



Speidel Building, 2022. HRG.

In 1972, City Hall (1911) and the Federal Building (originally the Post Office; 1932) were sold to the CRA for \$475,000 and \$275,000, respectively.³⁴⁸ By this time, City Hall had been vacant for several years after city offices moved to the newly designed Civic Center across the street on Mission Street. Postal operations moved from the Federal Building to the west lobby of the Speidel Building in 1973. Other carriers worked out of the Diamond Bar office.³⁴⁹ In 1973, City Hall and the Federal Building were demolished to make way for a new, multi-million-dollar office-financial center north of Mission Boulevard between Garey Avenue and Main Street. Following demolition of City Hall, construction began on a new \$1.2 million building for Bank of California.

Although there were grandiose plans for downtown improvements in the early 1970s, many of the projects were not completed. In 1973, the CRA terminated agreements with the Speidel and Smith Development Co. as the exclusive developers for the proposed \$8 million retail center on Pomona Mall East. The CRA determined that the developers had difficulty obtaining sufficient funds for the project, and development in the area slowed.³⁵⁰ It appears that the CRA in Pomona was dissolved circa 1974.³⁵¹

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION

The 1950s and 1960s ushered in a period renegotiated public space in Pomona and greater Southern California. Consisting of Mexican Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, and whites, Southland communities engaged in a greater degree of intercultural communication during the post-war period.

One vehicle for this increased communication was the construction of parkways and freeways. Although parkways and freeways often divided neighborhoods in the urban core of Los Angeles,

³⁴⁸ "Old City Hall Gives Way to New Financial Complex," *Progress Bulletin*, October 16, 1973, 11.

³⁴⁹ "Post Office is Moving to Speidel Building," *Progress Bulletin*, July 6, 1973, 11.

³⁵⁰ "Pomona Urged to Cancel Agreement on Mall Project," *Progress Bulletin*, October 14, 1973, 13.

³⁵¹ "Public Hearing to be Held on Sale of One-Block Area," *Progress Bulletin*, July 24, 1974, 11.

they reinforced links between communities in the orbit of Los Angeles with communities previously accessible via interurban railways. Another venue that exhibited demographic and economic changes was the creation of multiethnic and multiracial dance halls. The relative prosperity of the 1950s provided greater movement, thereby creating a multiracial youth culture that challenged the social relations in Pomona and greater Southern California.³⁵²

In Pomona, one example of this was the establishment of Rainbow Gardens as a venue for Latin American music. Prior to this time, the dance hall hosted big band productions. When asked if a Mexican American attended Rainbow Gardens in the 1940s, Pomona local Calendario Mendoza replied:

Oh, no. Absolutely not. In fact, I hesitate to say this, but I think that even before then a Mexican American had to be *extremely* well dressed and not even look too much like a Mexican in order to get into Rainbow Gardens on a Saturday night [with the white bands]. It just was one of those things. It was a sign of our times, at that time, when discrimination was still there.³⁵³

This changed in the 1950s. Beginning in 1950, the dance hall began hosting mid-week Latin American dances with live performances. The event was hosted by Mendoza, who had taken over a regional Mexican radio program in 1949. Mendoza was recognized by many Mexican Americans in the citrus belt as the central figure in promoting Latin American music. As the popularity of the dance hall increased, it exclusively played Latin American music, and became a central gathering spot for Latinos in the Pomona Valley.³⁵⁴

THE FIGHT FOR FAIR HOUSING & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Historically, marginalized communities of color in Pomona were centered in specific enclaves of the city. It was not until the 1963 passage of the Fair Housing Act, also known as the Rumford Fair Housing Act, that discrimination was legally outlawed.

Prior to the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1963, most Black residents in Pomona resided in a section of south Pomona surrounding White Avenue and west of Garey Avenue.³⁵⁵ One hundred and fifty housing units in this area were occupied by non-white renters or owners.³⁵⁶ During the 1960s, two other Black communities blossomed in the northeastern and northwestern regions of the city. Of the 22,000 residents that Pomona gained in the 1960s, 17,000 were Black residents; this represented an increase from just 1% of the city's population to about 20%.³⁵⁷ The *Los Angeles Times* documented three derogatory names given to the three predominantly Black districts of the city: "The Island" in northeast Pomona near Pomona High School; "Sin Town" in the northwest near Ganesha High School; and "The Flats" in the southwest near Garey High School.³⁵⁸

³⁵² Garcia, 191.

