

were often more like work camps and remained somewhat isolated and from the rest of the City.<sup>66</sup> Most citrus towns had *colonias*, however due to deed restrictions, and its more urban setting, Pomona did not have a centralized citrus community and they were mostly scattered along the southern and eastern edges of the City, which are no longer extant as a result of postwar development in the City.<sup>67</sup>

Despite the boom of the citrus economy, in the years leading up to World War II, the industry's demise was on the horizon. Several weather events such as freezes and droughts had plagued growers in the preceding decades, which led to water scarcity and increased growing costs. This set of unfortunate events led to the eventual dismantling of the citrus industry by selling and subdividing farms, redeveloping once rich agricultural properties, and closing support services like packinghouses and canneries.<sup>68</sup>

## 4.2.2 Subtheme: Residential Development

Archival research and community outreach provided limited information about the earliest forms of housing for Pomona's Latina/o community. While the Rancho period has a well-documented residential development history (see Section 4.1.2), the immigrants arriving in Pomona in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to work in the agricultural fields and on the railroads have minimal written and physical documentation of their living conditions.

### 4.2.2.1 Early Residential Housing Forms (circa 1870-circa 1920)

Thousands of Mexican laborers were brought to Pomona by the railroad companies for the construction and maintenance of the new railroad lines between 1870 and 1880, and the City experienced a significant worker housing shortage. The railroad companies utilized railroad cars to deal with the housing shortage as described below:

Most of them [the railroad workers] had families and were quartered in what consisted of railroad cars with divisions called *secciones*. Instances of whole families living in one small room were not uncommon. Cooking facilities for the whole cluster of families were normally housed in a special car equipped for that purpose. The *secciones* were moved from place to place and were parked on rail siding for the duration of work for the specific area. In the more stable labor camps, the railroad companies built groups of small houses, normally along the railroad tracks and on the outskirts of towns. These groups of homes, due to the fact that they were inhabited predominately by people of Mexican descent, were referred to as *colonias*, the Spanish word for colony. This description is applied to a neighborhood of homes where inhabitants are mainly of

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<sup>66</sup> HRG 46; González, 6-10; "Council Hears Appeal In Behalf of Mexicans; Exchange May Act Soon," *Progress Bulletin* (Pomona), November 4, 1920, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/622446018/>.

<sup>67</sup> García, 69.

<sup>68</sup> Lothrop, 66-67, 79; HRG, 96.

Mexican descent. Pomona's first and largest *colonia* is the one north of the Southern Pacific tracks, west of Huntington Boulevard.<sup>69</sup>

Numerous books and articles have been written on the plight of citrus workers throughout the Pomona Valley, which sheds some light on potential early housing options for the agricultural workers, but there are no extant examples of worker camps or housing remaining to confirm these theories. Popular forms of agricultural worker housing seen throughout the Pomona Valley included small cabins/shacks, bunkhouses, tents, boarding houses, and makeshift dwellings with scrap materials. Unlike most citrus cities, Pomona did not have concentrations of *colonias*, so the housing was solely at the discretion of the farm owner and there was no regulation or government oversight to ensure that minimal safety and sanitary conditions were met.<sup>70</sup>

#### **4.2.2.2 Railroad and Hamilton Neighborhood (circa 1885-Present)**

Based on previous historical accounts and archival research, the oldest Latina/o neighborhood in the City is concentrated off West Second Street and between Hamilton Boulevard and Oak Avenue on both sides of the railroad tracks on the outskirts of town (Exhibit 12), referred to herein as the Railroad and Hamilton neighborhood.<sup>71</sup> This area was originally used for agricultural purposes, but shifted to residential use in the early 1900s. The 1906 Sanborn Map shows modestly scaled single-family homes scattered sparsely throughout the blocks north of the railroad tracks. The map did not document the area to the south of the tracks. By 1911, the Sanborn Map shows additional lots north of the railroad tracks had been infilled with homes, but much of the neighborhood was still undeveloped with buildings.<sup>72</sup>

