

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



1. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

Proposed Monument Name: Grant D. Venerable Family Residence		Former residence of notable person(s) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other Associated Names:			
Street Address: 2921 S. Budlong Avenue		Zip: 90007	Council District: 8
Range of Addresses on Property:		Community Name:	
Assessor Parcel Number: 505401014	Tract: Cotton's Budlong Tract	Block:	Lot: 15
Identification cont'd:			
Proposed Monument Property Type:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Building	<input type="radio"/> Structure	<input type="radio"/> Object
	<input type="radio"/> Site/Open Space	<input type="radio"/> Natural Feature	
Describe any additional resources located on the property to be included in the nomination, here:			

2. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY & CURRENT STATUS

Year built: 1908	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Factual <input type="radio"/> Estimated	Threatened? Select
Architect/Designer: George G. Webster & Neal D. Barker	Contractor: A.C. Tobias	
Original Use: Single Family Residence	Present Use: Single Family Residence	
Is the Proposed Monument on its Original Site?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No (explain in section 7) <input type="radio"/> Unknown (explain in section 7)

3. STYLE & MATERIALS

Architectural Style: Select from menu or type style directly into box		Stories:	Plan Shape: Select <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FEATURE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
CONSTRUCTION	Type: Wood <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Type: Select	
CLADDING	Material: Wood rustic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Material: Select	
ROOF	Type: Gable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Type: Select	
	Material: Composition shingle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Material: Select	
WINDOWS	Type: Sliding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Type: Select <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Material: Vinyl <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Material: Select	
ENTRY	Style: Off-center <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Style: Select <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
DOOR	Type: Paneled, glazed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Type: Select	

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



4. ALTERATION HISTORY

List date and write a brief description of any major alterations or additions. This section may also be completed on a separate document. Include copies of permits in the nomination packet. Make sure to list any major alterations for which there are no permits, as well.

	Removed original windows, replaced with sliding windows in original frames
	Removed dividing wall & dining built-ins separating dining room from kitchen
	Partitioned original bathroom to add additional half bathroom
	Den original windows removed & framed-in for smaller vinyl window
	Added faux paneling to cover brick fireplace
	Most original doors removed & replaced with modern slabs
	In-ground pool added to backyard
	Carpeted added in bedrooms.

5. EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION (if known)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed in the California Register of Historical Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formally determined eligible for the National and/or California Registers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Located in an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)
<input type="radio"/>	Contributing feature
<input type="radio"/>	Non-contributing feature
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determined eligible for national, state, or local landmark status by an historic resources survey(s)
Survey Name(s):	
Other historical or cultural resource designations: None	

6. APPLICABLE HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT CRITERIA

The proposed monument exemplifies the following Cultural Heritage Ordinance Criteria (Section 22.171.7):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. Is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.



HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM

7. WRITTEN STATEMENTS

This section allows you to discuss at length the significance of the proposed monument and why it should be designated an Historic-Cultural Monument. Type your response on separate documents and attach them to this form.

A. Proposed Monument Description - Describe the proposed monument's physical characteristics and relationship to its surrounding environment. Expand on sections 2 and 3 with a more detailed description of the site. Expand on section 4 and discuss the construction/alteration history in detail if that is necessary to explain the proposed monument's current form. Identify and describe any character-defining elements, structures, interior spaces, or landscape features.

B. Statement of Significance - Address the proposed monument's historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance by discussing how it satisfies the HCM criteria you selected in Section 6. You must support your argument with substantial evidence and analysis. The Statement of Significance is your main argument for designation so it is important to substantiate any claims you make with supporting documentation and research.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant

Name: West Adams Heritage Association	Company: Same		
Street Address: 2263 S Harvard Blvd	City: Los Angeles	State:	
Zip: 90018	Phone Number: (323) 909-9242	Email: preservation@westadamsheritage.org	

Property Owner

Is the owner in support of the nomination? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

Name: Santiago Pamplona & Corinne Bower	Company:		
Street Address: 2921 S. Budlong Ave	City: Los Angeles	State: CA	
Zip: 90007	Phone Number: (717) 649 - 3544	Email: cbower19@gmail.com	

Nomination Preparer/Applicant's Representative

Name: Raymond Hurley & Laura Meyers	Company: West Adams Heritage Association		
Street Address: 2915 S Budlong Ave	City: Los Angeles	State: CA	
Zip: 90007	Phone Number: 703 915 6361	Email: hurleyraymond474@gmail.com	

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT NOMINATION FORM



9. SUBMITTAL

When you have completed preparing your nomination, compile all materials in the order specified below. Although the entire packet must not exceed 100 pages, you may send additional material on a CD or flash drive.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nomination Form | 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copies of Primary/Secondary Documentation |
| 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written Statements A and B | 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copies of Building Permits for Major Alterations (include first construction permits) |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bibliography | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional, Contemporary Photos |
| 4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two Primary Photos of Exterior/Main Facade (8x10, the main photo of the proposed monument. Also email a digital copy of the main photo to: planning.ohr@lacity.org) | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical Photos |
| | 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zimas Parcel Report for all Nominated Parcels (including map) |

10. RELEASE

Please read each statement and check the corresponding boxes to indicate that you agree with the statement, then sign below in the provided space. Either the applicant or preparer may sign.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all documents submitted will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and understand that the documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of this application will become the property of the City of Los Angeles, and understand that permission is granted for use of the photographs and images by the City without any expectation of compensation.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I acknowledge that I have the right to submit or have obtained the appropriate permission to submit all information contained in this application.

Raymond Hurley

05/03/2025

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Mail your Historic-Cultural Monument Submittal to the Office of Historic Resources.

Office of Historic Resources
Department of City Planning
221 N. Figueroa St., Ste. 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213-874-3679
Website: preservation.lacity.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

● EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	pg6
● SECTION A PROPOSED MONUMENT DESCRIPTION	pg8
● SECTION B STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	pg11
○ INTRODUCTION	pg11
○ CRITERIA 1 & 2	pg12
■ THE LIFE OF GRANT D. VENERABLE	pg12
■ VENERABLE ATTENDS CALTECH	pg13
■ THE VENERABLES MOVE TO BUDLONG	pg16
■ CAREER AS HOTELIER AND ENTREPRENEUR	pg19
■ THELMA SCOTT VENERABLE	pg20
■ VENERABLE LATER YEARS	pg21
■ THE CHILDREN OF GRANT D. VENERABLE	pg23
■ SOCIAL CLUBS	pg24
■ GRANT D. VENERABLE II	pg32
■ PAVING THE WAY: AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING	pg35
○ CRITERIA 3	
■ INTRODUCTION	pg42
■ A.C. TOBIAS COMMISSIONS BARKER & WEBSTER	pg43
■ BARKER & WEBSTER	pg43
■ THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT	pg44
■ GEORGE J. WEBSTER: LIFE AND CAREER	pg45
■ WEBSTER MASTERWORKS	pg49
■ NEAL DOW BARKER	pg53
○ CONCLUSION	pg53
○ LIST OF RESIDENCES ASSOCIATED WITH GRANT D. VENERABLE	pg55
○ BIBLIOGRAPHY	pg58
○ PROPERTY PHOTOS	pg61
○ LETTERS OF SUPPORT	pg70
○ COPIES OF PRIMARY / SECONDARY RESEARCH	pg79
○ COPIES OF BUILDING PERMITS	pg83
○ PARCEL PROFILE SUPPORT	pg85
○ ZIMAS	pg88

APPENDIX

● GRANT D. VENERABLE: EDUCATION & EARLY CAREER	pg3-20
● THELMA SCOTT VENERABLE	pg21-22
● THE VENERABLE FAMILY	pg23-28
● GRANT D. VENERABLE II	pg29-31
● CONQUEST BLAINE VENERABLE	pg32-34
● LOUISE VENERABLE	pg35
● ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY	pg36-38
● KANSAS CLUB	pg39-43
● GEORGE J. WEBSTER: ARCHITECT	pg44-52
● NEAL DOW BARKER	pg53
● BARKER & WEBSTER	pg54-55
● LOS ANGELES REDLINING MAP (193X)	pg56
● 1940 CENSUS (Cotton Budlong Tract)	pg57
● 1950 CENSUS (Cotton Budlong Tract)	pg58
● PERMIT & ALTERATION HISTORY	pg59-61

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, my partner and I moved into what was already in the process of becoming the A.C. Tobias Residence (CHC-2021-10146-HCM). We didn't fully understand what it meant when the prior owner told us he had hired a historian to nominate the residence as a "Historic-Cultural Monument," but I began attending the Cultural Heritage Commission meetings and learned more about the landmark designation process.

The historian, Anna Marie Brooks, explained that this nomination was especially important because much of the area's historic resources had been ignored by SurveyLA, the CRA and other city surveys and had no historical protection from modification or demolition. In trying to assist Brooks with our home's nomination, I searched through escrow documents to help piece together who lived here previously. We came across a driveway-sharing agreement from 1971, signed by Texana Sargeant and the owner of the house directly to the south, Grant D. Venerable. We googled Venerable in the chance he could lead us to Texana or her next of kin. The search immediately turned up results announcing Grant D. Venerable's historic achievement in 1932, when he became the first graduate of Pasadena's prestigious California Institute of Technology (CalTech).

I reached out to Laura Meyers at West Adams Heritage Association, who in 2009 published "West Adams' Landmarks of African American History," which featured Grant D. Venerable as one of the important African Americans who had lived in this neighborhood. She told me that Venerable was "major" and "a trailblazer." Meyers partnered with me to produce this nomination, contributing extensive research and physical writing.

Through connecting with the children of Grant D. Venerable, I learned about life in the multi-ethnic Adams-Normandie neighborhood, and the role the Venerables played in desegregating it. The residence hosted numerous social clubs and prayer groups, and local newspapers are filled with birthday parties and piano recitals lauding the gifted Venerable children, who went on to blaze their own trails in the arts, sciences and entrepreneurship.

Stumbling upon such history next door furthered my sense that there was a wealth of unrecognized cultural heritage on these streets. As a documentary filmmaker, research and storytelling are part and parcel. A few doors down, Laura and I discovered that an 1890s farmhouse used to overlook orange groves under the eye of Charles Reed Conway, an early California pioneer who founded the second English-language newspaper in Los Angeles. After reviewing census records and calling the Venerables, I learned that the same property became known in the 1950s as "The Japanese Settlement House," likely a boarding house for Japanese-American Families following World War II. Newspaper searches revealed that across the street, early California pioneers built a humble residence and were profiled with a quarter-page *LA Times* article in 1907 commemorating their 65th wedding anniversary. These houses were just the ones I could see from my driveway and research in spare time.

I also reached out to John Ripley, an architectural historian who specializes in Craftsman architecture and the foremost researcher of the home's architect, George J. Webster. Once known as the "hidden architect of Altadena" for his prolific contributions to Altadena's development, more is now known about Webster's work, thanks to research from Ripley and others – including four homes built in Adams-Normandie (of six total in Los Angeles, with the rest in Pasadena and Altadena). Webster's contributions to the Altadena region took on a tragic dimension, when on January 7th, 2025, the Eaton Fire broke out and erased seven of Webster's most significant works.

In my first phone call with Grant D. Venerable II, we discussed how people decide what is culturally significant and choose to preserve that story through the built environment. He told me the story of when the I-10/Christopher Columbus Freeway was built just a mile north of this house. His father, a civil engineer, was initially excited by this grand public infrastructure project, but did not realize the profound social consequences that would result, that city leaders were effectively sealing South LA off from the city. Nor did he realize how demolishing the neighborhoods of Sugar Hill and Berkeley Square – where Black residents paved the way for housing desegregation nationwide – to build the freeway would erase what could have remained enduring architectural symbols of what's possible in America, and more specifically Los Angeles. He told me that our dialogue was proof that history viewed through the lens of identity is not divisive, but actually brings people together.

In the two years of researching and writing this nomination, I have learned that part of why we lack landmarks to non-white and male peoples is that our criteria often fall short of understanding what is culturally and historically significant for marginalized cultures. Rita Cofield of the Getty Conservation Institute, whose work is focused on preservation of Black history in Southern California, explained to Laura and me how "firsts" – the trailblazers and barrier-breakers – are vitally important, becoming the shoulders on which the next generations stand. While for some, a college graduation or owning a house might seem like personal achievements, the following pages will show how a strictly segregated society would turn such events into symbols of equality.

We are proud to be submitting this nomination for the Grant D. Venerable Family Residence at 2921 S. Budlong Ave, in honor of the Venerable family's contributions to the cultural fabric of Los Angeles and Historic West Adams, as well as its

architectural significance. This has been a community effort, and we are proud to have gained the support of LA Council District 8, the North Area Neighborhood Development Council (NANDC), the University Park Action Coalition (UPAC), as well as the current property owners, who even welcomed the grown children of Grant D. Venerable to tour the property.

As this monument qualifies under all 3 Criteria, it is dense in its historical context and reaches 53 pages (88 with supporting documentation), and a 60 page appendix of supplemental documentation. It has been challenging to keep this short, as we feel it's important to document this history for future historians to continue the work. Given the application's depth, we are outlining here the supporting qualifications under each criteria, with the following pages offering greater detail:

CRITERION 1

The Grant D. Venerable Family Residence is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.

The Venerable Residence is both identified with important events of local history and exemplifies contributions to the broader cultural fabric locally and nationally. The residence was known locally as home of the man whose graduation was so meritorious that the largest African American newspaper in California heralded his accomplishment as one that would "encourage Negro youth throughout the land... awaken a desire and determination to follow in the footsteps of this exemplary young man and student." (Article text provided in full on pages 10 and 11).

His graduation from CalTech in 1932 made him a local celebrity, and newspapers would follow his life and that of his family for decades to come – associating them with their residence on Budlong Avenue, and subsequently turning both the family and their home into aspirational symbols of African American prosperity.

More broadly, Grant D. Venerable helped break barriers for African Americans in academia, specifically in the sciences and engineering fields.

Although he was living in his mother's home at the time of graduation, this event paved the way for a prosperous career that would position him to break the color barrier again. Purchasing the subject residence involved crossing the "red line," overcoming political, economic and racial barriers to integrate neighborhoods surrounding L.A.'s "West Side." Venerable did this as part of a concerted effort of Black Angelenos to expand westward, in which prosperous and well-known African Americans led the way by purchasing homes in areas where they risked intimidation, lawsuits and violence. In this era, home ownership was not only a status symbol, but a political symbol of equality in a deeply segregated nation.

The Venerable Family Residence also exemplifies significant contributions to the local cultural and social history by becoming an anchor of a nascent African American community. It served as a meeting house for numerous social clubs, which were integral to African American communities locally and nationwide. The residence would also serve as the headquarters for Venerable's later career as entrepreneur, in which he realized his mission to provide economic uplift to L.A.'s Black community. Furthermore, it symbolized the effort that middle-class African Americans, including the Venerable family, were making to move into racially-restricted neighborhoods.

Today, the broad cultural and social history of Los Angeles and the nation remain entangled in Civil Rights (or rather, lack thereof). But Grant D. Venerable and a handful of other African American scholars challenged national educational norms by pursuing scientific degrees at a time when Blacks literally were not welcome at America's top-ranked universities. Venerable's admission to Caltech, in 1929, and graduation, in 1932, exemplifies the civil rights struggle to change this pattern of discrimination in higher education. Although he did not live in the house at the time he earned his degree, the story of this pioneering individual and his meeting the challenge to earn that degree was oft-told (in local newspapers) during Venerable's tenure at the house -- in part as an effort to inspire young people of color that they, too, could overcome the obstacles of race and achieve whatever goals they dared to dream.

CRITERION 2

The property is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history.

Grant D. Venerable broke barriers in higher education when he became not only the first student of African descent to be enrolled at the prestigious CalTech in 1929, but its first graduate of African descent in 1932. His accomplishment exemplifies the efforts of other African American scholars and the NAACP in the 1930s to tear down racial barriers to higher education.

In 1944, the subject property became the first home purchased by Venerable, the result of a productive career as an insurance salesman in another segregated industry. Venerable raised his three children in the property, living there from 1945 to 1970 – his longest period spent in any residence.

Newspaper coverage of the importance of his graduation, but continued to cover his life and that of his children in the social pages of the leading African American newspapers. The home served as a hub for community engagement and mentorship, making the residence even more widely known.

Throughout his life, Venerable encouraged and voiced support for higher education, raising money for scholarships and giving speeches to students about the importance of academic achievement and college attendance. To this day, representation in higher academia and the sciences falls dramatically short of parity, especially for African Americans.

Evidence of Venerable's impact on academia are evident in his son, Grant Venerable II, who was raised in the home and there laid the foundation for a similarly trailblazing career as a chemist, professor and university administrator.

CRITERION 3

The property also embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age.

This rustic Craftsman bungalow was designed and built in 1908 by the brief partnership of architectural designers Neal Dow Barker and George James Webster. Although the residence has some alterations, it retains the distinctive characteristics of the Arts and Crafts movement and the Craftsman architectural style and methods of construction.

In particular it bears the design signatures of George J. Webster, who fused influences from his native Britain into his participation in the Southern California Arts and Crafts scene. He became known for his rustic single-story bungalows before designing grand homes throughout Pasadena and Altadena. Webster was dubbed “the uncredited architect of Altadena” for his significant contributions to the region, where he built his largest and costliest residences. Thanks to architectural historians referenced throughout this document, his work has become more recognized. However, on January 7th, 2025, the outbreak of the Eaton Fire in Altadena tragically destroyed many of these works.

Barker worked almost exclusively in partnerships, and it is theorized that he acted in a more supporting capacity, allowing for the style of architects like M. Paul Martin and George J. Webster to dominate the works. Webster's foremost researcher, architectural historian John G. Ripley, considers the subject residence a turning point in Webster's work, bearing many of the signatures for which he'd become known in his later solo works.

The subject residence is particularly notable as one of only six Webster works extant in the city of Los Angeles, alone or in partnership with Barker.

Unfortunately, 2921 Budlong Avenue is now a more-rare example of Webster's work, as seven of Webster's Craftsman residences in Altadena were destroyed in the January 2025 Eaton Fire.

A. PROPOSED MONUMENT DESCRIPTION

The Grant D. Venerable Family residence is located in the Adams-Normandie block of the Historic West Adams neighborhood of Los Angeles, at 2921 S. Budlong Avenue. Constructed in 1908, this one-story, wood-frame bungalow was built in the Craftsman architectural style.

EXTERIOR

The subject property is sited on a lot 50 feet x 134 feet on the west side of Budlong Avenue, with the front elevation facing east. It is of wood-frame construction with exterior walls clad in split redwood shingles with unfinished lower edges. The form of the house is roughly rectangular, with shallow protrusions on the north and south sides, and a larger protrusion to the west. The bungalow has a 23' setback, excluding porches or other protrusions from the main structure.

The front elevation is dominated by a relatively large porch with steps at the front and sides. The window surrounds are plain boards in the typical Craftsman manner. The original architects employed a faux post-and-beam style at the corners with faux exposed mudsills with half-timbered corners at the base of the front facade. One also can see the original brick of the wing wall by the front steps and mudsill.

The residence has an intersecting cross-gable and hipped roof with overhanging eaves, and is clad with composition shingles. The roof ridge runs east-west, with a gable in the front and a hip-and-gable form in the rear. The primary, street-facing elevation features a main gable with a large vent at its peak, composed of two rows of alternate vertical slats with one row behind the other, offset so the attic space cannot be seen. The south-facing gable features two original windows to the attic in a traditional style with glass painted over. Two pairs of structural wooden knee-brackets with integral feet support the north and south gables, with one pair supporting the upper gable, while the lower pair adjoins the bottom of the gable.

The form of the house is roughly rectangular, with shallow protrusions on the north and south sides, and a larger protrusion to the east, street-facing facade. The roof pitch is medium, about 6-in-12. As is typical of Craftsman houses, the roof has a wide overhang along the eaves and gable rakes. The roof, which was originally clad in wood shingles, has since been replaced with composition shingles. A driveway runs to the north of the house, paved in cement with a dividing fence. The backyard features a kidney-shaped in-ground pool.

INTERIOR

The main entrance on the east-facing elevation opens directly into the living room, which runs the full width of the house and has a den at the south end. The living room has plain-sawn oak flooring and douglas fir woodwork which has been painted white. Intersecting, molding-trimmed box beams run along the ceiling both east-west and north-south, supported by columns, and continue into the dining room. There is a diagonal colonnade crossing the base of the front wing, separating the alcove den from the living room.

There is one large, wood-framed fixed picture window looking out on the porch. On the north wall of the living room there is a fireplace with a mantle flanked by bookshelves on both sides. Above the mantle, the chimney bottle-necks to a thinner shaft.

SOUTH LIVING ROOM / DEN

Beyond the diagonal colonnade is a den, currently used as an office. An angled, quarter-sawn oak stair tread steps down into the "sunken" room. The south wall features a ribbon of two sets of original paired casements at a raised height. The leaded glass panes are arranged in the architect's signature style, with three square panes over two rectangular panes. The south wall also features original molding and a bead-board bookcase.

THE DINING ROOM

The living room flows into the dining room which is directly to the west, continuing the living room's possibly original oak floors. Two half-height walls partition the living room from the dining room, both framed by a vertical boxed column at either end, with a horizontal boxed beam running north/south at the ceiling over the dining room entry. The west wall opens to a hallway via an original door frame. The north wall features a center pair of windows

flanked by two smaller, raised windows. While from the interior this section appears to be a bay window, the exterior view of the north face shows that it is actually flush with the gable above it, and it is actually the living room wall that is inset under the gable.

KITCHEN

The modern kitchen is open to the dining room and living room and a rear laundry room, which has a west exit door to the backyard.

HALLWAY

The central hallway connects to the common rooms via the door on the south side of the dining room. The hall is in the shape of a stubby “L” and has doors to the front bedroom, bathroom, rear corner bedroom, rear central bedroom, and kitchen. At the end of the hallway from the dining room entrance, there is a five-panel door with raised panels that leads into the rear central bedroom.

BATHROOM

Returning to the hallway and turning east, one enters the site of the original bathroom. Though still a bathroom, its floor plan has been divided with a wall to create a half-bathroom servicing the larger bedroom, with a full bathroom accessible from the hallway. No original features remain in either of the bathrooms.

BEDROOMS

The front bedroom is accessible from both the hallway and the living room. The south bedroom wall features vinyl windows with original framing, and the west wall has a door to the half bathroom.

The rear central bedroom is accessed from the western end of the hall. The smallest of the home’s three bedrooms, it still has original molding around the window. All bedroom floors are carpeted.

Proceeding back to the hallway and directly to the south one enters the south west corner bedroom. Original molding is extant for the baseboard as well as for two vinyl windows on the south and west walls.

HISTORIC EUCALYPTUS TREES

There are three historic eucalyptus trees in the east median (*Eucalyptus Sideroxylon*, common name Red or Pink Ironbark), one of which stands directly in front of the subject property, in the public right-of-way. The northernmost of the three trees was noted in the nomination for the neighboring property at 2915 S. Budlong Ave (A. C. Tobias Residence; CHC-2021-10146-HCM). The tree’s age is unknown, but it has certainly outlived its usual lifespan of 25 years, as archival photos show the tree in mature condition by the early 1950s. A city tree arborist visited in 2022 and declared the tree healthy.

ALTERATIONS

The front porch and its steps have been covered with a possibly granite-like material. Archival photos show the porch once had a pergola with posts supporting box beams running axially and transversely, forming a stacked set. At some point prior to 1985, the pergola was removed along with a supporting column at the northeast corner, and the beams were truncated.

The original foundation was brick, and a permit to remove and replace the foundation was issued in 2004. Most original windows have been replaced with vinyl while retaining their original interior and exterior framing and original jambs and sills. A band of casement windows beneath the street-facing gable have been replaced by infill with a

single window of inappropriate design.

The original front door has been replaced by a modern paneled door of thinner width, though a vertical post shows the original door's larger width. The living room fireplace and bookcases have been covered with patterned tile – possibly laminate or granite — and it is unknown if the original fireplace brick, tile hearth floor and broad wooden mantle remain beneath the tile. The sunken den once boasted a diagonal colonnade which has since been closed off with drywall and a pair of doors, though the original molding and beams remain.