³⁵³ Interview with Calendario Mendoza, February 7, 1995, as recorded in Garcia, 192.

³⁵⁴ Garcia, 194.

³⁵⁵ "Pomona's Council Reaffirms Support of Open Housing," *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1969, SG1.

³⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1960, Los Angeles and Long Beach, California*, 722.

³⁵⁷ "Pomona Gropes for Stability in Storm of Ethnic Chaos," *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1971, A1.

³⁵⁸ "Pomona Gropes for Stability in Storm of Ethnic Chaos," *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1971, A1.

In contrast, Pomona's Latino population estimates from the 1950s are difficult to calculate, given the Census methodology at the time that categorized Latinos as white. By 1960, the Latino community was largely concentrated in the area south of Holt Avenue and to the west of Garey Avenue.³⁵⁹ During the 1960 Census, the government began tracking Spanish surname populations (domestic and foreign born). Officially, the Census data records nearly 4,200 residents with Spanish surnames in the 1960 Census.³⁶⁰ The majority of Pomona's enumeration tracts contained residents with Spanish surnames, although six tracts contained the vast majority of these groups, which were in the area west of Garey Avenue, both north and south of the railroad tracks; the areas roughly correlated to the redlined neighborhoods of Pomona from 1939. By 1970, the Latino population was more widely dispersed across the city. The community of Cherrieville, one of Pomona's oldest neighborhoods and comprising 75 homes, was home to one of Pomona's oldest Latino areas, and associated with several groups, including Los Cherries, Los Dukes, and Mas Locotes.³⁶¹

During the 1960s, the California State Legislature passed several bills aimed at ending discrimination in business, employment, and housing. The Fair Housing Act of 1963 made it illegal for "anyone selling, renting or leasing a residence to discriminate based on race, creed, color or national origin."³⁶² The law was not universally well received and realtor home association groups in Southern California collaborated with similar groups around the state to spearhead Proposition 14, which aimed to repeal the Fair Housing Act.³⁶³ One of Pomona's leading developers, Robert A. Olin, was one of the original signatories to Proposition 14. "The aim of Proposition 14," said Olin, "was to assure for anyone the right to sell to whom he chooses...People want to know who the people are next door before they buy."³⁶⁴

However, there were numerous staunch advocates in the Pomona who were active in the fight for fair housing. Local developer Ralph Lewis was a resolute supporter of the Fair Housing Act and served as the chairman of the fair housing committee of the Home Builders Council of California. Lewis formally debated against Olin, his former partner, at professional meetings, and lauded the new legislation alongside representatives of the NAACP. Lewis referred to Proposition 14 and other campaigns as "a futile expenditure of effort and funds which will hurt race relations in California."³⁶⁵

Other proponents for fair housing in Pomona included John McGlothin, who was one of the few local realtors to be a voice for fair housing. The president of the local chapter of the NAACP, Moody T. Law, was also a vocal advocate. Important early advocacy was undertaken by the Pomona Valley Fellowship for Social Justice. The significance of this issue to the local community is evidenced by the fact that the largest demonstration against the repeal of Fair Housing laws in California occurred in Pomona in January 1964, when 500 National Association

³⁵⁹ "Pomona Gropes for Stability in Storm of Ethnic Chaos," *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1971, A1.

³⁶⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, *U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1960, Los Angeles and Long Beach, California*, 104.

³⁶¹ Jesse Katz, "Blood Spills as Pomona Gang War Fails to Die," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1987.

³⁶² Lawrence P. Crouchett, "Assemblyman W. Byron Rumford: Symbol for an Era," *California History* 66, no 1 (1987): 19.

³⁶³ "Housing Long Beach: A Brief Historical Context and Framework for Equitable Housing Policy in Long Beach," <http://www.housinglb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/HousingLB-Paper5-8-13.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2019), 2.

