CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH

History Advisory Board Report

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The History Advisory Board is a subset of the Bruce's Beach Task Force and the Bruce's Beach Task Force History Subcommittee, which was disbanded by the Manhattan Beach City Council on March 26, 2021. The members of the Task Force were essential to the development of this document.

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THE PROCESS

The Bruce's Beach history subcommittee was tasked to go through publicly available documents and sources in order to prepare an accurate factual synopsis of the timeline of events that occurred from when the Bruce family acquired their first property in Manhattan Beach in 1912 through the renaming of the park and installation of the Bruce's Beach plaque in 2007.

As part of this process, the subcommittee sought to verify facts and clarify folklore surrounding the events of the complaint of condemnation proceedings in Manhattan Beach in the 1920s. We compared the master's thesis of Robert L. Brigham and doctoral dissertation of Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson, as well as Dr. Jefferson's book, "Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era" with other reports from that time, specifically newspaper articles and government records.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and a flood at the Los Angeles Hall of Records, we have not been able to obtain all documentation we need to certify some claims. We've noted these instances where appropriate. It is a "living document" that we are dedicated to updating as more resources become available.

Finally, it is worth noting a statement made by Robert L. Brigham, whose 1956 Master's Thesis, "Land Ownership and Occupancy By Negroes In Manhattan Beach, California," has served as a primary resource on the history of Bruce's Beach. This statement has been particularly applicable to our own research and why we hoped to present this history as accurately as possible:

> *The misinformation the author encountered in seeking data on the Bruces and other individuals and incidents re-lated to his subject is significant as it indicates the ease with which fallacy can become 'fact' in a situation of this type.*

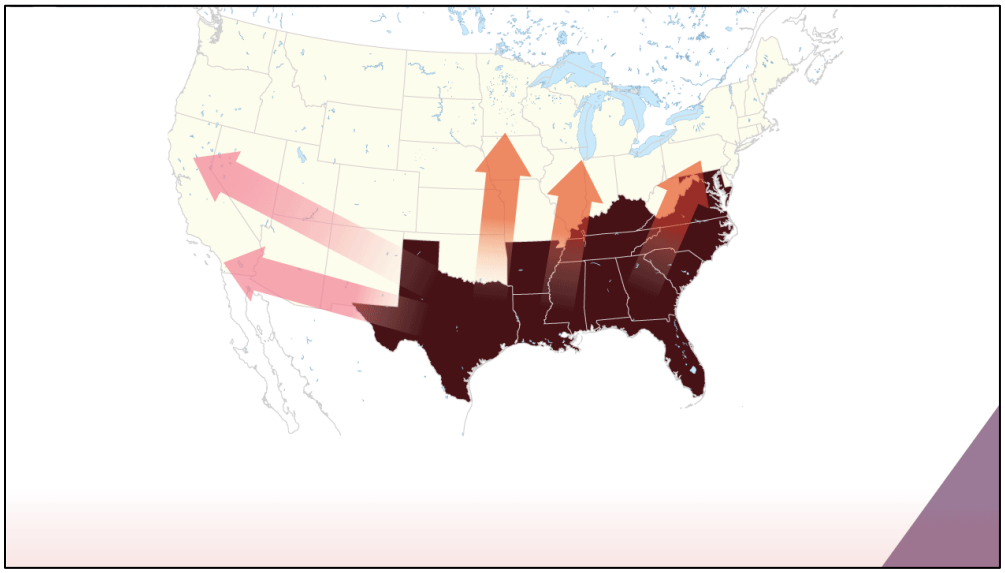
INTRODUCTION: BRIEF COMMENTS REGARDING CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

It is important to understand the historical context of the United States at the time the Bruces and other Black property owners were purchasing land in Los Angeles and Manhattan Beach. This was a very different Southern California than it is today in terms of race relations. It was the Jim Crow era where racial segregation was prevalent in both public and private practices. The following briefly summarizes a few of the contributing historical events.

The Railroad Boom

In 1881 the Southern Pacific Railroad linked Los Angeles directly with the eastern United States for the first time. In 1885, the Santa Fe Railroad opened a second line linking Los Angeles with the rest of the nation. In an article for the California Historical Society, Alison Rose Jefferson wrote, "The post-Civil War years into the early decades of the twentieth century, [B]lack men gained employment on the transcontinental railroad, most often as Pullman Company's Palace Car porters and waiters, helping to define American travel and becoming a symbol of upward mobility for [B]lack males during the nation's railroad transportation era."[1]

Population Increase of Los Angeles



Between 1916 and 1918 alone, 400,000 African Americans migrated north

In the early 1900s, economic and social opportunities were the cause of the first phase of Black migration out of the South. The Goodrich Company was building tire plants, the expanding railroad was in need of labor and service industries were growing. African

[1] Allison Rose Jefferson, "The Transcontinental Railroad, African Americans and the American Dream," 2019. Accessed May 4, 2021 https://californiahistoricalsociety.org/blog/the-transcontinental-railroad-african-americans-and-the-california-dream/

Americans were leaving the South at much higher rates than Whites and moving to regions that previously had little racial diversity. These movements dramatically changed the nation's racial distributions.[2]

From 1900-1920 the growth rate of Los Angeles exploded. An average of 23,710 new people moved every year, and the growth rate of the Black population equaled that of the city itself.[3]

Black Population of Los Angeles and Percentage of Population [4]

Year	Total Population	Black Population	Percentage of Total Population
1850	1,610	12	less than 1%
1860	4,385	66	1.50
1870	5,728	93	1.60
1880	11,183	102	less than 1%
1890	50,395	1,258	2.5
1900	102,479	2,131	2.01
1910	319,198	7,599	2.4
1920	576,673	15,579	2.7
1930	1,238,048	38,894	3.1

In his book, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*, Douglas Flamming stated that for Black Angelenos "the most important aspects of the city's origins were the racial characteristics of its founders. Virtually all of the first settlers were 'colored' in the European sense of the word." They were of mixed heritages of African, Native American, and Spanish descent. Most of the White Angelenos moved from slave states when California became a free state in 1850.

For Black Americans, California was the dream and the promise of the equality they were never given in the east. These opportunities also extended to home ownership. The

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[2] James Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).
[3] Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) 25.
[4] SurveyLA Citywide Historic Statement, 11.

large amounts of open land meant greater opportunity for home ownership. In 1910, the population was 319,198 and 36% of Los Angeles's Black families owned their homes.[5] This was compared to only 2.4 percent in New York City, 29.5 percent in Oakland, 11 percent in New Orleans and 16.5 percent in Birmingham.

Jefferson L. Edmunds, editor of the Black newspaper the *Liberator,* said, "California is the greatest state for the Negro" in 1902.[6] "Los Angeles is wonderful," gushed W.E.B. Du Bois. "Nowhere in the United States is the Negro so well and beautifully housed ... Out here in this matchless Southern California there would seem to be no limit to your opportunities or your possibilities."[7] Attorney Hugh Macbeth had just graduated from Harvard Law School in 1913 when he first visited Los Angeles. He wrote to his wife back on the east coast, "Come and dwell in God's Country."[8]

James and Lula Slaughter relocated to California from Georgia. Elizabeth Patterson was born in Tennessee. Black migrants quickly laid claim to Central Avenue between 8th and 20th Streets in Downtown Los Angeles, and the area became known as "Brick Block" - with clubs, churches Black-owned businesses and newspapers like the *California Eagle* supplying community needs.[9]

As the population increased, so did the racial tension. In the July 1912 issue of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) publication, *The Crisis*, Louise McDonald wrote in a letter to the editor, "We suffer almost anything (except lynching) right here in the beautiful land of sunshine. Civil privileges are here unknown. You can't bathe at the beaches, eat in any first class place, nor will the streetcar and sight-seeing companies sell us tickets if they can possibly help it. I am speaking from experience." [10]

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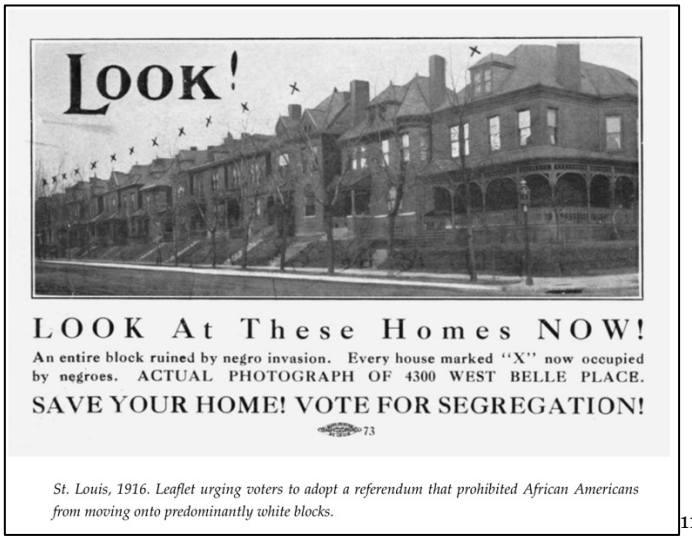
[5] Flamming, 51.
[6] Josh Sides. *LA City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*. (Berkley: University of California Press, 2006) 11.
[7] Ryan Reft, "*How Prop 14 Shaped California's Racial Covenants*. 2017. Accessed on May 21, 2021. https://www.kcet.org/shows/city-rising/how-prop-14-shaped-californias-racial-covenants
[8] Flamming, 50.
[9] Kelly Simpson, "The Great Migration: Creating a New Black Identity in Los Angeles," 2012, Accessed June 7, 2021, https://www.kcet.org/history-society/the-great-migration-creating-a-new-black-identity-in-los-angeles.
[10] Louise McDonald, Letter to the Editor, *The Crisis*, July 1912.

Racial Zoning



St. Louis, 1916. Leaflet urging voters to adopt a referendum that prohibited African Americans from moving onto predominantly white blocks.[11]

In his book, *Color of Law*, Richard Rothstein describes the racial zoning practices that began in 1880 that affected residential integration. During the early 1900s many towns across the country adopted policies forbidding Black people from residing or even being within the town borders after dark.[12] South Bay neighboring towns Hawthorne and Inglewood were both "sundown towns".[13]

During the early 1900s, zoning was frequently used as a means of segregation. The City of St. Louis and planning engineer Harland Bartholomew developed a series of zoning ordinances in 1919 to prevent movement into "finer residential districts…by colored people."[14]

These segregationist practices went as high as the national level. In 1913, one year after W.A. Bruce purchased her land in Manhattan Beach, President Woodrow Wilson approved segregation in government offices. Curtains were installed to separate [B]lack and [W]hite workers, [B]lack supervisors were demoted, and separate cafeterias were created. In 1921, Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, organized an Advisory Committee on Zoning to develop a manual on why cities should develop zoning ordinances and distributed them nationwide.[15] In 1924, the National Association of Real Estate Boards adopted a code of ethics that stated "a realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood…members of any race or

[11] Richard Rothstein, *Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2007), 36.
[12] Rothstein, 38.
[13] Loewen, James. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: Touchstone, 2006).
[14] Rothstein, 48.
[15] Rothstein, 43.

nationality…whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood."[16] This stayed in effect until the 1950s.

SurveyLA states, "The final and most long-lasting mechanism of segregation was [W]hite violence and intimidation…The actions ranged from polite requests to leave, to bombs, vandalism and death threats."[17]

Restrictive Covenants

In his book, *LA City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*, Josh Sides explored the discrepancy between what Edmunds and Du Bois had described and the segregated reality Blacks would encounter. Los Angeles "had one of the highest proportions of black homeowners of any major American city as well as an extensive network of racially restrictive housing covenants designed to minimize bac residential mobility."[18]

In 2005, the City of Los Angeles entered into a multi-year grant agreement with the J. Paul Getty Trust to complete a citywide historic resources survey, a process of systematically identifying and recording information on properties and neighborhoods that reflect Los Angeles's architectural, social, and cultural history. The project, called SurveyLA, is managed by the staff of the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) within the Department of City Planning (DCP).[19]

According to SurveyLA, "an extremely common tool of racial segregation was the restrictive covenant, used widely in Los Angles from 1900 to 1948. Restrictive covenants were legal clauses written into property deeds, which dictated that the owner could only sell or rent a property to 'Caucasians', otherwise the owner could lose the property." The covenants were described as "invisible walls of steel. The [W]hites surrounded us and made it impossible to go beyond these walls."[20] When these racial covenants were upheld by the California and U.S. Supreme Courts in 1919 and 1926, they became even more widespread. Finally, in 1968, the Fair Housing Act made them illegal.

Manhattan Beach was not exempt from racially restrictive covenants. In the conditions of a Grant Deed signed and dated March 19, 1925, for Lot 10, Block 14 of Tract 1638 in the City of Manhattan Beach – what is now on the corner of 35th Street and Palm Ave. – was the restriction that "said premises or any part thereof, shall not be sold, conveyed,

[16] Rothstein, 44.
[17] SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement, 45.
[18] Sides, 13.
[19] SurveyLA.
[20] Sides, 12.

leased, rented to or occupied by any person of other than the Caucasian or White race."[21] A similar restriction was conveyed in the Grant Deed for Lot 10, Block 23 of Tract 3395 in the City of Manhattan Beach, or what is today near the corner of 8th Street and Ardmore. It made the condition that "the property mentioned in this deed shall not be transferred, sold, assigned, given or rented to any person or persons not of the Caucasian race."[22]

The Shenk Rule

In 1912, Caleb Holden, a Black man, entered a bar. Holden was charged $1 for a beer while his White associate was charged a nickel. When the Los Angeles Mayor asked City Attorney John W. Shenk to look into the matter after outcry from Black residents, Shenk declared "that businesses had the right to charge whatever they desired and could change their prices at will." This led to unprecedented discrimination across the city. In response, a letter to the editor at *The Liberator* wrote, "Mr. Shenk completely nullified the Civil Rights bill in this state."[23]

Sides posited that "despite all the tangible assets Los Angeles offered, it was as rigidly defined by race as any southern hamlet."[24]

[21] Grant Deed, Title Guarantee and Trust Co., Esther L. (Urquhart) and A.P. Kanters to Edward H. Platt, February 26, 1925, Manhattan Beach Historical Society Collections.
[22] Book of Deeds (Los Angeles County) 4582, Page 246.
[23] "Shenk for Mayor? Wait!" *California Eagle,* April 4, 1913.
[24] Sides, 34.

ANNOTATED TIMELINE

Please note that these annotations are not weighted.

- Eyewitness account (1)
- Interview (other than first-hand/eyewitness) (2)
- Legal document (3)
- Newspaper/magazine report (4)
- Other archival document (5)
- Robert L. Brigham's master's thesis (6)
- Allison Rose Jefferson's doctoral dissertation (7)
- Dr. Jefferson's book, "Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era." (8)

Date	Event	Archival Source(s)	Annotation
February 1912	Mrs. W.A. Bruce purchases Lot 8, Block 5 in Peck's Manhattan Beach from Henry Willard of Los Angeles.	Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Los Angeles County, California	3
June 17, 1912	Mrs. W.A. Bruce opens portable cottage/stand; arrival of Black guests causes "agitation" of some White property owners and confrontation with guests accessing the ocean.	*Liberator*; *Los Angeles Times*	4, 7, 8
1916	Bruces build 2-story frame building with kitchen, dancefloor and other amenities	*California Eagle, Manhattan Beach News, Southwest Contractor*	3,4,6,7,8
1919	Major George and Mrs. Ethel Prioleau purchase the southern half of lot 4, block 12	Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Los Angeles County, California	3,6,7,8
1920	Mrs. W.A. Bruce purchases lot 9 of block 5	Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Los Angeles County, California	3,4,6,7,8
1921	George Lindsey approaches BoT (Board of Trustees) about the increasing numbers of Black people in MB as a consequence of the Bruces' resort	Brigham Thesis	1,6,7,8
1922	Ms. Elizabeth Patterson purchases other half of Prioleau lot 4, block 12	Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Los Angeles County, California	3,6,7,8

Date	Event	Archival Source(s)	Annotation
June 1, 1921	Peck donates land to city from 15th Street to the north city limits for a park for what would become Live Oak and the armory.	Minutes of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees	5
1923	Mrs. Mary Sanders & Mr. and Mrs. Milton B. and Anna Johnson purchase lot 6, block 12 and lot 1, block 12, respectively	Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Los Angeles County, California	3,6,7,8
1923	John McCaskill and Elzia L. Irvin purchase property on the south side of 26th Street, across from the Bruces'.	Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Los Angeles County, California	3,6,7,8
1923	The Bruces build on lot 9 of block 5; There are now three buildings across the two lots	Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk; City of MB v. B.H. Dyer et.al.	3,6,7,8
November 15, 1923	George Lindsey and "several civic leaders" present petition to purchase Blocks 5 and 12 of Peck's Manhattan Beach to the Board of Trustees	Brigham Thesis; Minutes of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees	3,6,7,8
December 6, 1923	Petition is submitted to BoT by "property owners of blocks 5 and 12" protesting Lindsey's petition	Minutes of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees	5
January 22, 1924	Free lecture on "The Principles of the KKK and Ideals of Pure Americanism" advertised	Brigham Thesis	4,6,7,8
June 5, 1924	Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees pass Ordinance 276, which declared the intention acquire by condemnation Blocks 5 and 12 of Peck's Manhattan Beach Tract	Minutes of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees	5,6,7,8
June 5, 1924	Manhattan Beach Trustees pass a series of ordinances (273-275) that prohibited new or additional development of bath houses and commercialized amusements near the Strand without Trustee approval and prohibited the dressing or undressing in any vehicle or temporary structure on the beach.	Minutes of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees	5,6,7,8
1924	News report published about KKK operating unrestricted along the waterfront in the South Bay	*California Eagle*	4,6,7,8
1924	Manhattan Beach BoT pass ordinance 282 to initiate legal proceedings for "acquisition by condemnation for public park purposes" of	Minutes of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees	3,6,7,8