The dining room was once separated from the kitchen with a built-in buffet with leaded glass windows which was flanked by two swinging paneled doors, one leading to the kitchen and the other to the main hallway. The removal of the buffet and doors has created an open floor plan, leading from the front door, through the living room and dining room and into the kitchen and laundry room to an exterior door.

The laundry room would have likely been separated by an exterior wall and door, leading out to a screened-in-porch with half walls, which has since been framed in and merged with the kitchen. Added exterior features in the backyard include an in-ground pool in the backyard. A permit for the pool was issued in 1971. Archival photographs show a free-standing garage once stood in the backyard, but has since been removed.

INTEGRITY

Despite substantial interior modifications, the exterior of the house, along with the main front rooms, still appear much as they would have 116 years ago. Almost all original exterior architectural features remain in good condition. The interior floor plan also remains largely as it was built, with original window and door molding as well as hardwood floors intact in the main common spaces. The ceiling beams and columns through these common spaces are key architectural features whose significance will be explored in Criterion 3 (pages 41-52).

Written with contributions from Anna Marie Brooks' HCM nomination of 2915 S Budlong Ave as well as John G. Ripley's report on 2915 S Budlong Ave.

B. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTION

Many historical figures are recognized some time after their accomplishments, once enough context has emerged for them to be appreciated. Grant D. Venerable's historic accomplishment was the rare sort seen in its time as a barrier-breaking win for racial equality, one that would open doors for others. An October 1932 article, written in anticipation of his graduation in the *California Eagle*, appears in the editorial section, beside a piece authored by revered civil rights attorney and future *California Eagle* owner, Loren Miller. The article's text is reproduced here for legibility, with the original scan reproduced on page 12 of the appendix.

STUDENT EXPRESSIONS | BY: CARL ECHOLS GRANT D. VENERABLE

Is the fact known and appreciated that at the world-famous California Institute of Technology, located in Pasadena, one and only one Negro student has ever studied within its sacred walls?

Is the fact known and appreciated that this senior, for such he is, will be graduated from this school this year, having established a precedence hitherto unknown in the twenty or more years of its history?

Grant D. Venerable deserves the highest respect and admiration of his fellows. The world greets his intellectual accomplishments. Let colored folk get into this reception line and honor real achievement when it makes its appearance.

The example of Mr. Venerable will encourage Negro youth throughout the land. It must do more, it must awaken a desire and determination to follow in the footsteps of this exemplary

young man and student.

Grant Venerable was born in Kansas City, Missouri, July 10th, 1904. He came to California a few years ago with his mother Mrs. Louise Venerable, who lives presently in Los Angeles.

Young Grant graduated from the San Bernardino High School immediately planned to enter Cal Tech. He found himself, however at U. C. L. A. as a medical student. This course was abandoned after three years and the brilliant young mathematician headed straight for the Pasadena Institute made famous by Millikan, Morgan and Einstein. He began his training for Civil Engineering and is soon to complete the course.

Venerable soon won the esteem of professors and students. He was chosen vice-president of the cosmopolitan club. He was sent by the school to the Canadian Student Christian Conference which convened at Vancouver, British Columbia this past summer. Delegates from over the world were present.

One day Grant was casually led to enumerate a few subjects he studied during his young career. The list is partly as follows:

Elementary and advanced algebra, plane and solid geometry, trigonometry, plane analytic and solid analytic geometry, integral and differential calculus, theory of probability, theory of numbers, theory of equations, projection geometry, spherical trigonometry, and so forth and so on.

Physics, chemistry, geology, zoology, paleontology, economics, history. Spanish, French, English and a few others to help make the list varied and interesting.

And so proceeds the career of a pioneer who not only on one occasion at Cal Tech received one of the two highest grades, but who was picked by coach and athletes as sure quarterback and quartermile material. As a twist of fate altered his career from that of physician to an engineer, so a twist of an ankle changed his career as an athlete, at least for a while.

Soon the California Institute of Technology will open its doors and send forth another group of graduated scientists and engineers. Among them will be the first Negro in the history of the school – Grant D. Venerable.

October 23rd, 1932

Source: [California Eagle](#), Editorials October 23, 1932 pg 8

THE LIFE OF GRANT D. VENERABLE

VENERABLE'S EARLY YEARS

Grant D. Venerable was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on July 10th, 1904 and was of African, Cherokee, and Scottish descent. He attended Crispus Attucks Elementary School, a segregated school, and Lincoln High School in Kansas City. There Venerable received a strong education in mathematics and liberal arts. At the age of 15, he migrated to California because of what was thought to be a tuberculosis spot on his lung, and landed in San Bernardino to live with his uncle Conquest Blaine Venerable (1885-1969). "Uncle Blaine," as he was known, was the much younger brother of Grant D. Venerable's father, and was raised by Grant D. Venerable's mother, Louise Venerable, as a "foster son."

The tuberculosis spot on Venerable's lung was a misdiagnosis, and he enrolled at San Bernardino High School as one of only five black students. Because he had come from a segregated school (Lincoln High School), he was held back a year, but graduated on time in 1920 at the age of 16. After graduation, he lived with his mother, Louise Venerable, on a ranch in Santa Ana, running track at Santa Ana Junior College. He moved with his mother to Los Angeles around 1921, and attended the University of Southern California, enrolling as a pre-med student. His mother worked as a housekeeper in the home of the wealthy Blackstone family, who owned the J.W. Robinson Department Store. From that income she purchased a home at 1286 W 36th st. (since demolished), where Venerable lived on-and-off while attending various colleges.

From 1923-1924 Venerable attended the Southern Branch of the University of California on Vermont Avenue, which became the original campus for the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), now home to the Los Angeles City College. At UCLA, Venerable played the coronet and was an associate and protégé of the later diplomat and Nobel

Prize winner Ralph Bunche, who would go on to play a major role in the formation of the United Nations and negotiate peaceful resolutions to international conflicts. Venerable also joined the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the first Black fraternity in the nation, formed in 1906. Association with the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity was an honor, and Venerable continued his association with this fraternity as a charter member throughout his life. Fraternities were especially key for creating community within integrated institutions, which still practiced exclusionary practices regarding the use of campus life, athletics and academics, including practices such as denying housing or use of campus facilities. Venerable would retain a lifelong association with the fraternity, serving as president of the L.A Alpha Phi Alpha Alumni chapter, hosting meetings at 2921 S. Budlong Ave.

From 1924-1926 he studied at the University of California at Berkeley as a mathematics major, living at the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity house on Scott Street in San Francisco (*see: list of residences associated with Grant D. Venerable, page 54*). From 1926-1927 he returned to UCLA, where he served as president of the Agenda Club, described by UCLA as “a Negro organization.” Venerable’s attendance at UCLA was cut short when he was expelled by the head of the mathematics department for dropping a course without securing approval from the department chair. These harsh consequences were not a typical reprimand, and it should be noted that Venerable had recently made waves for writing a guest-editorial column in the UCLA Daily Bruin in reply to a racist article previously published in the journal. The article, called “The Negro Problem,” publicly questioned the role Black people should play in integrating to white society. Venerable wrote:

“We should like to set at rest the misguided minds of those who are under the impression that we of the Negro race want social equality. To make such an assertion of the “New Negro” (so ably described by Ralph Bunche '27 in an address at the close of the last semester) is an exhibition of ignorance beyond comparison. We want social equality and social intercourse with the other races in no greater measure than they desire it with us. Equal opportunity is our plea!” (CDB, 10/10/27).”

Loud Bark and Curious Eyes: A History of the UCLA Daily Bruin, 1919-1955, pgs. 30 - 31

For the next two years, Venerable studied independently to deepen his math and physics knowledge before applying to Caltech.

VENERABLE ATTENDS CALTECH

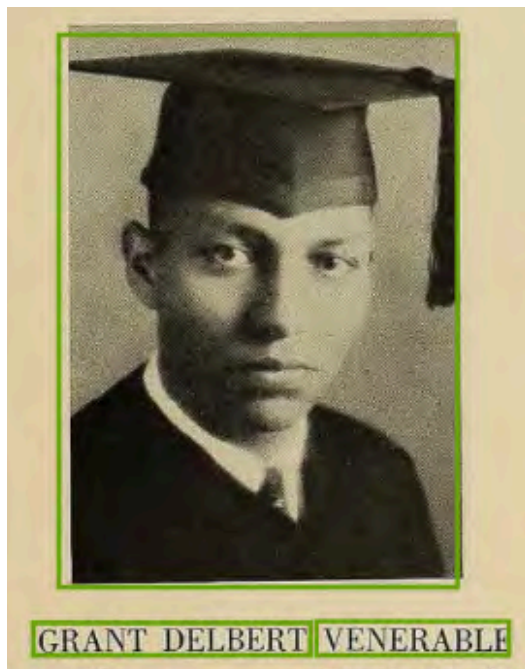
In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, affirming that the state and local-level racial segregation laws created after the Civil War did not violate the U.S. Constitution, establishing the principle of “separate but equal.” The result was a system of segregated and separate schooling, by law in the south and/or by tradition everywhere else, that was anything but equal.

Vastly different amounts of money were spent on the public school K-12 education, with different curriculums that steered Black students towards vocations such as railroad porter, blacksmith, laundress or maid. Higher education was similarly segregated and unequal. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were likewise oriented toward vocational training to secure employment.

By the mid-1930s, the NAACP began an orchestrated challenge to *Plessy v. Ferguson* – with some moderate success. Venerable was likely influenced by the movement in its nascent stages, breaking barriers as the first student of African descent to be admitted to the California Institute of Technology (CalTech) in 1929 to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, and its first Black graduate in 1932, a little over three decades following the *Plessy* decision.

The Supreme Court didn't officially end racial segregation in public schools until 1954, with the decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. However, segregation continued to persist despite this ruling. In 1976, the Supreme Court ruled segregation in public schools to be illegal.

Given this context, the importance of Venerable’s role in eventually desegregating Caltech cannot be understated. The significance of this event from a state and national perspective will be explored in greater detail on pages 34-40, “Paving the Way: African Americans in the Sciences and Engineering fields.”



Grant Delbert Venerable's graduation portrait in the 1932 California Institute of Technology yearbook. Source: *"The Big T' Volume 22, Published by The Associated Students of the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA, 1932.*

Caltech traces its roots back to the fall of 1891, when Amos Throop, a philanthropist based in Pasadena, established Throop University in the Wooster Block building in Pasadena. Throop University grew rapidly with the arrival of astronomer George Ellery Hale (the Mount Wilson Observatory's first director) to its board of trustees in 1907. Hale molded the school into a "first-class institution for engineering and scientific research and education" according to Caltech's website page, "History & Milestones." Hale was joined by chemist Arthur A. Noyes and physicist Robert A. Millikan in 1921 and the school was renamed the California Institute of Technology. Caltech rose into prominence throughout the 1920s, with the express purpose to pursue "scientific research of the greatest importance." Today, Caltech is ranked among the best academic institutions in the world and the most selective in the United States.

At Caltech, Venerable attended classes taught by scholars such as engineers Fred Converse and Theodore von Kármán (who developed the "wind tunnel" that would later become the Jet Propulsion Laboratory); chemical engineer William N. Lacey, and Nobel physicist Albert Einstein (a visiting lecturer in 1930, prior to his joining the Princeton faculty), as well as Robert A. Millikan, who won the Nobel Prize in 1923 for determining the magnitude of the electron's charge. He was in a unique position when he attended lectures by Einstein, who could only speak German at the time. Venerable, fluent in German, was able to understand without translation.

He paid for college through odd jobs, mowing lawns and working as a chauffeur and butler for a family in Beverly Hills. While studying at Caltech, Venerable was a member of the YMCA (now the Caltech Y), the American Society of Engineers, the track team, and the Exhibit Day committee. He also wrote for *The California Tech*, Caltech's student newspaper, from 1929 to 1932, and served as president of Caltech's Cosmopolitan Club, which was formed to promote fellowship among students of different nationalities.

Venerable's time at Caltech was not without incidents of racism. Grant Venerable's daughter, Lynda Venerable Ellington, writes in her support letter for this nomination that "he was not wanted at this prestigious school and was told many times he would not pass the course of study." Even more blatant was denying Venerable his application to live in one of Caltech's student residences. Dr. Millikan, who was also associated with eugenics and the Human Betterment Society, appealed to the Board of Trustees on the issue of whether a "colored" student should be permitted to live on campus. Venerable was later approved to live in the house, but declined, citing the prohibitive cost. In 2021, Caltech removed Millikan's name from campus buildings along with other alumni associated with the eugenics movement, renaming buildings for other notable Caltech graduates, including Grant D. Venerable.

A fellow graduate of the 1932 Caltech class, William Shockley, would go on to be known as both a Nobel Prize

winner, as well as a vocal advocate for eugenics and his beliefs that Black people were “genetically inferior.” Of his time at Caltech, he insisted, “there were never any black people at Caltech.” In 1972, Grant D. Venerable II authored a *Los Angeles Times* op-ed aimed at Shockley, reminding him he attended Caltech alongside “Grant D. Venerable, Caltech’s first Negro alumnus.” The article is reproduced in the appendix, page 31.

In 1931, Venerable was selected by Caltech to represent the university at the American Canadian student conference on Bowen Island in Vancouver, Canada. The *California Eagle*, the largest African American newspaper circulating in California at the time, reported the news on July 10th, 1931, referring to Venerable as “the only colored student in Caltech... a major in engineering and... former president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.” On August 14th, 1931, Venerable published an article in the *California Eagle* on his experiences in Canada, “Canadian Christian Conference Views Race Problem: All races tell of their problems; remedies advanced by few,” in which Christian speakers from around the world discussed such wide-ranging subjects as colonialism and generational views on interracial marriage. In 1932, the year of his graduation, Venerable was living in Pasadena at 1147 Cordova St, which appears to be the site of the Trinity Baptist Church. Census records also show him intermittently registered at his mother’s address, 1286 W. 36th st, a site since demolished.

GRANT D. VENERABLE’S CAREER FOLLOWING GRADUATION

The nation was in the thick of The Great Depression when Venerable graduated, and despite his engineering degree from an esteemed university, he struggled to find work. The Great Depression was especially hard on African Americans. The term “last hired, first fired,” proliferated as African Americans saw unemployment rates that dwarfed those of whites. The Library of Congress states the unemployment rate among African Americans in 1932 at approximately 50 percent.

In 1934, Venerable went to Montana to put his engineering degree to some use in his aunt’s gold mine, earning enough to return to California by 1935 to work for the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company as a junior insurance representative and salesman. Golden State Mutual was founded to provide Black people in California – who were often denied policies or charged exorbitant premiums – with quality life insurance. It was the first of its kind in California, and would go on to become the largest Black-owned insurance company in the American West, employing many Black Americans in Los Angeles.

Both the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, currently the largest, oldest and most influential African-American newspaper in the Western U.S., and the *California Eagle* reported in 1936 and 1937 about Venerable’s rise in the Golden State ranks with “remarkably rapid advancement,” noting that he was “very popular in religious and fraternal circles.” On June 11, 1937 an article on the front page of the *California Eagle* with the headline “Golden State Writes \$178,000 New Business” states that “Grant Venerable, assistant superintendent of the Los Angeles district, lead[s] in sales.” (Appendix, 14-15)

Venerable met his future wife Thelma Lorraine Scott, who also worked at Golden State Mutual as a corporate bookkeeper, in 1936. Unbeknownst to each other, they had both emigrated from the Midwest to California in the same year – 1919. Scott’s family migrated from Kansas, packing all of their belongings and family members into a single Chandler Touring Car to embark on the 13-day journey from Topeka, Kansas to Los Angeles, where they settled in Boyle Heights at 612 N Evergreen Ave. and later 3011 Boulder St. Los Angeles.

Scott attended Los Angeles Junior College to earn her Associate of Arts degree, an academic feat that was not expected nor typical for women in her era. Scott and Venerable were married in 1939 at the Scott family church, Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Boyle Heights. Their son, Grant D. Venerable II, described their relationship as “love at first sight...bringing together two families with very great histories and legacies. Each family was a pillar of the Black middle class of Southern California.”

Venerable took a leave of absence at Golden State around 1940-1941, when an increased demand for mining engineers finally allowed him to pursue his chosen field of study. He worked for the Hayward Spyglass Company, applying his knowledge of optics, before working as a mining engineer in remote locations like Death Valley and the Salton Sea.



Grant D. Venerable beside a Ford Model T in Elliston, MT, 1934. *Venerable Family Archive*.

THE VENERABLES MOVE TO BUDLONG AVENUE

After their marriage, Venerable and his wife resided at the home of Louise Venerable, Grant Venerable's mother, at 1286 W 36th St. for 5 years, until purchasing 2921 S. Budlong Avenue in 1944 at a cost of \$7,000. Venerable's son, Lloyd Venerable, recalls that his father was won over by the large open public spaces, which could serve as not only an office for himself, but also an ideal hosting space for church and social groups. His wife was an accomplished organist and painter, and those spaces would also be a space for the kids to play, make music and art, pray and read.

CROSSING THE REDLINE: THE EFFORT TO DESEGREGATE LOS ANGELES' "WEST SIDE"

Venerable's trailblazing went beyond desegregating academia. The subject residence is a testament to his efforts in resisting and chipping away at the segregationist forces that dictated where Black people were permitted to live and own homes.

Jennifer Mandel's PhD thesis "Making a 'Black Beverly Hills': The struggle for housing equality in modern Los Angeles," and subsequent book "The Coveted Westside: How the Black Homeowners' Rights Movement Shaped Modern Los Angeles" (University of Nevada Press, 1992) provide excellent context on the concerted effort made by Black Angelenos to migrate and desegregate the area now known as Historic West Adams.

Mandel notes that the desegregation of West Adams followed a pattern in which socially and economically prominent African Americans risked intimidation, lawsuits, and violence by moving into white neighborhoods. If they found an area was reasonably safe, many others followed.

In the late 1930s, the Historic West Adams neighborhood was referred to as the "West Side," in contrast to the largely Black neighborhoods east of Central Avenue, an epicenter of African American life in Los Angeles. The "East Side" faced overcrowding, forcing Black Angelenos to explore where else in LA they could settle. Los Angeles had its own form of Jim Crow laws and there were significant political, economic and social barriers to home ownership for Black people, making this a difficult and dangerous exploration.

Homeownership has long been considered the foundation of wealth and social advancement in America. Mandel writes that African Americans "purchased homes and goods as a way to assert their civil rights," using the American dollar as an "essential expression of political views" by boycotting racist public and private institutions and consciously choosing where to spend their money. Mandel continues, "To middle- and upper-class Blacks, homeownership and consumerism signified wealth, status, and power in American society. Indeed, affluent blacks in Los Angeles acted alongside a broad-based effort toward racial equality that was occurring in communities around the country and erupted in the mid-1950s as the modern civil rights movement." (Mandel, pg. 14)

Until the passing of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, it was commonplace across the nation for restrictive housing covenants in property deeds to expressly prohibit the property's sale to anyone who was not Caucasian, "specifically

Negroes, Asians, Hispanics, and Jews.” These race-restrictive housing covenants were a vital method of maintaining segregation.

Furthermore, public and private policies made mortgages hard to receive. Throughout the 1930s, various federal government agencies assessed cities nationwide on the security and risk of real-estate and mortgage investments. Los Angeles was among 239 cities divided into four grades, each corresponding to a color – green and blue noting first and second grade, yellow and red denoting third and fourth grades. Most African American urban households fell into the zone labeled "red" or "grade four," which were considered most risky for mortgage support.

The effects of what came to be known as “redlining” extended beyond denying real estate loans to charging exorbitant interest rates and denying credit and insurance to those living in “risky” zones. In both public and private spheres, red zones were considered not worthy of investment and property values were lower than in higher-graded zones. As funding for public schools in the United States is largely derived from property taxes, this process also inhibited educational resources. Today, redlining is considered one of the most profound manifestations of systemic racism in American society for its lingering effects on both housing and educational segregation, and is viewed as a major contributor to the racial wealth gap.

Mandel notes that “although whites attempted to isolate people of color to the Eastside, middle-and upper-class African Americans used their financial resources and resolve to confront residential discrimination one street block at a time. As they migrated westward, affluent blacks broke down the racial divide and expanded housing opportunities for people of color across the city.” (Mandel, 22)

The California Negro Directory of 1942-1943 lists only a few dozen African Americans living in the West Adams district north of Jefferson Avenue. This area was then deemed yellow/grade three, meaning “declining” and was increasingly inhabited by Eastern European caucasians, while south of Jefferson Blvd was graded red, and was home to a larger African American population.

By the early 1940s, Black families were beginning to challenge these covenants while migrating to the West and North. Some wealthy Black people purchased grand homes in West Adams Heights, nicknamed “Sugar Hill” after the prosperous neighborhood in Harlem, NY. In 1945, eight white residents of West Adams Heights/Sugar Hill sued their Black neighbors, insisting on evicting them because “their property would lose value and racial clashes would inevitably ensue.” Many people recognize the names of the celebrity defendants, in particular actresses Hattie McDaniel and Louise Beavers, but the legal name of the lawsuit was actually *Tolhurst v. Venerable*. The named defendant was Nellie Venerable, the wife of Conquest Blaine Venerable, who took in a teenaged Grant D. Venerable during his high school years.

A life-long father figure for the younger Venerable, Blaine had amassed a fortune as an hotelier, entrepreneur and philanthropist and had purchased a Moorish-style villa on “Sugar Hill,” at 2266 S. Harvard Blvd in 1945 (since demolished). Loren Miller, a prominent civil rights attorney, was hired by the collective of Black homeowners, who prevailed in the Sugar Hill cases, helping end legal housing restrictions in California. The presiding judge ruled:

“It is time that members of the Negro race are accorded, without reservations and evasions, the full rights guaranteed them under the 14th Amendment of the Federal Constitution. Judges have been avoiding the real issue too long. Certainly there was no discrimination against the Negro race when it came to calling upon its members to die on the battlefields in defense of this country in the war just ended.”

This ruling marked the first judge in America to use the 14th Amendment to disallow the enforcement of race-restrictive covenants. The case served as a precursor for the Supreme Court suit, *Shelley v. Kraemer* (also argued by Loren Miller, alongside future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall), which ruled against such covenants nationwide and paved the way for the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

In addition to the covenants and redlining, barriers to employment and generational wealth were factors that made home ownership difficult. In the event a real estate transaction could happen in a white neighborhood, the act of integrating that neighborhood could be met with violence. When Venerable purchased the Budlong home in 1944, the

significance – and the risks – of leaving his mother’s red-lined neighborhood to live north of Jefferson Blvd would have likely been top of mind. Venerable’s daughter Lynda recalls her family being “if not the first, then among the first” African Americans on the block. She also recalls that her father carried a visible gun on his person as a warning to neighbors who might commit violent reprisals. Thankfully, the gun was never fired, and Grant D. Venerable II describes an idyllic upbringing as more Black families joined the Venerables in the increasingly diverse Adams-Normandie block:

“When it opened up to Black people, it was a very nice area. Old, old, homes with beautiful lawns, well-manicured landscapes... people took great care of their properties. And this was, as I said, a very racially integrated area inhabited by people who consciously chose to be amongst other people, as well as people of their own background; people who wanted their children to be around a diverse group... There were appreciable Black Americans, Mexican-Americans, Japanese, Chinese; others, Jewish. They were there and lived quite harmoniously together.”

According to a 2018 *Los Angeles Times* profile on the Adams-Normandie neighborhood:

“The court-ordered end of L.A.’s discriminatory racial covenants in the late 1940s was a milestone in the neighborhood’s history, as black Angelenos and other people of color were now afforded the same housing rights as whites and were able to freely move into the neighborhood. As a result, many of the remaining white residents decamped to the Valley and other suburbs.”

Census records for the subject property’s tract from 1940 and 1950 show a startling demographic shift on this particular section of Adams-Normandie. In 1940, every resident listed on the subject residence’s census page was of Caucasian descent. By 1950, 90% were listed as African American. These census records are included in the appendix, page 56-57, along with a Los Angeles “residential security” map from 1939 (page 55).