³⁶⁴ "Landlords Admit They Bar Negroes," *Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 1966, B1.

³⁶⁵ Carpio, 192.

for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) members picketed in downtown Pomona.

In 1962, when lay-offs began at the Convair plant, homes in Valwood Estates, a postwar subdivision recorded in 1954, were vacated on almost every block and property values plummeted.³⁶⁶ By 1963, there were 52 vacant homes; of the remaining residents, 213 were white and 96 were Black. Vacancies were caused by a combination of overbuilding, hard economic times, and repossessions. Due to the vacancy rate and rundown nature of those properties, home values dropped as much as \$2,500 below their original purchase price.³⁶⁷ Some people blamed the decline in value on the presence of Black neighbors.



Context view of Valwood Estates, 2022. *HRG*.

In 1963, the Valwood Property Owners Association was formed to help stem the sale of homes by white owners and beautify the recently integrated neighborhood. The association was led by Mrs. Rudolph Augarten and Mrs. Louis Robinson, white and Black residents, respectively. The association began a “not for sale” campaign of yard signs to discourage selling by white owners, and to prevent “blockbusting” by realtors who were encouraging panic selling among white residents. In 1963, the Homeowners Association voted to support an open housing covenant. The association’s efforts proved fruitful. By 1964, all but 20 of the vacant houses were occupied and white flight had effectively been curtailed—making Valwood one of the first, if not the first, successfully integrated neighborhoods in Pomona.

In 1964, the Pomona Valley Fair Housing Council was established.³⁶⁸ The purpose of the organization was to create better understanding between people, promote construction of low-income housing, and prevent discriminatory practices in housing. The Fair Housing Council’s office was located at 1238 W. Mission Boulevard. In March of 1969, Monroe Jones was elected

³⁶⁶ “Valwood Group Hopes to Prove Integrated Tract Can Prosper,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 1963, SG1.

³⁶⁷ “Valwood Group Hopes to Prove Integrated Tract Can Prosper,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 1963, SG1.

³⁶⁸ “Rumford Act Supporters to Organize,” *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, April 17, 1964, 15.

President. Jones arrived in Pomona in early 1968 after serving on the City Council in Seaside, near San Francisco. In an extensive interview in the *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, Jones called for realtors to cease and desist steering people to certain areas of Pomona based on their race. He also noted that Black residents who were fleeing the inner-cities of Los Angeles had few choices for relocation.³⁶⁹ In 1969, a study found that nearly three-quarters of the Black residents living in Pomona came from other Southern California cities, establishing a migration pattern from cities to suburbs.³⁷⁰

Another local voice for fair housing was John P. Sloane, chairman of the Pomona Human Relations Council. Human Relations Councils were often formed by city governments as a gesture to ease tensions, though they typically lacked authority. Pomona formed a Human Relations Council around 1960; however, it was widely criticized as ineffective. In order to affect some progress in the city, in 1969, Sloane asked that the Pomona City Council draft a letter reaffirming the open housing principle.

In January 1970, police responded to a disturbance complaint that resulted in injuries to several people. When the police chief exonerated the officers handling of the situation, Black leaders held protests in City Hall, condemning the report as a “complete whitewash.” The Black community listed the incident as one of many prejudices and discriminations they faced in Pomona. Monroe Jones, a local leader of the Pomona Valley Fair Housing Council, recalled that ten months ago he “brought to the attention of the council the fact that there are fewer than 20 Blacks among the city’s nearly 700 city employees...in all this time there has been no action or response.”



Black Residents Protesting Discrimination at Pomona City Hall, 1970. *Los Angeles Times*.

³⁶⁹ “A Militant Voice of Reason Speaks,” *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, May 31, 1969, 2.

³⁷⁰ “Recreation Use Urged for Lot in Negro Area,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1969, SG_A6.