Date	Event	Archival Source(s)	Annotation
	Blocks five (5) and twelve (12) of Peck's MB Tract		
Nov 1924	City files lawsuit for condemnation	Complaint of condemnation	3,4,6,7,8
1925	Bruces, Ms. Patterson, Prioleaus and Johnsons file answer to the complaint filed by MB requesting higher compensation for their properties + damages	City of Manhattan Beach v. B.H. Dyer et.al.	3,6,7,8
1926	Mr. and Mrs. James Slaughter purchase their property at 120 26th Street.	Brigham	1
1927	MB "leases" Block 9, tract 8867 between 25th and 27th streets to Oscar Bessonette, who posts "no trespassing" signs	*California Eagle, Minutes of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees*	4,5,6,7,8
1927	Taxpayers Protective League attempt recall the BoT, citing compensation too high for property seized in eminent domain	*Manhattan Beach News; Manhattan Globe; Los Angeles Times, Venice Evening Vanguard*	4
May 16, 1927	Mrs. Bruce purchases property in Los Angeles, CA.	Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Los Angeles County, California; Los Angeles City Directory	3, 5
May 30, 1927	Slaughters open a 10-room boarding house at 120 26th St.	*California Eagle;* County Assessor's Map book	3,4,6,7,8
May 1927	Bruces surrender their land	Letter to the City of Manhattan Beach	3
June 17, 1927	Board of Trustees pass Ordinance 311, imposing 15-minute parking limitations on streets surrounding Blocks 5 and 12 of Peck's Manhattan Beach	*Minutes of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees*	5
July 4, 1927	Elizabeth Catley, guest of the Slaughters, arrested for trespassing while swimming in MB	*California Eagle*	4,6,7,8
July 17, 1927	4 Black bathers (Dr H.C. Hudson, John McCaskill, J.H. Conley, & Romalious Johnson) arrested, taken to jail, and charged $10 bail in Manhattan Beach for trespassing on land owned by O. Bessonette	*California Eagle*	1, 2, 4,6,7,8

Date	Event	Archival Source(s)	Annotation
Aug. 2, 1927	The Black bathers are tried at Manhattan Beach City Hall and found guilty, fined $200 or $500 in property; sign said "No Trespassing" was for "undesirables", White people in same spot not arrested, testimony given that police were to keep "coloreds" off the beach	*California Eagle*	4,6,7,8
1927	Dr. H.C. Hudson (dentist and president of the NAACP) makes plea for support from NAACP for Black bather case	*California Eagle*	4,6,7,8
Aug. 12, 1927	Appeal successful thanks to Hugh McBeth & Slaughter family	*California Eagle*	4,6,7,8
Sept. 2, 1927	Manhattan Beach City Council repeals lease to Bessonette and overturns parking restrictions	Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach. September 1, 1927; *Manhattan Beach News*	4,5
Oct. 18, 1927	"Hooded" individuals go to the Slaughter house at night, cover the gas meter under the house with oil soaked waste, accelerant, and cotton, then light a match to it; Slaughters awakened by smoke, put out fire before the fire department got there, Slaughters "not the running kind"	*California Eagle*	1, 4, 6, 7,8
Oct. 19, 1927	Burning cross lit across from Slaughters	*California Eagle*	1, 4, 6, 7
Feb. 15, 1928	Grand jury set, Asa Keyes said "big names" are involved in the arson plot, George Contreras chief of DA detectives	*Los Angeles Express*	4
1928	News article reports on a 2-year long "race war", "Manhattan Beach community at a "fever" "town has done its best to avoid a [N]egro settlement"	*Venice Evening Vanguard*	4
1928	Dynamite, bullets, arson, burning cross, "investigation 6 weeks long", investigators questions seven MB residents including police chief Jack Garvin	*Venice Evening Vanguard, Los Angeles Times*	4
Feb. 16, 1928	100 men have a secret meeting about Black residents in Manhattan beach, roads blocked, Contreras said that some MB officials not	*Venice Evening Vanguard*	4

Date	Event	Archival Source(s)	Annotation
	cooperating		
June 2, 1928	Elizabeth Catley files suit against Alexander Haddock & members of MB Board of Trustees regarding her arrest	*Los Angeles Times*	4
June 10, 1929	Final judgment delivered in condemnation proceedings	Final Judgment, City of Manhattan Beach v. B.H. Dyer et.al.	3,6,7,8
1930	The *Manhattan Beach News* praised the efforts of councilman John F. Jones who had "made it his particular aim" to force the Black residents from Blocks 5 and 12 because their "settlement" had "depreciated property values to a considerable extent and many sales were lost on this account."	*Manhattan Beach News*	4
Sept. 20, 1931	Charles A Bruce passes away	California, County Birth and Death Records	3,4
July 21, 1932	City petitions the County for assistance in funding the development of City Park between the Strand and Highland, and Live Oak Park using the County Welfare and Stabilization Program.	Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach. July 21, 1932.	4,5
February, 1933	City of Manhattan Beach files plans to utilize funds from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to build a beachfront park	Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach. February 2, 1933./*Los Angeles Times*	4,5
Sept. 4, 1934	Willa Bruce passes away at the age of 71	California, County Birth and Death Records	3,4
1948	City builds pumping station between 26th and 27th Street to abate the sewage problem from population boom.	*Manhattan Beach Messenger*	*4*
1959	New landscaping work completed on the park	Image from *South Bay History Collection, CSUDH*	5
1962	Kiwanis Club and City Council sponsor contest to rename park as Bayview Terrace Park.	South Bay Breeze	4, 7,8
1974	Park renamed "Parque Culiacán"	Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of	3,4,7,8

Date	Event	Archival Source(s)	Annotation
		Manhattan Beach	
2003	Leadership Manhattan Beach petitions the City Council to rename Parque Culiacán “Friendship Park”. Request denied, but plaque acknowledging the park’s history is commissioned.	Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach	4,5,7,8
2006	Council voted in favor of name change to “Bruce's Beach”	Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach	4,5,7,8

DETAILED TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1900-1912



Charles and Willa Bruce, Circa 1886. Courtesy of the California African American Museum.

Willie "Willa[25]" Ann Bruce (b. 1862, Missouri), and her husband, Charles Aaron Bruce (b. 1860, District of Columbia) lived with their son, Harvey (b.1888) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the late 1890s where Charles worked as a cook.[26] Between 1900 and 1903, they moved to Los Angeles and purchased a home at 1024 Santa Fe Avenue.[27]

During this same time, the town of Manhattan Beach was taking form. Between 1898 and 1901, the area four miles north of Redondo was known as Potencia, Spanish for "power," and for what an ambitious group of businessmen hoped to harness from the ocean and convert into electricity.[28] The enterprise folded following a winter storm in 1899 that destroyed most of the pier and, thus, presumably, most of the wave motor.[29]

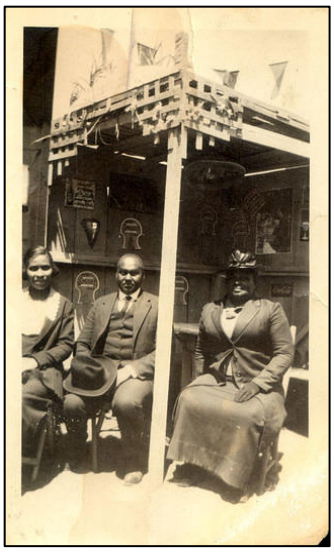
In September 1901, John A. Merrill and his Manhattan Beach Company purchased the land formerly owned by the Potencia Townsite Company, to build a new resort along the

[25] In nearly every historical document discovered, Mrs. Bruce's first name was denoted as "Willie" exclusively, with the exception of the 1870 Census and her son Harvey's 1921 marriage license where she is listed as "William Walker". Her descendants have stated that they and others consistently referred to her as "Willa" and requested that we do the same.
[26] United States of America, Bureau of the Census, *1900 United States Census*; Census Place: *Albuquerque, Bernalillo, New Mexico*; Page: *6*; Enumeration District: *0009*; FHL microfilm: *1240999*.
[27] *Los Angeles, California, City Directory, 1903,* 214; and *Los Angeles City Directory 1904*, 211.
[28] "Los Angeles and Vicinity: Ocean Power," *Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 1897; and Jan Dennis, *A Walk Beside the Sea: A History of Manhattan Beach*, (Manhattan Beach: Janstan Studio, 1987), 25.
[29] "Reported Wreck of the Wright Wave Motor at Potencia-Notes," *Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 1899.

Pacific called "Manhattan Beach."[30] George H. Peck, Jr. would buy the area north of the pier from the Manhattan Beach Company in October of the same year, which would be called North Manhattan Beach.[31] Despite historic folklore claiming that the town's name was the result of a coin flip between Peck and Merrill, there is no concrete evidence to support this story except anecdotal information shared 35 years after the fact.[32]

On February 19, 1912[33], Mrs. Willa Bruce purchased Lot 8 of Block 5 in Peck's Manhattan Beach Tract[34] from Los Angeles real estate agent Henry Willard[35], who appeared to be an independent real estate man.[36] The *Los Angeles Times* reported that she paid $1,225 for the 33 ⅓' x 105'[37] parcel between 26th and 27th streets on The Strand, west of Ocean Drive, which was "a high price compared to the cost of nearby lots.[38] *(Please note: Although requested, we were unable to access deeds of comparative properties purchased at this same time to confirm this information for this report. We are still trying to find exact deeds to verify this statement.)*

[30] "MANHATTAN BEACH Another New Resort to Be Opened to the Public", *Los Angeles Herald*, September 13, 1901; Dennis, *Walk Beside the Sea*, 27.
[31] Book of Deeds (Los Angeles), 1505, page 119; Dennis, *Walk Beside the Sea, 25.*
[32] "Beach Title Suit Arouses Interest in Early Day Data", *Manhattan Beach News, September 13, 1935, 1*; Deepa Bharath, "Legend: Coin Toss Decided Name of MB", *The Daily Breeze,* May 7, 2006, A4.
[33] Book of Deeds (Los Angeles), 1890, 182.
[34] Peck's Manhattan Beach Tract Map, Manhattan Beach Historical Society.
[35] Robert L. Brigham, "Land Ownership And Occupancy By Negroes In Manhattan Beach, CA" (master's thesis, Fresno State College, 1956); Jan Dennis, *Skirts Across the Sand* (Manhattan Beach, CA: Janstan Studio, 2008); Alison Rose Jefferson, "Leisure's Race, Power and Place: The Recreation and Remembrance of African Americans in the California Dream" (PhD dissertation, University of California Santa Barbara, 2005); and Alison Rose Jefferson, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 2020).
[36] *1912 Los Angeles City Directory*, page 1941.
[37] Report of Referees, City of Manhattan Beach v. B.H. Dyer et al, No. 157, 573. (CA Super. Court, L.A. 1925.)
[38] "Colored People's Resort Meets With Opposition," *Los Angeles Times*; Jun 27, 1912; page I15.



(l-r) Meda Simmons Bruce, Harvey Bruce, and Willa Bruce, date unknown. (Courtesy of the California African American Museum)

An advertisement in the *Liberator* announced that the June 17, 1912, opening of "Bruce Beach Front", a seaside resort for bathing and fishing would be a "grand affair"[39]. Guests would arrive to find "a small portable cottage with a stand that sold soda pop and lunches," rented bathing suits and provided access to bathing showers and dressing tents.[40] While her husband, Charles, worked as a dining-car chef on the train running between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, it was 49-year-old Willa who ran the business.[41]

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "great agitation" was observed within a week of opening "among [W]hite property owners of adjoining land." Black patrons of the Bruce's Beach were "confronted by two deputy constables who warned them against crossing the strip of land in front of Mrs. Bruce's property to reach the ocean." This forbidden portion of sand owned by George H. Peck, Jr., extended more than half a mile from Peck's pier to 24th street. It was "staked off" and "No Trespassing" signs were placed, forcing the Bruces' guests to walk a half mile in either direction to get to the water. It is unclear whether these signs were placed by Peck or even with his knowledge.

Despite the impediments, Black bathers were undeterred and so was Mrs. Bruce. "Wherever we have tried to buy land for a beach resort we have been refused," Mrs. Bruce told the *Times*, "but I own this land and I am going to keep it."[42]

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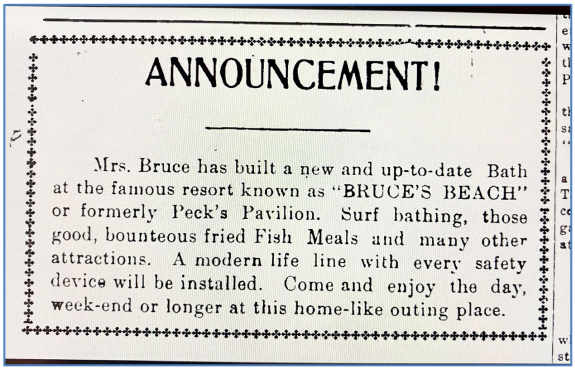
[39] "Bruce Beach Front", *Liberator,* May 31, 1912, 5.
[40] "Colored People's Resort Meets With Opposition"; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 106; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 35.
[41] Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 35.
[42] "Colored People's Resort Meets With Opposition;" Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 106; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 35.

1913-1923

As the popularity of the Bruces' resort grew within the Black community, it created an increased concern among White residents of Manhattan Beach. In 1915, for example, H.D. Aron wrote to City Clerk Llewellyn Price requesting information on Lot 3, Block 5 in Peck's Manhattan Beach Tract -- three lots north of the Bruces' and two lots east. Price responded:

> *Confidentially, there is something about that block that is quite a detriment to the neighborhood, and that is that there is a colored family who live the year around on lot 8, which faces the ocean. Every so often they have a coon picnic and it is attended by about seventy-five to one-hundred-and-fifty coon pullman porters and their friends. You can imagine how much this would depreciate property values in that neighborhood. It is the only colored family that lives within the corporate limits of Manhattan. If it wasn't for that fact, I would consider this a bargain at about the assessed valuation.*[43]

After two years, the Bruces were able to upgrade from their portable stand to a two-story frame building to accommodate more guests and provide more services. On December 25, 1915, the *Manhattan Beach News* reported that "The [N]egro population of Manhattan Beach… have had plans drawn for one of the finest apartment houses in this section of the beach." It would be two stories and include 30 dressing rooms on the ground floor with completion by summer 1916. The 23-plastered building with a red tile roof was to resemble the Sadler building at the Strand and Marine and was slated to cost $6,000.[44] It was completed by May 16, 1916,[45] and the *Eagle* advertised that Mrs. Bruce had built an "up-to-date Bath" that provided a "home-like outing place".[46]

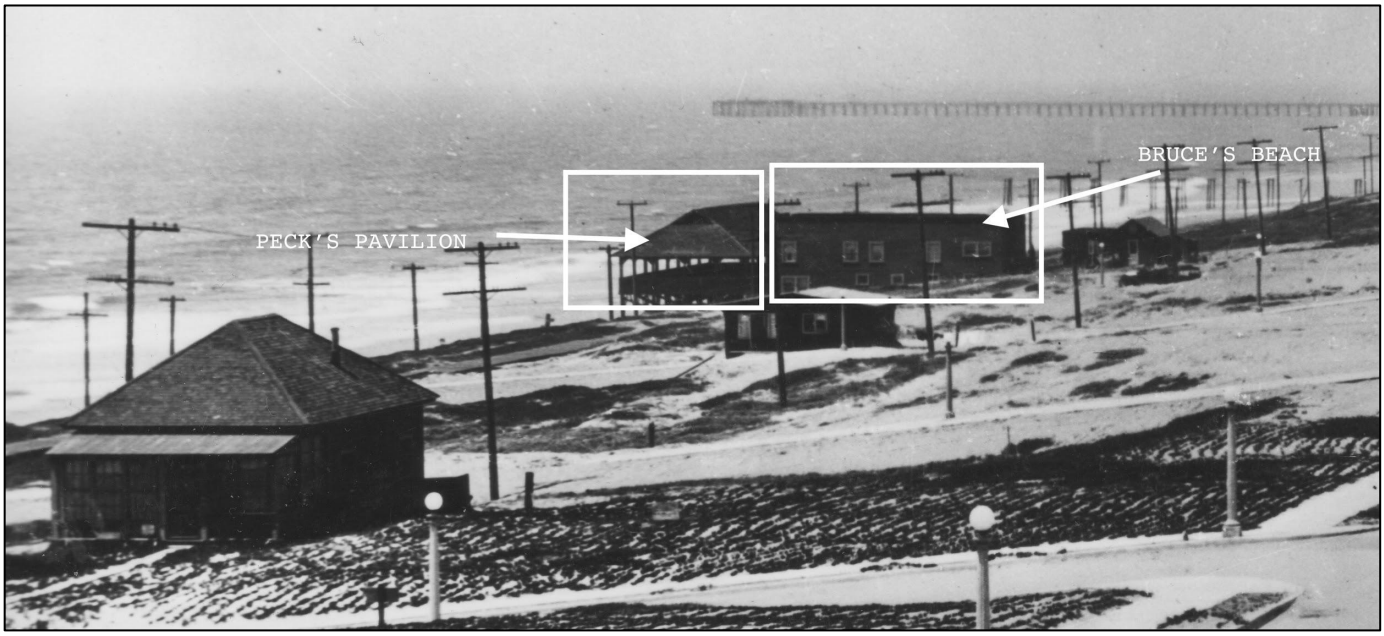


ANNOUNCEMENT!

Mrs. Bruce has built a new and up-to-date Bath at the famous resort known as "BRUCE'S BEACH" or formerly Peck's Pavilion. Surf bathing, those good, bounteous fried Fish Meals and many other attractions. A modern life line with every safety device will be installed. Come and enjoy the day, week-end or longer at this home-like outing place.

Advertisement in the California Eagle, April 29, 1916.

[43] City Clerk Correspondence between H.D. Aron and Llewellyn Price, October 18, 1915.
[44] "Apartment House At Peck Pavilion," *Manhattan Beach News*, December 25, 1915, 4; and Dennis, *Skirts Across the Sand.*
[45] "Notices of Completion: Record May 16", Southwest Contractor and Manufacturer, 1916-5-20 V. 17: 38.
[46] Advertisement, *California Eagle*, April 29, 1916.