According to the 1942-194 California Negro Directory, very few African Americans were living north of Jefferson Avenue, and only one name is listed on Budlong Ave north of Jefferson, Lucille Henderson on 24th st – five blocks to the north, bisected by Adams Blvd. Given the Census-documented demographic shift within the decade and that Venerable purchased the home in 1944 – prior to the *Tolhurst v. Venerable lawsuit* – we feel confident in stating Venerable was part of this early wave of prominent African Americans who dared to risk the consequences of breaking the barriers that kept LA segregated, and inspired others to follow.

Not only were the Venerables well-known community figures, but their residence would host social clubs and organization meetings (discussed in detail on pages 23-36), allowing African Americans from other neighborhoods to visit the home and witness its role in a changing neighborhood.

By 1948 home and music school of Leon and Dovie Steward was established across the street at 2916 S. Budlong Ave, where the Venerable children learned to play the organ and performed recitals written up frequently in the *Los Angeles Sentinel* and the *California Eagle*. Later, 2215-2217 Budlong Ave. was the home of famed musician Johnny “Guitar” Watson, and Professor William T. Wilkins would establish his school of music a block away from the Venerable home, at 1514 W. 29th St. There were several other nearby African American pioneers, including film and television actress Amanda Randolph, who lived a few blocks away on Van Buren Place.

CAREER AS HOTELIER AND ENTREPRENEUR



Advertisement for the McAlpin Hotel, under the management of Grant D. Venerable. *Los Angeles Sentinel*, January 9th, 1947.

Venerable used the property as his business headquarters as he parlayed from engineering into entrepreneurship. Around 1945 he acquired, owned and managed the McAlpin Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles at 648 Stanford Ave., which was listed in various editions of *"The Negro Motorist Green Book or The Travelers' Green Book,"* (commonly referred to as the *"Green Book"*). Launched in 1936, the *Green Book* was an annual guidebook for African American travelers that provided a list of thousands of U.S. hotels, inns and boarding houses, along with restaurants, gas stations, and other establishments that could offer safe services in a time where travelers could encounter racial prejudice, price gouging and physical violence.

The 1896 Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* was a case about segregated train cars – and as a result of its landmark precedent, segregation was enshrined at hotels, eateries, beaches, restrooms, and of course, schools. The resulting policies constructed an intricate system of regulations that disempowered Black people and subjected them to constant harassment. It also created an opportunity for Grant D. Venerable and others to own and operate hotels that provided this vital service for their community.

In 1940s Los Angeles, much of the hospitality industry was segregated. Black people were not usually allowed to stay in white-owned hotels, nor eat in white-owned cafes and restaurants, nor sometimes even fill their gas tanks at certain service stations. Furthermore, parts of Los Angeles were known as *"Sundown towns,"* with their own forms of Jim Crow laws, making it unsafe for Black people to be out in public after sunset as they could be subject to intimidation, harassment and/or violence.

The McAlpin stood in Downtown Los Angeles, which was known as a safe haven for Black travelers during segregation. Venerable's operating of the McAlpin represents a further contribution to the community. The hotel has since been demolished, along with most of the 224 Los Angeles sites mentioned in the various editions of the *Green Book*.

In 1948, Venerable moved on from the hospitality industry to assemble shareholders with his brother-in-law Bill Tatum to acquire the George R. Healy Manufacturing Company of Montebello. Utilizing his scientific and engineering skills, he developed a *"felt weld"* chalkboard eraser that was virtually indestructible and is still used by school districts nationwide. Venerable would spend nearly the rest of his life running the Healy Manufacturing company, using the subject residence's den as his office and headquarters and to host his annual shareholders meetings.

In 1948, Grant D. Venerable would be profiled in the first edition of the *Negro's Who's Who of California*. Its foreword reads:

"Throughout the country a search of public school and university libraries of social and research agencies, and of private collections of individuals in many States, a definite need for a *Who's Who* designed to record and present the Negro in the light of his achievements and

recognition in those fields of activity which are measures of his advancement and his contributions to the growth and progress of the community and state in which he lives.



Jesse Owens holding Lloyd Venerable beside Thelma Scott Venerable, with Grant D. Venerable II and Lynda Venerable. Los Angeles, 1946. *Venerable Family Archive*

The California Eagle, Thursday, June 23, 1949—9

SOCIAL NOTES

Yvonne Cressley of Palm Dental and Pharmaceutical A Spring is the cheerful and snappy representative of the Desert Tea Company as "Miss Desert Tea" in the Shriners Bathing Beauty contest.

Mrs. Alice Harvey had as her guest to lunch, Mrs. Herman Moore of the Virgin Islands. Mondays at her home on 7th avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. T. Curtis Smith and her daughter, Miss Ann Smith, left by plane Saturday for Berkeley where they will spend their vacation.

Mrs. Hilma Kaufman and Mrs. Alpha Womona Jones spent ten days holidaying at Catalina recently.

Mr. and Mrs. George Simons of Houston, Texas, were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. L. N. Tatum of Berendo street last week.

Mrs. Charlotte Hendricks was hostess to the executive board of the Auxiliary of the Medical.

Friends are grieved over the death of Attorney Willis O. Tyler who passed last Saturday.

(Continued on Page 11)

MARTINEZ BOOTERIES

* * *

Mrs. Melba Burch Holly, popular wife of Dr. W. Holly of Vallejo, California, is spending her vacation with Mrs. S. Venerable of Budlong avenue.

The "Social Notes" section of the *California Eagle* edition dated Thursday, June 23, 1949, notes a "popular wife" vacationing with Mrs. Thelma Scott [Venerable] "of Budlong avenue."

THELMA SCOTT VENERABLE

Thelma Scott Venerable was an organist, painter and homemaker referred to in a June 23rd, 1949 edition of the *California Eagle* as "Mrs S [Venerable] of Budlong Avenue," (highlighting the their home address in the social pages,

signifying it as a symbol of the well-known family). Tragically, Thelma died unexpectedly of a pulmonary embolism in December of 1950, at just 34 years old. Their eldest child Grant was five years old, Lynda was three and Lloyd was one. Her obituary in the *California Eagle* refers to her as a "popular and highly regarded young matron of the West Side," noting that her passing came as a shock because she "kept the seriousness of her complaint by her pleasant smiles and never-complaining devotion to her family."

She was an active member of the Vermont Avenue Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA), where her eldest son attended school. Following her passing, Grant Venerable assumed her duties with the PTA, eventually serving as the first male president of the James A. Foshay Junior High School PTA. Both parents used the residence as an occasional meeting space, becoming active community voices in their children's education. After Thelma Venerable's passing, the Vermont Avenue Parent Teacher Association gave her a posthumous lifetime membership, the highest honor a PTA "can bestow upon anyone." Her husband and children accepted the honor on her behalf.

Mrs. Grant Venerable Passes Following A Brief Illness

Funeral services were held this morning at 10 o'clock for Mrs. Thelma Lorraine Venerable, popular and highly regarded young matron of the West side who died last Friday afternoon at the Queen of Angles Hospital.

Her sudden death came as a shock to her family, friends and neighbors, from whom she kept the seriousness of her complaint by her pleasant smiles and never-complaining devotion to her family, which included three young children and a devoted husband. The funeral services were held in her childhood church, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 3046 East First Street.

Mrs. Venerable's illness became acute on the day before Thanksgiving and on the following Friday, she entered Queen of Angles Hospital.

After six days she returned home for three days. She again went to the hospital, where she died last Friday afternoon at 2.

Mrs. Venerable was brought to Los Angeles from her native Topeka, Kansas, where she was a small child, by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James H. Scott. She finished the public schools and completed a commercial course at Los Angeles Junior College after which she was employed in the home office of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company.

During the five years of this employment she met and married Grant D. Venerable, now in the manufacturing business.

Three children were born to the union, Delbert S., Linda E. and Lloyd S. She devoted her entire life to her family, all loyal members of the Bethel AME church. Her only other community activities were with the Alpha Phi Alpha Wives Auxiliary, Vermont Avenue P.T.A. and the Child Study Guild, of which she was a charter member.

Mrs. Venerable is survived by her immediate family, mother and father, brothers, Luther, James, in Arizona and Raymond in Tulsa, California. Her sister, Mrs. Erma Moore, niece Mildred and Nephew Thomas Moore and

'The Tragedy of Missing Heaven'

Rev. E. D. Smallwood, pastor, presents both choirs of Opportunity Baptist Church in "The Tragedy of Missing Heaven" (Every Body Talks 'Bout Heaven, Ain't Going There'), at the Opportunity Baptist Church, 1112 East 23rd Street (Corner 23rd and Griftth Aves.) Friday, Dec. 22, at 8 p.m.

Don't fail to see this play of the seasons. It will cause you to wonder—just who will make it to Heaven? This musical drama is written and directed by the pastor, Bro. E. D. Smallwood. Visit a church with the motto: "Beal witness to the Truth, and quench not the Holy Spirit." The church with "The Everlasting Welcome in all." Visit our 8:5-9:30 a.m., 8:7-11:6 p.m.; and morning and evening services 11 a.m. and 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Friendly Thoughts



Motherhood is the most sublime thing in life, giving to the world an infinite blessing of love, devotion, compassion and protection—the bridge between heaven and earth.

Funeral services were held this morning at 10 o'clock for Mrs. Thelma Lorraine Venerable, popular and highly regarded young matron of the West side who died last Friday afternoon at the Queen of Angles Hospital.

Her sudden death came as a shock to her family, friends and neighbors, from whom she kept the seriousness of her complaint by her pleasant smiles and never-complaining devotion to her family, which included three young children and a devoted husband. The funeral services were held in her childhood church, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 3046 East First Street.

Mrs. Venerable's illness became acute on the day before Thanksgiving and on the following Friday, she entered Queen of Angles Hospital.

After six days she returned home for three days. She again went to the hospital, where she died last Friday afternoon at 2.

Mrs. Venerable was brought to Los Angeles from her native Topeka, Kansas, when she was a small child, by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James H. Scott. She finished the public schools and completed a commercial course at Los Angeles Junior College after which she was employed in the home office of the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company.

During the five years of this employment she met and married Grant D. Venerable, now in the manufacturing business.

Three children were born to the union, Delbert S., Linda E. and Lloyd S. She devoted her entire life to her family, all loyal members of the Bethel AME church.

Her only other community activities were with the Alpha Phi Alpha Wives Auxiliary, Vermont Avenue P.T.A. and the Child Study Guild, of which she was a charter member.

Mrs. Venerable is survived by her immediate family, mother and father, brothers, Luther, James, in Arizona and Raymond in Tulsa, California. Her sister, Mrs. Erma Moore, niece Mildred and Nephew Thomas Moore and

California Eagle, Dec 21, 1950, pg. 12

Thelma Scott Venerable's obituary in the *California Eagle*, December 21st, 1950.

VENERABLE LATER YEARS

Grant Venerable subsequently married Ida Walls Lee in 1953. Born July 29, 1910, Lee worked at Lockheed Martin during World War II before becoming a school teacher at Hooper Avenue School in South Los Angeles. Venerable and Lee separated in 1955. Venerable later married Naomi T. Pryor in 1967, and left Budlong Avenue around 1970. A

shared driveway agreement from 1970 with the property directly to the north— 2915 S. Budlong Ave (The A.C. Tobias Residence, *CHC-2021-10146-HCM*) – was signed by Grant D. Venerable, indicating he still owned the property as of 1970. By 1971, a new owner applied for a permit to install an above ground pool.

By the mid-1950s, rumors were spreading of the government’s plans to build the I-10 freeway directly through “the West Side,” in-line with a trend nationwide during America’s mid-century effort to modernize American roadways. By the early 1960s, residents of Sugar Hill and Berkeley square (a neighborhood of mansions lining a wide gated street within Sugar Hill, many of them Black-owned) saw the homes they fought so hard to attain seized by eminent domain and demolished. Despite community activism, they were unsuccessful in halting what was then viewed as inevitable progress. The neighborhood of Adams-Normandie was also a site of such demolitions, with the freeway ending up just a mile north of the Venerable residence.



Grant D. Venerable and his three children survey the construction of the I-10 Freeway, which ran through the Adams-Normandie neighborhood just a mile from the Venerable Family Residence, 1960. *Source: Venerable Family Archive*

What time has shown is that Black communities were often the sites of inner-city freeways, and subsequently experienced economic downturn. The I-10 freeway construction triggered a migration of the area’s well-to-do Black community further west to the Baldwin Hills area, which Venerable followed once his children had all left for college.

Census and voter registration rolls show Grant D. Venerable living at the Park LaBrea apartments at 360 Burnside Avenue #1B, from approximately 1973-1978. His third wife, Naomi T. Pryor, passed away in 1978. In 1979 he was registered to vote at 3851 S. Cloverdale in Baldwin Hills. He continued to run the Healy Manufacturing Company until retiring in 1985. It is believed he remained at the Cloverdale residence until his death in 1986. As this residence is a modest one he inhabited later in life and only for seven or so years, it should not be considered as pivotal or significant a residence to serve as a monument to his legacy as the subject residence.

Venerable passed away on March 27th, 1986 at the age of 81 due to Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Venerable’s family established a Memorial Book Fund in his honor at Caltech. The endowment is used to purchase books that “bear upon the human condition, especially of African American and Native American cultures, and which bear upon the impact of modern technology on the human condition.”

In 2021, Caltech removed the name of the physicist Robert Millikan (who publicly questioned the appropriateness of Venerable’s living on campus housing) from campus buildings for his association with the eugenics movement. Caltech further honored Venerable by memorializing one of its eight undergraduate houses as “The Venerable House,” noting his “life that embodies the values and character of the house.”

Grant D. Venerable

Civil Engineer-businessman and 67-year L.A. resident, Grant D. Venerable, died of Hodgkins lymphoma on Thursday, March 27. He was 81.

The Kansas City, Missouri-born mathematical thinker was president and general manager of the Geo. R. Healey Mfg. Co. of Los Angeles, which pioneered in the development of the "felt weld" chalkboard eraser that is widely used in school districts across the U.S.

In 1932, he was the first Black American to graduate from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena where he was a protege of the late Nobel Laureate physicist Robert A. Millikan.

An associate of the late Ralph Bunche, Mr. Venerable was noted in the 1920s as an outstanding cornetist and quarter-mile sprinter, both at UCLA and CalTech. In 1939, he married the former Thelma Scott, who predeceased him in 1950. From 1967 to 1978 he was married to the late Naomi T. Pryor, formerly of Chicago.

He is survived by a daughter Lynda Ellington and son-in-law Owen Ellington, M.D.; two sons, graphic artist Lloyd Venerable of Los Angeles and Bay Area high-tech author and commentator Grant D. Venerable, II; and three grandchildren Owen, Bryan and Michelle.

A memorial service is planned for April 5 at Guidance Church of Religious Science. Contributions may be sent to the California Institute of Technology, care of the Venerable Memorial Fund.

Grant D. Venerable's obituary in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 3rd, 1986.

THE CHILDREN OF GRANT D. VENERABLE

Lynda Blaine Venerable Ellington attended UC Berkeley during the Free Speech Movement (1964), receiving a B.S. degree in Business Administration in 1969 from California State University-Los Angeles, graduating as one of 50 women in a class of 3,000. She went on to parlay her natural gift for mathematics into a successful career in banking and marketing, often the only minority in her office. She married Mr. Bernardo Ellington in 1971, and their wedding and reception at the landmark Wilfandel Club on West Adams Boulevard was profiled in the *Los Angeles Sentinel* along with prominent guests in attendance. Lynda Ellington went on to have a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry.

Lloyd Dennis Venerable combines a scientific engineering instinct with modern art and photography. In the 1970s he worked as curator of Gemini-Graphic Editions Limited, an important and innovating atelier in fine art lithography print editions, where he forged connections with renowned contemporary artists from David Hockney to Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella and Roy Lichtenstein, among others.

Grant D. Venerable II attended UCLA to pursue chemistry, and earned his Masters of Science and Ph. D from the University of Chicago by the age of 28. He has led an accomplished career as an awarded chemist, professor and

university dean. This nomination also considers Grant D. Venerable as a historic personage, with associations to the subject property, for his own barrier-breaking in the fields of chemistry and higher education. His life and career are discussed in greater length in the section GRANT D. VENERABLE II (pages 31-33)

SOCIAL CLUBS

The residence was also a key and frequent meeting place for social clubs for Black Americans living on LA's westside. The SurveyLA *Citywide Historic Context Statement for African American History of Los Angeles*, includes a theme of Social Clubs and Organizations, 1885-1980, stating:

"African American social clubs and organizations in Los Angeles fostered a sense of community identity and pride.... Because of exclusionary practices by whites, members of the African American community often formed their own clubs, establishing separate chapters of national white clubs as well as distinct local organizations. The clubs founded by black Angelenos ranged from purely recreational golf clubs to groups with strong civil rights agendas focused on improving conditions and elevating the African American community.... Meetings and events were held in residences, churches, or rented spaces."

The *Santa Barbara African American Context Statement* chapter on "Clubs and Social Organizations" provides further context on the impact of Black homes used as social clubs:

"The homes of Black residents also frequently served as more than personal residences but also as meeting places for Black social clubs, civic and political organizations, and other groups, in addition to churches. In this way, the homes of Black residents often acted as incubators for activities, efforts, and movements led by Black men and women that not only enriched the lives of Black residents but positively impacted the city as a whole."

While not the exclusive meeting point for some of these organizations, the number of organizations that utilized the space for meetings is further evidence of the residence's contributions to the broader cultural fabric during the heyday of mid-century West Adams.

THE KANSAS CLUB AND THE GREAT MIGRATION

One such club was the Kansas Club, which connects the Venerable Family Residence to a major national historic theme: The Great Migration. Both the Venerable and Scott family histories are representative of one of several waves of migration of African American families at the turn of the 20th century.

Thelma Scott Venerable's family were part of a group of African Americans known as "Children of the Exodus" or "Exodusters" who embarked on one of the largest single migrations in American history to escape Jim Crow laws in Deep South states like Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas. The Exodusters migrated en masse to Kansas, which was rumored to become a "Black state," to be given over to former slaves and their children. When Kansas did not become such a place, another migration pattern was triggered westward. Many headed for California, though a larger migration to California did not take place until the outbreak of WWII, when Franklin D. Roosevelt integrated the shipping ports on the West Coast.

Although Grant D. Venerable was born and raised in Missouri, his family has strong connections with Kansas as well. His uncle and de-facto father figure C. Blaine Venerable was the first Black teacher in Lawrence Kansas, despite

“much opposition” as reported in a May 29th, 1915 article in the *Lawrence Journal-World*. Venerable’s mother, Louise Venerable, was also living in Lawrence, Kansas in 1915, and had purchased a house for her daughter Neosho Venerable to live in while attending the University of Kansas. It was from Lawrence, Kansas that young Grant Venerable was sent in 1919 to live with C. Blaine in San Bernardino.

A 1946 photo shows a dinner session of the Kansas Club, captioned as being taken in the Venerable Family Residence. Behind them one can observe the distinctive “Webster Windows” with three panes of glass over two, which were noted in historian Anna Marie Brooks’ nomination of 2915 S. Budlong Ave. as a signature of one of the home’s designers, George J. Webster. According to Grant D. Venerable II, the home’s spacious living room and den made it an ideal meeting space for this group, of which his maternal grandparents were charter members.



Grant D. Venerable and Thelma Scott Venerable (top photo, far right) host a dinner session of the Kansas Club in the Venerable Family Residence at 2921 S. Budlong Ave, in March 1946. Source: *Anthony Scott Papers, Kansas University*.

The Los Angeles chapter of the Kansas Club was a satellite branch of the larger Kansas Club movement, which was established out of the State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs in 1900 “to assert their emerging middle-class [status], organize their growing population.” Clubs of this era grew out of the necessity for community among the diasporas created from The Great Migration and were known to “challenge established definitions of race and gender, redefine leadership roles in Black communities, and question the complexities of economic class status.” According to the PhD dissertation by Doretha K. Williams, “Kansas Grows the Best Wheat and the Best Race Women: Black Women’s Club Movement in Kansas, 1900-30” the Kansas Club’s origins were primarily women-led and tailored to “strengthen their communities... monitoring the ebb and flow of unstable migration patterns, addressing the needs of rural women, and re-visioning the failed and unfulfilled promises of the state, Kansas women accomplished more than just incorporated art clubs; they strengthened a community in transition, setting in motion the construction of a Black middle class.”

The origins of the Kansas Club has its roots in turn-of-the-20th century Kansas, and “proposed methods that fostered the quality of life for Black people, and challenged Black women and men to initiate social change...used

literature and homebuilding as their avenues toward race and self-improvement... Club women sought to create a sense of economic stability by securing employment for the recently-arrived migrants. [...] incorporating the organization helped to “inspire confidence, gain permanence and be ready for the transaction of business.” (Williams, p68-73)

Despite being primarily women-led, there were many male members and attendees. A 1905 article in the *Los Angeles Times* tells an extraordinary story of Black prosperity and housing equity associated with the Kansas Club. The Article is titled “His Negro Neighbor: Gov. Hoch of Kansas by entertaining Booker T. Washington Encourages Nick Chiles’ Ambitions.” The article is provided in the Appendix, page 43.

Just 40 years after the end of the Civil War and Emancipation, a Black newspaper editor named Nick Chiles had amassed a fortune sufficient to purchase a home near the governor’s mansion. That the governor is summarily blamed for encouraging these “ambitions” by being too congenial with the Black community – mainly by welcoming Booker T. Washington and attending a meeting of the Kansas Club alongside W. T. Vernor (ordained minister and president of Western University, later appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt as Register of the Treasury) – demonstrates the power and influence of this organization and the type of political and social activism in which it engaged. That this event garnered press in the *Los Angeles Times* further demonstrates the club’s national implications.

Nick Chiles was an especially notable figure for Black Kansans, and stressed the importance of homeownership and maintenance as paths to achieving social equality. He was known for advocating for the “righteous cause,” which Doretha K. Williams describes as “the struggle for Black women to create loving, beautiful homes in the midst of a violent, oppressive and sometimes life-threatening environment...” amid the “challenge of white supremacy and Jim Crow in the US.”

Kansas Clubs went beyond the local and participated in national meetings in support of causes having to do with, among other things, historic preservation, such as the restoration of the Frederick Douglas home. More pointedly, these clubs emphasized the importance of owning and building homes to form strong communities, fight prejudice and resist discrimination.

The Kansas Club’s members rose to national prominence by 1930, and Kansas Club women went on to hold key national offices and make policy for the entire The National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs (NACW). The impact of this NACW was felt in some of the biggest legal battles of the era, including “the request for a federal anti-lynching law, suffrage, the end of Jim Crow railroad cars, reform of marriage and divorce laws, and support for federal child labor laws.” (Williams, 94)

Chapters were spawned nationwide, including among the nascent Black migrant population in California. The Los Angeles chapter was founded in 1927, and is written up frequently in the *Los Angeles Sentinel* throughout the 1930s-1960s. Loren Miller, the aforementioned civil rights attorney and *Los Angeles Sentinel* owner, who was raised in Kansas, is also reported in attendance at meetings. Newspaper coverage of the Kansas Club is shown on pages 39-43 of the appendix.

ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity was a pivotal social organization for the African American community in the world of higher education. As a charter member of the local Alpha Phi Alpha chapter, Venerable held annual meetings at his home. Grant D. Venerable served on the Alpha Phi Alpha scholarship committee, and in that role he occasionally gave lectures at local high schools. *The Los Angeles Sentinel*, in a 1947 article, mentions Venerable as an “outstanding engineer graduate of Caltech,” who gave a speech “stressing the importance of preparation for opportunity.” This article further underscores the resounding effect of Venerable’s Caltech graduation and the doors it opened for subsequent students, three years into Venerable’s tenure at the subject residence.

Publications of *The Sphinx*, the official publication of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity (and the second oldest continuously-published journal by African Americans in the United States), mentions in its December 1938 issue that in 1928 and 1929, Venerable was President of the Alpha Delta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha. Thelma Venerable was also active in the organization, serving as a member of the Alpha Wives Auxiliary of Los Angeles. An October 1947 issue shows Thelma Scott Venerable among other “wives of brothers” from the three main Los Angeles Alpha Phi Alpha chapters, congregating as one of the “most active groups of its kind within the fraternal circles” to establish a house for the fraternity in Los Angeles.