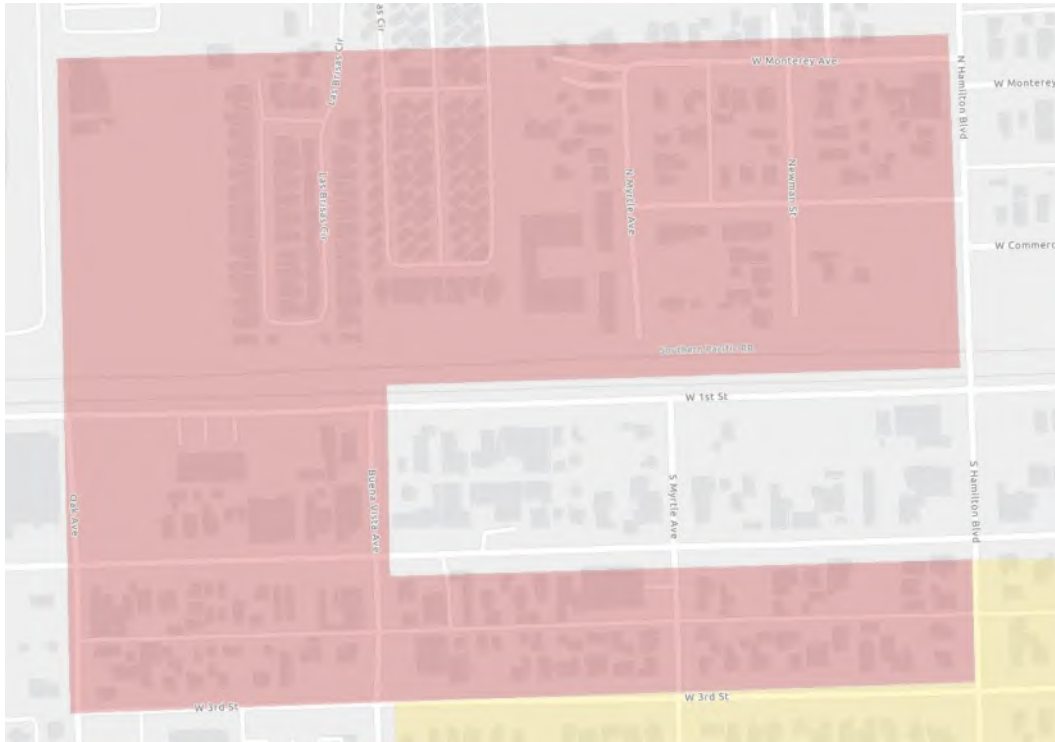
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<sup>69</sup> *Pomona Centennial History*, 4-5.

<sup>70</sup> García, 63-65.

<sup>71</sup> HRG, 96; Lothrop, 79.

<sup>72</sup> Sanborn Maps, Various Years, Los Angeles Public Library.