Looking north/northwest from Marine, circa 1916. The pier in the distance is what remained of Peck's Pier. Peck's Pavilion is on the beach to the west of The Strand, and The Bruces' resort was on the east of The Strand. The Pacific Electric Railway (Red Car) ran between the two, on what is the bike path today. The Original Photo Courtesy of the Manhattan Beach Historical Society

During the period between 1919-1926, at least six other African Americans purchased property in close proximity to Bruces' resort, four of them between 26th and 27th streets (Blocks 5 and 12 of Peck's Manhattan Beach Tract).[47]

In 1919, Major George and Mrs. Ethel Prioleau purchased the southern half of Lot 4, Block 12 from Clara A. Dyer for $10.[48] The other half of their lot was purchased by Ms. Elizabeth Patterson in 1922.[49] In 1923, Mrs. Mary Sanders bought lot 6, Block 12, with a cottage already built on it,[50] and Mr. and Mrs. Milton B. and Anna Johnson bought lot 1, Block 12.[51] That same year, John McCaskill and Elzia L. Irvin purchased outside the to-be condemned area at 116/118 26th Street .[52]

Mr. and Mrs. James Slaughter purchased property next to the McCaskill and Irvin land at 120 26th Street in 1926, across from the Bruces'.[53] They purchased their property

[47] Brigham, 19; Dennis, *Walk Beside the Sea,* 105; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 111; *Living the California Dream*, 37.
[48] Book of Deeds (Los Angeles County), Book 6776, page 337.
[49] Brigham, 22. We requested the deeds from the Assessor's Office, but they were unable to find them.
[50] Brigham, 26; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 112; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 38.
[51] Brigham, 26-7.
[52] Book of Deeds (Los Angeles County), Book 2469, page 314; Brigham, 29; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 113; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream,* 38-9.
[53] Brigham, 29.

after the condemnation proceedings started and would open a 10-room boarding house there after the Bruces' closed. (*For more information about these families, please see Supplemental Information: The Historic Black Community Of Bruce's Beach, page 57.)*

The remaining 25 lots of land in those two blocks were owned by White property owners. B.H. Dyer, R.L. Rice, and H.M. Eichelberger purchased their lots for $10 from George Peck in 1909.[54] Those included Lots 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of Block 5, and Lots 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, and 12 in Block 12.[55] The other lots were as follows:

C.W. STONE - Lot 3, Block 5
GEORGE W. YARROW - Lots 4 and 6, Block 5; Lot 11, Block 12
LILLIE D. DOSTA - Lot 7, Block 5
SARAH I. AMBROSE, MARION R. WYSER (SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BOND AND FINANCE COMPANY) - Lot 7, Block 12
R.C. RUPERD - Lot 10, Block 12
GRACE STUART - Lot 13, Block 12
L.A. DREISBACH (M.W. MITCHELL) - Lot 14, Block 12
CLARA M. MONROE - Lot 15, Block 12
H.A. ECCLESTON[56]- Lot 16, Block 12

We have not been able to obtain the deeds to learn when they were purchased and for how much. We do know, however, that by 1924, none of them had been developed.[57]

By providing accommodations and services for Black American families to enjoy a weekend on the coast, Bruce's Beach appeared to do well. At some point, an additional building was added to their initial lot[58], and, in 1920, Mrs. Bruce expanded her property when she purchased Lot 9 in Block 5, the lot immediately to the south of their existing lot, for $10 from Charles and Anna Krause and Jessie Carson Drake.[59] In 1923, they reportedly built on that land.[60]

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[54] Brigham, 24.
[55] Book of Deeds (Los Angeles County), 2516, 399-400.
[56] Brigham refers to this property owner as both "H.H. Eccleston" and "H.A. Ecclestone". The name listed in the Complaint of Condemnation and Report of Referees, City of Manhattan Beach vs. B.H Dyer et. al, and in the Meeting of the Board of Trustees indicate that the owner was "H.H. Eccleston". According to census records and directories, both an "H. Eccleston" and "H.A. Ecclestone" resided in Los Angeles at this time. Because we have not yet been able to obtain the official deed, we have deferred to the court records and minutes from the City on this individual's name.
[57]Report of Referees, City of Manhattan Beach vs. B.H Dyer et. al, 1925; and Brigham, 56.
[58] Report of Referees, City of Manhattan Beach vs. B.H Dyer et. al, 1925; Brigham, 56; and Jefferson, "Leisure's Race", 107; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 35.
[59] Book of Deeds (Los Angeles), Book 7351, Page 254; Brigham, 17; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 107; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 35.
[60] Brigham, 17; Dennis, *Walk Beside the Sea,* 105; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 107; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 35.

MAP OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP IN BLOCKS 5 and 12

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Ad for the Pacific Electric Red Car to Manhattan Beach
California Eagle, April 17, 1925.

Miriam Matthews, Los Angeles's first Black librarian, said in an essay prepared for the California African American Museum, "You would take the Red Car down … and spend a day on the beautiful beach or rent a room if you desired. Sundays were reserved for school gatherings and families, and the resort offered a getaway overlooking the Pacific Ocean." She wrote, "If one tired of the sand and surf, the parlor was available for listening to music or dancing."[61]



Louise and Byron Kenner at Bruce's Beach
Miriam Matthews Collection/UCLA



Beachgoers in front of the resort
Miriam Matthews Collection/UCLA

[61] Schoch, Deborah, "Erasing a Line Drawn in the Sand," *Los Angeles Times,* March 19, 2007.

1923-1927: Complaint of Condemnation

George Lindsey[62], a real estate agent in the North End of Manhattan Beach who arrived in the town in 1920, played a major role in initiating the series of events leading to the condemnation and seizure of property from Black families residing near the Bruces'.

Manhattan Beach resident Robert L. Brigham interviewed Mr. Lindsey twice for his 1956 Master's Thesis and said that "at neither time did the interviewee give any indication of being a racist. That is to say, he appeared to have no particular malice toward Negroes."[63] Lindsey indicated that White landowners feared that the increasing number of Black residents and visitors would affect property values and "a way of life in Manhattan Beach."[64] He told Brigham that "education and co-operation will eventually solve the problem… perhaps in five hundred years or so" and until that time, he was serving the community by working toward a peaceful end to the "[N]egro 'invasion.'"[65]

In the early 20th century, discussion of the potential impact of a "[N]egro invasion" into predominantly White neighborhoods, as mentioned by Brigham with regard to Lindsey's concerns, was often reported in the press. An article titled "The Negro Invasion" published in the *New York Times* on December 17, 1911, the year prior to the Bruces' opening of their resort, proclaimed that the presence of Black neighborhoods in the city "will increase and multiply" as long as there were "[W]hite landlords in unrestricted areas willing to sell to [N]egro agents." The suggested remedy was "a covenant of restriction against the sale or rental to [N]egroes" in order to prevent the inevitable depreciation of property value when White residents, motivated by "prejudice" rushed to sell.[66]

The term "Negro Invasion" can be found in multiple sources from across the county in the early 20th century to describe the fears of White residents who were concerned about their property values. *The Evening Times-Star* (Alameda, California) reported an incident that occurred in Kansas City in May 1911, under the headline, "Negro Invasion Resisted By Dynamite," that told of an attempt to blow up the home of a Black resident that was in a residential district "occupied only by Whites."[67] Similarly, the *Napa Valley Register* printed the article, "Lake County Was Fearful of 'Invasion'," detailing the fears

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[62] *U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.
[63] Brigham, 43
[64] Brigham, 44.
[65] Brigham, 43.
[66] "The Negro Invasion," *The New York Times, December 17, 1911, Accessed May 5, 2021,* https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1911/12/17/1048866495.html?pageNumber=14
[67] "Negro Invasion Resisted By Dynamite," *The Evening Times-Star,* May 31, 1911.

of a community near San Francisco when rumors permeated of a new Black country club coming to the area.[68]

The term was not used exclusively in headlines either. *The Santa Rosa Republican* reported on this same incident under the headline: "Buyer of Resort in Lake County Sets at Rest Current Rumor." The story mentions that the people of Middletown, California, were so afraid of a "negro invasion" that they staged a demonstration that included "automobiles full of hooded citizens" painting the letters "K.K.K." around the resort property.[69] Under the headline, "Owner Denies Sale to Negroes," the *San Francisco Examiner*, reported that San Francisco builder Joseph Greenbach denied selling the property to a Black individual or organization once he learned that "they intended to make it a negro membership club." The *Examiner* stated: "Public opinion in Lake County had become aroused at the prospect of a negro invasion." [70]

In accordance with this phenomenon, Brigham and Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson wrote about White neighbors' resentment of the Bruce resort's growing popularity and prosperity of its African American owners by the early 1920s and that some White residents were "concerned" about a "Negro 'invasion'" and the impact it could have on property values in Manhattan Beach.[71] Brigham frequently referred to the phrase "Negro 'invasion'" to describe the impetus for the condemnation proceedings.

In *Color of Law*, Richard Rothstein states, "...government policies to isolate [W]hite families in all-[W]hite neighborhoods began at the local level...many of these cities adopted zoning rules decreeing separate living areas for black and white families." In Los Angeles from 1937 to 1948, more than one hundred lawsuits sought to enforce restrictions and have Black families removed from their homes.[72]

Lindsey allegedly approached the Board of Trustees[73] (the precursor to the City Council) in 1921, requesting action to discourage African Americans from establishing residency in Manhattan Beach. Brigham wrote: "Although sympathetic, the members of [the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees] were reluctant to take action lest they go on record as being bigots."[74]

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[68] "Lake County Was Fearful of 'Invasion'," *Napa Valley Register*, March 9, 1928.
[69] "Buyer of Resort in Lake County Sets at Rest Current Rumor," *Santa Rosa Republican*. March 8, 1928.
[70] "Owner Denies Sale Of Resort to Negroes" *The San Francisco Examiner*, March 8, 1929.
[71] Brigham, 43-44; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 115, 133, 161, and 239; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 39.
[72] Rothstein, 44 and 81.
[73] Depending on when exactly in 1921 this happened, the Board of Trustees consisted of a combination of the following: Charles Ashton, Carl Bull, Malcolm Campbell, George Conkling, George E. Delavan, Richard Launer, Ernest Pentz, John C. Richardson, Cassius Robbins.
[74] Brigham, 44; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race", 118; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 41.

In a 1987 letter to *The Beach Reporter*, longtime Manhattan Beach resident Helen Sinsabaugh wrote that Lindsey was concerned over "some highly irregular real estate activities certain agents were operating among people in inland areas occupied by Black [people]."[75] Sinsabaugh, who lived at 2212 The Strand and was about 14 years old[76] at the time condemnation proceedings began, said that the realtor and other civic leaders were concerned about growing racial tensions in the community and met with "[B]lack leaders such as church pastors" to discuss the situation.[77] The *Venice Evening Vanguard* would report in 1928 that "the town itself has done its best to avoid a [N]egro settlement being formed there."[78]

Lindsey discovered a legal means by which to shut down the Bruces' resort through the Park and Playground Act of 1909. Sinsabaugh wrote that Lindsey learned of the "possibility of condemnation procedures for recreational civic use" through a series of real estate courses he had taken at the University of Southern California.[79] He and "several civic leaders" circulated a petition for support of this action and presented it to the Trustees on November 15, 1923.[80] It asked for a district to be formed to purchase Blocks 5 and 12 of Peck's Manhattan Beach for the purpose of making it a public park. The Trustees, who at this time, included Carl Bull, Malcolm Campbell, Frank S. Daugherty, George E. Delavan and Cassius Robbins, voted to take it under advisement and revisit it at the next meeting. [81]

The issue would not resurface again until the meeting on December 6, 1923, when property owners in Blocks 5 and 12 of Peck's Manhattan Beach submitted protests against the purchase of the property, which was filed with the City[82].

On January 3, 1924, Frank S. Daugherty introduced Ordinance 263, claiming eminent domain for a public park. Although it has been said that Live Oak Park had just been built nearby, that is not accurate. The city accepted a gift of land to be used as a park from George H. Peck in 1921.[83] Initially, the area at one time known as "Poison Oak Park" was used as the City's garbage dump.[84] Park development discussions would not

[75] Helen A. Sinsabaugh, Letter to the Editor, *The Beach Reporter*, 1987.
[76] *1920 United States Census, Manhattan Beach, Los Angeles, California.*
[77] Sinsabaugh, Letter to the Editor.
[78] "Nearby Town Now Center of Race War," *Venice Vanguard.* February 15, 1928.
[79] Sinsabaugh, Letter to the Editor.
[80] Brigham, p. 45.
[81] Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, November 15, 1923; "Trustees Consider Public Park Plan," *Manhattan Beach News,* November 11, 1923.
[82] Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, December 6, 1923.
[83] Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, June 15, 1921.
[84] Dennis, *A Walk Beside the Sea,* 90.

begin until 1932 and would commence in 1933 using resources from Los Angeles County.[85] (*Please see The History of the Park, page 44, for further explanation.*)

Daugherty moved to adopt the ordinance on February 7, 1924, a motion seconded by Trustee Robbins, and approved with unanimous consent by Trustees Daugherty, Robbins, Campbell, Delavan, and President Bull.[86]

On June 19, 1924[87], Manhattan Beach enacted new laws with fines and penalties for violating ordinances 273-275, which prohibited new or additional developments of bath houses east of the Pacific Electric right-of-way, gave the Board of Trustees regulating governance over the operation of bath houses, social clubs, theatres, dance halls, pool halls and other places of public amusement, and also the banning of dressing/undressing in cars, tents, and temporary structures.[88]

These ordinances did not directly and immediately impact the Bruces' existing resort; however, Brigham reported that one of his interviewees, Ethel Atkinson, daughter of Mrs. Sanders, told him that this was clearly aimed at the Bruces and other Black property owners. Brigham added:

> *Unsubstantiated, this reaction might appear to be the result of a hyper-sensitive attitude by a member of the persecuted minority. However, the man who is perhaps the most authoritative source among the Manhattan [W]hites [George Lindsey] of the period confirmed this opinion.*[89]

Not only did Lindsey confirm Brigham's suspicion that the ordinances were directed at the Bruces and any would-be Black business owners hoping to set up a bathhouse or business on the Strand in the future, but further evidence of their similar motivation lies in that they were passed on the same date, which also coincided with Ordinance 276 that declared the official intention to condemn Blocks 5 and 12 for public park purposes. This passed "unanimously by all Trustees present".[90]

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[85] Minutes of Meeting of the City Council of the City of Manhattan Beach, September 1, 1932. Minutes of Meeting of the City Council of the City of Manhattan Beach, February 2, 1933.
[86] Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, February 7, 1924,
[87] The Board of Trustees at this time were: President George E. Delavan, Trustees Merritt J. Crandall, Carl D. Edwards, John E. Rhind, Cassius Robbins.
[88] Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, June 5, 1924; Brigham, 36, 38, 45; Dennis, 109; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race" 119-20; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 40.
[89] Brigham, p. 38-39.
[90] Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, June 5, 1924.

On September 18, 1924, the City Clerk (Llewellyn Price) reported to the Trustees on the protests that had been filed against the taking of land by condemnation, specifically that "the apparent number of protests filed by owners of the property sought to be condemned were 1 and that 329 owners of property in the district had protested on various grounds". It stated that the number of lots contained in the district "amounted to approximately 10,000".[91] All protests against the condemnation were deemed insufficient and dismissed.[92]

On October 16, 1924, Manhattan Beach officials passed ordinance 282, which initiated legal proceedings for "acquisition by condemnation for public park purposes of Blocks five (5) and twelve (12) of Peck's Manhattan Beach Tract…" In November 1924, the city filed a lawsuit pursuing condemnation of those 30 lots. Six of these were owned by five Black families and had been developed with cottages, homes, or, in the Bruces' case, a two-story building for their business with a restaurant, changing rooms and accommodations. The remaining 25 lots that were owned by White property owners had no structures built upon them and were uninhabited.[93]

The *California Eagle,* a prominent African-American newspaper from 1879-1964, printed a letter from E. Burton Ceruti, Attorney for the L.A. Branch, N.A.A.C.P. on July 11, 1924, wherein he stated that Mrs. Bruce was "willing to sell her property and, even if a suit be instituted, would sell at a fair price at any time, and would abandon the suit at such time."[94] But by December of 1924, the Bruces had entered into the condemnation proceedings with Attorney Willis O. Tyler as their lawyer.[95]

Though it's been said that the Bruces and four other Black families sued for racial discrimination[96], that's not accurate. They, along with the Johnsons, Prioleaus, and Ms. Patterson, answered the complaint of condemnation, challenging it on the grounds that was based on racial discrimination. In the Bruces' Answer to the Complaint of Condemnation, they state that the true motivation was:

> *to banish them [the Black property owners] from the said City, and, more particularly, from that portion of the said City which is nearly contiguous to the Pacific Ocean, and this in order to entirely free the said City from their presence because of the fact that they are Negroes, and*

[91] Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, September 19, 1924.
[92] "Important Business at Council: All Park Protests Denied," *Manhattan Beach News,* September 19, 1924, 1
[93] Report of Referees, 1925.
[94] Ceruti, E. Burton. "Matter of Bruce's Beach", *California Eagle,* July 11, 1924, pp. 1 and 10.
[95] *California Eagle*. "Bruce's Beach Fights Condemnation", December 26, 1924, p. 1.
[96] Rasmussen, Cecilia, "Resort Was An Oasis for Blacks Until Racism Drove Them Out", *Los Angeles Times,* July 21, 2002, B.4.

