-family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP6 (Commercial Building), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Amy Y. and Nancy F. Hom  
P. O. Box 121528  
San Diego, CA 92112

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View west.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Latonia Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 919-923 Island Avenue

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)  
b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.  
c. Address: 919-923 Island Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92101  
d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83; 485364mE/ 3619174 mN  
e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-126-02-00; Portion of Block 109, Lot A

P3a. **Description:** Two story square building with the second floor associated with the African-American community as available furnished rooms from 1925-1955. The Latonia Hotel was a mid-century segregated hotel, advertised as "A Hotel for Colored People" in the 1949 Directory, speaking to its role both historically and as a present day reminder of the experiences of San Diego's African-American community. While not enough information has been found to adequately evaluate its significance as an individual resource at the national, state or local level, its association with segregation in historic gives it significance as a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Benjamin R. Harrol and Gloria Poore  
923 Island Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski  
  
Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View south.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):



**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Lillian Grant Properties

P1. Other Identifier: 1431-1437 J Street, San Diego Historical Site Board Register No. 562

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

**a. County:** San Diego

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.

c. Address: 1431-1437 J Street City: San Diego Zip: 92101

d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485807 mE/ 3619061 mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-373-06-00; Horton's Addition, Block 172, West ½ of Lots K thru L

P3a. **Description:** Two story building complex with completed construction around April 1912. It was owned by African-American business woman Lillian Grant by 1941. The properties provided racially integrated housing during a time of segregation. In October 2002, the property was deemed historically significant by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board as reflecting the diverse social, cultural, and economic history of San Diego the late 19th and 20th centuries (1890-1953), and in particular the history of African-Americans. While this determination was overturned by the San Diego City Council in April 2003, the ownership, residence, and entrepreneurial history embodied by this space make it significant as a contributing resource to the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**

Rainey L. Tharpe  
1158 Avenida Azul  
San Marcos, CA 92069

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**

Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View south.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Pacific Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 506 Fifth Avenue

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

**a. County:** San Diego

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.

c. Address: 506 Fifth Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92101

d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 484960 mE/ 3619213 mN

e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-082-08-00; Horton's Addition, Block 95, Lot G

P3a. **Description:** Three story building that catered to the African-American community from 1926 to 1941, even though the primary proprietors were Japanese. Rooms on the building's upper floors were available to African-Americans throughout the 1930s with businesses on the ground floor offering services to African-Americans. An advertisement in the 1936 Directory of the Colored Residents of San Diego declared 'Welcome All!' It is not uncommon for individual properties in the downtown area to have a diversity of ethnic associations, and while the relationship of the Pacific Hotel/Callan Hotel with Asian residents of the city has been well-documented, its association with the African-American community has not. As such, while the evidence uncovered so far does not suggest significance as an individual resource at the national or state level, the property's City of San Diego designation should be amended to reflect its significance under the Historical Resources Board's significance criterion A as a result of its connection with the historic African-American community in San Diego. In addition, Pacific Hotel/Callan Hotel represents a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**

Callan Hotel, LLC  
502 Fifth Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92101

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View north.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):



**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Pacific Parachute Company

P1. Other Identifier: 627 Eighth Avenue

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)  
b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.  
c. Address: 627 Eighth Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92101  
d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485270 mE/ 3619369 mN  
e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-104-02-00; Block 84, Lot D

P3a. **Description:** Two story building build circa 1940 that represents one of the highlights of African-American entrepreneurship under the ownership of Howard "Skippy" Smith and Eddie "Rochester" Anderson. Operating from 1942-1944, the Pacific Parachute Company housed in the building contributed to the WW II manufacturing effort, as well as employing of the few integrated work forces in San Diego. The building represents one of the highlights of African-American entrepreneurship in San Diego and California as a whole. Insisting on an integrated work-force, and operating the first African-American owned war plant during World War II, Howard "Skippy" Smith achieved incredible heights in the social climate of the 1940s. Receiving the National Negro Business League's Spaulding Award as the number one African-American business in 1943, Skippy Smith and the Pacific Parachute Company were, despite the business' short tenure, deeply important to the war effort and the struggle for racial equality. Given the role of the Pacific Parachute Company in fighting segregation in the workplace and as the first African-American owned business contributing to the United States' efforts in World War II, it is likely that the Pacific Parachute Company has significance as an individual resource at the state and national levels under California and National Register criteria A and B. It clearly meets the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board criteria A and B as an individual resource, and is a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP6 (Commercial Building), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5. Description of Photo: View east.

P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Ralph Thompson Trust  
4350 Altamirano Way  
San Diego, CA 92103

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Simmons Hotel/PE Robinson Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 542 Sixth Avenue

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

- b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.
- c. Address: 542 Sixth Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92101
- d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485046 mE/ 3619259 mN
- e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-083-02-00; Block 96, Lot J

P3a. **Description:** Three story brick structure built in 1906 with two stores located on the first floor and lodgings on the second and third floors. While much of the history of this building has been recognized (Gaslamp Quarter Building No. 71), it is clear on deeper investigation that this building's past is intimately connected with African-Americans for much of the twentieth century. Operated, and eventually owned, by African-Americans from the early decades of the century, Simmons Hotel/P.E. Robinson Hotel not only served as a residence open to African-Americans, but was the site of long-running, successful business enterprises with a high profile in the city. With the hotel's rooms under African-American proprietorship from 1919 to 1964 and continually housing numerous African-American residents, this property appears eligible for designation under City of San Diego significance criterion A as a result of its deep connection with the historic African-American community in San Diego.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
McClurken Machiner  
P. O. Box 530038  
San Diego, CA 92153

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski

Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View west.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #: \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial: \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource Name or #:** Western Hotel/Star Hotel

P1. Other Identifier: 522 Seventh Avenue

P2. **Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted **a. County:** San Diego  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)  
b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Point Loma Date: 1967 (Photo Rev. 1975/Revised 1994) Unsectioned; S.B.B.M.  
c. Address: 522 Seventh Avenue City: San Diego Zip: 92101  
d. UTM: Zone 11 ; NAD 83 ; 485131 mE/ 3619223 mN  
e. Other Locational Data: APN 535-111-08-00; Block 97, Lots G thru H

P3a. **Description:** Two story building constructed circa 1914 which housed working-class African-American migrants in various service occupations available to the African-American community - including railroad porters, janitors, waiters, and drivers - through the 1920s and 1930s. While not enough information has been found to adequately evaluate its significance as an individual resource at the national, state or local level, its association with segregation in historic gives it significance as a contributing element of the proposed African-American Thematic Historic District.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP3 (Multiple family property), HP5 (Hotel/motel), HP36 (African-American property)

P4. **Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P6. **Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both

P7. **Owner and Address:**  
Hotel Etoile Corp  
2271 Via Media  
La Jolla, CA 92307

P8. **Recorded by:** Stacey Jordan, Stacie Wilson, and Heather Kwiatkowski  
  
Mooney & Associates  
9903-B Businesspark Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92131

P9. **Date Recorded:** May 2004

P10. **Survey Type:** Pedestrian

P11. **Report Citation:**  
Downtown San Diego, African-American Heritage Study

P5. Description of Photo: View south/southeast.

**Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):