The April 1941 issue of *The Sphinx* features a profile of Grant D. Venerable in the “Alpha Men in the News”

section. The profile refers to Venerable's career transition from insurance executive to "engineering consultant." The profile further states that Venerable was unable to apply his training from Caltech during the Great Depression, but that due to the increased demand for engineers by 1941, "especially in the mining field, he is now able to follow his chosen profession." SurveyLA's *Citywide Historic Context Statement for the African American History of Los Angeles*, in its chapter on Clubs and Organizations, mentions:

"Sororities and fraternities often have significance beyond the university community, forming a base for future political and civic activism in addition to friendships. Social critics argue that historically Black Greek organizations differ from those that are traditionally all-white because of the organizations' lasting importance to African Americans long after they have left their respective colleges and universities."

SurveyLA highlights the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity as the first of its kind:

"The modern American system of undergraduate fraternities and sororities with Greek letter names began in undergraduate colleges of upstate New York during the 1820s. The first of these groups for African Americans was Alpha Phi Alpha, founded at Cornell University in 1906."

Fraternities were viewed as especially important for Black students at integrated institutions, as housing was commonly denied to Black students. Venerable joined Alpha Phi Alpha at UCLA, lived in the Alpha fraternity house while attending UC Berkeley, and was initially denied on-campus housing while attending Caltech. Lawrence Otis Graham writes extensively about the influence and importance of Alpha Phi Alpha, in his book *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class* (HarperCollins, 1999). "By the 1930s and 1940s, the fraternities and sororities had become more dominant on campus, offering large social gatherings and serving as a magnet for not just the intellectual elite but also the economic elite. By the early 1950s, many of the fraternity alumni who stayed active in their graduate chapters had launched important civic programs to respond to the black community..." (Graham, p86)

According to Graham, inclusion in these organizations was highly sought after, and only those with the highest academic standards and community profile gained admission. The social ties forged in this fraternity stayed with its members for life. Academic excellence was of the utmost importance, and members were devoted to increasing access to higher education for those who came after them. Graham writes:

"Quickly identifying themselves with programs that emphasized scholarship rather than mere social interaction, the Alphas launched, in 1919, a national "Go to High School, Go to College" campaign....The Alphas also contributed resources and manpower in 1935 to assist in the racial discrimination suit by black Amherst College graduate Donald Murray, who had been rejected by the University of Maryland Law School because he was not white. Not only did the fraternity pay his school expenses, but the group also provided his attorneys, who were Alphas and well-known civil rights attorneys Thurgood Marshall and Charles Hamilton."

According to the Venerable family, it was through Alpha Phi Alpha that Venerable met and became lifelong friends with Jesse Owens, who would go on to win four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Among the other high profile members of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternal network were: "Dr. Martin Luther King; Atlanta Mayors Andrew Young and Maynard Jackson; scholar W. E. B. Du Bois; former U.S. Senator Edward Brooke; former Congressman William Gray, who now heads the United Negro College Fund; Olympic gold medalist Jesse Owens; Canaan Baptist Church head Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker; Ebony magazine founder John Johnson; New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial; Seattle Mayor Norman Rice; Parks Sausage founder Henry Parks; National Urban League directors Hugh Price, Lester Granger, and Whitney Young; Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer; San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown; New York Congressman Charles

Rangel; U.S. Cabinet Secretaries William Coleman, Samuel Pierce, and Louis Sullivan; Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr.; and New York City Mayor David Dinkins.” (Graham, 92). The fraternity is still active today, with over 150,000 members and 750 chapters around the world, and still offering mentoring services to youth.

YOUTH MENTORSHIP

According to Grant D. Venerable II, it was widely known among the African American “West Side” youth that if they were in search of a mentor, they could walk up to the door of 2921 S. Budlong Ave and find one in Grant D. Venerable. Mentoring youth to succeed in education and entrepreneurship was a lifelong mission for Venerable. According to Venerable II, his father was “an instinctive and intuitively oriented teacher of mathematics to the students he tutored.” (Grant D. Venerable Memoir, “Footprints in the Chaotic Unknown” Published by Master Player Library-Phoenix Rising Series, p55).

A photograph from the Venerable Family Archive from December 18th, 1955 shows 13 of Venerable’s mentees posed in front of the fireplace at 2921 S. Budlong Ave., along with Venerable’s three children. Venerable sought to instill a business and education consciousness through ventures such as selling copies of *Jet Magazine*, a weekly news magazine for the African American community.



December 18th, 1955 pre-Christmas party of sixteen *Jet Boy* salespeople, Grant D. Venerable’s mentorship group. G. D. Venerable II (front, left, holding up the camera prize for annual *Jet Magazine* sales totals). Lloyd Venerable, (front, second from right). Lynda (standing, far right). Source: *Venerable Family Archive*

JACK AND JILL OF AMERICA & THE OCTOBER CLUB

Venerable’s emphasis on accomplishment were values shared by a larger social club that was pivotal to the network of upwardly mobile Black Americans – and their children – around the nation. This group was called “Jack and Jill of America,” which is cited in SurveyLA’s *Citywide Historic Context Statement for African American History of Los Angeles*:

“Jack and Jill was another national organization with programs for African American families. The organization originated in Pennsylvania in 1938 as a club for African American mothers. It was created by a group of middle and upper middle-class mothers who wanted to bring their children together to experience a variety of educational, social, and cultural opportunities, which, due to segregation and racism, were not available to African American children, regardless of the socio-economic status of their parents. The first chapter in Los Angeles was founded in 1949 by Emily Brown Portwig, a pharmacist, who was also an important supporter of the YWCA. The

organization has gathered at numerous homes throughout the city since its founding.”

A November 8th, 1951 article in the *Sentinel* features Venerable and his three children, Delbert (Grant Venerable II), Lynda Venerable (Ellington) and Lloyd opening a bank account at Broadway Federal Savings and Loan Association. The article mentions their address at “2921 Budlong St.”

Photo Standalone 10 -- No Title

Los Angeles Sentinel (1934-); Nov 8, 1951; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Sentinel
pg. A4



DEVELOPING THRIFT HABIT at tender ages are, from left: Lynda, Lloyd and Delbert Venerable, children of Grant D. Venerable, 2921 Budlong St., who last week opened savings accounts at Broadway Federal Savings and Loan association, 4329 S. Broadway. Also pictured are Dr. H. Claude Hudson, Broadway president; R. R. Wright III, manager (behind counter) and (in background) Miss Juanita Heard, teller, servicing account of Mrs. George Evans.

Like Golden State Mutual Life Insurance, Broadway Federal Savings and Loan Association was founded in 1946 to provide vital services to the Black community, who were not being serviced by any of the existing financial institutions. Broadway grew to become the second largest black-owned bank in the United States. The photograph of a well-known family with their address positions them as aspirational figures exemplifying core values shared by Jack and Jill of America: education and financial success. Lawrence Otis Graham writes extensively about Jack and Jill:

“....we had all been enrolled in Jack and Jill as kids. So that we would quickly accept the fact that each of us was supposed to do great things.... Jack and Jill of America has long been one of the defining organizations for families of the black professional class. It has 218 chapters throughout the United States and Germany, and its membership includes more than 30,000 parents and children. A nonprofit service organization, it focuses on bringing together children aged two to nineteen and introducing them to various educational, social, and cultural experiences.” (Graham, 22)

The goal of the Jack and Jill network was to raise children to succeed against adversity faced by a society dominated by white people. According to Graham, Jack and Jill, to this day, is highly selective and membership is invitation-only. A large emphasis is placed on education, and in particular the pursuit of higher education. Membership was especially beneficial for children who lived in largely white-populated neighborhoods, as it instilled a connection

The *Eagle* and *Sentinel* also reported frequently on the piano recitals performed by all three children, who attended the music school of Leon and Dovie Steward. A 1949 *Eagle* article specially mentions “Lloyd Venerable of Budlong Ave” as “entertaining 30 young friends... in honor of his 4th birthday.”

Articles in the *Eagle* and *Sentinel* report the Venerable children’s many piano recitals.

OCTOBER CLUB DEBUTANTS BOW



The young ladies presented. The 1960 Ball was dedicated to the memory of one of the late founders, Mrs. Neosha V. Tatum. Her niece, Lynda Venerable, upper left, is assisted by father Grant D. Venerable, as she bows in stars.

OCTOBER CLUB DEBUTANTS BOW

Los Angeles Sentinel (1934-); Oct 20, 1960; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Sentinel pg. B1

Grant Venerable disliked the exclusivity of some of these social clubs, but understood the importance of membership. He did not permit his daughter Lynda to join The Links, an especially exclusive women’s club, and instead encouraged her society debut with The October Club, founded by his sister Neosho Venerable Tatum. An October 1960 Article in the *California Eagle* features a photo of Lynda’s debut at the October Club Cotillion, writing: “Lynda Venerable...assisted by father Grant D. Venerable, as she bows in stars.”

LAS MADRINAS

According to Grant D. Venerable II, his paternal grandmother Louise Venerable used the home at 2921 S. Budlong Ave. for meetings of *Las Madrinass* (alternative spelling: “Medranas”) at least once a year. *Las Madrinass* (“The Godmothers”) were an organization of women who worked as servants in the homes of wealthy white families and organized cultural and social events. One such event was bringing singer Marian Anderson to perform in Los Angeles after she’d been denied the chance to sing in Constitution Hall by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1940.

Louise Venerable also lived on Budlong Avenue, a half-block away from her son, at 2955 S. Budlong Ave., from around 1945 until her death in 1950. An obituary in the *Los Angeles Sentinel* in 1950 described the elder Mrs. Venerable as “one of Los Angeles’ widely esteemed pioneers, who came to the city 30 years ago.” She was known to be active in the Women’s clubs of the era, including the Bethel Tea Club and the Theodore Roosevelt Unit of the Women’s Political Study Club, as well as Las Madrinass. The organization is written about extensively throughout the 1950s in the *Sentinel*, often in connection with the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority (Louise Venerable was also a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Mother’s Club). Her obituary is included in the appendix, page 35.

Despite living just a half-block away from the Venerables in her final years, she chose her son's home as a meeting venue for its especially spacious common rooms. 2955 S. Budlong Ave is extant but in altered condition, and was her residence for less than 5 years. Louise Venerable's prior home at 1286 W. 36th St. was demolished in the 1960s and is now an apartment building.

GRANT D. VENERABLE II



1960: Grant D. Venerable II on the 2921 rooftop servicing his installation of electrical-current generating solar cells. *Venerable Family Archive*.

A 1960 photograph provided by the Venerable family shows Grant D. Venerable II servicing solar cells he installed on the roof of 2921 S. Budlong Ave. He used thin gauge wire to conduct the current down to his bedroom, where he observed oxygen and chlorine products. In these early photochemical experiments using sunlight to cause chemical changes on water containing dissolved NaCl (sodium chloride), he was actually anticipating the subject of his Ph.D. research using high energy photochemistry at Argonne National Laboratory (Illinois, 1967-70).

Grant D. Venerable's pioneering in the fields of sciences and engineering is evident in the life of his son and namesake, Dr. Grant Delbert Venerable II. Venerable II continued his father's legacy in the world of academia and science, and credits his upbringing at 2921 S. Budlong Ave. as essential and foundational to his career success. Venerable described his family residence as:

"In keeping with the family's reverence for architectural traditions, the original 2921, with spacious design, elaborate wood appointments, and stained redwood shingle.... The history, heritage, and inspirational energy of this vintage Los Angeles Budlong Avenue home figured prominently in both [my] academic ability... to complete the Ph.D. in physical chemistry in March 1970 at...the University of Chicago."

While living at 2921 S. Budlong Ave, Venerable II gained admission to UCLA, living at the residence through his graduation in 1965. It was at UCLA that Venerable was inspired to pursue chemistry while attending lectures by chemical physicist Mostafa El-Sayed and Nobel Laureate Willard F. Libby. While still living in the residence, he subsequently gained admission to the University of Chicago to pursue a Master of Science as well as Ph.D.



SUPERINTENDENT CONGRATULATES SCHOLAR — William J. Johnston, superintendent of Los Angeles City Schools, congratulates Dr. Delbert Venerable II on his achievements since graduating from Manual Arts High School in 1960. Dr. Venerable is now a post-doctoral scholar at UCLA's Laboratory of Nuclear Medicine.

Board of Education Honors Dr. Venerable

By WANDA COOKE
The Board of Education at its meeting March 11, recognized Dr. Delbert Venerable II an alumni of Manual Arts High School, as one of the few blacks to receive a Ph. D. in chemistry at the age of 28.

Dr. Venerable and his parents were at the meeting along with Miss J. Spearman, Manual Arts principal, Alexander and Fong. Alexander served as a link between the old and the new since he was at Manual in 1960 when Dr. Venerable graduated and Mrs. Spearman was not.

Alexander introduced Dr. Venerable to the board at which time Dr. Venerable displayed his painting, "Blue Molecular." He spoke on black-

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Alexander introduced Dr. Venerable to the board at which time Dr. Venerable displayed his painting, "Blue Molecular." He spoke on black-

He told the board and audience how at UCLA he decided to express chemistry in the form of art to help students to better relate to chemistry. His painting, "Blue Molecular," which shows the effect of gamma rays in water, sold more than 100 copies.

In his short speech Dr. Venerable recognized a number of teachers that were behind him to help him make it. Among them were Richard Burt, Mary Gavin, Louise Nash and Florence Springer now, or formerly at Manual Arts.

Dr. Venerable, received his doctorate from the University of Chicago last year. He is now serving as a postdoctoral scholar at UCLA's Laboratory of Nuclear Medicine under a fellowship from the U.S. Atom-

Board of Education Honors Dr. Venerable
Cooke, Wanda
Los Angeles Sentinel (1934-); Apr 1, 1971; ProQuest Historical
pg. C11

An April 1971 article in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, "Board of Education Honors Dr. Venerable" shows the board of education honoring Grant Venerable II for his "achievements since graduating from Manual Arts High School in 1960," while still a resident at 2921 S. Budlong Ave. The article notes him "as one of the few blacks to receive a Ph.D. in chemistry at the age of 28."

Venerable II was awarded the United States Atomic Energy Commission Fellowship for his research into radiation biology, where he pursued postdoctoral research under Lawrence S. Myers, Jr., a former Manhattan Project team member and then member of UCLA's Laboratory of Nuclear Medicine and Radiation Biology in Los Angeles. In 1976, Venerable II became California State Polytechnic University's first tenured professor of African heritage in their Chemistry Department. He served at Chicago State University as the Associate Provost and as a professor of chemistry and African American studies (1996-1999), at Morris Brown College as the Dean of Faculty, interim Dean of the College, Provost, and professor-at-large of science and civilization (1999-2002), as chair of the Council of Chief Academic Officers for the Atlanta University Center (1999-2002). Venerable also served as the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (2010-2011) and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (2002-2010) at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. Among the scientific community, he is known for his "Ven Matrix of a System" approach, developed as a professor at Cal Poly State University-San Luis Obispo. He parlayed his Ven Matrix system into a career as a systems scientist among Silicon Valley tech firms in the 1980s.

Venerable II's publications include six books and dozens of academic articles and editorials in such places as the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Honors and awards include the National Educational Leadership Award from the JGT Foundation, the "Step To College" Distinguished Teaching Award from San Francisco State University, the California Alliance for Arts Education Outstanding Achievement Award, the Alpha Chi Sigma Chemistry

Fraternity Molecular Art Appreciation Award, and the Distinguished Teaching Award of Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo. He has produced 40 commissioned scientific oil paintings on molecular structure, pioneering the art genre of “molecular expressionist art.”

In 1987 he gave a speech at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on the role of arts education in a tech-focused society. He has also served as Board Secretary of the California Alliance for Arts Education. Throughout his career he has been active in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Chemical Society, National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers, Alpha Chi Sigma Chemical Fraternity, and the Association of Core Texts and Courses. Venerable II's life was profiled along with that of his family's history by The History Makers, a national non-profit research and educational institution committed to preserving African American histories.

The Talented Black Scholars Whom No White University Would Hire

For a century or more, a general boycott prevailed whereby America's great colleges and universities refused to even consider the appointment of a black person to their faculties.

FEW PEOPLE GIVE much thought to how racism does serious economic or professional damage to the very person who practices racial exclusion or discrimination.

In a sports example, the Boston Red Sox had the chance to sign Jackie Robinson in 1945, two years before Robinson broke baseball's color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Because of deep-seated racism within the Boston organization, the Red Sox failed to hire Robinson. For years Mike "Pinky" Higgins boasted "there would never be any niggers playing baseball for the Red Sox" while he was manager of the club.

Only after Higgins was fired in 1959 and 12 years after Jackie Robinson signed for the Dodgers did the Red Sox field their first black players. The Boston team was the last major league franchise to do so. The culture of racism prevailed in the Red Sox clubhouse for years to come. As late as 1991 there was only one African American on the Red Sox major league roster. This climate of racism in Boston may have produced some long-lasting and self-inflicted wounds. From 1945, when the Red Sox blew their opportunity to sign Jackie Robinson, to the end of the century, the team never won a World Series.

"In making their faculty selections, the most liberal and prestigious universities faithfully observed the custom of racial exclusion well into the twentieth century."

racial exclusion well into

In making their faculty selections, the most liberal and prestigious universities, such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Duke, and the University of Chicago, faithfully observed the custom of racial exclusion well into the twentieth century.

State and federal governments also followed the same racial custom, and as a result there was no legislative or judicial body that was prepared to break the grip of skin color as a controlling factor in faculty selections. To be sure, at most respected institutions of learning there was no Orval Faubus or George Wallace blocking the schoolhouse door, but the exclusionary effect was precisely the same.

"There was no Orval Faubus or George Wallace blocking the schoolhouse door, but the exclusionary effect was precisely the same."

Virtually the only exceptions to the rule of exclusion was the private black colleges and the racially segregated state-operated black colleges in the southern states. These institutions, now known as HBCUs, were funded — often generously — by whites and the philanthropic institutions that whites had founded. But under prevailing racial stereotypes, whites admired blacks for their brawn rather than their brains. In most cases, higher education for Negroes was restricted to the crafts and trades normally taught at so-called industrial schools. And in the main, black faculty were trained to teach the limited courses offered at these

• **Grant Delbert Venerable** was the first graduate of African ancestry from the California Institute of Technology. He earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from CalTech in 1932. Unable to obtain employment in the academic world or in engineering, Venerable took a job as an insurance agent with the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Co. In 1945 he and brother-in-law William Tatum entered the hotel business. They later bought the George R. Healey Manufacturing Co., which produced and distributed chalkboard erasers to major school districts across the country.



Grant D. Venerable

Grant D. Venerable's life profiled in the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, "The Talented Black Scholars Whom No White University Would Hire." Winter 2007/2008.

PAVING THE WAY: AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING FIELDS

The halls of academia were mostly closed to students of color from the time Harvard was established, in 1636, until the 1950s. According to one important study, only a handful of African Americans graduated from the nation's 25 top ranked universities in any field between the founding of the United States and 1945. Grant Venerable senior's entry to Caltech in 1929 and subsequent graduation were rare feats for the era, and established a pathway whereby Grant Venerable junior's matriculation at the University of Chicago became feasible. "Separate but equal" education was established in Plessy v Ferguson (1896) but dismantled in the 1950s by several landmark cases, including Brown v Board of Education. However, this issue has regained relevance today in the wake of the recent Supreme Court ruling regarding affirmative action. According to the ACLU, "the Supreme Court upended established equal protection law with its decision in SFFA v. Harvard and SFFA v. UNC, effectively eliminating the use of affirmative action in college

admissions. The court's decision disregards prior precedent, as well as the societal realities of race discrimination and inequality."

Grant D. Venerable and his son, Grant D. Venerable II, both broke barriers in academia, and the science and engineering fields. The halls of higher education were mostly closed to students of color, especially African Americans, until recent decades. Reaching the goal of attaining degrees from Caltech and the University of Chicago, respectively, both Venerables exemplify an important aspect of the Civil Rights Movement: Desegregating Higher Education.

Throughout the South especially, but in the North and the West as well, separate schools at all levels, including college, were established for whites versus African Americans and others of color. In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, affirming that the state and local-level racial segregation laws created after the Civil War did not violate the U.S. Constitution, establishing the principle of "separate but equal."

Obviously, the result was a system of segregated and separate schooling, by law in the South and/or by tradition everywhere else, that was anything but equal. Vastly different amounts of money were spent on the public school K-12 education, with different curriculums that reflected views of their respective future lives (that is, if an African American child was to grow up to be a railroad porter or a blacksmith, a laundress or a maid, their curriculum need not strive for higher academics).

Higher education was similarly segregated and unequal. The colleges established (largely in the South, in the late 1860s and 1870s, and today known as "HBCUs" – Historically Black Colleges and Universities) to educate previously enslaved Black people were oriented toward vocational training to secure employment.

Meanwhile, the Morrill Act of 1862, which created "land grant" colleges and universities (including notable institutions such as MIT) that have become the research powerhouses of modern America, was of little benefit to African Americans, as most of these campuses were closed to them. A second Morrill Act, passed in the 1890s to create more land grant institutions and which did require educational access for African Americans, either within separate White or Black colleges and universities, was never funded at the same level, and it certainly did not help the HBCUs become research institutions themselves.

It was indeed very rare for any African American to matriculate to and graduate from this country's top-ranked universities, and especially uncommon in the sciences, technology and engineering. Venerable's entry into Caltech and subsequent graduation was a singular feat in the era.

CONTEXT

Although SurveyLA's *Citywide Historic Context Statement, African American History of Los Angeles*, includes themes related to African Americans in health and medicine, and African Americans in the professions, it is silent about higher education in general and in the sciences in particular. Indeed, in reviewing many other local, state and indeed National Register Historic Context Statements for African Americans, that silence persists. One historian interviewed for this nomination theorized that that is because it was so rare an accomplishment that the civil rights theme of "Segregation in Higher Education: Breaking the Color Barrier" was not even considered.

Educational desegregation is itself distinct from residential or employment desegregation, which are in turn distinct from the desegregation of spaces of leisure, recreation, or public facilities. The pervasiveness of racial inequality in the U.S. education system at all levels has deep roots. Before the Emancipation Proclamation, it was usually not legal to teach enslaved people how to read and write. But after the Civil War, access to education was still not equal.

In 1913, in a speech entitled "Science, Education and Democracy," J. McKeen Cattell, editor and owner of *Science Magazine*, argued for more educational opportunities for blacks but also asserted, "There is not a single mulatto [sic] who has done credible scientific work."

This was not true, even then. Cattell ignored the work of the 18th century astronomer and mathematician Benjamin Banneker; the physicist Edward Alexander Bouchet, one of the first blacks to receive a doctorate in the U.S. (from Yale); biologist Ernest Everett Just, who had been publishing articles in scientific journals for several years before Cattell's speech; and of course agricultural chemist George Washington Carver, among others.

Nonetheless, the sciences and engineering fields offered few opportunities for African Americans for decades after that, and academia was, of course, in no small measure to blame.

Grant Delbert Venerable's matriculation at and graduation from Caltech in 1932 was – along with a tribute to his steadfast pursuit of a science degree – a ground-breaking event. He did not have many footsteps to follow on his journey. Even though after his graduation from Caltech he was not able to find direct employment in his field, Venerable nonetheless helped pave the way for African American scientists and engineers who succeeded him, including his son, Grant D. Venerable II. Still, his accomplishment in making it to, and through, Caltech was exceptional.

The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education compiled a list of "firsts" in the "Progress of African Americans in Higher Education." Their roster of scientists (likely incomplete) is rather short through World War II:

- **In 1889**, Alfred O. Coffin is the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in biological sciences. He earns his degree from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington. In 1892, Robert Robinson Taylor is the first black to graduate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- **1915**: The first black to earn a Ph.D. in physiology is Julian Herman Lewis, who graduates from the University of Chicago.
- **1916**: St. Elmo Brady becomes the first black to earn a doctorate in chemistry. He earns his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois.
- **1921**: Thomas Wyatt Turner is the first African American awarded a Ph.D. in botany. He receives his degree from Cornell University.
- **1932**: Frederick Douglass Patterson becomes the first black Ph.D. in bacteriology when he graduates from Cornell University. Patterson was a professor, then president, at Tuskegee Institute.
- **1932**: Columbia University awards the first doctorate to an African American in bacteriology, Hildrus Augustus Poindexter.
- **1942**: Catholic University awards the first black Ph.D. in geology to Marguerite Thomas Williams.
- **1943**: Harry James Green Jr. becomes the first black to earn a doctorate in chemical engineering. He received his degree from Ohio State University.