> *that these defendants allege that the said proceedings are arbitrary, oppressive and inspired by Racial Prejudice***.**[97]

Brigham reported that the only White property owners to file answers to the complaint were the entity of Dyer, Rice, and Eichelberger, as well as Southern California Bond and Finance Company and L.A. Dreisbach. He further stated that some of the remaining property owners had purchased their land as early as 1907 and all were before 1915. We do not know why these lots were undeveloped, though Brigham speculated that because they had not improved their lots in all those years, it "would seem to indicate that they did not have any great interest in it anyway."[98]

Some citizens of Manhattan Beach were opposed to the City's acquisition of the two blocks because they felt it was bad business practice. The *Manhattan Beach Globe*, a newspaper sponsored and written by members of the Taxpayers' Protective League, argued against the assessments levied against property owners that would pay for the condemned property. One editorial, written by outspoken critic of the Trustees Ralph F. Wedler, said:

> Park and Playground, why? Original idea to get the colored people out. Does it accomplish it? No. One thing all [W]hite people in the city of Manhattan Beach are in accord on and that is to make Manhattan Beach a one hundred per cent [sic] [W]hite beach.[99]

He argued that merely buying the property in Blocks 5 and 12 would not drive Black owners from town. He said that they would simply buy elsewhere in town, which is exactly what four of the five Black landowners did.

A February 11, 1927, editorial by the *Manhattan Beach News* supporting the Board of Trustees argued: "While the purchase of the property does not eliminate colored people from Manhattan Beach entirely, the steps taken to acquire the former stronghold of the negroes in this city, while having respect for the rights of the colored man, did not desire that he should make it his playground."[100]

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[97] Answer of W.A. and Charles Bruce to Complaint, the City of Manhattan Beach v. B.H. Dyer, et al., Section 6; Brigham stated that except for minor wording variations, the Answers filed by the Johnsons, Ms. Patterson, and the Prioleaus were "essentially the same in meaning." P. 58.
[98] Brigham, 55-56.
[99] R.F. Wedler, "Do You Wish to Antagonize the Property Owners in Manhattan Beach?", *The Manhattan Globe,* Saturday September 25, 1926.
[100] "Manhattan Beach Faces Crisis; Its Future Will Depend on Vote Feb. 15", *Manhattan Beach News*, February 11, 1927, p. 1-2.

In 1927, The Taxpayers Protective League submitted a petition to recall the Board of Trustees[101] for a number of legislative actions related to development along the Strand, as well as the park and playground proceedings. The *Manhattan Beach News* showed its support for the Trustees by publishing a statement signed by them that detailed the "Truth About Recall", where they asserted, among other things, that the Board's primary motivation was to "protect and enforce the rights of our City in the water front [sic] known as the Strand against the encroachment of private corporate interests."[102]

On that same front page, in an adjacent article, C.A. Bruce, Mrs. Willie Bruce and Harvey Bruce wrote a letter to their neighbors. In this letter, the Bruces expressed that "we have always felt and we hope we will be pardoned for plainly and bluntly saying so, that the attempt to make a park out of these two blocks was a direct slap at us because we were not born [W]hite people." They went on to write that as taxpayers, this "hardship" targeting them was inconsistent with the "economy in expenditure of public money" and that the park is not filling any public need.[103]

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the recall stemmed from citizens' dissatisfaction with the condemnation and the purchase of the land under the Park and Playground Act of 1909. The *Times* reported legal proceedings began when "(t)he amount which the city officials agreed to give for the land was said to be greatly in excess of its value." [104] Two years later, the *Venice Evening Vanguard* would report that offering an amount in excess of the value was a strategy: "... the anti-[N]egro forces have tried to keep the town [W]hite even buying out colored holdings at more than their true value, but in vain. Failing in peaceful means, harsher measures apparently have been resorted to in order to gain their ends."[105]

Just before the recall election, the *Manhattan Beach News* published an op-ed piece further supporting the Trustees and their actions. It was asserted that the acquisition of the condemned property was "a definite gesture that the citizens of this city, while having respect for the colored man, did not desire that he should make it his playground."[106] Furthermore, they argued:

> *The fact that [W]hite residents object to the colonization of [N]egroes in their midst is something over which we have no control. The Supreme*

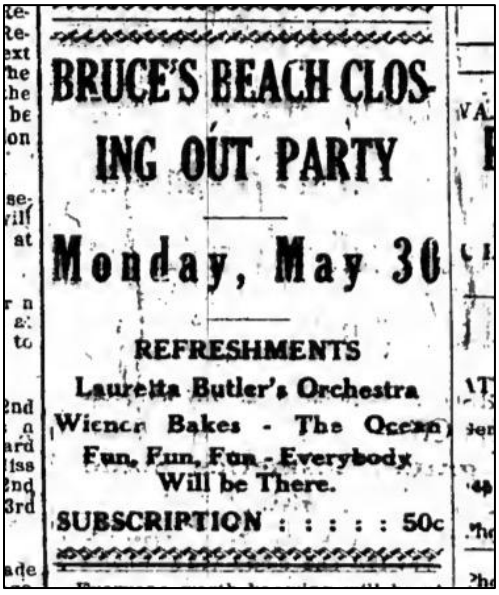
[101] The Board of Trustees to be recalled were Merritt J. Crandall, Harold Dale, G.E. Delevan, Jr., Carl D. Edwards, and John F. Jones.
[102] "Trustees Signed Statement; Here's Truth About Recall," *Manhattan Beach News, February 4, 1927.*
[103] "Apparently Bruce is Playing Politics with Tax League," *Manhattan Beach News,* February 4, 1927.
[104] "Recall Favors City Trustees at Manhattan," *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1927, p. A10.
[105] "Nearby Town Now Center of Race War". *Venice Vanguard.* February 15, 1928.
[106] "Manhattan Beach Faces Crisis; Its Future Will Depend on Vote on Feb. 15", *Manhattan Beach News,* February 2, 1927.

> *Court of the United States recently has recognized the fact that [B]lack and [W]hite does not mix, and it has ruled that [W]hite residents can zone the [N]egro out of their neighborhood, if they, the [W]hite people, predominate their neighborhood, and has stated that the [N]egro can zone the [W]hite man out of his district if his race predominates there.*

(The case referred to here is *Corrigan v. Buckley (1926)*, which affirmed the constitutionality of racially restrictive covenants as decided by The Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. It was appealed to the United States Supreme Court, who declined to hear the case on the basis of Fifth, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments, which restricted the government's involvement in private agreements between citizens regarding private property.[107])

The results of the recall election favored the trustees 549 to 135 against.[108]

Although the condemnation proceedings would continue for another two years, the Bruces decided to leave Manhattan Beach. They advertised in the *California Eagle* a "Bruce's Beach Closing Out Party" for May 30, 1927.[109]


BRUCE'S BEACH CLOS-
ING OUT PARTY
Monday, May 30
REFRESHMENTS
Laurella Butler's Orchestra
Wiener Bakes - The Ocean
Fun, Fun, Fun - Everybody
Will be There.
SUBSCRIPTION : : : : : 50c

California Eagle, May 3, 1927

It's unclear whether that party ever occurred because on May 16, 1927, the Bruces sent a letter to the City of Manhattan Beach whereby they turned over their "property and all improvements thereon and consent that you forthwith wreck, tear down and remove the

[107] *Corrigan v. Buckley*, 271 U.S. 323, 46 S. Ct. 521 (1926)
[108] "Recall Favors City Trustees at Manhattan", *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995);* Feb 16, 1927, pg. A10
[109] Advertisement, *California Eagle*, May 3, 1927.

building on said lots."[110] In June 1927, the Bruces had left and their buildings were demolished.[111] The Bruces purchased a home 1042 E. 20th Street[112] in Los Angeles, where they would live until Charles passed away in 1931.[113] After 1931, Willa moved to 3711 Wadsworth until her death in 1934.[114] *(For the outcome in the Complaint of Condemnation, please see 1929: Conclusion of Condemnation Proceedings, page 39.)*

1927: Historic Civil Rights Acts

On May 19, 1927, the Board of Trustees[115] agreed to the first of a series of beachfront leases to local businessman Oscar C. Bessonette[116] that would allow Bessonette to treat the beach as private property and thus arrest unwanted visitors.[117] The agreement would lease all of Block 12 of Tract 8867 and Lot 1, Block 10, Tract 8867, which constituted the entire beach between 16th and 19th Streets, and a small section at the base of 25th Street to Bessonette.[118] It was later amended to include Lot 1 of Block 11 and all of Block 9 in the same tract[119], with Block 9 comprising the entire beachfront between 25th and 27th Streets, directly in front of what was the Bruces' resort.[120]

It is a common misconception that Bessonette paid $1 for the lease. This comes from Bessonette's August 2, 1927, testimony in which McBeth asks: "Did he ever pay one dollar?" Before he could answer, an objection from the City Attorney was sustained.[121] There is no indication in the Minutes of the City of Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees that Bessonette was charged anything.

Although Bruce's Beach had closed, the Slaughter family had built a modern 10-room boarding house at 120 26th Street – southeast of the Bruces', outside of the condemned area, and about halfway between Ocean and Manhattan Avenues. It advertised that a grand opening on Monday, May 30, 1927, Memorial Day. The advertisement said:

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[110] Letter to the City of Manhattan Beach from Willie A. Bruce and Charles A. Bruce, May 16, 1927. Manhattan Beach Historical Society.
[111] "Housewreckers Clear Park Site of Old Buildings," *Manhattan Beach News*, June 27, 1927.
[112] Book of Deeds (Los Angeles County), 6936, 311; 1928 Los Angeles City Directory, p. 551,
[113] California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994, Charles Aaron Bruce, 1931, database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QGX9-NMJW : 1 March 2021).
[114] California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994", database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP7F-2HLC : 1 March 2021), Willie Ann Bruce, 1934.
[115] Trustees at this time: Merritt J. Crandall, Harold Dale, Carl D. Edwards, John F. Jones and G.E. Delavan, Jr.
[116] The National Archives at St. Louis; St. Louis, Missouri; *World War II Draft Cards (4th Registration) for the State of California*; Record Group Title: *Records of the Selective Service System*; Record Group Number: *147*.
[117] Brigham, 85-6; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 124; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 44-45.
[118]Minutes of the City of Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees, May 19, 1927.
[119] Minutes of the City of Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees, August 4, 1927.
[120] Map of Tract 8867, Los Angeles County, Accessed June 6, 2021, https://pw.lacounty.gov/sur/nas/landrecords/tract/MB0115/TR0115-082.pdf.
[121] "Negro Bathers Outraged At Manhattan Beach." *California Eagle*. Friday, August 5, 1927.

"Come, bring your family and spend the day at Manhattan Beach, formerly Bruce's Beach."[122]



California Eagle Advertisement, May 20, 1927.

The *California Eagle* reported that the names and addresses of some 25 bathers were taken by the Manhattan Beach Police Department on Memorial Day in what they called a "bulldozing attempt in disguise to coerce and browbeat the Negro into keeping away from those quarters."[123]

According to the *California Eagle*, another incident took place on June 26, 1927, when "petty officials" ran "some 40 or 50 persons" from the beach until they threatened Walter Gordon, Sr. with arrest. Gordon allegedly explained some "fine points of law", and the officials, "after listening with some emotion, [they] beat a hasty retreat."[124]



Elizabeth Catley

[122] Advertisement, *California Eagle*, May 20, 1927.
[123] Dick Cromwell, "Attempt to Bulldoze Negro Bathers", *The California Eagle,* Friday, June 10, 1927, p. 1, Brigham, 83; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 125; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 45.
[124] "What's the Matter with Bruce's Beach," *The California Eagle,* Friday, July 1, 1927, p. 1.

Then, on July 4, 1927, a 19-year-old Black UCLA student, Elizabeth Catley, was arrested for swimming and "trespassing" on the "private beach." Manhattan Beach police imprisoned her for five hours in a jail cell in Redondo "with nothing more than a wet bathing suit to protect her."[125] Catley would file a suit in Superior Court of Los Angeles County the following June seeking $35,000 in damages against Alexander Haddock, the arresting officer, and members of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees.[126] *(Please note: Due to COVID restrictions, we are currently unable to access records for the outcome of this case, but they have been requested.)*

According to Brigham, it was at this point that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) took action.[127] On July 17, Dr. Henry C. Hudson, President of the Los Angeles Chapter of the NAACP[128], was driving in Manhattan Beach around 5:00pm when he saw police officers talking to some Black men by the water. He would later testify: "I asked these officers…what, if anything, was the trouble? They answered that that was private property and the Colored people should follow the line of least resistance."[129] Opting not to leave, Dr. Hudson, John McCaskill, a Manhattan Beach resident, J.H. Conley, and Romalious Johnson[130] were all arrested for resisting an officer and required to pay $10 bail.[131]

On Tuesday, August 2, 1927, the four men were put on trial in Manhattan Beach City Hall. The *California Eagle* said they were tried "for the offense of bathing in the ocean,"[132] which appears to have not been an official charge, but more of an assessment on the events. Based on the court documents he obtained, Brigham reported that the men were initially charged with resisting an officer, but ultimately that charge was dropped "for the new charge of disturbing the peace."[133]

In the trial, Bessonette was represented by the Manhattan Beach City Attorney and the four defendants were represented by Attorney Hugh Macbeth.[134] Macbeth graduated

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[125] "Jailed for Bathing", *California Eagle,* Friday, July 8, 1927; "Bather Seeks Damages," *Los Angeles Times,* June 2, 1928, A2; Brigham, 84, Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 126; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 45.
[126] "Bather Seeks Damages."
[127] Brigham, 86; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 127-9; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 46-49.
[128] NAACP Los Angeles. https://www.naacp-losangeles.org/
[129] "Negro Bathers Outraged At Manhattan Beach." *California Eagle*. Friday, August 5, 1927.
[130] California State Library; Sacramento, California; *Great Register of Voters, 1900-1968*
[131] "Negro Bathers Outraged At Manhattan Beach;" Brigham, 88-89, Jefferson, "Leisure's Race," 129; Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 47.
[132] "Negro Bathers Outraged At Manhattan Beach."
[133] Brigham, p. 88.
[134] "Negro Bathers Outraged At Manhattan Beach"; and United States, Selective Service System. World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M1509, 4,582 rolls. Imaged from Family History Library microfilm.

from Harvard Law School in 1908 and founded the *Baltimore Times* before moving to Los Angeles in 1913.[135] In 1914, he was appointed special counsel to the Los Angeles District Attorney's office.

Macbeth questioned Bessonette about the "No Trespassing" sign:

> Macbeth: Did you have a sign posted?
> Bessonette: Yes, "No Trespassing".
> Macbeth: Did this sign mean no trespassing by Colored people?
> Bessonette: It meant no trespassing by undesirables.
> Macbeth: On July 17, when these four defendants seated here were arrested and lodged in jail were there any other people sitting in the same spot?
> Bessonette: Yes.
> Macbeth: Were they arrested?
> Bessonette: No.
> Macbeth: Then your sign was posted for colored peoples only?
> Bessonette: For undesirables.
> Macbeth: You consider colored people undesirables?
> Bessonette: Yes.[136]

Later, Officer Haddock testified that he had been given specific orders by Bessonette to keep Black people off the beach. Despite Haddock and Bessonette's admissions to racial discrimination, the local court found in favor of the City, and Hudson, McCaskill, Conley, and Johnson were fined $100, but upon appeal they were released on $500 bond.[137]

[135] *Black Past*. "Hugh Macbeth Sr". Greg Robinson. 2007.
[136] "Negro Bathers Outraged At Manhattan Beach"; and Brigham, 88-9.
[137] "Negro Bathers Outraged At Manhattan Beach"; Brigham, 92-93; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race" 129-130; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 47-8.



Officer Alexander Haddock; Photo courtesy of Jan Dennis

At their meeting on August 4, 1927, the City Council[138] of Manhattan Beach revised the minutes of the May 19th to include all of Block 9, Tract No. 8867, and Lot 1 of Block 11 in the lease to Bessonette[139]. Block 9 was the entire beach area between 25th and 27th Streets -- or directly in front of where the Bruces' resort stood and the neighboring Black vacation homes -- and Brigham wrote that "this was another subterfuge on the part of the City whereby an attempt was made to pervert the legal process to the end that the Negroes would leave Manhattan Beach."[140]

The *Eagle* reported that the defendants appealed to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County on August 12,[141] and Brigham wrote that on that same day, Macbeth moved for "an arrest of judgment in the Manhattan court", which was granted by Justice of the Peace (and Manhattan's City Clerk) Llewellyn Price. The next day, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that a mile of beach frontage would be "forever restricted against private use" in a perpetual lease deal involving Bessonette and "the George H. Peck interests".[142]

At the very next meeting of the City Council, however, the City cancelled its lease with Bessonette.[143] The next day, the *California Eagle* proudly declared: "NAACP Wins Beach Victory."[144]

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[138] As of August 1, 1927, the titles of offices and officers of cities of the Sixth Class in the State of California changed. The "Board of Trustees" would now be called "City Council". "By Their New Titles Ye Shall Designate Them," *Manhattan Beach News,* August 5, 1927. P. 1
[139] Minutes of the Meeting of the City Council of the City of Manhattan Beach, August 4, 1927.
[140] Brigham, p. 85.
[141] "Manhattan Beach Case Appealed," *California Eagle,* Friday, August 12, 1927; and Brigham, 92.
[142] "PUBLIC GETS MORE BEACH..."*Los Angeles Times (1923-1995),* Aug 13, 1927, pg. A1.
[143] City Council Minutes. Manhattan Beach. August 18, 1927.
[144] "NAACP Wins Beach Victory," *California Eagle,* Friday, August 19, 1927; Brigham, 93; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race", 130; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 47-8.



Attorney, Hugh Macbeth Sr.