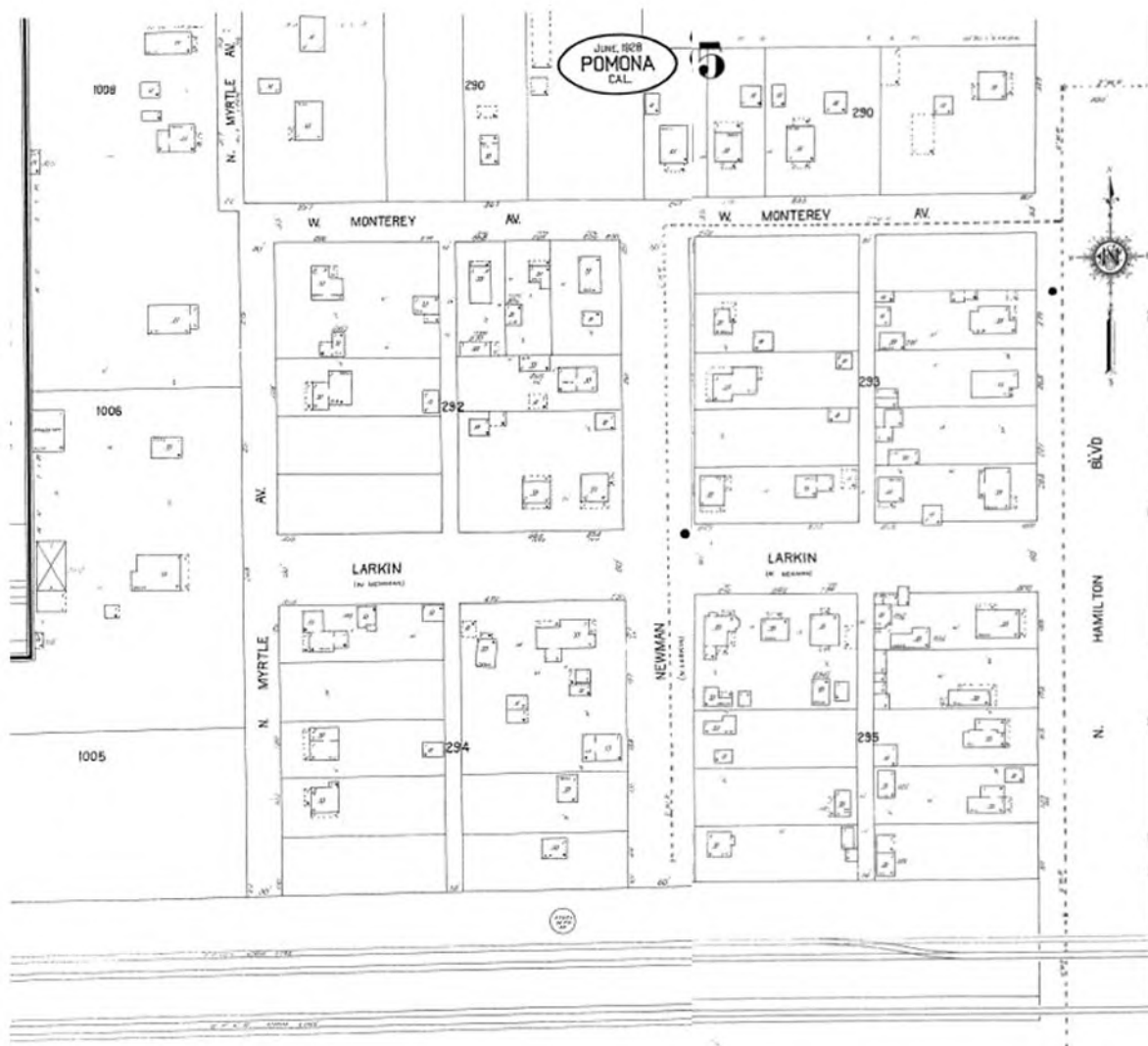


**Exhibit 12. General boundaries of Railroad and Hamilton neighborhood shown in red<sup>73</sup>**

The 1928 Sanborn Map is the first to show the entirety of the neighborhood's boundaries and shows evidence of multiple buildings placed on individual lots and a general increase in density. While residential development continued to increase, many lots were still vacant or used for orchards (Exhibit 13).

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<sup>73</sup> Center for Geospatial Solutions, 2022.



**Exhibit 13. 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map showing portions of the Railroad and Hamilton neighborhood<sup>74</sup>**

An aerial photograph from 1938 depicts the neighborhood with some remaining agricultural fields in the northwestern section, and lots developed with single-family homes throughout (Exhibit 14).<sup>75</sup> In 1939, this neighborhood was identified as redlined district D21, which is discussed in detail in Section 4.2.2.4 Redlining (1939-1963).<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Sanborn Map, 1928.

<sup>75</sup> UCSB 2025; NETR 2025

<sup>76</sup> Sanborn Maps, Various Years, Los Angeles Public Library.



**Exhibit 14. 1938 aerial photograph showing how Railroad and Hamilton neighborhood appeared one year before the redlining map was drawn.<sup>77</sup>**

By 1960, aerial imagery shows that only two small areas of agricultural fields remained. At this time, the mobile home park now known as “HiFi Mobile Home Plaza” was constructed, as well as St. Joseph’s Catholic Church and its associated athletic field. By the mid to late 1960s, the neighborhood largely appeared as it does in the present day, with the exception of the block bound by West First Street to the north, West Second Street to the south, Oak Avenue to the west, and South Buena Vista Avenue to the east, which from the 1960s through the 1980s, was converted and redeveloped for commercial use.<sup>78</sup>

Within the boundaries of the Railroad and Hamilton neighborhood is a small area known today as Cherrieville (also spelled Cherryville). It appears that the area was not formally planned, but rather, developed organically within the boundaries of the neighborhood. The Cherrieville area is roughly defined as by the boundaries of West Monterey Avenue to the north, the railroad tracks to the south, North Myrtle Avenue to the west, and North Hamilton Boulevard to the east. This area also features a park originally known as Cherrieville Park, located on the corner of North Hamilton Boulevard and West Monterey Avenue. Cherrieville Park was renamed by the City in 1989 as a result of continued