The statistics are not better when it comes to university faculty members. Black students would seldom see a professor who looked like them (and Venerable certainly did not) at the nation's top-ranked institutions of higher learning, according to the article "The First Black Faculty Members at the Nation's Highest-Ranked Universities," published in the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE), Winter 1998/1999 issue, by Ralph Bruce Slater (JBHE's managing editor at that time). Slater sums up the matter by stating: "For 300 years, America's leading institutions of higher learning observed a strict racial taboo against the hiring of black faculty."

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The JBHE later published a lengthy discussion of the free-market "claw back" theory that posits that competition between institutions leads to the end of discrimination. The *Journal* wrote:

"The theory was as follows: If, because of some unfavorable class prejudice or racial stereotype, a college or university consistently rejected qualified students or scholars, the forces of full-blooded competition would soon rush in and put the matter right. This was so because the rejected student or professor would be free to seek and win a position in a second institution where a more rational view of the applicant's competence and qualifications would prevail. Having made a wiser choice, the second institution would gain in educational prestige and strength....

“But as to African Americans in the United States, the rules calling for racially neutral treatment protected by competition never came to pass. Driven by strong prevailing shared values about the biological and cultural inferiority of the Negro, virtually all institutions of higher learning in the United States adopted a universal rule of racial exclusion. As to opportunities for professors and students alike, the rule essentially was: “No blacks need apply.”

As was their academic duty, the college administrators who controlled admissions to higher education celebrated scholarly ability, they honored academic talent and ambition, and they cherished intelligence and learning in their student applicants — but not in black people. It followed that a highly qualified black student or professor could not punish rejection by a racist institution by going elsewhere because there was no “elsewhere.”

Almost all white institutions of higher education joined what was essentially an unwritten campus boycott against Negroes. With only minor exceptions, even such liberal and prestigious places as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Duke, and the University of Chicago subscribed to the rule of exclusion. After the Civil War, for a period of almost a hundred years, distinguished Negro academics such as Carter G. Woodson, Alain Locke, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ernest E. Just, E. Franklin Frazier, John Hope Franklin, Sterling A. Brown, Charles R. Drew, and Rayford Logan were not acceptable as scholars at most of America’s great institutions of higher learning. There was no black faculty member of Harvard College until the appointment of Ralph Bunche in 1950.

Harvard University was founded in 1636, 16 years after the pilgrims arrived at Plymouth. “But for the next 320 years, race or skin color remained a rigid qualification for selection to a faculty post at Harvard as well as at virtually any other of the 3,000 predominately white institutions of higher learning in the United States.” Not only was it a social rule that African Americans need not apply for a faculty job, wrote Slater, “the great black scholar W.E.B. Du Bois discovered on many occasions, it was most impertinent to even raise the question.”

In the U.S., Edward Bouchet “was the first African American to earn a doctorate in any field. He was also only the sixth person in the Western Hemisphere to earn a Ph.D. in physics. Yet despite the shortage of qualified professors of physics, Bouchet was unable to find work at any institution of higher learning. Instead he labored for 26 years at the School for Colored Youth in Philadelphia, which had no library or laboratory facilities,” observed Slater.

In 1998, JBHE compiled a list of the first black faculty members at 25 major colleges and universities, confirming that by and large their first such hires did not occur until the 1950s (if then), long after Grant Delbert Venerable had attended Caltech. (Also, Caltech did not respond to the 1998 survey; through JBHE’s independent research, no black faculty member could be identified prior to 1992 at Caltech). There were a few exceptions: George F. Grant at Harvard, in 1870; and Patrick Healy at Georgetown in 1868 (albeit, passing as white), and Ralph J. Bunche was appointed professor of government in 1950 by Harvard.

At the time of this study, 25 years ago, the number of black faculty on these campuses remained very small, under 1% of total faculty at Caltech, 5% at Emory and only 2% at Yale and Harvard. JBHE calculated that “if the nation’s highest-ranked universities continue to hire black faculty members at the same rate as has been the case in recent years, it will be several centuries before the level of black faculty reaches even the current percentage of black college and university professors nationwide, which stands at 5 percent.”

More broadly, JBHE observed, fewer than 400 African Americans had earned college degrees from America’s white colleges and universities by 1900. A decade later, the numbers were rising, but not by much: “between 1826 and 1910 only 693 blacks were graduated from predominantly white colleges in the United States. Even City College of New York, which had almost no admission requirements and an institutional mission to serve the dispossessed, had

educated only two black graduates by 1910. By 1954, African Americans made up only 1 percent of freshmen at predominantly white institutions. This percentage did not increase above 2 percent until the late 1960s.”

Keep in mind, these statistics about racial disparity in higher education were and are an outgrowth of the nation’s long history of discrimination in all school settings. It was illegal in many Southern states to even teach black slaves to read and write, and “polite” society discouraged the practice in the Northern states. “Even when communities or individuals promoted the education of Africans, it was generally undertaken with the intent of imparting White behavioral norms, conceptions of morality, and religious beliefs that were viewed as being deficient in Blacks,” wrote Amity L. Noltemeyer, Julie Mujic and Caven S. McLoughlin in the chapter, “The History of Inequality in Education,” in the book *Disproportionality in Education and Special Education*.

CALIFORNIA

In California, the picture was similar. Even though California was, technically, a “northern” (non-slavery) state, its institutions enacted exclusionary policies consistent with nationwide practices. Each of the four largest colleges and universities – Stanford, Cal Berkeley, UCLA and USC – matriculated a mere handful (compared to total enrollment) of African American students in their respective first several decades. Complete statistics are difficult to come by – because the schools did not keep statistics based on demographics.

Stanford, Berkeley and Caltech were in the nation’s top tier (all three appeared in published lists of the 20 highest-ranked universities in 1910 and 1925), while USC failed to make the cut and UCLA did not exist as a stand-alone entity. But in any case, when JBHE undertook its later study of “firsts” among top-ranked colleges and universities, it missed California’s admittedly few notable grads, including Venerable.

But a 2023 review of these four universities’ respective websites and archives still does not reveal any African American graduate in the sciences and engineering before Grant Delbert Venerable became the first African American to break that barrier, at Caltech.

Stanford University has created an archive about its own history of black students. However, in its introduction, the university notes: “Despite being a historically white institution, Stanford has a rich history of Black student life. However, prior to the mid-1960s, **Stanford admitted few black students, and offered limited support to those who were admitted** [emphasis ours]. Users will find few records of black students in the archives dating before the mid-1960s.”

One exception at Stanford was Ernest Houston Johnson, who was actually admitted with the first class of students in 1891. He received a B.A. in Economics in 1895, enrolled in law school classes but, unfortunately, passed away from tuberculosis in 1898. Little was known about his life, and Stanford’s own researchers were unaware until about 10 years ago of his existence until an archivist examining a photograph of the university’s first football team noticed that one player was black.

Johnson was the son of a catering business owner who at one time had worked for Leland Stanford’s family. When Ernest Johnson graduated from high school in Roseville, CA, he applied to both Berkeley and Stanford. Berkeley accepted him; Stanford ignored his application. His father contacted Mrs. Stanford, who intervened and contacted David Jordan, the university’s president – who also intervened. Ernest joined the Pioneer class, and participated on Stanford’s football team; he worked as a printer’s apprentice to cover his expenses. When he died, his Stanford diploma was placed in his coffin. He was buried in a corner of Sacramento’s Old Cemetery, and after a period of time his wooden grave marker disintegrated, leaving his story untold until the Stanford researcher uncovered it.

UCLA’s history of Black students begins with its roots as a “Normal” School, that is, a college that teaches teachers. Its first black graduate was Bessie Bruington Burke in 1911, who became the first African American teacher (and later, principal) in Los Angeles, settling just a few blocks south of the Venerable Family Residence. Her residence was demolished in 2021.

In 1919, the Los Angeles Normal School was acquired by the University of California Regents, and became the “Southern Branch” of Cal Berkeley. It was located on Vermont Avenue in Hollywood. Once the institution was renamed University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and moved to Westwood, it was not a welcoming campus for people of

color. African American students could not live on the Westwood campus or in the nearby neighborhood (where the university moved in 1929), because Westwood itself had racial covenants, according to James W. Johnson, author of *The Black Bruins: The Remarkable Lives of UCLA's Jackie Robinson, Woody Strode, Tom Bradley, Kenny Washington, and Ray Bartlett*. Before the recruitment of these five men Johnson nicknamed "The Fabulous Five" in 1939, the campus culture was NOT one of acceptance. That year, 1939, out of 9,600 students only 50 were African American, according to Johnson. "Nonetheless, the school was an oasis in a more hostile environment" – the City of Los Angeles.

As discussed elsewhere in this narrative, Venerable briefly attended UCLA in the mid-1920s, but was unceremoniously dismissed from his studies when he dropped a class. According to an issue of the UCLA Alumni newsletter, "UCLA was established in 1919, at a time when Black Americans were moving to Los Angeles to escape the violence and bigotry of the South, the beginning of the Great Migration. UCLA was not segregated, yet was not immune from the systemic racism of the time. Only a small number of Black, and other minority students, were enrolled in what was then the Southern Branch of the University of California on Vermont Avenue... Black students were not afforded accommodations, were denied the use of university facilities and most had to work full-time to pay tuition,"

Among famous trailblazing African American Bruins were Miriam Mathews '24 (California's first black librarian, historian and a civil rights activist who helped establish "Negro History Week" in Los Angeles); and Ralph Bunche '27 (diplomat, politician and Nobel Peace Prize winner).

Black students were not invited to join most collegiate activities, including UCLA's fraternities and sororities, so they established their own organizations such as UCLA's first Black sorority, Delta Sigma Theta and fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi in 1923. These organizations were a haven for students, fostering community and support.

Another early Bruin was Augustus (Gus) Freeman Hawkins '31, who entered politics to champion workers' rights. He worked his way through college as a soda jerk at a drug store located at 27th and Central. He later recalled, "I had struggled to go to college, only to find out that I had no better opportunity than one who hadn't gone to school at all." Hawkins was the first African American from California (and, indeed, west of the Mississippi) elected to Congress, and was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The University of Southern California (USC) also boasts pioneering African Americans as alumni, even though bigotry flourished. Perhaps best known is architect Paul Revere Williams '19, the first African American member of the AIA.

In 1907, USC conferred its first degree on a black man. John Alexander Somerville, who was born in Jamaica, received his D.D.S. from the School of Dentistry. Some 11 years later, his wife, Vada Watson Somerville, became the first African American female graduate of the dental school. Together they founded the Los Angeles Chapter of the NAACP in their living room. To meet the housing needs of blacks, they built a 26-unit apartment building that they named La Vada. Following the success of the La Vada, the Somervilles built the Hotel Somerville on Central Avenue, now known as the Dunbar Hotel.

Before Vada Watson Somerville, the first Black woman to receive a degree at USC was Diana McNeil Pierson '09, an educator and a missionary who went on to receive her M.A. in 1910, with a thesis on "Liberian Republic: Experiment in Government."

Established in 1868 originally in Oakland and, by 1873, in Berkeley, the University of California did not keep campus racial or ethnic demographic data going back to the late 19th and early 20th century. But there are a few anecdotal stories of African American students in Cal Berkeley's first 70 years (e.g., before World War II).

Berkeley's first black student appears to have enrolled as early as 1881, but there is no record of his graduating. There is a record, however, for Charles E. Carpenter, Class of 1905, who later applied for a job as a Senate messenger, noting in a letter (now in the university's archives) at the time he was the only black graduate of Cal.

The first black, female student to earn a degree at the University of California was Vivian Logan Rodgers '09. Graduating with a Bachelor's degree in English, she traveled to Hawaii to accept a teaching job. Her young life was cut short; she caught typhoid fever and never really recovered, dying in 1914.

That same year, Walter A. Gordon '18 became a trailblazing Cal football player. After graduation, he became the first African-American on the Berkeley police force and the first African-American student to earn a law degree from Boalt Law School, in 1922.

Ida Louise Jackson '22 was the daughter of a former slave, and one of only nine black students when she started at Berkeley in 1920. She started an Alpha Kappa Alpha chapter, the first black sorority at Berkeley and in the western United States. But when she and her sorority sisters submitted their group photo to the Blue and Gold yearbook, it was rejected, because, explained UC president David Barrows, the photograph "was not representative of the student body." After graduation, Jackson became the Dean of Women at Tuskegee University and helped establish a summer school to train black teachers in Mississippi.

Along with Jackson, fellow African American female students Berlinda Davison, Vivian Costroma Osborne, Modest Oreathial Richardson Tatum, Louise Alone Thompson, Ruby Cozetta Jefferson, Annie Virginia Stephens, Talma Catherine Brooks, Myrtle Price, and Coral Johnson all graduated from Berkeley in 1922. On campus in the same era were also Miriam Matthews and Josephine Cole.

Lionel Wilson '39 had played all kinds of sports in high school, but when he entered Berkeley he discovered he was banned from joining the basketball or baseball teams due to the color of his skin. He did complete a degree in economics but the inequalities continued. Wilson took a special graduate course in personnel administration but his professor, apologizing, explained he would be able to place all the other students in jobs – but not Wilson. However, he persisted, and went on to receive a law degree from U.C. Hastings, became the first Black judge in Alameda County and then served as Oakland's first Black mayor.

Marvin Poston '39 entered Cal Berkeley as a math student in 1935, but later switched to optometry. The administration supported him, but despite his good grades, Poston's professor failed him on the final test. (Poston later reflected, "when he saw black, he saw red.") The UC provost changed the grade, but the same professor interfered with Poston's required clinical practice. Poston succeeded to graduate, but – like many other black students described in this narrative, was unable as a Black man to get a job.

When a "first" is achieved, it tends to pave the way for more "firsts", as was emphasized in the 1932 *Eagle* editorial, which envisioned Venerable's impact for generations of scholars to come. The stories of pioneering Black students in California like Ernest Houston Johnson, Bessie Bruington Burke, Ralph Bunche and Miriam Mathews likely inspired Venerable to not only attempt the daunting task of applying and gaining entry to a top-ranked university, but to pursue a degree in the sciences and engineering, a path for which he had next to no mentors -- a new door that needed opening. Venerable jumped numerous hurdles not only in gaining access to a top tier institution but also in weathering the many micro and macro-aggressions that were bound to occur, including a concerted attempt to exclude him from on-campus housing. Graduation itself was a rite often denied to Black students brave enough to integrate higher learning, another reason his graduation was so celebrated.

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Along with the lack of African American faculty, and even though a small but growing number of African Americans were matriculating in science and engineering during the 1930s and 1940s, "they were still not full-fledged members of the scientific community," wrote authors Anthony P. Carnevale, Nicole Smith, and Michael C. Quinn of The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce in their report, *Mission Not Accomplished: Unequal Opportunities and Outcomes for Black and Latinx Engineers*, 2021.

In 1957, there was an "explosion of interest in engineering in the United States," according to the *Mission Not Accomplished* report. "At that time, the desire to improve engineering and science education and outcomes in the U.S. was framed as a national security challenge." American leaders worried that the U.S. would be left behind not just in technology but world leadership if nothing was done. 25 years later, the publication of the report "A Nation at Risk" "renewed the call to improve the country's crumbling education system." However, the effort to groom more scientists and engineers did not include any policy directives aimed at equity, equality or balanced representation in the science fields.

To this day, African Americans are underrepresented in science and engineering occupations. That is, a smaller proportion of Black people are in science and engineering occupations than are in the U.S. workforce as a whole (5%

versus 12%). “Put a more direct way, Black/African American and Latinx prime-age adults are roughly 33 percent of the adult [U.S.] population, but just 15 percent of engineers – a woeful bias in workforce ratios,” declared *Mission Not Accomplished*.

Another reason Black students were less likely to study engineering is because historically Black colleges and universities – where most attended – generally lacked accredited engineering departments.

“Prior to integration, the universities in the South and elsewhere did not allow for African Americans to attend and get engineering degrees,” Robert Weissbach of Indiana University-Purdue University said. “Basically HBCUs had engineering technology programs that were still providing preparation for an engineering career, but those students were not allowed to sit for licensure.”

During the 1960s, Howard University was the only Historically Black College and University with an accredited engineering department. Finally, a decade later, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology accredited six more HBCU programs.

Decades later, the picture remained the same. When Purdue University mathematics professor Edray Herbert Goins enrolled as an undergraduate student at Caltech in the early 1990s, he questioned why out of a student population of nearly 2,000, there were only 50 black students. And at that time there were only two black faculty members out of 300.

He learned that, after Grant Delbert Venerable, there were no other African American undergraduate students at Caltech until a young man named Charles McGruder enrolled in 1961. And there was only one graduate-level student, James Lu Valle (who was also an Olympics Bronze medalist at the Berlin Games in 1936), who earned a doctorate in chemistry in 1940. And when Goins went to Stanford for his graduate work, he became the only black grad student in the mathematics department, and there was only one black professor.

What these statistics demonstrate is how unusual it was that Grant Delbert Venerable achieved his degree at Caltech. Although he was not able to immediately find employment in engineering, through the years he was able to apply his education to find success in business, utilizing engineering to symbolically build a better mousetrap (eraser). Venerable always emphasized the importance of education, instilling a love of science and academics in his children and other young people. He served on the scholarship committee of Alpha Phi Alpha, and in that role he occasionally gave lectures at local high schools, stressing the importance of preparing for opportunities.

Decades later, when Stanford University Physicist William Shockley started speaking about his shocking racial theories, Grant D. Venerable II reminded the readers of the *Los Angeles Times* that he was a classmate of Venerable’s father, Caltech ’32. “Among the members of his own class was a conspicuous ‘datum’ named Grant D. Venerable, Caltech’s first Negro alumnus.” Renowned as an expert on “the unity of knowledge,” Venerable II, made a lasting impact on his students, colleagues and industry through his educational and scientific endeavors over the course of nearly 50 years.

“As a child, I thought that I wanted to be a mechanical engineer and follow in my father’s footsteps. I had an insatiable interest in science, including how the body works, astronomy and the solar system...,” he recalls. “It was in junior high school that the seriousness began to take over. Russians were putting up their satellites and our national leaders were calling upon kids to consider a career in science. So I began to set my sights on science and mathematics in high school.”

CRITERIA #3

INTRODUCTION

The subject residence is a fine example of a Rustic Craftsman bungalow. Although it has experienced alterations, it retains the distinctive characteristics of the Craftsman style, especially the signatures of George J. Webster, a prolific and underappreciated architect once known as the “uncredited architect of Pasadena and Altadena,”

(*Altadena: Between Wilderness and City*, Michelle Zack) due to his legacy of 30 or more exquisite Craftsman-style residences to that area.

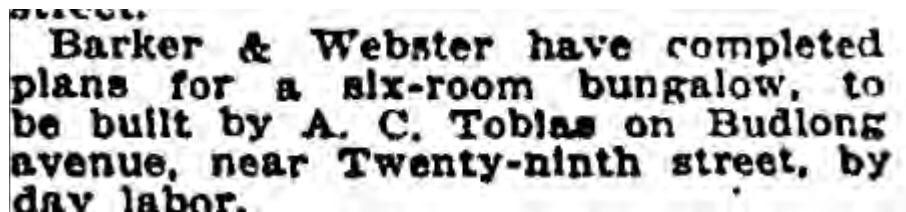
In recent years, Webster's work has been more properly attributed, thanks to the work of historians Anna Marie Brooks, Timothy Gregory and especially John Ripley (*co-author of Images of America: Pasadena's Bungalow Heaven* Charleston, NC: Arcadia Publishing. 2012), who will be referenced throughout this section. Webster designed iconic masterworks such as the Rosewall Estate, the J.S. Paul Residence, and the Colonel William Griffith Residence, the William Valentine Cottages, The Jane Griffith house, the C. K. Valentine House, and the Christie House.

The Venerable Family Residence is an excellent and largely intact example of the Craftsman style and method of construction, and an excellent example of the suburban single-story rustic craftsman bungalows for which Webster became well-known. Moreover, the residence represents a turning point in Webster's oeuvre, signalling the hallmarks that would distinguish his grander works. The property is particularly notable as one of only six works by Webster still extant in Los Angeles.

A.C. TOBIAS COMMISSIONS BARKER & WEBSTER TO DESIGN RESIDENCES

In 1907, real estate developer Archibald Clark Tobias purchased three contiguous parcels on the west side of the 2900 block of Budlong Ave. Tobias chose the design partnership of Neal Dow Barker and George James Webster, known as "Barker & Webster," to design a home for himself and his wife with a business office inside at 2915 S. Budlong, now a Historic Cultural Monument to the City of Los Angeles (*CHC-2021-10146-HCM, the A.C. Tobias Residence*). Tobias also commissioned two investment residences to the north and south of his own residence, 2911 S. Budlong to the north and the subject residence to the south at 2921 S. Budlong Ave. The three "Tobias Bungalows" form a triptych with consistent overall designs, but with variations for each home.

The Tobias Bungalows were constructed between 1908 and 1909 at a cost of \$3,000 each. George J. Webster designed and built a fourth bungalow at 2931 S. Budlong in 1910, as a solo architect. The residence still stands, and despite alterations bears a resemblance to the Tobias Bungalows. Photos of all the Webster bungalows on Budlong Avenue can be seen on pages 66-68 of this nomination.



"AMONG THE ARCHITECTS.: Boards of Local Designers Taken up With Plans for Many New Buildings--Colleges and Schools." *Los Angeles Times* (1886-1922); *Los Angeles, Calif.* 18 Oct 1908: V15.

BARKER & WEBSTER

G. J. Webster and N. D. Barker formed a partnership in August of 1908, which lasted into 1909. From their office in Downtown Los Angeles they designed eight known houses, six of which were in Los Angeles, and only four remain standing today. Webster has two extant properties as a solo architect in the city of Los Angeles (excluding Pasadena and Altadena). A full list of works by George J. Webster and Neal Dow Barker, both as solo designers and in partnerships, can be found in the Appendix, pages 51-53.

It is difficult to distinguish Barker's contributions from Webster's – or any of the architects Barker formed partnerships with (and he almost exclusively functioned in partnerships). His most notable collaborations were with Webster and architect M. Paul Martin. Historian John Ripley speculates Barker may have acted more in a supporting role with his partnerships, as Webster's solo architectural style tends to dominate their partnership, as M. Paul Martin's did in his partnership with Barker. The Tobias Bungalows in particular bear consistent scale, mannerisms and details with the single-story rustic bungalows for which Webster became known before tackling grander commissions in Pasadena and Altadena. For more on Webster's career, see section "GEORGE J. WEBSTER, LIFE AND CAREER" on page 44, with more supporting material can be viewed in the Appendix, pages 44-55.

Another notable and extant work of Barker & Webster is a seven-room bungalow built for Walter Vail, at 1303 Maltman Ave, in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles, erected in early 1909. Like the Tobias cottages, it bears Webster's signatures.

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

Barker and Webster were both British subjects – Barker from England, Webster from Scotland – and remained so throughout their lives. Because of their ages, it can be assumed that they had been exposed to the English and Scottish Arts and Crafts movements in their differing and earlier iterations. According to the SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement on the *Arts and Crafts Movement 1895-1930*: "The Arts and Crafts movement was an art, design, architecture, and lifestyle philosophy that originated in mid-nineteenth century England.... The proponents of the American Arts and Crafts movement shared with their British counterparts a reform philosophy that emphasized hand craftsmanship over mass production."

The movement reflected an aesthetic shift away from the tenets of late Victorian era design. Movement pioneers in Britain were also motivated by a rejection of the dehumanizing effects brought about by the Industrial Revolution and mass production, advocating instead for works influenced by nature and traditional craftsmanship.