Hugh Macbeth had a long legal career fighting against racism and segregation. Twenty years after the Manhattan Beach case, Macbeth would argue *Oyama v. California,* against California's Alien Land Act in front of the United States Supreme Court . The Court's ruling for Oyama in January 1948 ended the Alien Land Act and set a legal precedent for later rulings against segregation. [145]

The Ku Klux Klan and the "Race War" of 1928


Ku Klux Klan Still Working at Manhattan Beach

California Eagle, October 28, 1927

On October 18, 1927, two months after the beachfront was opened to everyone, "hooded" individuals approached the Slaughter house during the night and covered the gas meter under the house with oil-soaked waste, accelerant, cotton and lit a match to it. The Slaughters were awakened by the smoke, but were able to extinguish the fire before the fire department arrived. The *California Eagle* reported that "there are individuals who are determined that justice and decency shall not prevail and are endeavoring to terrorize and instill fear into the hearts of Colored residents of Manhattan Beach." The following night, the *Eagle* stated that "the fiery cross of the K.K.K." was burned across

[145] Robinson, Greg, "Hugh Macbeth Sr.," *Black Past*. 2007.

the street from the Slaughter home. Despite these attempts at intimidation, the article noted, the Slaughters were "not of the running kind".[146]

After the release of *Birth of a Nation* in 1915, it ignited a rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan across the United States, although it wasn't until the 1920s that it became significantly active in Southern California.[147] The *Los Angeles Times* reported in January of 1921, that efforts were underway by Klan members to make its presence more pronounced on the west coast, and, in July of that same year, it reported that a federal investigation had been initiated regarding attempts to organize a branch of the organization in Los Angeles.[148]

In 1922, members of the KKK raided the Inglewood home of Basque immigrants who were illegally selling alcohol. Fidel and Angela Elduayen, their daughters and Fidel's brother, Mathias, were threatened, bound and beaten, according to Sam Gnerre's South Bay History blog, because the liquor they sold had purportedly sickened one Klansmen and killed another.[149] The result of the raid left one Klan member, M.B. Mosher, who happened to also be an Inglewood constable, dead, and led to a grand jury investigation of 46 alleged Klansmen, including George Cate, Mayor of Redondo Beach, and Redondo's Chief of Police John Henry.[150] Ultimately, Cate and Henry were not among those 43 indicted[151] nor were they confirmed as members of the KKK. This would not be the last time Cate was accused of being a Klansman, however, though he routinely denied any involvement with the organization.[152]

On January 12, 1924, *The Redondo Breeze* published an advertisement that invited readers to a free lecture on "The Principles of the KKK and Ideals of Pure Americanism."[153] On Friday, January 18, the *Redondo Reflex* reported: "It is quite

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[146] "Ku Klux Klan Still At Work in Manhattan Beach," *California Eagle*. October 28, 1927.
[147] "From the Archives: Ku Klux Klan images from 1920s Southern California", Scott Harrison, October 4, 2017.
https://www.latimes.com/visuals/framework/la-me-fw-archives-ku-klux-klan-images-from-the-1920s-20170825-story.html
[148] "Ku Klux Klan!", *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1921: II4; "FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATING KU KLUX KLAN IN LOS ANGELES ..." *Los Angeles Times,* July 19, 1921, pg. II1.
[149] Sam Gnerre, http://blogs.dailybreeze.com/history/2014/03/15/the-1922-ku-klux-klan-inglewood-raid/
[150] "PLAN ARRESTS IN MOB KILLING: Quick Action Expected to Follow Inquest;" *Los Angeles Times* ; Apr 25, 1922; pg. I1; and Warden Woolard, "WIZARD CALLS; COBURN AMBLES: Grand Goblin Summoned to Atlanta ..." *Los Angeles Times,* May 16, 1922; pg. II1.
[151] "KLANSMEN INDICTED: Forty-three Are Accused; Grand Jury Action Based," *Los Angeles Times,* June 8, 1922, I1.
[152] "BEACH MAYOR NAMED IN SUIT: Klan Leader of Redondo Made Co-respondent," *Los Angeles Times,* January 19, 1926, 22.
[153] Brigham, 41.

evident from the great crowd last Monday night that Redondo Beach has many in sympathy with the 'hooded organization'."[154]

The *California Eagle* reported on the front page of its July 4, 1924, issue that the KKK was operating unrestricted along the waterfront.[155] Cited in the article was an incident in Redondo Beach where KKK pamphlets were handed out to Black fishermen. In that same article, the Bruces and their resort are specifically mentioned:

> *The Bruces have been at Manhattan for thirteen years, and were among the first settlers of that end of the beach… But it is understood that some Ku Klux who recently moved in the vacinit [sic] objects [sic] to the presence of Colored folk, and have so manipulated their objections that they have reached and influenced the servants of the people (who reside [sic] over the city council) and this august body has condemned Bruce Beach as a pleasure resort for Colored people.*[156]

When Brigham wrote his thesis in 1956, he interviewed a number of individuals who remembered incidents of racially motivated harassment directed at Black residents and their guests. In one instance, Hugh Macbeth, lawyer for Ms. Sanders and the Johnsons, said air was let out of tires in cars parked near the Bruces' resort while owners were at the beach.[157] Cassius Robbins, a member of the 1924 Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees, claimed that one night he "followed a siren to Bruce's Lodge where someone (supposedly a Klansman) had set fire to a mattress under the main building."[158] Mrs. Emma Barnett Holt, daughter of the Milton and Anna Johnson, relayed a story of a Black-owned home on 23rd Street that was partially burned in 1926, allegedly by a White neighbor, upset that an African-American woman had purchased it.[159] Mrs. Ethel Atkinson reported "10 Minutes Only" parking signs that were posted on Highland near the home of her mother (Mary Sanders) to make parking inconvenient for their friends and visitors.[160]

These accounts were recited nearly 30 years after they were alleged to have occurred, and some were not from first-hand experience, calling into question the validity and credibility. With further research, however, we discovered reports by a variety of sources

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[154] "K.K.K. Meet Crowded to Street", *The Redondo Reflex*, January 18, 1924, p. 1.
[155] "Klans Operations", *The California Eagle*, Volume 39, No. 10, July 4, 1924, p. 1; Brigham, 41; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race" 119-120; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 42.
[156] "Klans Operations", *The California Eagle*.
[157] Brigham, 40.
[158] Brigham, 41.
[159] Brigham, 77.
[160] Brigham, 82.

that corroborate acts of violence against members of the Black community in Manhattan Beach.

- On February 15, 1928, Superior Judge Superior Judge Carlos H. Hardy impaneled the 1928 Los Angeles County grand jury. One of the first investigations was the alleged "anti-race arson plot at Manhattan Beach, where it is charged houses of Negro residents have been dynamited and set on fire by White citizens objecting to the presence of Negroes." District Attorney Asa Keyes intimated that "some big names" are involved in the arson play.[161]

- On February 15, 1928, the *Venice Evening Vanguard* reported that the grand jury would hear the case that followed a six-week investigation led by George Contreras, chief of the district attorney's detective staff. The article said: "Dynamite, bullets and the secret torch are all alleged to have been employed by residents in order to induce the [N]egroes to travel. Certain citizens objected to a colored settlement." It also noted: "It was learned that seven Manhattan Beach citizens have been questioned by operatives in regard to the race trouble. One of these seven, it is said, has been Jack Garvin, Manhattan's chief of police. The other six are business men of the community." [162]

- According to the February 15, 1928, *Los Angeles Record*: "Burning and dynamiting of the homes of [N]egro residents at Manhattan Beach, which has grown to the proportion of a race war is to be investigated by the 1928 grand jury as soon as it is impaneled." It is also reported here that seven White Manhattan Beach residents were expected to be subpoenaed.[163]

- *The Pasadena Evening Post* reported on the investigation into the alleged arson and dynamiting in Manhattan Beach, saying that it "was declared to appear to be the concerted effort of some group of residents of the community to terrorize the [N]egroes now there into a fight."[164]

- On February 16, 1928, *The Record* provided more details about the incidents, stating that the home of James Slaughter at 120 26th Street was fired upon and the home of Isaac and Pearl Mose[165] at the corner of 6th and Peck was completely

[161] "Anti-Race Plot Will Be Among Initial Probes," *Los Angeles Evening Express* (Los Angeles, California) · Wed, Feb 15, 1928, 3.
[162] "Nearby Town Now Center of Race War," *Venice Evening Vanguard* (Venice, California), Wed, Feb 15, 1928 · 1 and 8.
[163] "Homes At L.A. Beach Set Afire," *The Record* (Los Angeles, California), Wed, Feb 15, 1928, 1.
[164] "Grand Jury Will Probe Dynamiting," *Pasadena Evening Post* (Pasadena, California), Wed, Feb 15, 1928, 12.
[165] Manhattan Beach City Directory, 1921, p.162.

destroyed by a fire. It is also reported that, "A fiery cross blazed upon a hillside shortly before one of the fires and written warnings were placed upon the houses marked for arson." Police Chief Jack Garvin stated that no official report of dynamiting or shooting had been brought to his attention. The *Record* noted, however, that " this information is common talk in the community." [166]

- The *Times* reported that Contreras had uncovered clues "indicating that certain citizens set fire to [N]egro dwellings, fired shots into the walls of others, burned falling crosses on the hills, and in one instance, atempted [sic] to destroy a house with dynamite. Threatening notes written to the victims and pinned to the doors will be used in tracing those responsible for the acts of violence."[167]

- Following an announcement of the Contreras investigation, it was reported that there was a "secret meeting in the sand hills near the ocean" among members of the Manhattan Beach community . The *Times* stated:

> *The mysterious meeting, according to officers was called by leaders in the movement to oust the [N]egro population from the beach city immediately after the announcement was made that evidence concerning asserted acts of violence had been obtained and will be placed before the 1928 grand jury.* [168]

- Also reporting on the "mystery conclave", the *Venice Evening Vanguard* stated, "While the forces of the law were moving to end the race strife in that community, a band of 100 men are said to have met in the middle of the night…" They also reported on the investigation itself, saying that while some officials cooperated with Contreras's investigation, others "appeared to be throwing obstacles in the way of the official probe. It was against these men that the 'ouster' action will be asked of the grand jury."[169]

- On February 25, 1928, *The Indianapolis Reporter* carried a story by the Associated Press about the incidents in Manhattan Beach. "Several homes have been bombed, fired into, and burned, but the largest losers are reported to be the White insurance companies as the Negro citizens have insured their homes against these hazards." Furthermore, it stated that District Attorney Asa Keyes had been doing a secret investigation of the "[W]hite hoodlums" responsible

[166] "May Oust Officials in Beach Race War," *The Record* (Los Angeles, California), Thu, Feb 16, 1928, 2.
[167] "Oustings in Terrorizing Plot Loom," *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1928, Part II, 14
[168] "SECRECY IN TERRORISM PLAN LIFTED: Contreras Goes to Beach City as Negro Baiters Meet in Sand Dunes," *Los Angeles Times,* Feb 17, 1928, A3.
[169] "Probe Mystery Conclave Held in Race Strife," *Venice Evening Vanguard*, Friday, February 17, 1928, 1.

> these actions for six weeks and "expects to bring several prominent business men before the law to explain their connection with the gangsters who are believed to be perpetrating the crimes and endangering the lives of citizens of Manhattan Beach." [170]

On February 27 and February 28, 1928, the *Times* reported that no witnesses would be called in the "asserted arson cases in Manhattan Beach."[171] It only stated that:

> *"Reports that the investigation of arson charges against several Manhattan Beach residents also would be taken up today were denied by [Deputy District Attorney Ellis] Eagan. It will be necessary to obtain more evidence before placing the investigation before the grand jury, Eagan intimated."*[172]

(*Please note: We received copies of the 1927 and 1928 Grand Jury Final Reports, however, neither makes any mention of the racial incidents in Manhattan Beach. We have requested the 1929 Grand Jury Report and are investigating the final outcome of these investigations.*)

1929: Conclusion of Condemnation Proceedings

A final judgment on the condemnation proceedings was delivered on June 10, 1929.[173] The amount granted to each of the condemned property holders are demands as printed in the Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach:[174*]

OWNER	PROPERTY	SETTLEMENT
B.H. DYER, R.L. RICE, & H.M. EICHELBERGER	Lots 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of Block 5 Lots 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, and 12 in Block 12	$21,147.31
C.W. STONE	Lot 3, Block 5	$1325.71

[170] "Open Clash of Races is Anticipated: White stir up Wrath of Negroes By Attacks on Their Homes" *The Indianapolis Recorder*, February 25, 1928, 1.
[171] "Forecast Upset by Grand Jury", *Los Angeles Times,* February 28, 1928, A2.
[172] "MILES CASE CHARGES TO GRAND JURY: Little Credence Placed by District Attorney in Affidavits Offered," *Los Angeles Times,* February 27, 1928, A5.
[173] Final Judgment, City of Manhattan Beach vs. B.H Dyer et. al. 12 and 13; Brigham, p. 67.
[174] Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, March 3, 1927.
[*] The list of demands mentions a "C.J. Rihn", but there is no mention of C.J. Rihn in any of the court documents, theses or city documents. It's unclear how this name relates to the Parks and Playground Settlement.

OWNER	PROPERTY	SETTLEMENT
GEORGE W. YARROW	Lots 4 and 6, Block 5 Lot 11, Block 12	$6,461.13
LILLIE D. DOSTA	Lot 7, Block 5	
W.A. BRUCE	Lots 8 and 9, Block 5	$14,500.00
MILTON B. & ANNA E. JOHNSON; EMMA K. BARNETT	Lot 1, Block 12	$3888.16[175]
ELIZABETH PATTERSON	½ Lot 4, Block 12 (NORTHERLY HALF)	$1,865.66
ETHEL AND GEORGE W. PRIOLEAU	½ Lot 4, Block 12 (SOUTHERLY HALF)	$1,874.37
MARY R. SANDERS	Lot 6, Block 12	$4129.09
SARAH I. AMBROSE, MARION R. WYSER (SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BOND AND FINANCE COMPANY)	Lot 7, Block 12	$128.09 (So.Cal. Bond) $577.81 (Wyser)
R.C. RUPERD	Lot 10, Block 12	$1,565.08
GRACE STUART	Lot 13, Block 12	$1,200
L.A. DREISBACH (M.W. MITCHELL)	Lot 14, Block 12	$913.95 (Dreisbach) $25.00 (Mitchell)
CLARA MONROE DARLINGTON	Lot 15, Block 12	$1,200.00
H.H. ECCLESTON	Lot 16, Block 12	$1755.85

In their original answer to the Complaint of Condemnation, the Bruces requested $70,000 for their property and $50,000 in damages because "if the lands described in the Complaint are condemned, these defendants will be ousted from their homes and will be unable and are unable to procure other homes" in Manhattan Beach because they

[175] The Demands for the Johnson family break down as follows: Milton B. Johnson $673.04, Anna E. Johnson $1273.04, and Emma K. Barnett $1273.04.

are Black."[176] But this was not likely a condition of the condemnation because of the five Black families who owned the condemned property, four bought land in other areas of the beach city.[177] The Bruces were the only family who did not.[178]

The *Times* reported on July 24, 1927, that ocean-front property in Manhattan Beach could be purchased for $165 per front foot.[179] According to a July 1927 Sketch Map showing the prices of ocean frontages between Santa Monica and Long Beach, a 66⅔ x 100 ocean-facing lot as was the Bruces', could be purchased for $12,500 or $187 per foot.[180]

The Court granted the Bruces $14,500.[181] When they turned over the land in 1927 it had been 15 years since Mrs. Bruce purchased the lot and she was now 64 years old. Charles was 66. They purchased a home at 1042/1044 E. 20th in Los Angeles[182], and reported to the 1930 U.S. Census that it cost $7,500. According to that Census, Charles continued to work as a chef on the railroad.[183] Harvey, Meda, and four-year-old Harvey, Jr. moved to the house they owned at 940 E. 37th St., Los Angeles.[184] Charles passed away in 1931 of kidney failure[185], and Willa passed away three years later of atherosclerosis.[186] They're interred side-by-side in Evergreen Cemetery.

Around 1932, Willa and Harvey allegedly purchased two commercial properties: One at 724 East 33rd Street in Los Angeles, and the other at 1339 E. 18th Street. It is unclear exactly how much they paid for this land or what they used it for, but in 1942, a notice appeared in the *Eagle* advising that both properties would be for sale pursuant to

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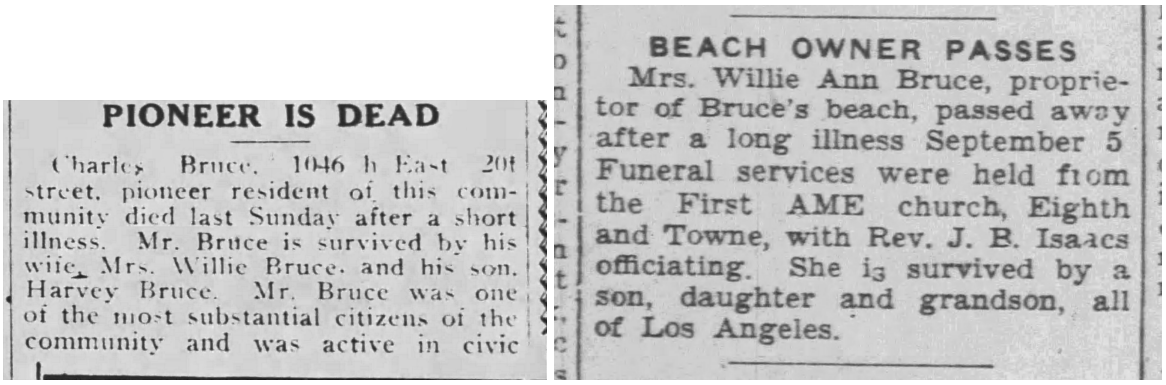
[176] *City of Manhattan Beach v. B.H. Dyer, et al., Answer of Willie A Bruce and Charles A. Bruce*, June 14, 1924.
[177] Brigham, p. 68.
[178] There have been stories repeated about what the judge may have said, but we cannot substantiate those statements because there is no record of what the judge stated at any time with regard to the Bruces or Manhattan Beach.
[179] "DATA GIVE PRICE INDEX AT SEASIDE: COMPARATIVE VALUE SHOWN BY RECENT…" *Los Angeles Times,* July 24, 1927, E4.
[180] Sketch Map Showing Prices of Ocean Frontage Between Santa Monica and Long Beach, California, July 1927, Rebecca Bates, Facebook, "Manhattan Beach Haunts That No Longer Exist."
[181] Report of Referees, City of Manhattan Beach vs. B.H Dyer et. al. 12 and 13; Brigham, 68.
[182] 1928, 1929, 1930, 1932 LA City Directories.
[183] 1930 Census, Year: 1930; Census Place: Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California; Page: 6A; Enumeration District: 0291; FHL microfilm: 2339879
[184] 1930 Census, Year: *1930*; Census Place: *Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California*; Page: *15A*; Enumeration District: *0306*; FHL microfilm: *2339879*
[185] "California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994", *Charles Aaron Bruce, 1931*, database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QGX9-NMJW : 1 March 2021).
[186] "California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994", Willie Ann Bruce, 1934, database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP7F-2HLC : 1 March 2021).