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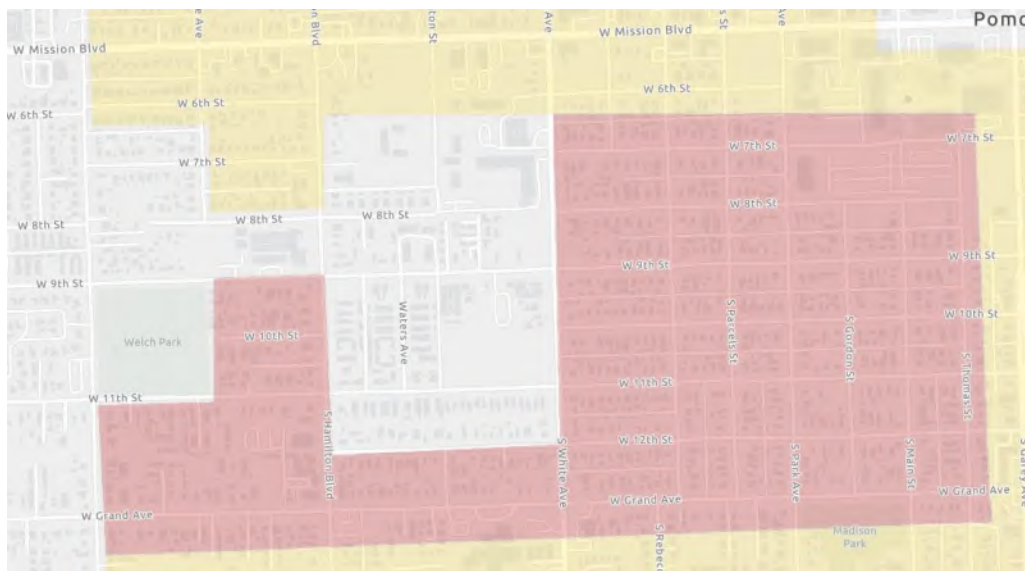
<sup>77</sup> UCSB 2025

<sup>78</sup> UCSB 2025, NETR 2025

gang activity and associations with one of the City's oldest Latina/o street gangs bearing the same name, Cherriville. Today the park is known as Hamilton Park.<sup>79</sup>

#### 4.2.2.3 Grand and Hamilton Neighborhood (circa 1930 -Present)

A second historically Latina/o residential neighborhood, referred to herein as the Grand and Hamilton neighborhood, was identified further south of the Railroad and Hamilton neighborhood. The general boundaries of the neighborhood are West Seventh Street (north), South Thomas Street (east), West Grand Avenue (south), and Buena Vista Street (west) (Exhibit 15).