Both Barker and Webster were also influenced by the early California Arts and Crafts movement and were early participants in its architecture portion. Pasadena, Altadena, and the collectively known "Arroyo Seco" region were an important site for the Craftsman zeitgeist in the early 20th century. Both Barker and Webster were, at that time, living in the Arroyo Seco region and were frequently building there.

Eclecticism is a central design tenet of the Craftsman movement, due to the numerous influences from cultures around the world, including Swiss, Japanese, and English architecture. Webster, a Scotsman raised in South America and working in turn-of-the-century Southern California, exemplified the global eclecticism central to the design movement. Influences of English design as well as Japanese design abound in his work, along with some uniquely Californian tendencies, including generous front porches and pergolas.

In the early 1900s, the LA neighborhood of West Adams was becoming a destination for wealthy Angelenos due to its proximity to Downtown. Farmland was being speculated and sold for development, and Craftsman architects were tapped to build entire neighborhoods in the fashion of the era. Bungalows became a popular and economical form of housing, but were often custom-built and suited to the needs of its occupants, featuring elaborate woodwork, stained glass and other features. The bungalow's simplicity and use of natural materials, especially wood, made it ideally suited for a booming California. The subject residence exemplifies what SurveyLA notes as characteristic of the early Craftsman bungalow, including windows placed in groups or bands and "wood... shingle exteriors, horizontal definitions with broad front porches, front-facing gabled roofs and overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails." (pg. 46)

The movement began to decline around 1915, as "kit homes" embraced the Craftsman style and introduced it to the masses via assembly-line-processed, pre-cut materials. They could be ordered from a catalog and assembled on any plot of land – essentially the opposite of the movement's original emphasis on hand-crafted and pre-industrial modes of building. SurveyLA notes that custom-designed houses (such as the Tobias Bungalows) often featured "workmanship and design of high quality and represent the Craftsman style at its peak of expression." (page 19)

GEORGE J. WEBSTER, LIFE AND CAREER

George James Webster was born of Scottish parents on April 28, 1868, in Paysandú, Uruguay, where his father managed a cattle estancia, with Spanish as the primary language spoken in the home. The family later moved to Scotland (without the father), and George grew up in the Edinburgh area. He earned a college degree, but the institution is not known. In Britain his profession was listed as “gas engineer.” Around 1898 he married the former Annie MacPherson Southerland, a native of Scotland; they had no children.

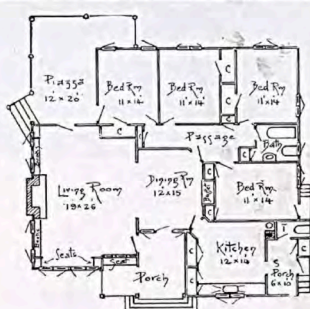
Mr. and Mrs. Webster came to the Los Angeles area in about 1902, when Webster was 34 years of age. After staying at the Argyle Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles, they moved to their newly-purchased home in Pasadena on June 21, 1902. His first Pasadena-area directory listing was in the 1904 edition, which listed him as a “rancher” residing in Altadena. Over the years, he and his wife moved fairly often within Pasadena and Altadena, sometimes living briefly in houses of his own design.

Webster joined the M. Paul Martin firm as a draftsman in 1903. Webster soon left the Martin firm and opened a drafting and blueprinting firm next door to Martin’s office, advertising “a specialty made of designing artistic and convenient residences.” His first documented house commenced in early 1905, a bungalow for Mabel Farris which still stands (in altered condition) at 619 South Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena.

In 1906, he took a break from designing homes to live in Sonora, Mexico and travel through Central and South America. Webster was a native Spanish speaker, and took many photos which illustrated articles by the Associated Press as well as articles written by himself for the *Los Angeles Times*, such as a series on earthquake activity in Chile and Peru (Appendix, pg. 47). Webster appears to have had an interest in photography as well as architecture. The Los Angeles directory of 1915 indicates he was the secretary and treasurer of the West Coast Art Company, in addition to his designing work. He also had several photographs published in local newspapers.

Webster returned to Southern California in 1907 and re-established his independent design practice. A design by him was published with photographs and descriptions in the book *Bungalows, Camps and Mountain Houses* by William Phillips Comstock and Clarence Eaton Schmerhorn, printed in 1908 (viewed below). The book contained two photographs, a floor plan, and a description of a seven-room Craftsman bungalow. His feature in a book edited by other architects shows respect for his work by his peers.

Webster’s designs were also featured in the *Ladies Home Journal* and *House Beautiful*, and in bungalow design books. A 1908 edition of *Ladies Home Journal* features Webster’s work in articles written and photographically illustrated by Pasadena author Helen Lukens Gaut, whose husband was a builder in Pasadena. The articles illustrated the types of bungalows which could be constructed at a price point. One was titled, “The Two-Thousand-Dollar Bungalow,” and the next, “The Three-Thousand-Dollar Bungalow.” Each article included a photographic example of Webster’s work in Pasadena with an extended tagline.



A SEVEN ROOM BUNGALOW. George J. Webster, Architect.
(Described on page 53)

49

Bungalows, Camps and Mountain Houses, p.49 (1908, r. 1915)

The following text is extracted from page 53 of *Bungalows, Camps and Mountain Houses* (Comstock, William Phillips and Clarence Eaton Schmerhorn. Originally printed in NY, NY: William Comstock Co., 1908.):

“The living room of the seven-room bungalow on page 49 has windows to the north, east and south and on the south, and on the south and east are large piazzas. The dining room communicates directly with the kitchen and by closing one door leading to the passage all the bedrooms are isolated from the living apartments. The house has ten good-sized closets. Both outside and inside are built and finished with California redwood, the exterior being covered with redwood shingles, stained a rich brown, while the interior is paneled in redwood and stained. There are built-in buffets with leaded glass doors, built-in seats and bookcases, also heavy beamed ceilings and a large open fireplace of cobblestones.”



THE bungalow on the left looks both comfortable and weatherproof, as in reality it is. It is built of shingles which are stained a dark brown, with white-painted window-sash to give a note of contrast. Inside there are six rooms and bath. The living-room has a broad fireplace made of red brick. Designed by George J. Webster.

Ladies Home Journal, 1908, “The Two Thousand Dollar Bungalow and “The Three Thousand Dollar Bungalow” (bottom).



A LARGE family could be comfortable and happy in the eight cozy rooms of this bungalow, and— just think!— it was actually built for \$3000. The rustic porch is a pretty feature of the exterior. Designed by George J. Webster.

A SUBURBAN BUNGALOW

THAT a home of moderate cost can be made attractive and comfortable is proved by these pictures of a bungalow built for P. J. McNally, Esq., in Altadena, California. By connecting the living and dining rooms by a wide-open space a spaciousness is effected which would be impossible in a small house if these rooms were entirely separate, while the wide-open fireplace and its carefully worked-in seats, bookcases, and mural, lend a contrast to the whole apartment. The rather quiet, skilful tone is softened by the paneled walls of the “all wood” inside finish, which can be done economically by using red boards and half-inch battens of the same wood. The lumber used in this case was California redwood, but almost any wood not given to cracking and warping can be successfully employed. In staining the woodwork a soft, such-



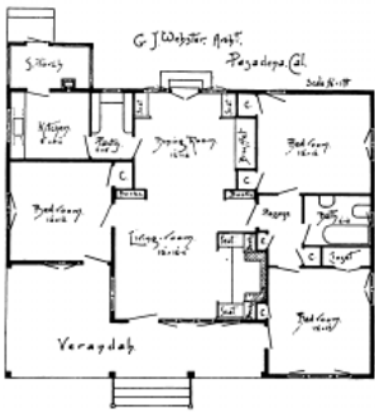
The Bungalow of P. J. McNally Esq., Altadena, California



74

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

trusive color, such as raw or burnt umber, should be applied, not too dark in shade, and varnish of any kind should be avoided. A simple oil stain applied with a brush and almost immediately rubbed off with a cloth, in order to show up the natural grain of the wood, produces the best effect at lowest cost. Simplicity is the keynote of success in bungalow building, and all useless and meaningless quirk in door and window casings and moldings should be tabooed; a plain finish and a simple treatment of a simple home will prove the inside good taste of the owner. The house illustrated is a good example of these principles and expresses character and charm.



THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL
the beautiful during it is broadly three distinct eras, an developed and its inf and sculpt Andrea. T were its d belonged t more clas The work and Ghibe are magn division. nation of associated Vian. R former sty architectu tive arts o It was n under way classic revl designs for them. T quattro-ens furniture i well in stu to keep in

The House Beautiful, February 1910, Page 73. G.J. Webster. The PJ McNally House (357 E. Altadena Dr.) depicted here was lost in the Eaton Fire of 2025.

After 1914, Webster maintained an architectural office from 1914 through 1916, according to directories. In late 1919, Mr. and Mrs. Webster moved to Laguna Beach, where they had owned property since 1914. They built a home at 2285 Glenneyre St. in 1922 and remained there for about 32 years. George was involved in the local improvement association and various neighborhood issues. Both George and Annie were active for many years in the Laguna Beach Garden Club.

Webster passed away at age of 76 on February 5, 1954, with little notice in the paper. He was survived by his wife, who also died later in 1954. His brief obituary can be viewed in the Appendix, page 51.

GEORGE J. WEBSTER: STYLES AND MANNERISMS

According to architectural historian John Ripley, Webster is known for displaying a consistent vision throughout his design work, a language of his own characterized by certain key characteristics: ceiling and ceiling beam variations, board-on-board gable vents, wood-paned 3-over-2 pane windows (referred to as “Webster Windows”), a particular form of supportive knee braces with integral feet, as well as faux post-and-beam features. Webster also employs what Ripley calls an “ambiguity of wall boundaries,” a distinctive three-dimensional thinking manifested in wall depth manipulations, which will be explained further in this section.

The subject residence is the earliest known example of Webster's work to feature all of these characteristics together. These features remain in-tact, with the exception of most, but not all, of the windows. The windows that remain show Webster utilized unique variations on his signature windows in the form of art glass with leaded panes.

Another unique “Webster-ism” is the faux-sunroom effect in the west-facing sunken den, currently used as an office. It was once lined with a ribbon of casement windows in the Webster style, which have since been in-filled with a smaller vinyl window. This signature of designer George James Webster was first used in his Lindsay house in Altadena (1905, lost in the 2025 Eaton Fire), and was a common mannerism seen later in Webster's grander works, such as the J.S. Paul Residence.

While it was typical of the Craftsman period to have rooms flowing into each other while being demarcated by colonnades or cased openings, According to Ripley, Webster's use of alcoves, cased openings and colonnades to separate the dining room, living room and den is particularly unique and playful. The Venerable Family Residence's common rooms are demarcated by stacked post-and-beams with ceilings uninterrupted by wall friezes above the connecting spaces. Ripley notes the subject residence's open concept of space flowing through the public rooms as a likely influence of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie School, which emphasized “open planning.”

Ripley refers to Webster's unique tendency for three-dimensional thinking in crafting open spaces with nooks and the illusion of bay windows as “wall ambiguity.” Although easily overlooked, it is an unusual design sophistication for an era before computers that set Webster apart from his contemporaries. Examples of “Wall ambiguity” are found throughout Webster's work, commonly in his fireplace areas as well as his dining rooms, but also his living areas and even bathrooms.

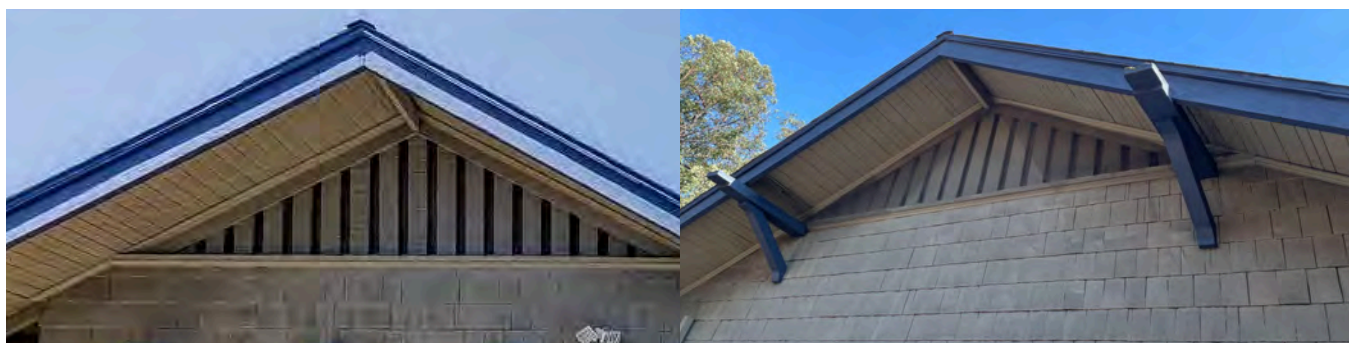
Two examples of wall ambiguity are found in the living room and dining room of the subject residence. From the dining room interior, there appears to be a bay window lined with windows of varying heights. And yet the exterior view from the north facade shows the dining room is flush with the north gable. The interior illusion is created by in-setting the broad living room fireplace, so that the chimney is aligned with the overhanging gable and the dining room wall.



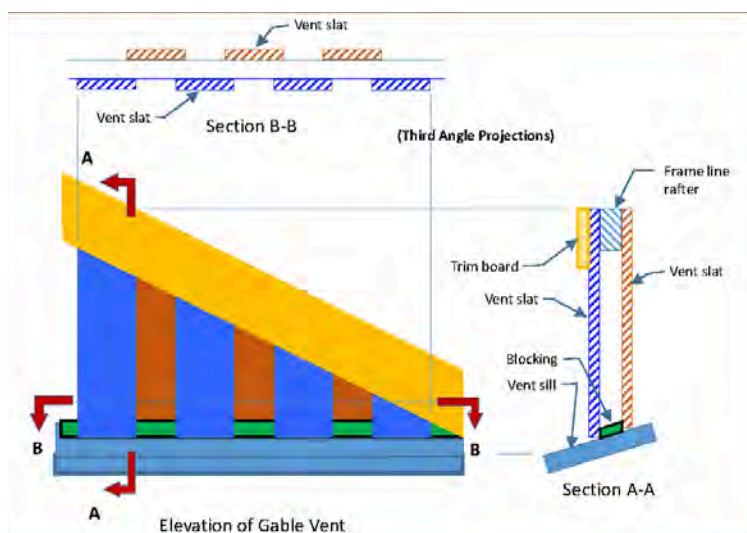
North elevation of subject residence, showing chimney serving the living room fireplace, and the dining room "false bay" window. Also note the knee braces with integral feet supporting the gable, another "Webster-ism." Photo taken by nomination preparers.

There is an additional false bay embedded on the south end of the living room, a nook that feels like a bay window due to the enclosing walls from the primary bedroom to the south and the colonnade demarcating the den to the north.

Another signature detail used repeatedly by Webster between 1906 and 1914 is the board-on-board attic vent design (providing ventilation while shielding the attic, used here in the front main gable and the rear partial gable). The design was later used by Webster's contractor Harry McKeen in his own solo practice, and Barker would also employ this design in later works.

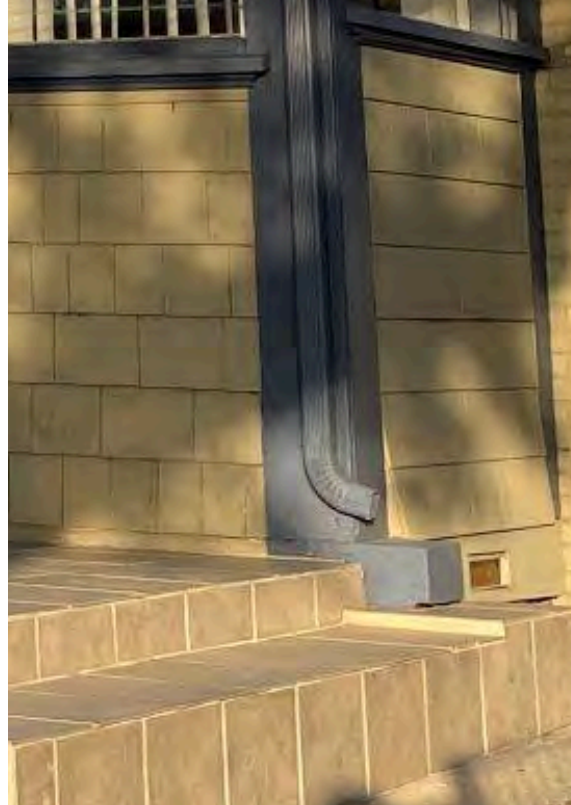


Left: East facing gable (front facade) with infill featuring board-on-board gable vents in signature Webster style (Source: MLS Photo, 2022) Right: North facing gable with vents (Source: nomination preparer) Below: Diagram by John Ripley showing Webster's board-on-board gable vents.



The residence exterior exhibits faux exposed mudsills at the base several walls, in conjunction with a larger faux post-and-beam structure (for both exterior and interior) to create the feeling of a medieval structure, and also to visually echo Japanese and Chinese buildings. The *SurveyLA context statement on the Arts & Crafts movement* notes global eclecticism among the Craftsman style's chief tenets, and that movement architects looked to "all things Japanese for inspiration." (SurveyLA, page 1)

The front porch has steps all around its sides, a tendency found frequently in Webster's later work and an influence of the American and Californian Craftsman movement. Overall, the subject residence combines a uniquely American and Californian bungalow style with the craftsmanship of British subjects and likely inspiration from Greene & Greene and Frank Lloyd Wright in its integration of Japanese design elements.



Above we see examples of the faux mudsills as part of the larger faux post-and-beam structure, lending the appearance of a medieval Japanese structure to the bungalow. Photo taken by nomination preparers.

WEBSTER MASTERWORKS

George resumed his solo career by April 1909, establishing an office in Downtown Pasadena. Some of the residences he designed in this phase of his career were on a grander, more elaborate scale, although still very much in the Craftsman style. It has recently been acknowledged that Webster was the designer of an addition and garage for the Wells-Halliday Mansion (HCM no. 458).

ROSEWALL

"Rosewall," in Altadena, at 180 E. Mendocino St in Altadena, was built in 1911. It was Webster's costliest and

grandest commission. It was, somewhat miraculously, spared destruction during the Eaton Fire, although almost everything around it was destroyed.



Top: Early photograph of Rosewall Estate (still extant as of 2025). Source: *Altadena*, page 129. Fisher Family Collection.
Bottom: Modern photo of Rosewall Estate. Source: John G. Ripley

COLONEL WILLIAM GRIFFITH HOUSE (1910)

In 1910, William and Josephine Griffith commissioned Webster to design a winter home for them at 1824 N. Mar Vista Ave. in Pasadena. In 1913, Josephine Griffith purchased a 60-foot-wide parcel along Mar Vista to extend the northerly boundary of her property.

In 1913, Josephine Griffith, wife of Colonel William Griffith, purchased the neighboring lot, and in 1917 built an accompanying property in the style of the Col. William Griffith House. The residence, currently located at 1844 N. Mar Vista Ave, was built in 1917 either for her son, or possibly as a servant's quarters or as an investment. The architect is unknown, but according to author of *The Building Biographer*, Tim Gregory, "the house bears a striking resemblance in stylistic features and materials to the Griffiths' original home, so may also have been designed by George Webster," or it may be a work done in his style.



The Colonel William Griffith House at 1824 N. Mar Vista Ave, Pasadena, CA, built 1910. Survived the Eaton fire of 2025.
Source: John G. Ripley

J.S. PAUL RESIDENCE (1909, 1163 Rubio St, Altadena.)



Left: 1911 photograph of the JS Paul residence, tragically lost in the 2025 Eaton Fire. (Source: *Keith's Mag* March 1911, page 161) Right: Contemporary photograph of the JS Paul residence. (<https://hometown-pasadena.com/>)

The J.S. Paul Residence, a sprawling estate with extensive stacked-beam pergolas, was destroyed during the Eaton Fire of 2025.

GARFIELD AVE

Mr. and Mrs. Webster had moved by late 1910 to the 2000 block of Garfield Ave. — a block-long tract straddling the Pasadena/Altadena border which George subdivided and designed many of the houses. Along North Garfield below Woodbury Road at the Altadena/Pasadena border, Webster designed at least nine Craftsman residences over a seven-year period. Eight of these dwellings are still standing, several of which Mr. and Mrs. Webster lived in. Those that have been documented or attributed are: 2053/55 (1911); 2056 (1911); 2073 (1914) — altered; probably the last house he designed in the Pasadena area; 2080 (1909); 2085—also altered (1909); 2108 (1913); 2121 (1911). All of the Garfield Ave residences survived the 2025 Eaton Fire.

THE VALENTINE COTTAGES

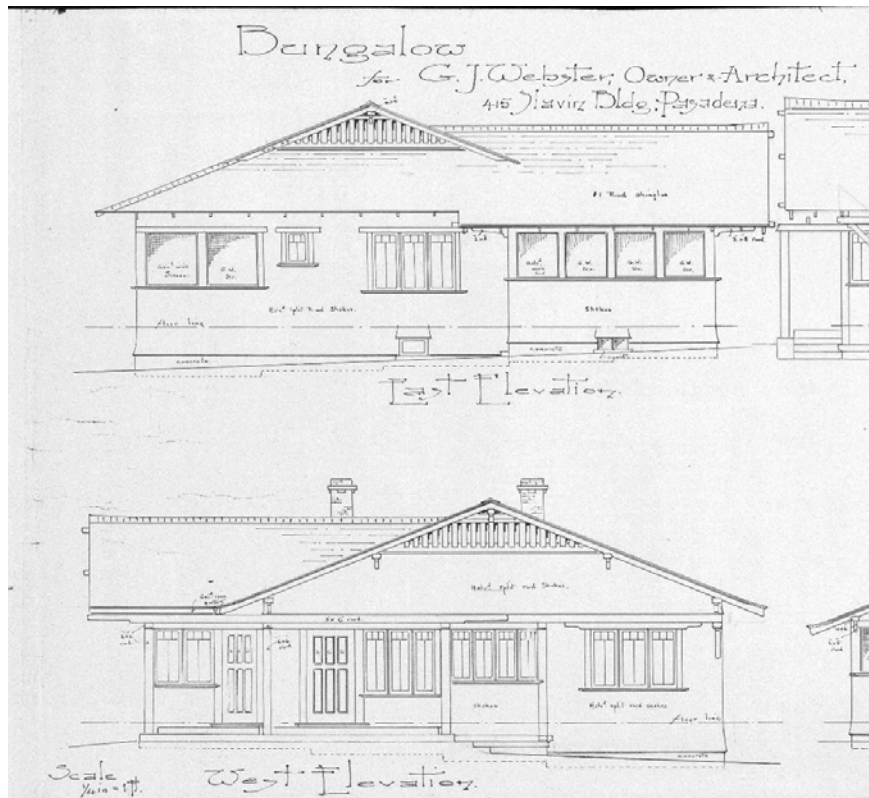
Between Webster 1912 and 1915, a compound of four cottages were built by a Walter Valentine in Altadena. Documentation points to him as the main architect of the cottage addressed at 2800 Holliston Ave., while physical evidence points to him as the likely designer of another bungalow at 1419 E. Palm St (listed in the National Register of Historic Places (100001337). Webster also designed stone entrance portals at the NE corner of Holliston and Palm in 1912. 1421 E. Palm St. has also been attributed to George Webster, with significant alterations and additions from Henry Greene. Webster may have designed the fourth cottages, but there is no documentation to support this. 2800 Holliston is not viewable because it is set back a long distance on a private street with landscaping in the foreground. Webster had designed a prior residence for Valentine, at 600 Alameda St, Altadena. Unfortunately, all of the Valentine Cottages were destroyed in the Eaton Fire of 2025.

The Valentine Cottages are often credited to Henry Greene, who, along with his brother Charles Greene (together known as Greene & Greene), are considered exemplars of the American Arts and Crafts movement. In 1922, Henry Greene expanded the cottage at 1419 E Palm St with a living room and garage. Webster designed a cottage for Charles Greene's sister-in-law, Jane White, an established client of the Greenes, at 382 Buena Loma St. in Altadena.