Division 1, Part 6, Chapter 7 of the Revenue and Taxation Code (sale of tax-defaulted property).[187] Property records have been requested, but have not yet been found.



PIONEER IS DEAD

Charles Bruce, 1046 h East 20t street, pioneer resident of this community died last Sunday after a short illness. Mr. Bruce is survived by his wife, Mrs. Willie Bruce, and his son, Harvey Bruce. Mr. Bruce was one of the most substantial citizens of the community and was active in civic

BEACH OWNER PASSES

Mrs. Willie Ann Bruce, proprietor of Bruce's beach, passed away after a long illness September 5 Funeral services were held from the First AME church, Eighth and Towne, with Rev. J. B. Isaacs officiating. She is survived by a son, daughter and grandson, all of Los Angeles.

Bruce Family Obituaries published in The California Eagle



CARD OF THANKS

We wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to our many friends for their many acts of kindness and the beautiful floral offerings during the illness and death of our dear mother and grand mother, Mrs. Willie Ann Bruce. We also thank all of the officers and members of Electa Chapter of the Eastern Star Lodge for theri acts om kindness and the very beautiful Star of flowers.

Sleep on, mother dear, there is a reaper whose name is death, you have won the fight and the battle is over. Rest n peace with Jesus.

Signed:
Mr. Harvey Bruce, son,
Mrs. Mida Bruce, daughter,
Harry Bruce, Jr., grandson.

from The California Eagle

After 1929

In 1930, the *Manhattan Beach News* praised the efforts of councilman John F. Jones who had "made it his particular aim" to rid Manhattan Beach of Black residents because their "settlement" had "depreciated property values to a considerable extent and many sales were lost on this account." The article continued: "Mr. Jones worked long and earnestly on this problem with the result that the [N]egroes finally withdrew their

[187] "Legal Notices", *California Eagle,* April 9, 1942. P. 12.; *California Revenue and Taxation Code,* CHAPTER 7. Sale to Private Parties After Deed to State [3691 - 3731.1] *(Chapter 7 enacted by Stats. 1939, Ch. 154.).*

occupancy of the Manhattan Beach property and the city is now free from that menace."[188]

Daugherty, one of the three original subdividers in Manhattan Beach (in addition to George Peck and John A. Merrill), was interviewed for a four-part essay titled "A History of Manhattan." In one excerpt published in the *Manhattan Beach News* on February 19, 1943, and reprinted on July 20, 1945 in the *Redondo Reflex,* Daugherty discussed the racist motivations behind the condemnation of the Bruces' and other families' land. "We tried to buy them out but they would not sell. There were several families in the blocks between 26th and 27th streets…We had to acquire these two blocks to solve the problem. We voted to condemn these two blocks and make a city park there. We had to protect ourselves. Our attorney advised the members of the council never to admit the real purpose in establishing the park, especially during the city council meeting…"[189]

The History of the Park

After the City condemned the land for a new park in place of the former resort, historic folklore says that the land sat empty for 30 years following the condemnation. Brigham remembered looking at the empty lots of sand between 26th and 27th Street and wondered why houses had "popped up out of the sand all around" it, and his thesis was a result of his curiosity.[190]



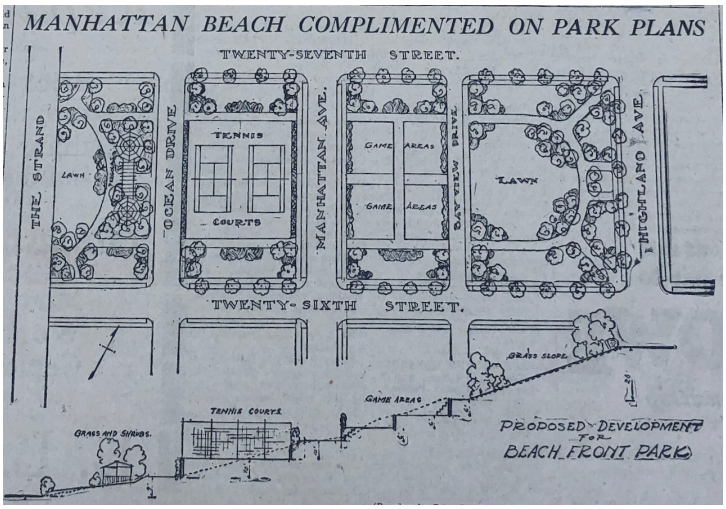
Looking west across Highland Ave., between 26th St. and 27th St., circa 1950
Photo Courtesy of the Manhattan Beach Historical Society

Beginning in 1932, however, Manhattan Beach City Council had petitioned the county for assistance in funding both the City Park between the Strand and Highland, and Live

[188] "Jones' Efforts Increase Values," *Manhattan Beach News,* April 11, 1930. P. 1.
[189] "Negroes and Pier Building Were Manhattan Problems," *Manhattan Beach News,* February 19, 1943, 1 and 6.
[190] Brigham, iii-iv.

Oak Park off what was then called Railroad Drive. They hoped to use labor supplied by and paid through the County Welfare and Stabilization Program.[191]

In February 1933, the City of Manhattan Beach filed plans to utilize funds from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to build a beachfront park. The resolutions asked the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for 2580 "man days" for the improvement of the City Park, "being the block between Manhattan Avenue and Ocean Drive, 26th and 27th." For the block between The Strand and Ocean, 1300 "man days" were requested, and between Manhattan Avenue and Bay View, 2400. The block between Bay View and Highland needed 2267 "man days".[192] The *Los Angeles Times* said the Beach Front Park and Live Oak Park projects were "striking examples of how well planned public projects best may utilize Reconstruction Finance Corporation funds available for unemployment relief.[193]



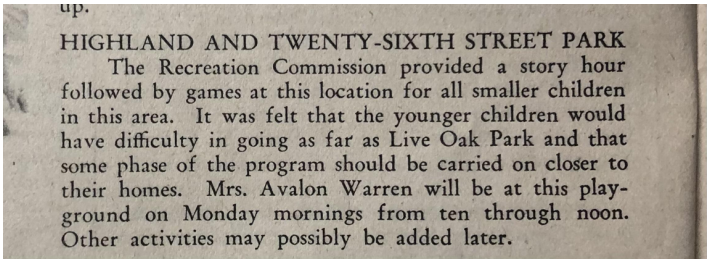
Proposed development between 26th and 27th Streets. From the Manhattan Beach News, March 17, 1933.

By August 11, 1933, the *Manhattan Beach News* reported that "Beach Front Park… has been graded and its terraced surface planted to moss, pending further development that will include extensive landscaping, game areas, and tennis courts."[194]

Though it's unclear exactly how much of this plan came to fruition, the development of some sort of park was ongoing. In 1938, a local resident approached Council to request a volleyball court at the City Park between 26th and 27th. Permission for this was

[191] Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach. July 21, 1932.
[192] Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach. February 2, 1933.
[193] Manhattan Beach Park Projects Being Pushed: Two Recreation Places Under Construction May Provide Work for Many Citizens," *Los Angeles Times*, March 13, 1933, p. 10
[194] "Progress is Evident in Park Work", *Manhattan Beach News*, August 11, 1933, p. 1.

granted.[195] In 1940, there were numerous discussions of creating tennis courts there, where one resident argued that the courts weren't level and "not fit even to play volleyball on."[196] Community events also took place there, as noted in a 1945 issue of "Community Life" magazine, which describes a children's story hour located at the playground at Highland and 26th Street Park.[197]



up.

HIGHLAND AND TWENTY-SIXTH STREET PARK

The Recreation Commission provided a story hour followed by games at this location for all smaller children in this area. It was felt that the younger children would have difficulty in going as far as Live Oak Park and that some phase of the program should be carried on closer to their homes. Mrs. Avalon Warren will be at this playground on Monday mornings from ten through noon. Other activities may possibly be added later.

Excerpt from Community Life, 1945

In 1948, the State took over the ownership of the property condemned by the City in 1929 under the condition "that the land be accepted for use as a public beach or park only."[198]

Since its inception, Manhattan Beach had been consistently plagued by raw sewage leaking into the Santa Monica Bay through the Hyperion Outfall. In the 1940s, it was not uncommon for the beaches in Manhattan to be closed due to a quarantine because of the risks to the public's health.[199] Manhattan Beach was complicit in the pollution, using the Hyperion Outfall, just like its neighbors. But by 1948, the population of the town had increased from 859 in 1920 to 6,398 by 1940,[200] and the lack of sufficient water treatment facilities led the State to take action against all cities -- including Manhattan Beach -- to "abate the nuisance immediately."

The solution to the problem would be costly, and as an alternative, the City and its neighbors created the South Bay Sanitation District. By building a pumping plant beneath the Strand at 27th, the City's sewage would be re-routed through tunnels under the sand hills to Aviation Boulevard, where it would join the eastern Sanitation District. This was more economical and, more importantly, environmental because the South

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[195] Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach. August 28, 1938.
[196] Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach. May 2, 1940.
[197] *Community Life, Summer Issue,* Recreational Life, 1945.
[198] City of Manhattan Beach Memorandum, Carl K. Newton, City Attorney, March 22, 1987.
[199] "South Bay Beaches Face Quarantine", *Manhattan Beach News,* August 22, 1941; "Prepare Signs for Beach Quarantine," *Manhattan Beach News,* April 9, 1943. "Swimming in So. Bay Banned By State At Season's Peak of Heat", *Manhattan Beach News,* September 4, 1947.
[200] https://www.citymb.info/residents/about-us/census-data

Bay cities would no longer be contributing to the direct sewage pollution of its beaches.[201]



Pumping plant between 26th and 27th St, 1949, Courtesy of Jan Dennis

When the South Bay Cities Sanitation District was installing the new sewer lines and the pumping station, they requested use of the City Park between 26th and 27th Streets. The City granted them permission, provided the property be left in "clean and proper conditioning so far as reasonably possible" and that any "sand retaining growths or foliage removed" be restored in the same condition as it was.[202]

A South Bay Breeze newspaper article published November 9, 1954 reported on a joint session between the City Council and the Recreation Commission discussing the development of park plans. By 1956, the area was landscaped into a terraced park that absorbed a portion of Bayview Drive.

[201] "City Divorces Hyperion in New Sewer Set-up", *Manhattan Beach Messenger, Special Supplement: "The Manhattan Beach Story: A Report to Our Citizens,"* April 13, 1950, *p. 15.*
[202] Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach. October 19, 1948.



1959 Manhattan City Park, 27th and Highland
South Bay History Collection, CSUDH

The site was referred to as City Park and Beach Front Park until 1962, when the Kiwanis Club and the Manhattan Beach City Council sponsored a naming contest. The chosen name was Bayview Terrace Park. [203]

In 1974, the park's name was subject to another change, this time as an act of goodwill toward Manhattan Beach's Sister City, Culiacán, Mexico. The Manhattan Beach Sister City Committee requested that the City change 15th Street to Calle Culiacán "in view of the impending visit of Culiacán representatives for the change of officers on the city council and to make them feel more a part of the cultural exchange." During the February 19, 1974 meeting, the Manhattan Beach Sister City Committee requested the city rename the park "Culiacán Terrace Park or its Spanish equivalent." With Council's consent, Parque Culiacán was designated on March 16, 1974.[204]

In 1988, the mayor of Culiacán, Mexico no longer supported the Sister Cities Program, and dropped Manhattan Beach as their sister city. In 1989, a new sister city was established with Santa Rosalía of Baja California, Mexico.[205]

On February 18, 2003, a group from Leadership Manhattan Beach, a community leadership program, proposed a class project called "Facts on Plaques", a series of historical facts placed on plaques near points of interest. Class member Mark Davis also proposed a communitywide contest to rename Parque Culiacán with a name more relevant to the community. The council approved the project with the directive that the park should not be named after an individual.[206]

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[203] South Bay Breeze, November 9, 1954
[204] Minutes of the City Council Meeting of the City of Manhattan Beach, February 19, 1974.
[205] Parks & Recreation Minutes February 27, 2006.
[206] Minutes of the City Council Meeting, February 18, 2003, Agenda Item 13.

On April 15, 2003, the Leadership class returned to the City Council with the recommendation of renaming Parque Culiacán to Friendship Park. During the meeting, the Sister City Organization representatives protested the recommendation and stated that it was inappropriate to drop the original Sister City's name Culiacán from the park. *The Daily Breeze* reported that then Mayor Steve Napolitano and the other council members felt that the names weren't specific enough to Manhattan Beach, and the City Council unanimously denied the recommendation of Friendship Park.[207]

There was, however, Council support for putting up a plaque acknowledging the history of the park. It accepted a donation of $3,600 from The Leadership Manhattan Class of 2003 and instructed staff to work with Leadership to develop a sign including all the history of Parque Culiacán.[208]

At the City Council Meeting on May 6, 2003, Sandra Seville-Jones, co-manager of Leadership Manhattan Beach, presented wording based on the extensive research completed by Leadership. Councilmember Ward suggested deleting the word "tragic" from the plaque wording; however, Ms. Seville-Jones felt that the documentation supported the use of the word and it was an important factor in the emotional impact of the statement. Richard Frank, co-manager of Leadership Manhattan Beach, said he believed it was "time to acknowledge and address what happened at the park, noting that it was tragic and unfair circumstances."[209]

Following discussion, the final text read:

> *Parque Culiacán*
>
> *Named in honor of Culiacán, Mexico Our first Sister City 1974*
>
> *Formerly the site of Bruce's Beach, a resort for African American Angelinos. This two block neighborhood also housed several minority families and was condemned through eminent domain proceedings commenced in 1924. Those tragic circumstances reflected the views of a different time.*
>
> *The land was referred to as City Park and Beach Front Park, and later named Bayview Terrace Park through a community contest in 1962.*

[207] Johnson, Dennis, "Manhattan Beach park will continue to carry ex-sister city's name," *Daily Breeze*, April 17, 2003, A3.; Minutes of the City Council Meeting, April 15, 2003, Agenda Item 15, 6.

[208] Minutes of the City Council Meeting, April 15, 2003, Agenda Item 15, pg. 7

[209] Minutes of the City Council Meeting, May 6, 2003, Agenda Item 6.19, pg. 5

Designated Parque Culiacán on March 16, 1974 at the time of a visit from representatives of our first Sister City.

Parque Culiacán commemorates our community's understanding that friendship, goodwill and respect for all begins within our own boundaries and extends to the world community.

Signed and donated by Leadership Manhattan Beach Class of 2003[210].



Two years later, on December 6, 2005, renaming the park was brought up again during City Council audience participation. Rosa Parks had died in October 2005 prompting Manhattan Beach resident and activist, Patrick McBride, to request that the park be named after her as symbolic of the civil rights issues related to the park's history. Mr. McBride stated that Bob Brigham was also in support of renaming the park in honor of Rosa Parks. In response to Mr. McBride's comment, Mayor Fahey felt strongly that a name that addresses the history of the area would have more meaning than Parque Culiacán. Mayor Fahey asked the council if there was support for discussing changing the name of Parque Culiacán; Mayor Pro Tem Ward said he "didn't have any problem with discussing it" and City Manager Dolan suggested it be referred to Parks and Recreation for consideration and discussion before city council agendize it.[211]

Parks and Recreation met on February 27, 2006. Community member Patrick McBride spoke during audience participation on the history of Bruce's Beach and Rosa Parks. Parks Commissioner Lear agreed with other Commissioners and would be open-minded about considering a new park name that has a much more localized connection to the Manhattan Beach community, i.e., Bruce's Beach. The meeting minutes note that, "The Commission has an interest in sending the message that Manhattan Beach stands for,

[210] Transcript of the sign from the Parque Culiacán plaque written by Leadership Manhattan Beach Class of 2003.
[211] Manhattan Beach City Council Meeting, December 6, 2005

amongst other things, diversity and recognizing that the greatest blemish in our history is the events of the 1920s at Bruce's Beach." Commissioner Lear commended Mr. McBride's noble effort to communicate to the world that the City of Manhattan Beach stands for diversity and good will. The Commission voted against changing the name to Rosa Parks Park.[212]

At the conclusion of the Manhattan Beach City Council meeting on April 18, 2006, during other council business, Mayor Mitch Ward, supported by Mayor Pro Tem Nick Tell and Councilmember Joyce Fahey, directed the Parks and Recreation Department to look into renaming Parque Culiacán, with specific direction to look at the historical aspects of the area.[213]

The Parks and Recreation committee met on May 22, 2006. During audience participation, community members suggested keeping the name Parque Culiacán as well as the names Forgiving Park, Ocean View Park, Surf View Park and Bayview Terrace. Community member Patrick McBride once again suggested that the park's history had a huge civil rights significance, thus renaming the park Bruce's Beach would signify the historical relevance. Mr. McBride suggested that a lot of people think we should honor the Bruce Family and he suggested the city should honor the symbol that they stood for and the historical struggle that took place. Commissioner Paralusz agreed that the City Council's direction was to consider renaming the park to reflect historical events, and said she was in favor of renaming the park Bruce's Beach to recognize our City's history. She suggested that we can't go back and change what happened, but could certainly address what had happened. Commissioner Paralusz then made a motion to recommend to the City Council in favor of changing the name Parque Culiacán to Bruce's Beach. The Committee voted 4-2 (Ayes: Cohen, Paralusz, Gill, Lamb; Nays: Harris, Lear).[214]

At the City Council meeting on July 6, 2006, the Parks and Recreation Committee brought their recommendation of renaming Parque Culiacán to Bruce's Park or Bruce's Beach Park before council.