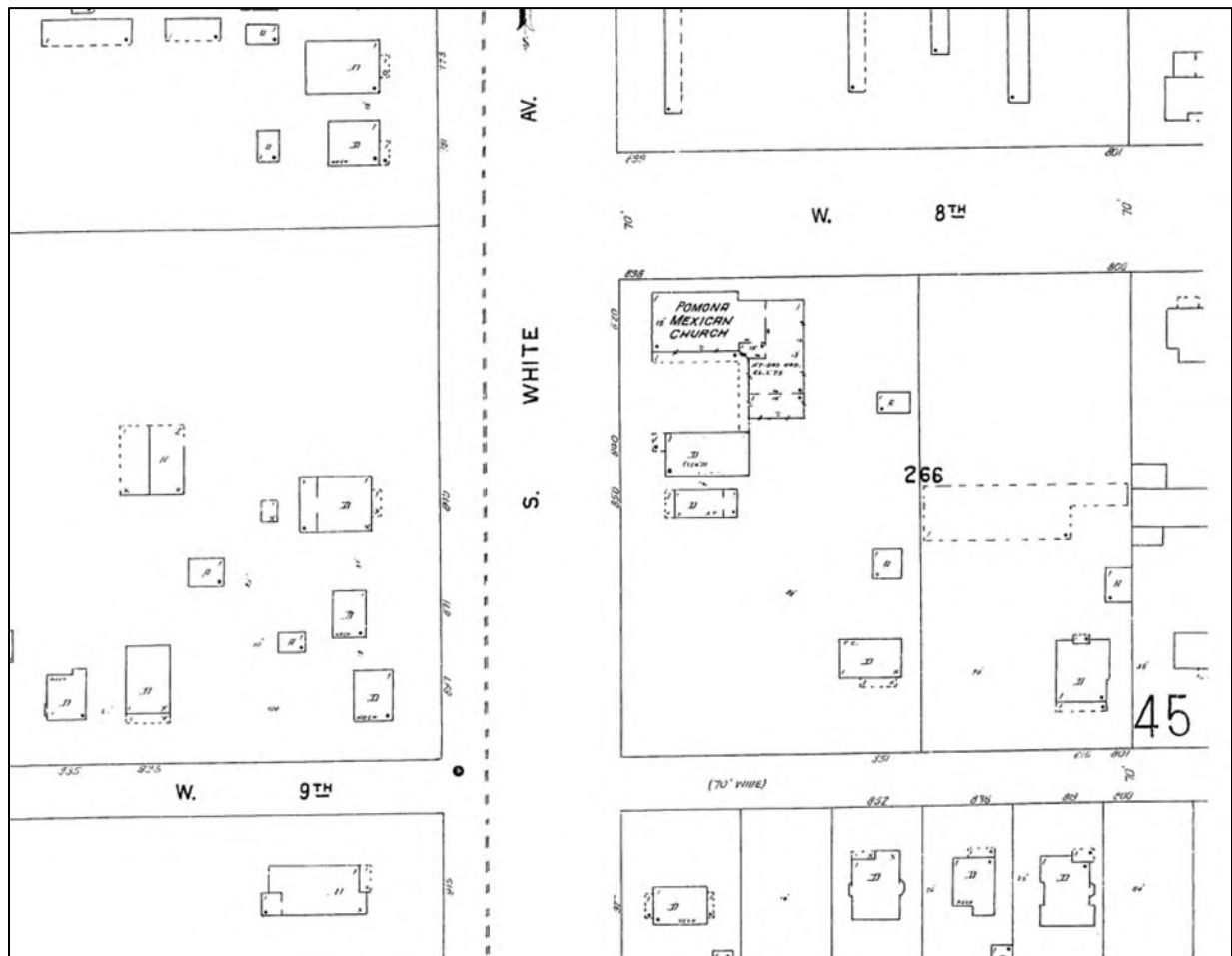
**Exhibit 15. General boundaries of Grand and Hamilton neighborhood shown in red<sup>80</sup>**

This area was originally used for agricultural purposes, but was converted to primarily residential use by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1895 Sanborn Map shows a mix of single-family residential buildings, as well as agricultural related buildings such as storage barns, animal pens, and stables. The 1906 and 1911 Sanborn Maps show the continued slow development of more residences throughout the lots that were previously occupied by orchards. By 1928, a church located at 810 South White Avenue was constructed and labeled on the Sanborn Map as the "Pomona Mexican Church" (Exhibit 16). This map also demonstrates that the neighborhood was substantially infilled with residential development, specifically in the northern sections. Areas south of West Tenth Street still had several vacant lots. The entire neighborhood was limited in its commercial development at this time.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Jessica Katz, "Blood Spills as Pomona Gang War Fails to Die," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1987; Jason Newell, "A city besieged", *Gangland: A look at gangs in Southern California*, September 27, 2004; "Gift of Labor," *Progress-Bulletin* (Pomona), August 3, 1975, 9. Mike Ward, "What's in a Name? Pomona Hopes a Little Less Crime," December 23, 1990. [www.latimes.com/archives](http://www.latimes.com/archives).

<sup>80</sup> Center for Geospatial Solutions, 2022.

<sup>81</sup> Sanborn Maps, *Los Angeles Public Library*, Various Years



**Exhibit 16. 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map showing “Pomona Mexican Church”<sup>82</sup>**

The two neighborhoods discussed above were home to many of the City’s Latina/o residents at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but their living conditions within these neighborhoods were generally unsanitary and not maintained by the City. Much like the treatment of agricultural workers on farms, the City’s early Latina/o communities were isolated in the early years, with workers treated as dispensable and their living conditions often deplorable. This general lack of concern for the living conditions of the Mexican people by White residents and government representatives is captured in a 1920 newspaper article in which Reverend Walter C. Buckner spoke to the current living conditions of the Mexican residents and the popular views of Mexicans:

He [Buckner] declared that he had no criticism to make of the health department in the recent clean-up campaign but that he wished to make an appeal to the council to help solve the very pressing problem by encouraging any worthy project designed to put an end to the present shortage of houses for the Mexicans...

<sup>82</sup> Sanborn Map, 1928.

