

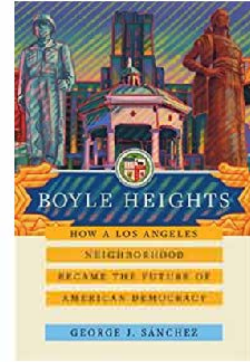
Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy (Volume 59)

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Grades 9-12

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Reading Guide by Van èe Smith-Matsalia, Curtis Middle School

Questions

1. According to the text, how did the racial diversity of Los Angeles create the thriving financial success of the city that we see today?
2. The text suggests that the early landowners in Southern California, specifically those who bought land in the auctions of what would become known as Boyle Heights, became prominent political figures in Los Angeles who were able to gain access to political influence and power. What connection does this suggest about land ownership and power/influence?
3. What effect did the completion of an affordable railroad system have on "The Americanization of Southern California"? How did the creation of a railroad system impact Mexican Elite who had, up until that point, held to their land in Southern California? How might city development impact communities today? Think about your own community. How has it changed overtime? How has this impacted people differently? Was this a positive change or negative one?



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4. The text explicitly states that, “cities throughout Southern California applied restrictive covenants against Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans, African Americans, and sometimes Armenian, Jews, Italians, and other groups seen at the time to be racially undesirables. ‘Racial undesirables’ were just one of many threats that land speculators sought to control in this period.” Considering what you have already learned between the connection of land ownership and power, why might the city leadership of Los Angeles work to keep ‘racial undesirables’ from living on and owning land in the area? Create a timeline of your community. How did it begin? What places tell a story about the neighborhood and about the people who have lived there? What is the land ownership patterns and how do they impact residents today?
5. The rulings against Eunice and William Long allowed for whites to evict Black homeowners simply because they were Black at a time where more than half of the homes were owned and occupied by Black Americans. Look up the original home address of the Long Family (771 E 41st Street, Los Angeles, Ca) and look up the value/cost of houses in that area today. How do you think the Black community might be affected financially today if they were never kicked out of their homes due to racist and discriminatory housing policies?
6. Chapter 5 discusses the internment of Japanese American citizens and those who witnessed the tragic event. In what way did the removal of Japanese Americans change the financial and political landscape of Southern California? What places and buildings represent this history? Learn more about one of the historic places impacted by the internment of Japanese American Citizens. What is this place and what is happening there today?
7. Chapter 8 discusses the Black and Brown Power movements in Los Angeles during the late 1960s. According to the text, how did these two communities affect/support each other in their fights for educational and housing justice? How do you think they can continue to support each other? Find a present-day example of community ally ship. Use two different resources in your research (news article, media, oral history, etc....)