[212] MB Parks and Recreation Meeting Minutes, February 27, 2006
[213] Manhattan Beach City Council Meeting, April 18, 2006
[214] MB Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes, May 22, 2006



Residents gave emotional speeches during audience participation. Many of the name change supporters wore large paper hearts with "BB" written on them. Resident Oliver Coker read a letter on behalf of his wife, Lillian Light, saying this was "a chance to right a wrong and honor the Bruce Family… This name would make a statement that 'we citizens of Manhattan Beach strongly oppose such acts of racial discrimination and will never again allow such acts to occur here'." Resident Gail Runk said "history must never die because if history dies, the future dies with it. We have an opportunity to honor the past here…for the history the Bruce family enriched our city with." Resident Patrick McBride, who started the name change discussion 6 months prior, and spoke on its behalf at every meeting, noted the name change also highlighted the significance of the non-violent protest by Elizabeth Catley, the NAACP, and the movement it inspired.[215]

Mayor Mitch Ward suggested that the discussion should be about the history of the land rather than the Bruce family, and referred to the role of the Bruce family as the "movement the Bruce family created as a result of George Peck". He shared an article from *The Manhattan Beach Observer* -- published by the Manhattan Beach Residents' Association -- that evoked a portrayal of George H. Peck, as a generous businessman who helped his Black neighbors in "bucking the practice of racial exclusion, opened up two blocks of land on the beach for African Americans to purchase."[216]

The first mention of this story that we found was in a *Los Angeles Times* article written in 2002, 90 years after the Bruces purchased their land and four years prior to this renaming discussion. It suggested that Peck took a proactive role in reserving and facilitating the sale of Manhattan Beach property to African Americans when he "flouted tradition and set aside a two-block area fronting the ocean between 26th and 27th streets and Highland Avenue for minority residents."[217] Attempts to contact the reporter to find her source for this information have been unsuccessful so far.

[215] Minutes of the City Council Meeting, July 5, 2006
[216] MB City Council Minutes and Recording, July 5, 2006; Murphy, Michelle, "Parks and Recreation Commission Recommend Changing Park Name," *The Manhattan Beach Observer*, June, 2006, 4 and 6.
[217] Rasmussen, "Resort Was An Oasis."

We also spoke with Michelle Murphy via telephone, the author of *The Manhattan Beach Observer* article, who did not recall the origins of this story or the source she had used for the piece. Peck's great-grandson, Clarke Mallery, said in an email that he hadn't heard this story until 2006 when the park re-naming was discussed by Council.

Robert Brigham did not mention it in his thesis either. He reported that George H. Lindsey had claimed that there had been a series of telegrams between Peck and his business associate/son-in-law Herb Culler regarding the Bruces and their guests. Lindsey told Brigham that the use of a long rope was the "direct result of telegrams between Culler and Peck", who at the time was back east for business and allegedly told Culler to "do what he thought best."[218] It's not possible to verify Lindsey's accusation or Peck's alleged involvement, however, because no telegrams have been found nor is there any other record of such an exchange to corroborate this story.

Following extensive review of government documents, newspaper articles, obituaries, interviews, and historian research from 1912 through 2021, there is also no evidence from primary or other sources that Peck actually set aside land for minorities. There is also no evidence that he publicly objected to the harassment against the Bruces and their guests following the development of their property. We have been unable to find any information regarding Peck's position on the eminent domain proceedings.

Mayor Ward said he supported the name change because he wanted to "honor the founder of this city, George Peck, for the vision that he had." He felt it was a "grave error" to not recognize the true importance of the land. He said: "I feel bad this evening that this council does not have the foresight as George Peck did in 1912 to call this land Bruce's Beach. It is a grave error this evening that we do not move forward with the renaming of Parque Culiacán…" Mayor Pro Tem Tell indicated he would support changing the name of the park to Bruce's Beach. Mayor Ward made a motion, and Mayor Pro Tem Tell seconded the motion. Councilmembers Jim Aldinger and Richard Montgomery voted against the name change. With the deciding vote, Councilmember Joyce Fahey voted in favor of changing the name to Bruce's Beach.[219]

On November 8, 2006, city staff presented a report to the Manhattan Beach City Council suggesting text for the new plaque at Bruce's Beach park and asking for $8,000 to be allocated from the City Council contingency fund. Manhattan Beach resident Patrick McBride asked for the item to be pulled from the consent calendar for discussion. During the discussion, McBride expressed concerns about where the plaque wording came from and why experts such as Robert Brigham and Alison Rose Jefferson had not been consulted about it to verify its accuracy. He was also concerned that significant

[218] Brigham, p. 39.
[219] MB City Council Minutes and Recording, July 5, 2006

history was not represented. Councilmember Ward stated that a complete history was unnecessary. Council Member Joyce Fahey and Mayor Nick Tell pushed for the inclusion of George Peck in the opening sentence of the plaque wording. Staff was directed to modify the wording to include historical information about George Peck and Bruce's Beach being the only beach open to African Americans at that time.[220]



Patrick McBride

At the December 5, 2006, meeting, Patrick McBride spoke and again expressed concern regarding the accuracy of the history reflected in the plaque wording and the need for more time and consideration. He had shared the plaque wording with the Center for Law in the Public Interest, a Los Angeles Civil Rights Firm. They were in disagreement with the plaque wording and felt that the driving out of the families was important to include. The council felt strongly that the focus should remain on the positive. Mr. McBride shared that several months ago the Center had offered to help the city to raise money for an art piece and to help draw attention to the area and its historical significance. Councilmember Ward and Councilmember Aldinger served on the subcommittee to review the text.[221]

Despite the concerns raised by Mr. McBride, the final wording was unanimously approved by council on December 5, 2006:

> **Bruce's Beach**
> In 1912, Mr. George Peck, one of our community's co-founders, made it possible for the beach area below this site to be developed as Bruce's Beach, the only beach resort in Los Angeles County for all people. Charles and Willa Bruce were the African American entrepreneurs who settled here, thus the name Bruce's Beach. This two-block neighborhood was home to several minority families and was condemned through eminent domain proceedings commenced in 1924. Those tragic circumstances reflected the views of a different time. The land was

[220] MB City Council Minutes and Recording, November 8, 2006
[221] MB City Council Recording, December 5, 2006

> referred to as City Park and Beach Front Park and later named Bayview Terrace Park through a community contest in 1962. The park was designated Parque Culiacán on March 16, 1974, at the time of a visit from representatives of our first Sister City. The Manhattan Beach City Council renamed the park as Bruce's Beach in July 2006, commemorating our community's understanding that friendship, goodwill and respect for all begins within our own boundaries and extends to the world community. All are welcome. A project of Leadership Manhattan Beach Class of 2003.

The newly named Bruce's Beach park was dedicated on Saturday, March 31, 2007, and the ceremony attracted around 250 people, including Willa and Charles's grandson, Bernard Bruce. Bernard told the crowd: "This is a happy day for my family and me. It is a happy day for Southern California, for African Americans, for the whole country. We are remembering our past."[222]

[222] Schoch, "A Deep Tide of Goodwill…"

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: THE HISTORIC BLACK COMMUNITY OF BRUCE'S BEACH

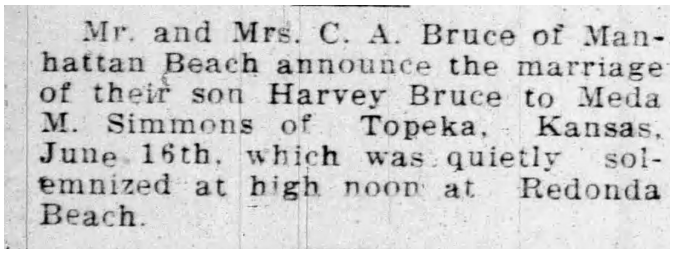
Generations of the Bruce Family



Thomas Tillman and Caroline Burgess
Step Father and Mother of William Ann Walker

William Ann Walker and Charles Aaron Bruce had one son, Harvey, who was born on July 12, 1888[223] in Albuquerque, New New Mexico. He moved with his mother and father to Los Angeles in the early 1900s. In 1910, Harvey worked as a chauffeur. By 1917, he was working as a cook on the Salt Lake City Railroad -- like his father -- and registered for the draft on May 29, 1917.[224]

On June 16, 1921, Harvey married Meda W. Simmons (b. December 16, 1898 d. May 12, 1988).



Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Bruce of Manhattan Beach announce the marriage of their son Harvey Bruce to Meda M. Simmons of Topeka, Kansas, June 16th, which was quietly solemnized at high noon at Redonda Beach.

California Eagle, June 21, 1921

On January 2, 1926 Harvey and Meda welcomed a son, Harvey Anthony Bruce Jr, born in Manhattan Beach.

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[223] "California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994", database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QPQD-614Y : 1 March 2021), Harvey Bruce, 1954.
[224] United States, Selective Service System. *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M1509, 4,582 rolls. Imaged from Family History Library microfilm.

Charles Aaron Bruce passed away September 20, 1931.[225] Three years later, on September 5, 1934, Willa Ann Bruce passed away in Los Angeles at the age of 71.[226] A month later, October 29, 1934, her second grandson was born, Bernard Bruce. Harvey Sr. passed away February 21, 1954.[227]



Bernard Bruce at Bruce Family Reunion at Bruce's Beach 2007

During the period between 1919-1926, at least six other Black families purchased property in close proximity to Bruces' resort, four of them between 26th and 27th streets (blocks 5 and 12 of Peck's Manhattan Beach tract)[228].

The Prioleau Family



Source Anthony Powell Collection

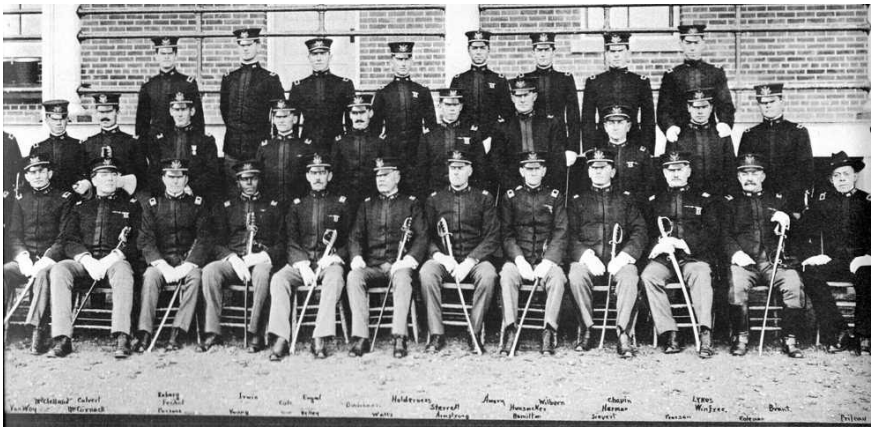


George Prioleau, Public Domain Image

[225] "California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994", *Charles Aaron Bruce, 1931.*
[226] "California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994." *Willie Ann Bruce, 1934.*
[227] "California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994." Harvey Bruce, 1954.
[228] Brigham, 19; Dennis, *A Walk Beside the Sea,* 105; Jefferson, "Leisure's Race"; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 37.



Family photo taken about 1920 -1924, before the last girl was born.
Anna Gonzales, Prioleau Granddaughter.



Major George Washington Prioleau, first row, right

In 1919, Major George and Mrs. Ethel Prioleau purchased the southern half of lot 4, block 12.

Major George Washington Prioleau was born on May 15, 1856, to slave parents in Charleston, South Carolina. Prioleau earned his theology degree from Wilberforce University in Ohio and served as an African Methodist Episcopal Church pastor and denominational leader for Ohio congregations, and in 1889 he became professor of theology and homiletics at Wilberforce. Six years later, President Grover Cleveland appointed him to replace Henry Plummer as chaplain of the 9th Cavalry, U. S. Army, with a rank of captain.

In 1898, now promoted to the title of Major, George Washington Prioleau served with the famed Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry during the Spanish-American War. The 9th Cavalry left the western United States for the first time in its history and was

deployed to bases in Georgia and Florida for military activities in Cuba and the Caribbean. Chaplain Prioleau was eager for an opportunity for African American soldiers to prove themselves on the field of battle, but he became ill with malaria and was unable to travel to Cuba with the rest of the 9th. Upon recovering from his illness, he served as a recruitment officer in the segregated South. While there, Prioleau was shocked by the racism the 9th faced on a daily basis. Despite facing blatant racism and often enduring brutal conditions, the Buffalo Soldiers earned a reputation for serving courageously.

Through public letters and editorials, Prioleau challenged racial segregation and attacked the hypocrisy of fighting a war for liberation in Cuba while the United States remained locked in a mindset of racism. When the 9th returned from the Spanish-American war, they were cheered and treated as war heroes in New York City, but in Missouri the 9th Cavalry was “unkindly and sneeringly received,” as recorded by Prioleau. They also found that they were unable to sit at numerous restaurants, while White soldiers were warmly greeted and allowed to eat free of charge.

Chaplain Prioleau vocally advocated that service in the United States Army provided a rare opportunity for young Black men. However, in the end he concluded that patriotic duty and military service would not erase the color line in the minds of many Whites. He served in the 9th Cavalry for 20 years before being transferred to the 10th Cavalry and later the 25th Cavalry with a promotion to major, retiring in 1920 and moving with his family to Manhattan Beach. [229]

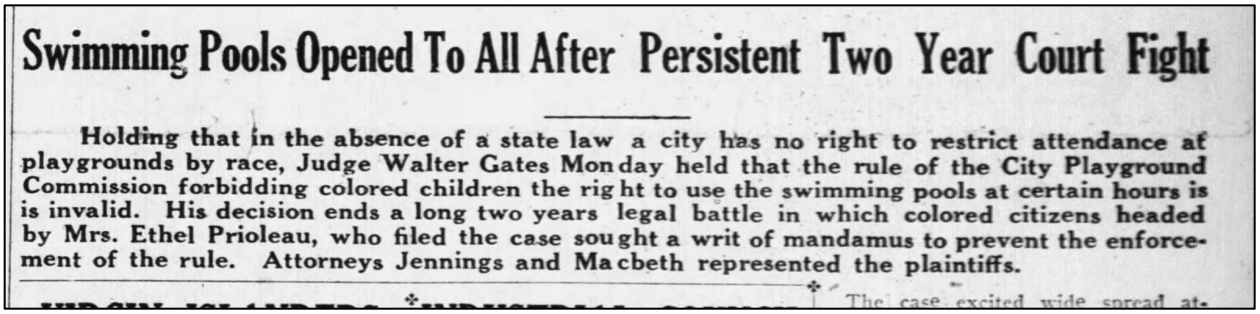
In 1921 he helped found the Bethel AME Church in Los Angeles where he often preached without pay. He died in 1927, a year and 5 months after falling from a ladder while painting the church and suffering serious injuries. He was survived by his wife, Ethel Stafford (b. 22 Oct 1882, Kansas City, Kansas).

Ethel was an accomplished woman in her own right. She graduated from Normal Teacher Training College in Kansas. While her husband was stationed on various military assignments, Ethel began teaching classes for Army Officer's wives. This included gymnastics classes, which were unheard of at the time. Ethel helped her husband start the AME church and for 20 years ran a progressive Sunday School program. She was the President of the Southern California Branch of the Women's Missionary Society from 1933-1942.

She was also a social activist. Ethel was President of the Theodore Roosevelt Unit of the Women's Political Study Club. She worked with Betty Hill to help change the policies

[229] US Veteran's Affairs Memorial. Added: 3 Mar 2000. Find a Grave Memorial 3744434

that didn't allow Black nurses to eat in the dining room, sleep overnight during their shifts at County Hospital, or become ambulance drivers. Ethel helped end segregation at public pools in summer 1931 when she sued the city, along with NAACP member Betty Hill, complaining that she was not allowed to use the swimming pool in nearby Exposition Park but had to travel 3.6 miles to the "[N]egro swimming pool" at 1357 East 22nd street.[230]



Swimming Pools Opened To All After Persistent Two Year Court Fight

Holding that in the absence of a state law a city has no right to restrict attendance at playgrounds by race, Judge Walter Gates Monday held that the rule of the City Playground Commission forbidding colored children the right to use the swimming pools at certain hours is is invalid. His decision ends a long two years legal battle in which colored citizens headed by Mrs. Ethel Prioleau, who filed the case sought a writ of mandamus to prevent the enforcement of the rule. Attorneys Jennings and Macbeth represented the plaintiffs.

The case excited wide spread at-

California Eagle 1931

Additionally, Ethel assisted Dr. Ruth Temple in organizing sex education classes for women and girls of appropriate age. This was a highly controversial issue at the time.

Ethel was also a business woman. She obtained her realtor's license. Her reputation for sound judgment and honesty was so good that she would purchase homes, sight unseen, for soldiers retiring and moving to Los Angeles.[231]

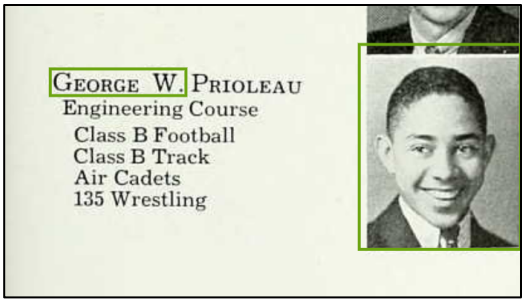
This was all accomplished while raising 4 children, the youngest of whom was 2 ½ when she was widowed. She also cared for her husband George for 17 months after his injury until his passing.