He believed that the city would still continue to exist without a single Mexican but that they are a valuable part of the community that even tho they might be dispensable that is no excuse for treating them badly...

...They are a clannish people who visit each other a great deal, talk over affairs, and spread a great deal of information among themselves so that what one Mexican knows that is of interest to his race, all the other Mexicans in the state know too<sup>83</sup>

Later in the same article Councilman Holmes G. Brown stated that a recent State Housing Commission inspection found the Mexican worker housing conditions to be "intolerable" and the state would take action if the City did not.<sup>84</sup> While steps were taken to attempt to remedy the issues in the Latina/o neighborhoods, as the Great Depression arrived, these neighborhood improvement efforts came to a grinding halt with the introduction of redlining, which is discussed in detail in Section 4.2.2.4 Redlining (1939-1963).

By 1950, the Sanborn Map shows that all but a few lots within the neighborhood were developed with single-family homes.<sup>85</sup> Over the next several decades, the neighborhood continued to infill with dense residential development. During the 1950s and 1960s, civic development at the northeastern corner of the neighborhood replaced original residences. Other large churches were developed as well, including Sacred Heart Church, which is located at 1263 South Hamilton Street. This church was constructed in the 1940s and is known for its association with the Latina/o community. By the mid to late 1960s, the neighborhood looked much like it does today.<sup>86</sup>

#### **4.2.2.4 Redlining (1939-1963)**

The presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) included a variety of governmental programs designed to help the United States recover during the Great Depression. These programs were collectively referred to as the New Deal. Two of the New Deal programs that significantly impacted housing throughout the United States was the enactment of the Homeowners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the National Housing Authority. Through the National Housing Act, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was created and alongside HOLC, were used to stabilize the housing market and provide federal aid to ease foreclosures during the Depression. It was also designed to provide opportunities for more Americans to become homeowners. Previously, banks only financed 50 percent of home costs, and mortgages had a duration of five years or less. Mortgages only covered the interest on the loan and typically required refinancing. In contrast, the new FHA loan covered up to 80 percent of the purchase

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<sup>83</sup> "Council Hears Appeal In Behalf of Mexicans; Exchange May Act Soon," *Progress Bulletin* (Pomona), November 4, 1920, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/622446018/>.

<sup>84</sup> "Council Hears Appeal In Behalf of Mexicans; Exchange May Act Soon," November 4, 1920.

<sup>85</sup> Sanborn Maps, *Los Angeles Public Library*, Various Years

<sup>86</sup> NETR 2025; UCSB 2025

price of the house with repayment options up to 20 years. Further amendments to loan terms lowered down payments and increased loan terms to 30 years.<sup>87</sup>

To qualify for FHA loans, the property must be at low risk of falling into default. The FHA guidelines stated a “whites only” requirement and also recommended against infiltration of “inharmonious racial or nationality groups.” Loans were typically not approved in older neighborhoods and loan terms specified the property could not be sold to Black citizens. These unfair housing practices were a basis for discrimination against other races such as Latina/os.<sup>88</sup>

HOLC performed surveys of cities and created “residential security” maps. These maps graded city neighborhoods by using a standardized form discussing location, quality and age of homes, proximity to industrial and commercial zones, and the socioeconomic, racial, ethnic makeup of the neighborhoods.<sup>89</sup> The colored maps were used to determine which neighborhoods were worthy of loans. Ranking from least risky and colored in green or given the letter “A,” and most risky in red or letter “D.” These determinations were based on HOLC surveys.<sup>90</sup> The lower neighborhoods, lettered C or D, typically were described with language such as “infiltration,” “subversive,” “undesirable,” “inharmonious,” or “lower grade” populations. Language used for the City of Pomona routinely mentioned “infiltration of Mexicans” and protections from “racial hazards.”<sup>91</sup>

Real estate agents were incentivized to participate in these discriminatory practices, as they followed a “code of ethics” established by the National Association of Real Estate Boards that prohibited realtors from showing homes to “members of any race or nationality” in areas where their presence would bring down the property value. Breaking this code risked the realtor’s license.<sup>92</sup>

The best and most affluent neighborhoods in Pomona were located near Ganesha Park where residents were described as “business and professional men, executives and retired people.”<sup>93</sup> While other neighborhoods were categorized as “Hazardous” neighborhoods. The first of these neighborhoods was Railroad and Hamilton, which was located in an area formed in a “C” shape around Edison Historic District, located to the north and south of West Second Street between North Hamilton Boulevard and Oak Avenue. This area was described as “completely occupied [by] Mexicans (peon type) and a few Negroes” (Exhibit 17).<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> California Department of Transportation, “Tract Housing in California, 1945-1973: A Context for National Register Evaluation,” 2011. <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/ser/tract-housing-in-ca-1945-1973-a11y.pdf>.

