

South Los Angeles is the official name for a large geographic and cultural area lying to the south and southeast of downtown Los Angeles, California. The area was formerly known as South Central Los Angeles (or South Central for short). In 2003, the city of Los Angeles changed the area's official name from South Central Los Angeles to South Los Angeles, hoping to blur collective memories of violence and blight. The city gave it its present name because the name South Central had become almost synonymous with urban decay and street crime. However, the name is not very widely used; most residents of Los Angeles (including residents of South Los Angeles) still use the old name.

Geographic Definition

While the name South Central derives from the neighborhood's historical core along south Central Avenue, the neighborhood is generally considered to cover most of the area of the City of Los Angeles south of the Santa Monica Freeway and east of the San Diego Freeway

About South Los Angeles from Wikipedia

History

19th Century-1948

South Los Angeles contains some of the oldest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, featuring many spectacular examples of Victorian and Craftsman architecture in West Adams. It is home to the University of Southern California, founded in 1880. The 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games took place near the USC campus at neighboring Exposition Park, which hosts the Los Angeles Coliseum. Until the rise of the Wilshire Boulevard corridor refocused Los Angeles' development to the west of downtown in the 1920s, West Adams was one of the most desirable areas of the city.

At the same time that well-to-do whites were building stately mansions in West Adams and Jefferson Park and the white working class was establishing itself in Crenshaw and Hyde Park, the area of modest bungalows and low-rise commercial buildings along Central Avenue emerged as the heart of the black community in southern California (notably playing host to one of the first jazz scenes in the western U.S., with trombonist Kid Ory a prominent resident). Under racially restrictive covenants, blacks were only allowed to own property within a zone bounded by Main Street on the west, Alameda Street on the east, Washington Boulevard on the north, and Slauson Avenue on the south, as well as in small enclaves in Watts and West Adams. Affluent blacks were somewhat less restricted in their ability to purchase property,

gradually moving into West Adams and Jefferson Park, but the working- and middle-class blacks who poured into Los Angeles during the Great Depression and World War II found themselves penned into what was becoming a severely overcrowded neighborhood.

1948-1960s

When the Supreme Court banned the legal enforcement of race-oriented restrictive covenants in 1948's *Shelley v. Kraemer*, blacks began to move into areas outside the increasingly overcrowded Slauson-Alameda-Washington-Main settlement area. For a time in the early 1950s, southern Los Angeles became the site of significant racial violence, with whites bombing, firing into, and burning crosses on the lawns of homes purchased by black families south of Slauson. In an escalation of behavior that had begun in the 1920s, white gangs in nearby cities such as South Gate and Huntington Park would routinely accost blacks who traveled through white areas; the black mutual protection clubs that formed in response to these assaults ultimately formed the basis of the region's fearsome street gangs.

As was the case in most urban areas, 1950s freeway construction radically altered the geography of southern Los Angeles; and, as was the case in most large American cities, a major motivation in planning freeway routes was the reinforcement of traditional segregation lines. The Harbor Freeway ran just to the west of Main Street, and the Santa Monica Freeway just to the north of Washington Boulevard. The Marina Freeway was originally to run near Slauson Avenue all the way to the Orange County line, but was deemed redundant and went unbuilt except for its westernmost portions.

However well the freeways worked in moving cars around, they were decidedly unsuccessful as instruments of segregation. The explosive growth of suburbs, most of which barred blacks by a variety of methods, provided the opportunity for most whites in neighborhoods bordering black districts to leave en masse. The spread of blacks throughout the area was achieved in large part through "blockbusting," a technique whereby real estate speculators would buy a home on an all-white street, sell or rent it to a black family, and then buy up the remaining homes from frightened whites at cut-rate prices and sell them at a hefty profit to housing-hungry blacks. This process accelerated after the Watts Riots of 1965, a traumatic event that resulted in the near-total abandonment of southern Los Angeles by white residents and merchants, as well as a large-scale movement to the north and west by middle-class blacks. By the late 1960s most of Los Angeles south of Pico Boulevard and east of La Cienega Boulevard had become overwhelmingly black. Areas wealthy (Baldwin Hills, West Adams) and impoverished (Watts) alike were referred to under the umbrella name of "South Central," even if they were 10 miles from the intersection of Vernon and Central Avenues. The Santa Monica Freeway formed the northern boundary of the "new" South Central, primarily dividing the middle-class blacks of Mid-Wilshire from the poor and working-class blacks to the south.

1970s-1990s

Beginning in the 1970s, the precipitous decline of the area's manufacturing base resulted in widespread poverty and crime. Street gangs, such as the Crips and Bloods, rose to great notoriety at this time, becoming even more powerful with the arrival

of crack cocaine (trade in which became dominated by gangs) in the 1980s. The area suffered even further as downtown Los Angeles' service sector, which had long been dominated by unionized African-Americans earning relatively high wages, replaced most of these black workers with newly arrived Central American immigrants. By the time of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, which began in South Central and spread throughout the city, South Central had become a byword for urban decay, its bad reputation spread by movies such as South Central, Menace II Society, Friday, and South Central native John Singleton's Boyz n the Hood.

Today

Since the 1992 riots, much of South Central's black working class has moved to the Antelope Valley and Inland Empire areas far to the north and east (respectively) of Los Angeles; departing black homeowners have been replaced by a massive influx of Latinos. Today, South Los Angeles is far from being an "all-black" neighborhood. Many areas in South Los Angeles, including Watts, are now 70% Latino. Communities that used to be heavily populated by blacks have now become ethnically mixed places with Latinos dominating the population. Now, very few communities in South Los Angeles are over three-quarters African American, with most black residents now found in the region's middle-class western districts. The rapid influx of Mexican (legal and illegal) immigrants into formerly all-black areas has caused conflicts among the different ethnic groups. In some parts of South Los Angeles, there have been hate crimes committed by both ethnic groups against each other because of conflicts over housing and employment competition. However, considerable efforts have been made to form a Latino-Black alliance in the inner city communities; a watershed event came when the majority of black South Los Angeles residents voted for Antonio Villaraigosa in the 2005 Los Angeles mayoral election.

Communities

South Central is a district of Los Angeles in the west of Inglewood.

Landmarks

- * University of Southern California
- * Exposition Park
- * Shrine Auditorium
- * Automobile Club of Southern California
- * Watts Towers

People from South Los Angeles

- * Ice Cube
- * Baron Davis
- * Eric Dolphy (Watts)
- * James Hahn (Morningside Park)
- * Hampton Hawes
- * Keyshawn Johnson (Crenshaw)
- * Arthur Lee
- * Charles Mingus (Watts)
- * Tayshaun Prince
- * John Singleton
- * Darryl Strawberry (Crenshaw)
- * Maxine Waters
- * Barry White
- * Esther Williams

URL: "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Central_Los_Angeles