The Prioleau children: daughter Mary Prioleau King, (b. 30 November 1910 d. 7 October 1996) was a teacher, daughter Ethel Suzanne Prioleau Bowan (b.24 June 1914 d. 15 Aug 1995) was an assistant Superintendent , son George W Prioleau (b. 1917- d. 1983) was a US Army Lieutenant, daughter Lois E. Prioleau Patton (b. 18 Jun 1924 d.23 Jun 2014) administrator in the Little Rock California school district.

[230] Flamming, 290.
[231] Profile of Mrs. Ethel G. Prioleau



Ethel 1932, Polytechnic High School



George W. Prioleau, 1934, Polytechnic High School



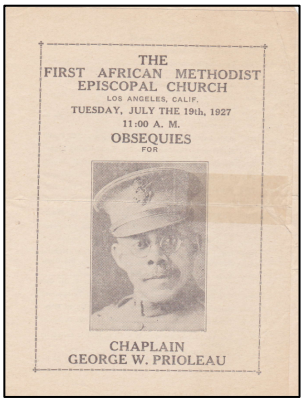
Lois Prioleau, 1942, Polytechnic High School



Mary Prioleau, 1927, Polytechnic High School



Buried Los Angeles National Cemetery, Plot 52, A-17



Program from Memorial Service

Ms. Elizabeth (Emma) M. Patterson

The other half of the Prioleau lot was purchased by Ms. Elizabeth M. Patterson in 1922 and together they built a duplex. Ms. Patterson was born in Tennessee about 1877. Before purchasing her lot in 1922, Elizabeth lived with her brother William T. Patterson

and his three adult sons on Alvarado Street. [232] Elizabeth was a longtime friend of the Prioleau family from when they lived in Kansas. [233]



Ms. Elizabeth (Emma) Patterson



Evergreen Cemetery, Los Angeles

Mrs. Mary Ramsey Sanders (Washington)

On September 15, 1923, Mrs. Mary Sanders bought lot 6, Block 12. She purchased an already constructed beach cottage from White owner Frank Heron.[234] Mary Sanders (married name Mary Washington) owned a home valued at $6,000 at 1146 S. Kingsley.[235] Mrs. Sanders maintained her residence at S. Kinsey Ave. and likely used the cottage as a weekend beach getaway.[236]

Mrs. Sanders was born 1872 in Canada and immigrated to the United States in 1887. Her mother and father were from Pennsylvania. Mrs. Sanders worked as a caterer for private families. According to Brigham's thesis, she was “one of the better cateresses in Los Angeles” and “a woman of considerable success and prestige.”[237]

She was twice widowed and lived with her sister, Fanny Robinson (b. 1872), also a caterer and widowed. She had three daughters, Ethel Washington (b. Sept. 1888) , Ira

[232] 1920 U.S. Census.
[233] Brigham 24.
[234] Brigham, 25. Although we request the original deed for this property, the Los Angeles County Assessor’s office was unable to locate it.
[235] 1930 United States Census.
[236] 1920 and 1930 United States Census.
[237] Brigham 32

Washington (b. Nov. 1891), a school teacher, and Francis "Fannie" Washington (b. May 1893 d.1919 of tuberculosis).

Ethel married Edward C. Atkinson and had a son John Edward Atkinson (b. Jan 21, 1912, Denver, Colorado- d. December 26, 1988, Los Angeles). John married Antoinette Gamble and had one son.

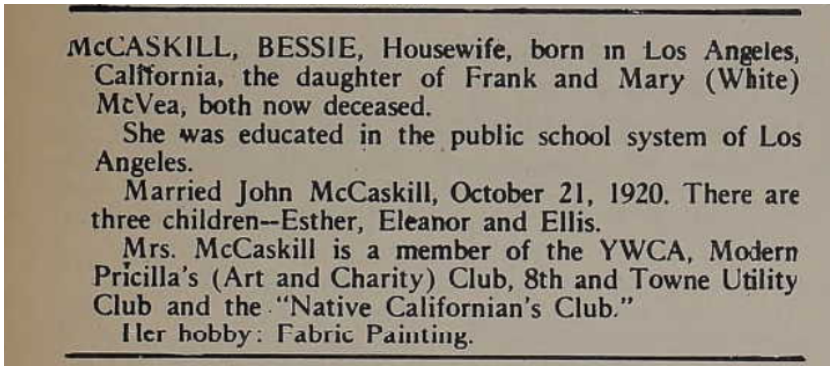
Milton B. and Anna Johnson

Mr. and Mrs. Milton B. and Anna Johnson had lot 1, Block 12.[238] Milton B. Johnson was born in Canada and came to the United States in 1874. He married Anna E. Davis October 27, 1914. Milton worked as a porter for the railroad.[239]

According to Brigham, the Johnsons' daughter, Emma Barnett Holt, purchased the property from her parents after the condemnation proceedings began. Holt told Brigham that in 1927 she purchased a new property on 23rd Street, just east of Highland Ave.[240]

John and Bessie McCaskill, Elzia and Carrie Irvin

John McCaskill (1893-1983) purchased property on the south side of 26th St. He was born October 27, 1893 in Florida. Before the war he was a porter at the Mak Hotel. By 1930, he worked as a presser at Hollywood Cloak and Suit. In 1920, he married Bessie Johnson (b. 1892). Bessie had twins Eleanor and Ellis Johnson from a previous relationship. They later welcomed daughter Esther Viola McCaskill.



McCASKILL, BESSIE, Housewife, born in Los Angeles, California, the daughter of Frank and Mary (White) McVea, both now deceased.

She was educated in the public school system of Los Angeles.

Married John McCaskill, October 21, 1920. There are three children--Esther, Eleanor and Ellis.

Mrs. McCaskill is a member of the YWCA, Modern Pricilla's (Art and Charity) Club, 8th and Towne Utility Club and the "Native Californian's Club."

Her hobby: Fabric Painting.

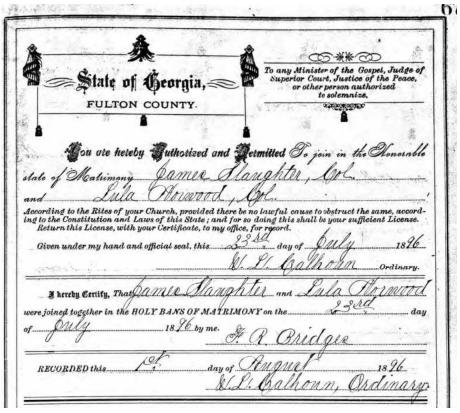
California State Library; *Negro Who's Who in California*; Page Number: *116*

[238] Report of Referees; Brigham, 26; and Jefferson, *Living the California Dream*, 38.
[239] 1920 US Census.
[240] Brigham, 77.

Elzia L. Irvin (b. 1887, Texas) and his wife Carrie also lived with the McCaskills. Carrie and Bessie Johnson were sisters. Elzia worked first as a shoemaker and then as a barber.[241]

James and Lula Slaughter

Mr. and Mrs. James Slaughter purchased property on the south side of 26th Street in 1926, across from the Bruces'. James Slaughter was born September 22, 1876 in Georgia. He married Lula Norwood (b.1876) on July 23, 1896 in Fulton, Georgia.



State of Georgia,
FULTON COUNTY.

To any Minister of the Gospel, Judge of Superior Court, Justice of the Peace, or other person authorized to solemnize.

You are hereby Authorized and Permitted to join in the Honorable state of Matrimony James Slaughter, Col.
and Lula Norwood, Col.
According to the Rites of your Church, provided there be no lawful cause to obstruct the same, according to the Constitution and Laws of this State; and for so doing this shall be your sufficient License.
Return this License, with your Certificate, to my office, for record.
Given under my hand and official seal, this 23rd day of July 1896
W. D. Calhoun Ordinary.

I hereby Certify, That James Slaughter and Lula Norwood were joined together in the HOLY BANS OF MATRIMONY on the 23rd day of July 1896 by me.
J. R. Bridges

RECORDED this 1st day of August 1896
W. D. Calhoun, Ordinary.

Marriage Certificate of James and Lula Slaughter

In 1901, their daughter Ruby Slaughter was born in Georgia. They moved to Los Angeles before 1903 and the birth of their son, James Marvin Slaughter (1903–1958). This followed with the births of son Richard Slaughter (b. 1907–), daughter William "Willie" Slaughter (b. 1909–), son Robert M. Slaughter (b.1910–1992), daughter Estella Slaughter (1914–1984), and daughter Virginia Slaughter (b. 1919-).

The Slaughters opened a 10-room boarding house – advertised as the Slaughter Apartments – at 120 26th Street. Unlike the Bruces' resort that was located on the Strand, the Slaughters' property was a block off the Strand, between Ocean and Manhattan Avenue, on the South Side of the street. Based on advertisements in the California Eagle, it appears that the Slaughters sought to capitalize on the existing popularity of the Bruces', marketing itself as "formerly Bruce's Beach". It's unclear if the Bruces supported their enterprise or if they even had any involvement in it.

The City did not maintain extensive records insofar as business licenses from that time. There is one incomplete book of "business licenses" housed at the Historical Society that is more like a ledger. The Slaughters are not listed in there.

[241] U.S. Census 1920.

The Slaughters opened a 10-room boarding house at 120 26th Street, Manhattan Beach in May 1927, and lived full time in Manhattan Beach. Their children attended local schools and participated in extracurriculars such as glee club.[242] Records show that the Mortgage Insurance Corporation took over the property in 1930.[243]


BEAUTIFUL BEACH RESORT: 120 26th St., Manhattan Beach. Comfortable modern rooms for rent by week or month at moderate prices. Delicious meals served in homey atmosphere. Make arrangements by phone or mail. Mrs. Flaughter, 120 - 26th St., Manhattan Beach. Phone, 11523, Redondo.

Slaughter ad from California Eagle.



James Slaughter, Miriam Matthews Collection UCLA



Thirteen-year old Estella Slaughter and her 7th Grade class at Center Street School in Manhattan Beach in 1927. Photo Courtesy of Jan Dennis.

[242] "Manhattan Glee Club," *Manhattan Beach News*, March 1, 1929.
[243] Brigham, 78.

Undeveloped Lots

The remaining parcels of land in that area were owned by White property owners -- some of which since 1909 -- and had not been developed by 1924. As best as our research could tell, these individuals were not residents of Manhattan Beach, but of downtown Los Angeles, where they were affiliated with businesses and industries there. As more information becomes available, we will update this section.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION II: RELEVANT ORDINANCES

ORD. NO.	ORDINANCE	DATE INTRODUCED	INTRODUCED BY	DATE ADOPTED	TRUSTEES
263	AN ORDINANCE DECLARING THE INTENTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH TO ACQUIRE BY CONDEMNATION FOR PUBLIC PARK PURPOSES, BLOCKS FIVE (5)AND TWELVE (12) OF PECK'S MANHATTAN BEACH TRACT IN SAID CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH; DESCRIBING THE LAND NECESSARY TO BE TAKEN THEREFOR AND DESCRIBING THE EXTERIOR BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICT TO BE BENIFITED [SIC] BY THE ACQUISITION OF SUCH LAND AND TO BE ASSESSED TO PAY THE DAMAGES AND COSTS OF SUCH ACQUISITION AND TO BE KNOWN AS THE ASSESSMENT DISTRICT.	1924-1-3	Frank S. Daugherty	1924-2-7	**AYES:** Carl W. Bull (President) Malcolm J. Campbell Frank S. Daugherty George E. Delavan Cassius L. Robbins **NAYS:** None

273	AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING PUBLIC BATH HOUSES EAST OF THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC RIGHT OF WAY IN THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH, AND PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR THE VIOLATION THEREOF.	1924-6-5	John E. Rhind	1924-6-19	**AYES:** George E. Delavan (President) Merritt J. Crandall Carl D. Edwards John E. Rhin Cassius L. Robbins **NAYS:** None
274	AN ORDINANCE REGULATING THE OPERATION OF BATH HOUSES, SOCIAL CLUBS, THEATRES, DANCE HALLS, POOL HALLS AND OTHER PLACES OR PUBLIC AMUSEMENT, IN THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH; PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF LICENSES THEREOF; AND PROVIDING FOR THE PUNISHMENT OF ANY PUNISHMENT OF HIS ORDINANCE.	1924-6-5	John E. Rhind	1924-6-19	**AYES:** George E. Delavan (President) Merritt J. Crandall Carl D. Edwards John E. Rhind Cassius L. Robbins **NAYS:** None
275	AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING DRESSING OR UNDRESSING IN ANY AUTOMOBILE OR OTHER VEHICLE OR CONVEYANCE, ON ANY STREET OR PUBLIC PLACE IN THE CITY OF	1924-6-5	John E. Rhind	1924-6-19	**AYES:** George E. Delavan (President) Merritt J. Crandall Carl D. Edwards John E. Rhind Cassius L. Robbins **NAYS:**

	MANHATTAN BEACH, AND ALSO PROHIBITING DRESSING OR UNDRESSING IN ANY TENT OR TEMPORARY STRUCTURE ON THE BEACH AND REGULATING THE APPEARANCE OF BATHERS ON STREETS AND PUBLIC PLACES; AND PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR THE VIOLATION THEREOF.				None
276	AN ORDINANCE DECLARING THE INTENTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH TO ACQUIRE BY CONDEMNATION FOR PUBLIC PARK PURPOSES, BLOCKS FIVE (5) AND TWELVE (12) OF PECK'S MANHATTAN BEACH TRACT, IN SAID CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH: DESCRIBING THE LAND NECESSARY TO BE TAKEN THEREFOR AND DESCRIBING THE EXTERIOR BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICT TO BE BENEFITTED BY THE ACQUISITION	1924-6-5	John E. Rhind	1924-6-19	**AYES:** George E. Delavan (President) Merritt J. Crandall Carl D. Edwards John E. Rhind Cassius L. Robbins **NAYS:** None

	OF SUCH LAND AND TO BE ASSESSED TO PAY THE DAMAGES AND COSTS OF SUCH ACQUISITION AND TO BE KNOWN AS THE ASSESSMENT DISTRICT AND REPEALING				
282	AN ORDINANCE ORDERING THE ACQUISITION BY CONDEMNATION, FOR PUBLIC PARK PURPOSES, OF BLOCKS FIVE (5) AND TWELVE (12) OF PECK'S MANHATTAN BEACH TRACT, IN THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH, IN THE MANNER CONTEMPLATED BY ORDINANCE 276.	1924-10-2	John E. Rhind	1924-10-16	**AYES:** George E. Delavan (President) Merritt J. Crandall Carl E. Edwards John E. Rhind Cassius L. Robbins **NAYS:** None
308	AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION ONE (1) OF ORDINANCE NO. 249 ESTABLISHING A RESIDENCE DISTRICT AND AN INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT IN SAID CITY AND MAKING IT UNLAWFUL TO CONSTRUCT, CARRY ON, ESTABLISH OR MAINTAIN CERTAIN TRADES, OCCUPATIONS, BUSINESSES, PLANTS OR WORKS OUTSIDE OF SAID	1927-4-21	Merritt Crandall	1927-5-5	**AYES:** George E. Delavan (President) Merritt J. Crandall Harold D. Dale Carl D. Edwards John F. Jones **NAYS:** None

	INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT.				
311	AN ORDINANCE REGULATING PARKING OF AUTOMOBILES AND OTHER VEHICLES ON PORTIONS OF OCEAN DRIVE, MANHATTAN AVENUE, HIGHLAND AVENUE, UNNAMED ALLEY RUNNING NORTH AND SOUTH THROUGH BLOCKS NINE, TEN, TWELVE, THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN, FIFTEEN AND SIXTEEN OF PECK'S MANHATTAN BEACH TRACT AND BLOCK B OF TRACT 3451, TWENTY-THIRD STREET, TWENTY-FOURTH STREET, TWENTY-FIFTH STREET, TWENTY-NINTH STREET, AND THIRTIETH STREET IN THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH; MAKING IT A MISDEMEANOR TO PARK ON ANY SUCH PORTIONS OF SAID STREETS FOR A LONGER PERIOD THAN FIFTEEN MINUTES AT ANY	1927-6-2	John F. Jones	1927-6-17	**AYES:** George E. Delavan (President) Merritt J. Crandall Harold D. Dale Carl D. Edwards John F. Jones **NAYS:** None

	ONE TIME AND PROVIDING PUNISHMENT FOR ANY VIOLATION THEREOF.				
314	AN ORDINANCE REPEALING ORDINANCE 311.	1927-8-18	Harold D. Dale	1927-9-1	**AYES:** G.E. Delavan (Mayor) Merritt J. Crandall Harold D. Dale Carl D. Edwards **NOES:** John F. Jones

Source: City of Manhattan Beach.

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1932

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Map of Tract 8867, Los Angeles County, Accessed June 6, 2021, https://pw.lacounty.gov/sur/nas/landrecords/tract/MB0115/TR0115-082.pdf
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June 15, 1921.
November 15, 1923.
December 6, 1923.
January 3, 1924.
February 7, 1924.
June 5, 1924.
June 19, 1924.
September 19, 1924.
October 2, 1924.
October 16, 1924.
March 3, 1927.
April 21, 1927.
May 5, 1927.
May 19, 1927.
June 2, 1927.
June 17, 1927.

MINUTES FROM THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH CITY COUNCIL

August 4, 1927
August 18, 1927
September 1, 1927
July 21, 1932
September 1, 1932
February 2, 1933
August 28, 1938
May 2, 1940
October 19, 1948
February 19, 1974
February 18, 2003
April 15, 2003
May 6, 2003
December 6, 2005
April 18, 2006
July 5, 2006
November 8, 2006
December 5, 2006

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"Bruce Beach Front." May 31, 1912.

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"FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATING KU KLUX KLAN IN LOS ANGELES.: CITY PROSECUTOR CHARGES INTIMIDATION ATTEMPT; Says Organizers Threatened Him for Ousting 'The Clansman;' Little Progress Made by Order Here. INTIMIDATION CHARGES MADE." July 19, 1921.

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