<sup>88</sup> Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York, NY: Liveright, 2017), 67.

<sup>89</sup> Jason Richardson, Bruce C. Mitchell, et al, “Redlining and Neighborhood Health.” Accessed February 12, 2025, <https://nrcr.org/holc-health/#Citations>.

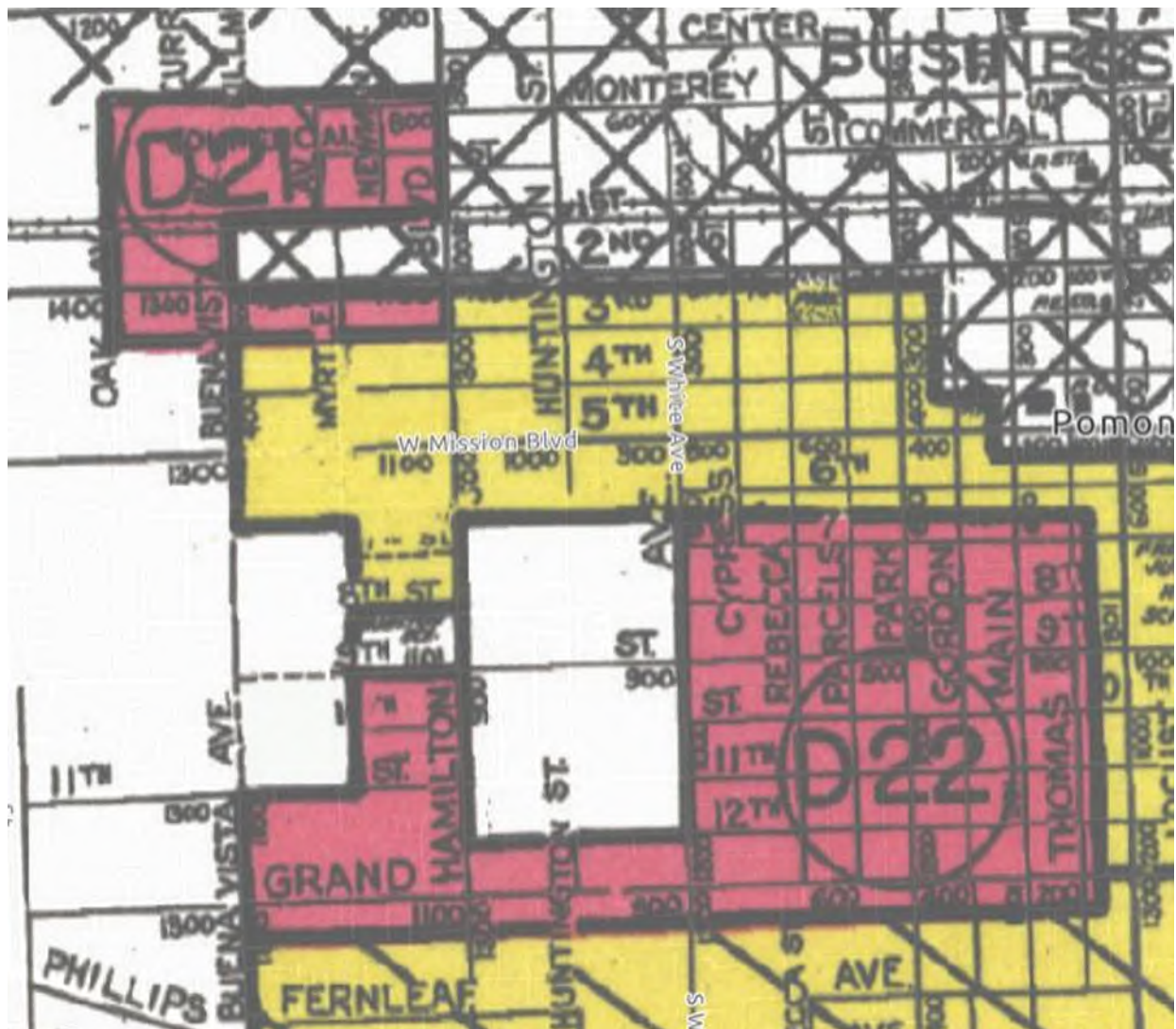
<sup>90</sup> Candace Jackson, “What Is Redlining?” *The New York Times*, August 17, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html>.

