

California Diversity History



Pre-conquest:	Tongva, Chumash, and other native peoples coexist in the region now known as the Los Angeles basin for at least 15,000 years.
1769	Spanish occupation of California. Father Juan Crespi names a river El Rio de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula (River of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels of Porciuncula).
1771	A company of settlers called “Los Pobladores” is recruited to establish pueblos in California in the name of Spain.
1781	Twelve of the poblador families establish a community named after the river: “[Of the]forty-six founders of Los Angeles, 42 were Native Americans and African Americans” (Cecil L. Murray).
1846-1848	U.S. territory. California becomes a part of the United States as a result of the war with Mexico. Many Americans see the new territory as proof of the nation’s “manifest destiny.”
1849	Writing of the state constitution. Full citizenship is only given to white male citizens of the United States and Mexico who reside in California. 1851 The state legislature passes a law requiring Mexican landowners to prove that they really own their land. Angry Mexicans band together to defend their property. Whites in Southern California respond by forming “vigilance committees.”
1854	As a result of vigilante violence, by 1854, officials in Los Angeles report a homicide a day with most of the victims Mexicans or Indians.
1871	Vigilantes turn their attention to Chinese immigrants as well, resulting in the first L.A. “race riot.”
1870-1890	The population of Los Angeles grows from 11,000 to over 60,000
1882	The U.S. bans immigration from China.

1920s	By the end of the decade, Los Angeles is the largest city in the west and the most racially diverse. It is also the most segregated; racial discrimination is written into real estate contracts.
1924	The U.S. bans immigration from all of Asia. In California, marriages between Asian and white Americans are banned, and "Asian aliens" are not allowed to buy or inherit property.
1929	A worldwide depression slows economic activity. Foreign nationals living in Los Angeles are rounded up and deported, along with at least 3000 Mexicans, many of them U.S. citizens.
1942	The Western Defense Command begins forcibly removing every person of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast.
1942	Just days after the Japanese are sent to internment camps, the Los Angeles newspapers begin to play up "Mexican" crime and "Mexican" juvenile delinquency, especially targeting teenagers wearing what police call "zoot suits."
1944	L.A. newspapers continue to portray Mexican Americans as dangerous and disloyal. In early June, about 200 servicemen attack people of color throughout the city while police look on.
1950s	The California Eagle, the oldest African American newspaper in the U.S., fights and wins battles against discriminatory hiring practices among various L.A. employers. Overcrowding and poverty in black neighborhoods persist, though, as industry in the central city moves to the mostly white suburbs.
1964	Among large cities, L.A. is the only one whose mayor is hostile to the federal antipoverty program. Division of wealth among the races becomes more and more extreme, and there are constant complaints regarding police brutality, about which nothing is done.
1965	Watts: young African Americans rock the city with their rage following an arrest on August 11. The violence spreads from 103rd and Central in Watts to over 40 square miles of the city, leaving 34 people dead and over 1000 wounded. Property damages range between \$40 and \$200 million, and nearly 4000 people are under arrest.
1960s –1980s	A change in federal immigration law repeals former exclusions, and the law now favors refugees, people with relatives in the U.S., and workers with needed skills. Immigration increases dramatically, including thousands of Koreans and other Asians.
3/3/91	Los Angeles police officers use force in subduing Rodney G. King, an African American. George Holliday tapes the beating, and the film is soon seen around the world.

- 3/16/91 A store security camera shows the fatal shooting of fifteen year-old Latasha Harlins, an African American, by Soon Ja Du, a Korean American storekeeper.
- 3/26/91 The four police officers charged in the King beating plead not guilty. Soon Ja Du is arraigned on one count of murder.
- 3/4/92 The trial of the officers charged in the King beating begins. None of the jurors is African American.
- 4/29/92 The jury returns not guilty verdicts on all charges except one count of excessive force. Violence erupts in Los Angeles. Reginald Denny is pulled from his truck and beaten. Governor Pete Wilson calls out the National Guard.
- 5/1/92 President George Bush sends federal troops to Los Angeles.
- 5/2/92 42 people have been killed, 700 structures have been destroyed by fire, thousands of people have lost their jobs, 5,000 people have been arrested and Los Angeles has suffered \$1 billion in damages.

