

90011: SOUTH CENTRAL L.A.

GO ON AN ADVENTURE WITH ANTAEUS THEATRE COMPANY

As part of our free podcast series, *The Zip Code Plays* – a celebration of the diverse culture and history of six Los Angeles neighborhoods – we've created this tour so you can visit some of our favorite landmarks and small businesses. Have fun!

THOUGH ONLY TRACES REMAIN TODAY, IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THE SOUTH CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOOD OF LOS ANGELES WAS THE EPICENTER OF JAZZ CULTURE ON THE WEST COAST. IT WAS EVEN KNOWN AS "THE WEST COAST HARLEM" AT ITS HEIGHT.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS TOUR:

- 📍 GABO CREPES
- 📍 THE DUNBAR HOTEL
- 📍 JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL
- 📍 28TH STREET YMCA
- 📍 27TH STREET BAKERY
- 📍 LINCOLN THEATRE

GABO CREPES

5821 AVALON BLVD LOS ANGELES, CA 90011

Do you have a late night sweet tooth? We recommend Gabo Crepes! Owned and operated by Gabriela Rodriguez and her team, Gabo Crepes is open 5:30pm to 10:30pm Friday through Sunday and is our top choice for getting your crepe fill in Los Angeles!



JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

1319 E 41ST ST LOS ANGELES, CA 90011

In 1915, the citizens of Los Angeles voted to sell \$4.6 million in bonds to raise money to build schools in Los Angeles, with approximately \$500,000 going towards building Jefferson High School. The school was founded in 1916 and is the fourth oldest high school in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Unfortunately, in 1933 a magnitude 6.4 earthquake in Long Beach destroyed the campus. Architect Stiles O. Clements was hired to build a 45-unit campus which was completed in 1935.

Some notable Jefferson High School alumni include Ralph Bunche (the first African American to be honored with a Nobel Peace Prize in 1950), Woody Strode (one of the first Black players in the NFL), Alvin Ailey (choreographer and activist), and Samuel R. Browne. In 1936, Browne became the first African American music teacher in the Los Angeles public school system, teaching at Jefferson High School. Over his 25-year tenure at the school he became a major influence on the up-and-coming jazz musicians of Los Angeles, and Jefferson High School maintained a continuous stream of new artists into the Central Ave jazz scene, keeping it fresh and thriving. He created a robust music curriculum that included music theory, music appreciation, harmony, counterpoint, orchestra, band, and choir. He would often bring students to Central Avenue to hear the musicians play, and sometimes even brought performers like Jimmie Lunceford or Nat King Cole into his classroom.



THE DUNBAR HOTEL

4225 S CENTRAL AVE LOS ANGELES, CA 90011

In its heyday, the Dunbar Hotel was known as a West Coast mixture of Waldorf-Astoria and the Cotton Club" - Los Angeles Times

The Dunbar Hotel you are seeing today has been revived after declining in the 1960s when legal and social victories of the Civil Rights movement offered new options for lodging and performance venues across the city for African Americans. But, in the 1930s to 1950s the Dunbar was known as "the hub of Los Angeles Black culture".

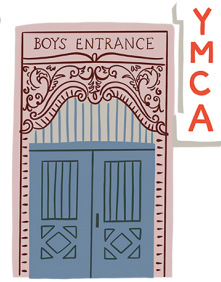
In 1928, John Somerville, the first Black graduate from USC School of Dentistry, and Vada Watson Somerville, the first licensed Black woman dentist in the state of California, bought a corner lot at 42nd and Central. The Somervilles built a four-story luxury hotel for \$250,000, and hired only Black contractors, laborers, and craftsmen. Originally named Hotel Somerville, it was one of the most upscale Black hotels in the United States and hosted the first national convention of the NAACP to be held in the western United States in 1928. Unfortunately, the stock market crash of 1929 led to the Somervilles selling the building. The new owner renamed it the Dunbar Hotel, after famed Black poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. In 1931, a nightclub opened at the Dunbar, and it became the center of the Central Avenue jazz scene becoming a celebrity magnet for Black entertainers including Ella Fitzgerald, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Fats Waller, Nat King Cole, Lena Horne, Billy Eckstine, Jelly Roll Morton, Ray Charles, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington.