Upper left and right photos show 1419 E. Palm as of 2020. *Source: MLS photos*

Bottom photo shows original Webster structure with signature gable vents. *Source: John G. Ripley*



Original plans for 2056 Garfield Ave (by George J. Webster, 1911). *Source: John G. Ripley*

NEAL DOW BARKER

Neal Dow Barker was an architectural designer and de facto architect in Southern California from about 1901 to about 1921. He was never licensed as an architect in California. Most of his known works were in Los Angeles, but a few are known in the Pasadena-Altadena area.

Barker was born in Manchester, England, in April of 1856; his parents were both natives of England. He first arrived in the US in 1876 at the age of 20. He was in England again by 1881 but returned to Canada and opened an office in Winnipeg, Canada, in 1883, calling himself an architect and heating and ventilating engineer. He designed the Manitoba Medical College in Winnipeg in 1884, but another architect tried to take credit for the design. Barker eventually won recognition as the designer after a war of words in the local newspapers.

He married Catherine Smith (1860-1886) in England in about 1885. Their son Reginald was born in Canada in 1886, but Catherine died on the same day. He returned to England in 1894 to marry Margaret Dean (1856-1901), and the couple entered the US shortly thereafter. Their daughter Constance was born in California in 1896, probably in Los Angeles where Barker was a partner in an oil burner business. By 1899 they were in Oakland, where Barker listed his occupation as architect.

After losing his second wife, he returned to Los Angeles in 1902 where he became a draftsman and later associate at the firm of architect M. Paul Martin, who designed residences, apartments and business buildings. Their works were covered in newspapers, but generally only in text. The associates practiced together until 1908. One can view no known examples of Barker's work, since much of it was done in association with architect M. Paul Martin and therefore, one cannot ascertain what is the work product of each gentleman.

Barker designed his own residence in Altadena, in 1904. The residence was featured in the *House Beautiful and Architectural Department* of the Times' Weekly Illustrated Magazine. The publication date was June 5, 1904. However, no known copies of the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* survive in public archives.

Around 1909, Barker returned to the office of M. Paul Martin as a draftsman, and later worked for others and for himself until retiring around 1921. However, he also did various independent jobs in the Pasadena-Altadena area, and he was listed as an architect in the classified sections of the Pasadena directories of 1916, 1918, and 1919.

He retired circa 1921, as the Craftsman style waned. His next career was as the proprietor of a service station in Altadena. Neal Dow Barker passed away on November 28, 1925 at the age of 69 when he was killed in a traffic accident on the Ridge Route in Kern County. Barker's first son Reginald (1886-1945) became a well-known motion picture director in the early years of the film industry. He was active from 1912 until 1935. A full list of Barker-designed properties is available in the appendix, page 53.

Written with contributions from John G. Ripley and Anna Marie Brook's HCM nomination of 2915 S Budlong Ave.



Left: The site of the Valentine cottages after the Eaton Fire. Right: The site of the J.S. Paul Residence after the Eaton Fire. Source: [CAL FIRE Damage Inspection \(DINS\) database](#)

CONCLUSION

President of the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Committee Barry Milofsky stated at the August 4, 2022 hearing of the Cornelius Johnson Olympic Oak Tree, that the history of L.A. is told by the small homes. Although the subject residence might appear at first glance like a modest bungalow, its design fuses the global influences of the Arts and Crafts design movement, and for a quarter century served as a beacon for L.A.'s African American community.

The Grant D. Venerable Family Residence at 2921 S. Budlong Ave should be recognized as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument under all three criteria. It is identified with a historic personage, Grant D. Venerable, and his barrier-breaking graduation in 1932. The home exemplifies broad contributions to the cultural fabric, serving as a meeting house for numerous social clubs and as a symbol of integration, when Venerable crossed the red-line to purchase the home in a neighborhood that would spark a nationwide fight for housing equity. The residence's notable design embodies the distinctive characteristics and building methods of the Rustic Craftsman bungalow style, in particular the style and mannerisms of its builder, George J. Webster.

The subject property is sited in a historic "no man's land" with homes dating back to the 1890s, many potentially identified with important personages and events of local and state history. However, there has never been an adequate survey of this section of South LA, which have been largely ignored by the former CRA and SurveyLA. Furthermore, the Adams Normandie HPOZ terminates two properties to the north and to the east, offering no protection for the subject residence, as well as for many other culturally significant sites.

As a result of this oversight, these neighborhoods have seen demolitions of historically significant sites, in particular sites significant to African American history. The Venerable family is in support of this nomination, and have included letters of support for the nomination, as well as research and archival photographs. Grant D. Venerable II writes in his letter of support for this nomination:

"We don't always understand in the present what is lost when historic buildings and residences are demolished to make way for "progress" I strongly urge the commission to carefully consider what will be lost and what will continually renew our urban identity in the neighborhoods south of the I-10 freeway as this beautiful region enjoys economic reawakening."

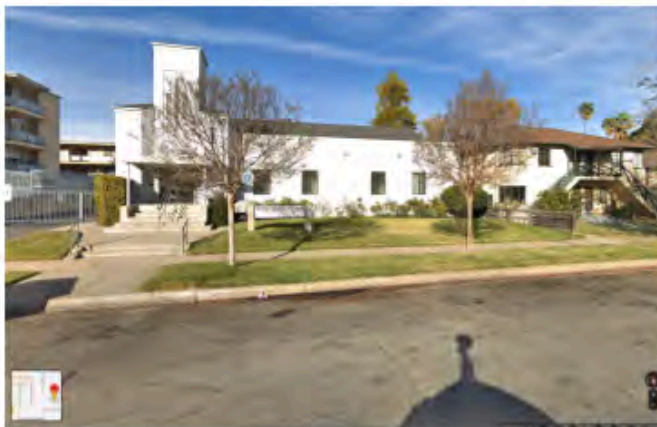
LIST OF RESIDENCES ASSOCIATED WITH GRANT D. VENERABLE

**LOUISE VENERABLE RESIDENCE (where Grant Venerable lived on and off)
1286 W 36th St, approx 1924 - 1932 (on and off) 1935 - 1944**



Demolished in 1965.

1147 CORDOVA ST. IN PASADENA (1932)



PARK LA BREA / 360 BURNSIDE ~1973 - 1978-9 - #1B



3851 S Cloverdale. 90008, Grant D. Venerable's home from. 1979 - 1986

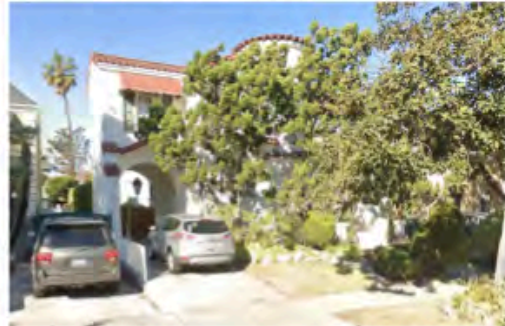


**C. BLAINE VENERABLE'S MANSION, 2266 S HARVARD BLVD
~1945 - 1958 (demolished)**

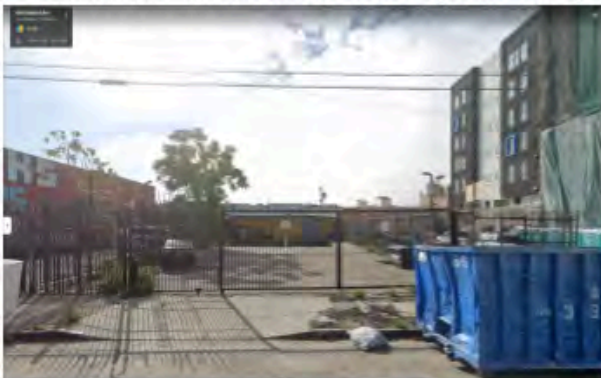


Source: google maps

**LATER C. BLAINE VENERABLE RESIDENCE
1221 S HUDSON AVE, LOS ANGELES, ~1958 - 1969**



MCALPIN HOTEL 648 STANFORD AVE (demolished)



Source: google maps

SCOTT FAMILY RESIDENCES

612 N EVERGREEN AVE & 3011 BOULDER ST. (image unavailable via google maps)



LOUISE VENERABLE RESIDENCE, ~1947-1950, 2955 S BUDLONG



Source: google maps

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 - Grant D. Venerable beside Model T Ford in Elliston, MT 1934
 - Jesse Owens holding Lloyd Venerable beside Thelma Scott Venerable, with Grant D. Venerable II and Lynda Venerable. 1946 *Venerable Family Archive*
 - December 18, 1955 business meeting and Pre-Christmas party of sixteen "Jet Boy" salesmen
 - Grant D. Venerable II's 4th birthday party (photograph)
 - 1946 photograph of the Venerable children alongside fellow Jack and Jill member Clothilde Dunning (photograph)
 - Lynda Venerable's debut portrait at the October Club Cotillion, Oct 15, 1960
 - Lynda Venerable's debut in society with the October Club, escorted by her father Grant D. Venerable Los Angeles, Oct 15, 1960
 - Extended family present at the October Club Cotillion Lynda Venerable —Lf to Rt: Arthur & Stella Cunningham Bell, Tom & Marian Singleton Jackson, and James and Carolyn Larkin Shifflett (1960)
 - Lynda Venerable at front door of prior to October Club debut, 1960.
 - *Venerable family archive*.
 - Lynda Venerable in the den of 2921 S. Budlong Ave.
 - Grant D. Venerable and his three children survey the construction of the 1-10 Freeway, which ran through the Adams-Normandie neighborhood just a mile from the Venerable Family Residence. 1960.
 - Grant D Venerable and daughter Lynda doing Healey Mfg Co. bank business at Security Pacific Bank. 1961
 - 1960: Grant Delbert II on the 2921 rooftop service his installation of electrical-current generating solar cells.
 - G.Delbert II practicing Belmore piano in living room of 2921 Budlong during 10th grade at Manual Arts High 1958.
 - Grant D. Venerable II at chalkboard family communications center in dining room of 2921 – 8th grade,
 - Vermont Avenue Elementary School PTA. Flanked by her PTA sisters, Thelma V is standing 3rd from left. The Parent Teacher's Association was integral to the success of the Los Angeles City Schools.
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PROPERTY PHOTOS



Top: Front facade of subject residence at 2921 S. Budlong Ave, Los Angeles CA 90007, the proposed Grant D. Venerable Family Residence.

Bottom: The three "Tobias Bungalows," with 2921 at the left, 2915 in the middle (A. C. Tobias Residence; CHC-2021-10146-HCM), and 2911 S. Budlong Ave on the right.

Photos of historic Red or Pink Ironbark Eucalyptus sideroxylon in front of the three Tobias Bungalows.

Source: taken by nomination preparers, 2022



Webster's signature knee-braces with integral feet.
 Source: photo taken by nomination preparer, 2022



A ribbon of leaded glass smaller casements in the “Webster Style.” Only 2 of 4 are visible. Source: Redfin, 2022



View of 2921 S Budlong Ave. through the colonnade and stacked ceiling beams. (Source: MLS, 2022)

Bottom: Reverse angle showing front door. (Source: MLS, 2022)



Top: View of 2921 S Budlong Ave through the colonnade and stacked ceiling beams. (Source: MLS, 2022)





Top: alcove den facing west with ribbon of smaller leaded “Webster Style” windows. (source: MLS, 2022)
Bottom: rear east-facing bedroom. (source: MLS, 2022)





2921 S. Budlong Ave in 1985 photograph from the Venerable family archive.



2921 S. Budlong Ave in 2005 photograph from the Venerable family archive.



Top: 2931 S. Budlong Ave., also designed by George J. Webster as a solo architect.
(Source: Google Maps, 2022)

Bottom: Aerial MLS photo shows 2931 (far left), 2921, 2915 with 2911 barely visible on the right.
(Source: MLS, 2022)



Top: 2911 S. Budlong Ave, the northernmost Tobias Bungalow, with 2915 S. Budlong in view to the south. (Source: Google Maps, 2022)

Bottom: 2915 S. Budlong Ave, with 2921 in view to the south. (Taken by nomination preparers)

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Grant D. Venerable II, Ph.D.
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Tyrone, Georgia 30290
404 861-6258 c
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July 12, 2022

Cultural Heritage Commission
200 North Spring Street, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Grant D. and Thelma Scott Venerable Residence-2921 Budlong Avenue

Dear Commission Members:

I am pleased to note that my family home at 2921 S. Budlong Avenue (L.A. 90007) has been nominated for a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) designation. Purchased in 1944 at a cost of \$7,000 and moved into in March 1945, this home was a major “first fruit” of my father Grant D. Venerable’s historic achievement of being the “first of his race” to graduate from the famed *California Institute of Technology* (Caltech) in Pasadena (1932). The unique style and practical features of this spacious craftsman home by a prominent duo of early 20th century architects enabled my parents to cultivate just the right lifestyle in support of their marriage, careers, civic activities, and raising three energetic and creative children. I can attest to specific qualities and features of the house as anchors for everything my sister, brother, and I have achieved in our fulfilling lives. Those achievements are undergirded by habits supporting good health, recreational pursuits, and spiritual development. But we have also enjoyed close ties to a large and viable extended family system, a nurturing social network of friends and colleagues sustaining successful lives.

In my case, this has supported my becoming a successful university mentor and teacher across the natural and social sciences and the arts and humanities. This was in such places as Duarte High, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UC Santa Cruz, San Francisco State, and fifteen years of service as provost/academic vice president retiring after nine years at Lincoln University of Pennsylvania. But also sustained by the 2921 Budlong residence was a strong sense of the contextual dimension in completing significant projects and leading such higher education organizations and projects. Everything I have been recognized for in *Who’s Who in America* springs from the inspiration and immense resource base afforded me at 2921, the qualities of the many individuals it has attracted, and its proximity to the cultural offerings of the Los Angeles region.

We did not learn until recently of the house’s architectural significance, or that its architects had built grand residences in Pasadena. You could certainly feel the architects’ unique signature in the 30-foot living room with stylish ceiling beams presided over at its north end by a handsome, bleached-brick fireplace flanked by bookshelves filled with literary classics, not the least of which was the 20-volume *Book of Knowledge*. When my father and mother Thelma Scott purchased this, their first home at 2921 Budlong Avenue, they credited those ceiling beams and spacious living room, so their kids would have a playground inside in case of a rare rainy day!

This house became an “organizing principle” for everything that was part and parcel of the identity of my family and our ancestors prior to my grandparental relatives’ arrival in Los Angeles after 1900. It would be no stretch to assert that 2921 Budlong offered a foundational influence in making me what I have become in my existence as a scientist, artist, musician, and educator. Even the house’s “conversion” to a solar observatory with my rooftop solar cell installation gave major impetus (1960) to my studying photo and electrochemistry during my undergraduate chemistry major at UCLA (1965-1970). And then providing the momentum for my earning the Ph.D. in physical chemistry at The University of Chicago focusing on radiation chemical processes.

In those days, the “network” involved all those who held our community together as we diminished the Color Line. It was of the utmost importance that the organizations comprising the children, youths, and families of the “Jack & Jill of America,” the PTA, Alpha Phi Alpha, and our Jet Magazine sales branch of the Johnson Publishing Co. were gathered on so many occasions over two decades. These gatherings involved families representing high-achieving members of LA’s “Black elite,” primarily physicians, educators, pharmacists, dentists, businessmen, attorneys, religious leaders and teachers. The architecture of this home, in particular the imposing living room and dining room space, the den and dining room, made it an ideal meeting place for the Board of Directors of the Venerable Corporation which purchased the George R. Healey Manufacturing Co. However, the den also functioned as Dad’s quiet space and “brain center” where he studied and brought ideas to fruition. His large pre-electric powered calculators performed complex arithmetic operations by heavy tabletop, hand-cranked rotor wheel machines that utterly fascinated us children. His large slide rule from his Caltech days sat next to the calculators for doing logarithmic and exponential computations.

It can be definitively stated that our home attracted a “Who’s Who” of the local and national community into its elegant interior. The 2921 residence held official meetings of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, of which my father was a charter member (1925) and whose members included such lifelong friends as Ralph J. Bunche (U.N. Undersecretary and 1948 Nobel Peace Prize winner), Chicago-based chemist Lloyd A. Hall (who revolutionized the meat packing industry), real estate broker Grace Atkins Ginns, and Olympic athlete Jesse Owens. The local Vermont Avenue School PTA, a congenially diverse group of mothers (see attached photo) also enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere of 2921 for luncheon meetings. The Kansas Club of pioneering migrants from Kansas, mainly my mother’s kindred, gathered at least a few times, while the Friday Morning Prayer Band gathered there perhaps monthly. Also gathering there were Las Madrinas (Spanish for “The Godmothers”), an active network of women who, like my father’s mother, were servants in the grand homes of Los Angeles-Beverly Hills and organized cultural events for the community. Budlong was at least a once a year venue for Las Madrinas when hosted by Louise Venerable, mother of Grant D. Venerable Sr., during the years in which she was active. (An attached photo shows Las Madrinas in 1940 hosting a reception for the renowned operatic contralto Marian Anderson who appreciated every opportunity to be in the warm embrace of the African American community wherever she concertized. This event occurred within a year following her celebrated Easter Sunday concert at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.)

Black financial independence was my father’s motivating dream, not just for himself but for his peers and future generations as well. From 2921 he and his brother-in-law William Tatum operated the McAlpin Hotel downtown and later acquired and operated the George R. Healy Company of Montebello California and made a respectable income through the manufacture and sales of “felt-weld” blackboard erasers that became school and college standards nationwide.

As I complete the eighth decade of my multifaceted existence, I am especially sensitive to human tendencies toward dementia and amnesia around who and what one is. If this is not checked, the very natural process of neural degeneration and the brain's forgetting how to coordinate the heart's pumping the blood to the vital organs and the brain's overall coordinative functions. When that happens to an entire city, the people and their leaders actually forget who and what they once were as an "urban organism." This has been the sad fate of once vibrant rust belt and automobile manufacturing centers. Their vintage buildings, residences, and other unique monuments have vanished or been lost to urban decay, because people and their leaders have forgotten.

When the Santa Monica Freeway was first announced, my civil engineer father while excited by the possibility for the public to utilize the new I-10 freeway infrastructure, he had not initially grasped the profound social consequences that would be incurred as a result; many of the mansions of Sugar Hill and Berkeley Square, where many wealthy Black families resided, would be demolished to make space for the I-10. Furthermore, the I-10 would run through the northern part of our neighborhood. The city leaders were effectively sealing South Central Los Angeles off from the rest of the City.

We don't always understand in the present what is lost when historic buildings and residences are demolished to make way for "progress," no matter how compelling is the case for economic development and quick wind-fall profits. Looking back, I wish Los Angeles still had those grand residences of my childhood in Berkeley Square and Sugar Hill as reminders that our history is one of resilience, adaptation to change, and ultimately prosperity. I strongly urge the commission to carefully consider what will be lost and what will continually renew our urban identity in the neighborhoods south of the I-10 freeway as this beautiful region enjoys economic reawakening.

Sincerely,

Grant D. Venerable II

LYNDA V. ELLINGTON

64 Heath Aster Lane
lyndabee02@yahoo.com

Lehigh Acres, FL 33936

602-690-5690

May 15, 2022

Cultural Heritage Commission
200 N Spring St, Room 272
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Commission Members,

2921 Budlong Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007! This was my home, where I was brought home from St. Vincent's Hospital, where I grew up and lived until about the age of 22. What made it a special home? Thoughts for your consideration in naming this home a 'historic monument':

Certainly, I was not aware of its historical background, it's designers or that it was a craftsman style home. It was a special home for my two brothers and me, Mom and Dad, Thelma and Grant Venerable. As I would come to know this home, filled with warmth and love, with open doors to family, friends and neighbors, it was a haven for all. My parents accepted all visitors without judgment and that is how my family came to be known and appreciated.

My father, a 1932 Caltech graduate, the first undergraduate of African descent was aware of the challenges of being one of the first families of color to live west of Vermont Avenue in a most desired neighborhood. The neighbors soon came to know a man of honor with a peaceful nature who would help guide not only his own children but mentor anyone who needed help. My father owned a small manufacturing company his only product being chalkboard erasers, needed by school boards across the country and as far away as the Philippines. This was a first for a man of African descent as there were only 2 other manufacturers of erasers in the US. He supplied his products by competitive bid and, as I spent many days there, I know firsthand that his erasers could be found everywhere in this country.

My father's legacy is being honored by Caltech in the renaming of a building in his honor in this the 90th anniversary of his graduation. He attended Caltech in a time when eugenics was actively supported in many areas especially at universities. My father helped to disprove the theory that people were 'inferior' because of the color of their skin. He was not wanted at this prestigious school and was told many times he

would not pass the course of study. My father had drive, determination, ambition and willpower and knew an engineering course of study was perfect for him. He was able to matriculate well and in so doing made lifelong friends of administrators and students alike. There are times when a person can speak about the way life should be, then there are those who's actions lead the way to understanding.

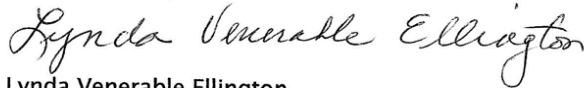
Our Budlong house was one of warmth with beautiful wood throughout, a hallmark of craftsman style. In the living room there was a beautiful fireplace with a huge wood mantle that held family pictures. Wooden bookcases on either side of the fireplace included built-in benches, cozy reading nooks. The books my parents would read inspired our knowledge and curiosity. At the front of the home was a huge picture window where before pulling down the shade every night we kids would say "goodnight street light".

There was a beautiful formal dining room where family and friends gathered for special occasions, dinners, birthday parties. The room included a magnificent buffet of wood and glass that covered an entire wall. At those special times the buffet would be laden with a delicious meal while the glass door cabinets protected family 'treasures' of present and past centuries from prying little hands.

The backyard was one where children could play in the mud and often did. My mother also planted a huge garden that our family and neighbors could share in. My love of gardening has extended from those humble beginnings to this day.

Looking back, there is no place like that home, beautiful, historic. Steeped in its history of a family seeking a good life and helping others along the way I ask your consideration in naming it a 'historic monument'. In so doing hopefully it will be viewed as a place of love, contentment, of reaching out to help others who enter in.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynda Venerable Ellington". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Lynda Venerable Ellington

Anna Marie Brooks
1109 4th Avenue
Los Angeles CA 90019
historichomesla@aol.com
310-650-2143

June 13, 2022

Dear Councilmember,

RE: Item 2, 22-0306, CHC-2021-101460-HCM, A. C. Tobias Residence, 2915 Budlong Ave.
CD 8

2915 Budlong Ave. is up for consideration as an HCM, on June 14th before PLUM. I cannot attend the meeting as I have a surgical follow-up appointment at Cedars. As the nominator of this fine, Rustic Craftsman bungalow by architectural designers Barker & Webster, and first occupied by developer/real estate broker A. C. Tobias, this outstanding residence has absolutely NO historic protection. Please change that unlucky fate by granting it HCM protection. The residences to the direct north, 2911, and south, 2921 Budlong Ave. were also developed by the same designers and developer, also in 1908. As a tryptic, the residences are similar in design with the center one, 2915, also incorporating an in-home office. 2915 is the most intact and the grandest of the three with original exterior and interior details still extant throughout its continuing 114-year life. The original *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* tree, common name Red or Pink Ironbark, still holds forth in its magnificence in the median at the front of the property. Following the City's and the CHC's inspection visit, it was deemed a museum-quality renovation by members of the City staff and of the CHC. No one knew that this fine Rustic Craftsman residence has absolutely NO historic protection. Therefore, please approve 2915 Budlong Ave. known as the A. C. Tobias Residence for Historic-Cultural Monument status, thus granting it protection, and refer it onward to the City Council.