<sup>91</sup> Center for Geospatial Solutions, “Structural Racism and Land Use and Policies in Pomona, CA,” ArcGIS StoryMaps, August 29, 2022, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c5b6b05808014b5a9e24cf82b2a4dd1b>.

<sup>92</sup> HRG, 137.

<sup>93</sup> Center for Geospatial Solutions, 2022.

<sup>94</sup> Center for Geospatial Solutions, 2022.



**Exhibit 17. 1939 HOLC Redlining Map showing Pomona’s Latina/o neighborhoods in red<sup>95</sup>**

The other redlined area in Pomona was the Grand and Hamilton neighborhood, generally bound by Grand Avenue (south), Buena Vista Avenue (west), West Ninth Street and West Seventh Street (north), and South Thomas Street (east) (Exhibit 17). This neighborhood was described by the HOLC in 1939 as follows:

Mexican & Negro laborers & relief clients; and poor white laboring class... This is another area which has degenerated due to infiltration of Mexicans. It differs from the other Mexican district in Pomona in that the improvements were not built in the typical Mexican farm labor shack type, but are the relics of a once acceptable neighborhood.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Center for Geospatial Solutions, 2022.

<sup>96</sup> Center for Geospatial Solutions, 2022.

The 1939 redline map information also indicated that some poor white laboring class families remained in the area, which suggests that the neighborhood may not have originally been a Latina/o neighborhood. City directory research from 1940 confirms that the neighborhood consisted of approximately one-quarter to one-third of residents with Latina/o last names.<sup>97</sup>

As in many other cities throughout the United States, redlined neighborhoods in Pomona reinforced and formalized segregationist ideas and planning practices and divided communities. Attempts were made to correct the damage caused by redlining with the California Fair Housing Act of 1963, better known as the Rumford Act (AB 1240). Under this legislation, people of color were allowed to purchase housing without being subject to discrimination, but in some instances the damage to communities was already done. Discriminatory housing practices and the continued segregation and mistreatment of Latina/os became one of the many issues that the Chicano civil rights movement took on in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>98</sup>

Since the 1970s, Pomona's Latina/o residential neighborhoods continued to be predominately Latina/o and retain a great deal of the original built environment from the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 4.2.3 Subtheme: Religion and Spirituality in Latino Culture

Most of Southern California's Latina/o community has historically been and continues to be strongly rooted in religion and spirituality. While there are many different nationalities represented under the term Latina/o, a significant percentage of the population were raised and/or continue to practice the Catholic faith. The history of the Catholic faith in Southern California can be traced back to the early settlement of Los Angeles and the establishment of the original Spanish missions between 1769 and 1823. During this time, there were 21 missions established throughout California and Los Angeles was just one of many. In 1769 the Portolá expedition reached the present-day boundaries of Los Angeles and became the first European visitors to the area. Father Junípero Serra established the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel Catholic mission on September 8, 1771.<sup>99</sup> When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821 the path toward the secularization of the missions unfolded and by 1834 the missions were secularized and the Rancho Period began in California.<sup>100</sup>

While Catholicism remained a dominate religion throughout much of the Latina/o community in California during the Rancho Period, the arrival of the railroads brought new religious influences to the region. From 1880 to 1910 there were significant transitions in Mexican Catholicism in California that can be attributed to the arrival of the railroads in the 1870s. Not only did the railroads bring an influx of opportunities for Latina/os in California, but they also led to significant population booms with

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<sup>97</sup> UCSB 2025; NETR 2025; City directories, various years.

<sup>98</sup> Herbert G. Ruffin II, "The California Fair Housing Act [The Rumford Act] (1963-1968), *Black Past*, June 5, 2011, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/california-fair-housing-act-rumford-act-1963-1968/>.

<sup>99</sup> OHP, 27; Douglas E. Kyle, *Historic Spots in California Fifth Edition*, Stanford University Press, 2002, 151-152.

<sup>100</sup> Clifton L. Holland, *The Religious Dimension in Historic Los Angeles: A Protestant Case Study*, 1974, William Carey Library, South Pasadena, 28-35.