28TH STREET YMCA
1006 E 28TH ST LOS ANGELES, CA 90011

The 28th Street YMCA, one of only two remaining club buildings founded by and for African Americans in Los Angeles, was a major milestone for recreational life on Central Avenue. This four-story structure was designed by well-known architect Paul R. Williams, who was the first African American member of the American Institute of Architects.

He designed homes for celebrities including Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and Barbara Stanwyck, among others, as well as many buildings in Los Angeles. Side note: He also designed the wrought iron gate for Murphy Ranch which is featured in our 90272: Pacific Palisades audio play.

Built in 1926, the Spanish Colonial Revival Style building cost \$200,000 and included a gymnasium, meeting spaces, 52 dormitory rooms, and a swimming pool, which was an important feature since swimming pools were racially segregated in Los Angeles until 1931. Be sure to check out the two identical entrances which are engraved with Men's Entrance and Boy's Entrance panels above the doors. In 2009, the building was added to the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places.

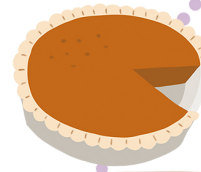


28TH STREET YMCA

27TH STREET BAKERY
2700 S CENTRAL AVE LOS ANGELES, CA 90011

The 27th Street Bakery is a third-generation family-owned business founded by Harry and Sadie Patterson in the 1930s. The Pattersons moved to Los Angeles from Shreveport, Louisiana and opened a restaurant that catered to other African Americans who also came from the South.

In 1956, the restaurant was converted to a specialty bakery - now the largest manufacturer of Sweet Potato Pies on the West Coast. Fun fact: One of the current owners, Jeanette Bolden, won a gold medal in the 4x100 meter relay in the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, and went on to be the head coach of the U.S. women's track and field team for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.



27TH STREET BAKERY



Make sure to take a picture of yourself on the tour and use #zipcodeplays to share your adventure with us!

LINCOLN THEATRE
2300 S CENTRAL AVE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90011



LINCOLN THEATRE

"The West Coast Apollo"

In the 1910s and 1920s, large movie theatres were opened in Downtown Los Angeles in the Broadway Theatre District. However, these theatres either excluded African Americans or restricted them to "colored only" seating sections. As a result, theatres that granted equal access to African Americans were one of the many businesses developed along Central Avenue.

Constructed in 1926, the Lincoln Theatre shared the corridor with other theatres including: the Globe, Tivoli, Angelus, and Hub. The Lincoln Theatre was the largest theatre, with an orchestra pit, large stage, and seating for 2,100 patrons. Designed by John Paxton Perine, the Lincoln Theatre cost \$500,000 to build and is an example of Moorish Revival architecture.

For more than 30 years, the Lincoln hosted a variety of stage shows, plays, concerts, talent shows, vaudeville, and motion pictures, including live performances. It was often referred to as "The West Coast Apollo" because it featured many of the same acts as the Apollo Theater in Harlem. It was outside the Lincoln Theatre in the late 1940s that eden ahbez handed the song "Nature Boy" to Nat King Cole's valet, which reached the top of the Billboard musical charts and helped establish Cole's solo career.

In 1962, the Lincoln Theatre was converted to a church and today it continues to be used for religious services.

Please note: We have developed these tours during COVID-19, so some of the places we have chosen may have restrictions in place, or may not be open to the public at this time. Please follow all stay-at-home orders that are in place. We have tried to include the information we had at the time of creating these tours, but we recommend that you check for updates too. Please also follow all posted rules when enjoying these tours!

THANK YOU FOR JOINING OUR TOUR!

THANK YOU FOR EXPLORING LOS ANGELES WITH ANTAEUS! WE HOPE YOU'LL LISTEN TO ALL SIX OF THE ZIP CODE PLAYS, AND JOIN US FOR MORE TOURS OF LOCAL NEIGHBORHOODS. VISIT ZIPCODEPLAYS.INFO TO LEARN MORE.



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