In a related matter 2921 Budlong Ave., the southernmost of the tryptic of residences designed by Barker & Webster and developed by A. C. Tobias, is currently on the market in excess of \$1 Million. The first offer, now withdrawn, was to demolish the property. It currently awaits its fate, unless the City, CHC, PLUM and City Council find it worthy of Historic-Cultural Monument status. Its cultural, social, and economic history are outstanding. 2921 Budlong was found eligible for CHC status under all three

criteria, by the preparer of the nomination, recently submitted to the Office of Historic Resources. The following are quoted from the nomination criteria:

1. The Grant D. Venerable Family Residence is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community. The Venerable family itself broke some of the barriers that faced (and continue to face) African Americans in the sciences; the family is also associated with Great Migration. Importantly, the family owned & managed a hotel listed in the Green Book and played a role in the "Sugar Hill" lawsuits that helped end restrictive covenants and break the color line in Los Angeles's residential neighborhoods.
2. The property is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history. Grant Delbert Venerable and his son, Grant Delbert Venerable II, who both broke barriers for African Americans in academia and the fields of science and engineering. Grant Delbert Venerable Sr. was the first African American graduate of Caltech, the California Institute of Technology, and in recognition, the university recently renamed one of its campus buildings for him.
3. The property also embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction; or represents a notable work of a master designer, builder, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age. This Rustic Craftsman was designed by Neal Dow Barker and George James Webster, and although it has some (reversible) alterations, it retains the distinctive architectural characteristics they are recognized for.

One can only submit a single property for HCM nomination, even though these three are intimately related. This historian submitted 2915 Budlong, the property in consideration for HCM nomination today (June 14), when it went on the market and the first offer was from a developer who wanted to demo this residence which has absolutely NO historic protection. The successful purchaser is in support of the nomination. In fact, he, a documentarian, is the nominator of 2921 Budlong, which also went on the market and received the highest offer from another developer.

Please remember 2921 Budlong Avenue when it is forwarded to you from the CHC, most likely months from now. In the meantime, today (June 14) please grant 2915 Budlong Ave. HCM status, thus granting it historic protection.

Thank you,

Anna Marie Brooks
Historian & Preparer of HCM Nomination of 2915 Budlong Ave.



Thryeris Mason
President

Julianne Burg
Vice President

Samantha Burg
Secretary

Julie Burg
Treasurer

Joe Vaca
Area 1
Representative

Marco Flores
Area 1
Representative

David Greenman
Area 2
Representative

Mehul Patel
Area 2
Representative

Jean Frost
Area 3
Representative

Nicolas Creighton
Area 3
Representative

Cindy Gaete
At Large
Representative

Jon Tieuel
At Large
Representative

Jim Childs
At Large
Representative

Vacant
USC Interest
Representative

Joe Ward-Wallace
Business Interest
Representative

June 22, 2022

Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Cultural Heritage Commission: Barry Milofsky, President
Gail Kennard, Vice President
Richard Barron, Pilar Buelna, Diane Kanner, Commissioners
Lambert Giessinger, Preservation Architect

Via email

RE: Support for the nomination of the Grant D. Venerable Family Home, 2921 S. Budlong Ave., as a Historic Cultural Monument.

On behalf of the Empowerment Congress North Area Neighborhood Development Council (NANDC), we would like to express our support of the HCM Nomination of the Grant D. Venerable Family Home. Grant D. Venerable was Caltech's first African American graduate. He broke barriers for African Americans in academia, and the sciences and engineering fields.

NANDC voted unanimously to support the nomination at its General Board meeting of June 2, 2022.

The Grant D. Venerable Family Residence is identified with important events of national, state, or local history, or exemplifies significant contributions to the broad cultural, economic or social history of the nation, state, city or community.

The Venerable family itself broke some of the barriers that faced (and continue to face) African Americans in the sciences; the family is also associated with Great Migration. Importantly, the family owned & managed a hotel listed in the Green Book and played a role in the "Sugar Hill" lawsuits that helped end restrictive covenants and break the color line in Los Angeles's residential neighborhoods.

The property is associated with the lives of historic personages important to national, state, city, or local history. Grant Delbert Venerable and his son, Grant Delbert Venerable II, both broke barriers for African Americans in academia and the fields of science and

PO Box 18769
Los Angeles, CA 90018
board@nandc.org | www.NANDC.org



engineering. Grant Delbert Venerable Sr. was the first African American graduate of Caltech, the California Institute of Technology, and in recognition, the university recently renamed one of its campus buildings for him.

This nomination also represents just one example of the wealth of history that has gone unrecognized in the NANDC area and in South Los Angeles. NANDC is supporting a cultural and architectural resource survey for its NANDC task force area and is working with Planning and Councilmember Harris-Dawson and Councilmember Curren Price to achieve that goal. Until there is a viable survey, the CHC will be receiving these gems piece meal - unfortunate but necessary.

NANDC is a self-governed, self-directed, and independent organization empowered by the Los Angeles City Charter. This charter offers neighborhood councils a role in the City's decision-making process. NANDC was certified by the City of Los Angeles on April 27, 2002 and was the 24th neighborhood council formed under the guidelines of the City Charter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thryeris Mason".

Thryeris Mason, President
Empowerment Congress North Area Development Council (NANDC)
www.NANDC.org

CC: Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Albizael Del Valle, CD 8
Isaias Benevides, CD 8
Adrian Fine, LA Conservancy
West Adams Heritage Association

PO Box 18769
Los Angeles, CA 90018
board@nandc.org | www.NANDC.org

COPIES OF PRIMARY/SECONDARY DOCUMENTATION

fold3

<https://www.fold3.com/image/630035015>

4 May 45 2921 Budlong Ave, Pa 7 233

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)

SERIAL NUMBER 1589	1. NAME (Print) GRANT DEIBERT VENERABLE		ORDER NUMBER 11525
T	(First)	(Middle)	(Last)

2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print)
1286 WEST 36th Street LOS ANGELES CALIF.
(Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)

[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]

3. MAILING ADDRESS
SAME
(Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same)

4. TELEPHONE RE 5521 (Exchange)	5. AGE IN YEARS 37 DATE OF BIRTH July 10 1904 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)	6. PLACE OF BIRTH KANSAS City (Town or county) MISSOURI (State or country)
--	---	---

7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS
MRS. THELMA VENERABLE 1286 WEST 36th St.

8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS
GRANT D. VENERABLE 4903 So. Central Ave. LA

9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS
4903 So. Central Ave LOS ANGELES Calif.
(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.

D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 1-1-42) ☆ GPO 16-21630-1

(over) *Grant D. Venerable*
(Registrant's signature)

Grant D. Venerable's 1945 draft card, with his new address at 2915 Budlong Ave handwritten on top, May 4th 1945.

Grant D. Venerable deed for 2921 S Budlong 1944 August 11th
 Book: 21190 Pages: 142-143

U.S.I.R.S. \$6.60 cancelled GRANT DEED

In consideration of TEN AND NO/100 Dollars, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged by the undersigned, DUDLEY F. KUZELL and ELIZABETH L. KUZELL, husband and wife, DO HEREBY GRANT TO GRANT D. VENERABLE and THELMA L. VENERABLE, husband and wife, as Joint Tenants, the real property in the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, State of California, described as follows: The South 20 feet of Lot 14 and the North 30 feet of Lot 15, in Cotton's Budlong Avenue Tract, as per map recorded in Book 12 Page 59 of Maps, in the office of the County Recorder of said County.

SUBJECT TO: Taxes for the fiscal year 1944 and 1945.

21190 143

Conditions, restrictions, reservations, rights, rights of way and easements of record.
 signed this 27th day of July, 1944.

Dudley F. Kuzell
 Elizabeth L. Kuzell

State of California,)
 County of Los Angeles) ss On this 27th day of July, 1944 before me, the undersigned
 a Notary Public in and for said County, personally appeared Dudley F. Kuzell and
 Elizabeth L. Kuzell known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the
 within instrument and acknowledged that they executed the same.

Witness my hand and official seal.

(SEAL) V. H. Volland, Notary Public
 Los Angeles County, California.
 My Commission Expires June 5-45.

#916 Copy of original recorded at request of National Title Insurance Co. Aug. 11, 1944 at 8
 A.M. copyist #10 Compared, Mame B. Beatty, County Recorder, by *L. J. Lippman* (173) Deputy
 \$1.00-S. T.

NOV 19 1970

LOS ANGELES LAND TITLE CO.
when recorded mail to:

United Mortgage Servicing Corp
3685 Crenshaw Boulevard, Suite 303
Los Angeles, California 90016

1256

RECORDED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS
OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIF.

2 Min. 8 A.M. NOV 19 1970
Post

RAY E. LEE, Registrar-Recorder

DRIVEWAY AGREEMENT

IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED BY THE OWNERS OF:

2921 South Budlong Avenue

Los Angeles, California 90007

2915 South Budlong Avenue

Los Angeles, California 90007

that the maintenance cost involved in providing vehicular access to above mentioned properties will be divided equally between the above property owners and the funds necessary will be collected and administered in a manner mutually agreed to by all parties whenever necessary.

2921 South Budlong Avenue
Los Angeles, California

Grant D. Venerable
Grant D. Venerable

2915 South Budlong Avenue
Los Angeles, California

Texana Sargent
Texana Sargent

The undersigned declare that they are the owners of those certain parcels of land situated in city of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, State of California described as follows:

- PARCEL 1: The South 20 feet of Lot 14 and the North 30 feet of Lot 15 of Cotton's Budlong Avenue Tract, as per map recorded in Book 12 Page 59 of Maps, in the office of the County Recorder of said County.
- PARCEL 2: The South 30 feet of Lot 13 and North 20 feet of Lot 14 of Cotton's Budlong Avenue Tract, as per map recorded in Book 12 Page 59 of Maps, in the office of the County Recorder of said County.

and said owners agree that there is constructed in and upon said right of way, or easement, as suitable pavement and that they will maintain said pavement in a good usable condition under all traffic or weather conditions until said maintenance is assumed by a governmental agency.

This agreement is to be construed as a covenant running with the land and for the mutual benefit of the undersigned, their heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assigns.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, we have executed this agreement this 14th day of

November 1970.

Grant D. Venerable
Grant D. Venerable

Texana Sargent
Texana Sargent

NOV 19 1970

FEE
\$280
21

1256

51097-4

November 19th, 1970 driveway-sharing agreement between Grant D. Venerable at 2921 S. Budlong Ave and Texana Sargent at 2915 S. Budong Ave.

On Second Thought

By LOREN MILLER

LET'S SQUAWK

I have decided to award the week's booby prize to certain attorneys at the Water and Power Department without examining the squawks of other claimants. They won in a walk when they refused to hire Negro workers on a city construction project because they feared the negro couldn't keep together without "treating gement."

I don't know whether or not there would have been arguments whether do the theorists who made order. It is unimportant. Ads of municipally owned projects can't hide their prejudice behind such specious theories. And now is the time for us to protest. We let them get away with this sort of policy and we will be shamed forever under the pious that practice is an old and therefore sacred practice.

It all comes down to the point of the hired servants up town. I own the Department. It belongs to the taxpayers of this city. It means that each one of us has an interest in it. We will look it over if we as owners of a town, discriminate against our race. Let's squawk.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Certain lawyers of the city have earned a distinguished service by their attacks on the unfair unjust trust deed racket. So we know California is one of the few states that permits the banks to take away men's homes out the formality of mortgage foreclosure and giving the lender a lien to redeem his property. A law is particularly unjust one time.

I am glad to note that a Negro, Marjeth, is in the forefront of fight. This sort of thing has neglected by us too long. It is time for us to wake up and see that whenever a law works hardship on the poor it is bound to work a hardship on the race. The poorest in America, the black, make the social injustice.

collages Oregon and Lillard got it in the neck. Too bad.

GREAT MINDS

The L. A. Bar Association and some newspapers are all bet up because a judge permitted the broadcast of the Clark trial. You can understand the papers. They make money only if their news is fresh and the radio cuts in on their business. You need not take the L. A. Bar members seriously. Their mental caliber is indicated by the fact that they bar Negro lawyers from their learned ranks and kicked up the biggest row over the prospect of a Negro judge. Such great minds get fuddled easily.

BOOKS AND BOOKS

I learn from the librarian that the collection at Helen Hunt Jackson Library, "located in the heart of the Black Belt" as the daily prints would say, is falling off. Whether or not this decrease is a calamity, I cannot say. It all depends on what kind of books the cash customers were reading. If they were absorbing some of the trash the Master Minds permit on the book shelves it might turn out to be a blessing in disguise. There are books and books.

As a client of long standing, I am able to report that the library in question has an excellent selection of books from which Negroes might profit. One of our saddest features is our tendency to depend too little on information and too much on flimsy inspiration, a

falling which accounts for the infant and vapid utterings of our editors, preachers, leaders, columnists and public speakers.

Most of us have no acquaintance with reading except a faint and hazy recollection of the patent fisheries of school text books supported with the clap-net of the newspapers. An hour or two spent with a careful selection of books would do much to weed out such erroneous ideas as the one that Negroes could solve all their ills were they given the ballot or another that all will be happy when we can point to a few black millionaires.

WIND BAG

There is talk that the biggest false alarm in America, General (Smiley) Butler may be invited to take over and cure the ills from which our police force is suffering. That would be a major calamity to Negroes. Butler is a roystering bully who has nothing to his credit except imposing brute force on the helpless citizens of those places where he has been sent by the U.

S. He is the same guy who remarked that the Haitian constitution could go to hell. In addition to that, he is incompetent and useless. Despite all the talk, he did not clean up Philadelphia when he was in charge of the city. As one who was there sometimes, I can testify that the racketeers were as wide open as they were before his overwhelming regime.

It Seems To Me

By: L. B. GRANGER

The Urban League throughout its national organization now seems committed to a step which is bound to bring down upon it the wrath and condemnation of

within the memory of the present generation. No one could realize that not only would the Negro be unable to find jobs in the new fields but that he would be fortun-

STUDENT EXPRESSIONS

BY: CARL ECHOLS

GRANT D. VENERABLE

Is the fact known and appreciated that at the world-famous California Institute of Technology, located in Pasadena, one and only one Negro student has ever studied within its sacred walls?

Is the fact known and appreciated that this senior, for such he is, will be graduated from this school this year, having established a precedence hitherto unknown in the twenty or more years of its history?

Grant D. Venerable deserves the highest respect and admiration of his fellows.

The world greets intellectual accomplishments. Let colored folk get into this reception line and honor real achievement when it makes its appearance.

The example of Mr. Venerable will encourage Negro youth throughout the land. It must do more it must awaken a desire and determination to follow in the footsteps of this exemplary young man and student.

Grant Venerable was born in Kansas City, Missouri, July 19, 1904. He came to California a few years ago with his mother, Mrs. Louise Venerable, who lives presently in Los Angeles.

Young Grant graduated from the San Bernardino High School and immediately planned to enter Cal. Tech. He found himself, however, at U. C. L. A. as a medical student. This course was abandoned after three years and the brilliant young mathematician headed straight for the Pasadena Institute made famous by Millikan, Morgan and Einstein. He began his training for Civil Engineering and is soon to complete the course.

Venerable soon won the esteem of professors and students. He was chosen vice-president of the Cosmopolitan club. He was sent by the school to the Canadian Student Christian Conference which convened at Vancouver, British Columbia this past summer. Delegates from over the world were present.

One day Grant was casually led to enumerate a few subjects he has studied during his young career. The list is partly as follows:

Elementary and advanced algebra, plane and solid geometry, trigonometry, plane analytic and solid analytic geometry, integral and differential calculus, theory of probability, theory of numbers, theory of equations, projection geometry, spherical trigonometry, and so forth and so on.

Physics, chemistry, geology, zoology, paleontology, economics, history, Spanish, French, English and a few others help to make the list varied and interesting.

And so proceeds the career of a pioneer who not only on one occasion at Cal. Tech. received one of the two highest grades but who was picked by coach and athletes as sure quarter back and quarter mile material. As a twist of fate altered his career from that of physician to an engineer, so a twist of an ankle changed his career as an athlete, at least for awhile.

Soon the California Institute of Technology will open its doors and send forth another group of graduated scientists and engineers. Among them will be the first Negro in the history of the school. Grant D. Venerable.

"STUDENT EXPRESSIONS by Carl Echols: Grant D. Venerable"

Source: [The California Eagle](#), Editorials October 23, 1932 pg 8

COPIES OF BUILDING PERMITS FOR MAJOR ALTERATIONS

ORIGINAL BUILDING PERMIT

All applications must be filled out by applicant.

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Ward 5 Applicant must indicate the Building Line or Lines clearly and distinctly on the Drawings.

Application for Erection of Frame Buildings
CLASS "D"

Application is hereby made to the Chief Inspector of Buildings of the City of Los Angeles, for the approval of the detailed statement of the specifications and plans herewith submitted for the erection of the building herein described. All provisions of the Building Ordinances shall be complied with in the erection of said building, whether specified herein or not.

(Sign here) A. C. Tobias

Los Angeles, Cal., SEP 23 1908 1908

Lot No. 820 ft 14 Block 1130 ft 15

ASSESSOR PLEASE VERIFY Callahan Building Ave. Tract

District No. 19 M. B. page 9 F. B. page 2112 Jones

ENGINEER PLEASE VERIFY No. 2921 - Building Ave Street Callahan

1. Purpose of the building Residence

2. Number of rooms Seven

3. Is any part to be used for store or other business purposes? No

4. Owner's name A. C. Tobias

5. Owner's address 3578 Building Ave.

6. Architect's name Robert Tobias

7. Builder's name A. C. Tobias

8. Builder's address 3578 Building Ave

9. Entire cost of proposed building, \$ 3000.00

10. Will building be erected on front or rear of lot? Rear on rear

11. Size of lot 50' x 134' Size of building 20' x 60'

12. Number of stories in height 2; height from curb level to highest point 11 m

13. Height of first floor above curb level 2 ft 11 m

14. What is the character of the ground: rock, clay, sand, filled, etc.? Clay

15. What will be the depth of the foundation below curb level? 6'

16. Of what material will foundation and cellar walls be built? Brick

17. Give dimensions of footings 16 in. at bottom, 15 in. high

18. Give thickness of foundation and cellar walls at top 8 in

19. Number and kind of chimneys Three Number of flues One & two

20. Number of inlets to each flue 1 & 2 Interior size of flues 2-5/8 x 2-5/8 x 2-2

21. What will be the size of the mud sills? 2 x 4 Size of girders or stringers 4 x 4

22. What will be the size of exterior studs? 2 x 4 Interior studs 2 x 4

23. Bearing partition studs 2 x 4

PERMIT NO. 5306

3 **OVER**

- REMARKS.

PARCEL PROFILE REPORT



PROPERTY ADDRESSES

2921 S BUDLONG AVE

ZIP CODES

90007

RECENT ACTIVITY

None

CASE NUMBERS

CPC-2008-1552-CPU
CPC-2005-5848-CA
CPC-2004-2394-100
CPC-19 XX-29708
CPC-19 XX-18002
CPC-1990-346-CA
CPC-1983-506
ORD-46167
ORD-180218
ORD-171682
ORD-171681
ORD-162128
ORD-156833
ORD-156356
ORD-129760
ENV-2008-1781-EIR
ENV-2005-6078-ND

City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning

5/15/2022

PARCEL PROFILE REPORT

Address/Legal Information

PIN Number	120B197 147
Lot/Parcel Area (Calculated)	4,020.1 (sq ft)
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 634 - GRID A7
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5054014014
Tract	COTT ON'S BUDLONG AVE TRACT
Map Reference	M B 12-69
Block	None
Lot	15
Arb (Lot Cut Reference)	1
Map Sheet	120B197

Jurisdictional Information

Community Plan Area	South Los Angeles
Area Planning Commission	South Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council	Empowerment Congress North Area
Council District	CD 8 - Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Census Tract #	2221.00
LADBS District Office	Los Angeles Metro

Permitting and Zoning Compliance Information

Administrative Review	None
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Planning and Zoning Information

Special Notes	None
Zoning	R2-1-O
Zoning Information (ZI)	<p>ZI-2374 State Enterprise Zone: Los Angeles</p> <p>ZI-2397 Neighborhood Stabilization Ordinance: North University Park-Exposition Park-West Adams</p> <p>ZI-1231 Specific Plan: South Los Angeles Alcohol Sales</p> <p>ZI-2452 Transit Priority Area in the City of Los Angeles</p>
General Plan Land Use	Low Medium I Residential
General Plan Note(s)	Yes
Hillside Area (Zoning Code)	No
Specific Plan Area	SOUTH LOS ANGELES ALCOHOL SALES
Subarea	None
Special Land Use / Zoning	None
Historic Preservation Review	No
Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	None
Other Historic Designations	None
Other Historic Survey Information	None
Mills Act Contract	None
CDO: Community Design Overlay	None
CPIO: Community Plan Imp. Overlay	None
Subarea	None
CUGU: Clean Up-Green Up	None
HCR: Hillside Construction Regulation	No
NSO: Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay	North University Park-Exposition Park-West Adams
POD: Pedestrian Oriented Districts	None
RFA: Residential Floor Area District	None
RIO: River Implementation Overlay	No

This report is subject to the terms and conditions as set forth on the website. For more details, please refer to the terms and conditions at zimas.lacity.org.
(*) - APN Area is provided "as is" from the Los Angeles County's Public Works, Road Control, Benefit Assessment.

SN: Sign District	No
Streetscape	No
Adaptive Reuse Incentive Area	None
Affordable Housing Linkage Fee	
Residential Market Area	Low
Non-Residential Market Area	Low
Transit Oriented Communities (TOC)	Tier 1
RPA: Redevelopment Project Area	None
Central City Parking	No
Downtown Parking	No
Building Line	23
500 Ft School Zone	No
500 Ft Park Zone	No

Assessor Information

Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5054014014
APN Area (Co. Public Works)*	0.123 (ac)
Use Code	0101 - Residential - Single Family Residence - Pool
Assessed Land Val.	\$416,011
Assessed Improvement Val.	\$105,167
Last Owner Change	03/26/2004
Last Sale Amount	\$398,503
Tax Rate Area	210
Deed Ref No. (City Clerk)	961558
	857914
	857913
	843825
	248157
	1694210
	1439919
	1415876
	1342860
	12068
	1159171
Building 1	
Year Built	1909
Building Class	D45B
Number of Units	1
Number of Bedrooms	3
Number of Bathrooms	1
Building Square Footage	1,813.0 (sq ft)
Building 2	No data for building 2
Building 3	No data for building 3
Building 4	No data for building 4
Building 5	No data for building 5
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No [APN: 5054014014]

Additional Information

Airport Hazard	None
Coastal Zone	None
Farmland	Area Not Mapped
Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone	YES
Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone	No
Fire District No. 1	No
Flood Zone	Outside Flood Zone
Watercourse	No
Hazardous Waste / Border Zone Properties	No

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Methane Hazard Site	Methane Zone
High Wind Velocity Areas	No
Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372)	No
Wells	None
Seismic Hazards	
Active Fault Near-Source Zone	
Nearest Fault (Distance in km)	1.99866504
Nearest Fault (Name)	Puente Hills Blind Thrust
Region	Los Angeles Blind Thrusts
Fault Type	B
Slip Rate (mm/year)	0.70000000
Slip Geometry	Reverse
Slip Type	Moderately / Poorly Constrained
Down Dip Width (km)	19.00000000
Rupture Top	5.00000000
Rupture Bottom	13.00000000
Dip Angle (degrees)	25.00000000
Maximum Magnitude	7.10000000
Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone	No
Landslide	No
Liquefaction	No
Preliminary Fault Rupture Study Area	No
Tsunami Inundation Zone	No
Economic Development Areas	
Business Improvement District	None
Hubzone	Qualified
Opportunity Zone	No
Promise Zone	None
State Enterprise Zone	LOS ANGELES STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE
Housing	
Direct all Inquiries to	Los Angeles Housing Department
Telephone	(866) 557-7368
Website	https://housing.lacity.org
Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO)	No [APN: 5054014014]
Ellis Act Property	No
AB 1482: Tenant Protection Act	See Notes
Assessor Parcel No. (APN)	5054014014
Address	2921 S BUDLONG AVE
Year Built	1909
Use Code	0101 - Residential - Single Family Residence - Pool
Notes	The property is subject to AB 1482 only if the owner is a corporation, limited liability company, or a real estate investment trust.
Public Safety	
Police Information	
Bureau	South
Division / Station	Southwest
Reporting District	337
Fire Information	
Bureau	South
Battalion	13
District / Fire Station	15
Red Flag Restricted Parking	No

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