When the police chief claimed that only a small segment of the population had complaints about the incident, Scott Jones, a local leader of the NAACP, replied that, “What the chief is really saying is that Negroes shouldn’t say anything. And if a black does complain, he’s a loudmouth. But if a white complains, action is taken at once.”³⁷¹

By the early 1970s, a survey found that the majority of white residents in Pomona “professed a desire to move from their current neighborhood,” suggesting the role of white flight in Pomona’s complex racial makeup.³⁷² Redistricting was again evident in the 1970 Census. At this time, additional enumeration tracts were added in a clear attempt to identify those areas with concentrations of non-white residents. In particular, a new enumeration tract was drawn that was composed of 77.7% Black residents, whereas other Pomona tracts hovered at around 3%.

SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOLS

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, Latinos and African Americans living in Pomona and Southern California sought greater inclusivity and protested segregation. World War II served as a catalyst to a more aggressive movement for demanded equal rights. For example, Mexican American Calendario Mendoza, who had been denied a teaching position prior to the war, remembered a changed attitude when he again tried to secure a teaching job in Pomona after the war. He recalled:

I said, “Here I am, I’m back again!” [laughs] And, you know this time I was a little more assertive I guess, because I said to myself, “My gosh, I went into World War II, and I was overseas for two years, and served with George Patton’s third army as an infantryman attached to a tank and battalion, and... if they tell me they are not going to give me the job this time, they’re going to find the activist in me coming out.” [laughs] So, things had changed by that time, and they did give me a job.³⁷³

In the 1960s, local schools were a great cause of unrest for the African American and Latino communities in Pomona. Because of housing segregation, the city’s elementary schools were sharply divided into Black and white dominated schools. North San Antonio was described as 91% Black; Lexington Elementary School was 52.8% Black; and Arroyo Elementary School was 51% Black. Palomares Junior High School, however, drew from these schools as well as Yorba Elementary School and Harrison Elementary School, where the students were predominantly white.³⁷⁴ As one student explained, “We’ve never seen a Black man until we were in junior high school.”³⁷⁵ Lack of integration at the high school level was even more pronounced. The Palomares Multi-Racial Parents Committee was formed to address the issues. By early 1970, the District’s enrollment was 65% white students, 17.6% Black students, and 15.7% students with Spanish surnames.³⁷⁶

In 1966, representatives of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Mothers’ League

³⁷¹ “Pomona Council Told to Expect More Picketing,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1970.

³⁷² Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 275.

³⁷³ Mendoza interview, May 6, 1994 as recorded in Garcia, 234.

³⁷⁴ “Pomona School Board Faces Student Unrest,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 1969, SG_A1.

³⁷⁵ “Pomona School Board Faces Student Unrest,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 1969, SG_A1.

³⁷⁶ “Pomona School Board Faces Student Unrest,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 1969, SG_A1.

picketed the Pomona Unified School District, demanding the district transfer vice principal Margaret McCleery of Marshall Junior High School for racial prejudice. According to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, McCleery had blamed a Black girl for fighting with a white girl and had her arrested by the police. Protestors outside of the Pomona Unified School District building on Garey Avenue sang “We Shall Overcome,” and held signs that read “Stop False Arrests,” “How Long Has This Been Going On?,” and “Banish Jim Crow from Our Schools.”³⁷⁷



Protestors Outside of Pomona Unified School District at 800 S. Garey Avenue, c. 1966. *Historical Society of Pomona Valley*.

During the late 1960s, the discrimination and education inequality for Black students inspired parent groups to appear before the Pomona Board of Education to demand the integration of schools. A Citizens Committee on Integration was established, and a recommendation was made on bussing programs between white dominated and Black dominated schools.

By June of 1969, frustration had reached a pinnacle, and students protested for three days at Pomona High School and Palomares Junior High School. Both students and police officers were injured.³⁷⁸ In July, the Board of Education voted against the plan developed by the Citizens Committee on Integration. In November 1969, Detective Richard Hill of the Pomona Police Department was assigned to Pomona High School as a “resource officer” for the students.

The Black community was not the only group facing discrimination in Pomona. Latinos also protested the inequality of the Pomona Unified School District. This activity was part of the much broader Chicano Civil Rights Movement, or *El Movimiento*. The 1960s and 1970s was a

³⁷⁷ “Picketers Seek Transfer of Pomona School Vice Principal,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 31, 1966, 173; Historical Society of Pomona Valley, “On Telling the Whole Story,” April 2, 2021, <https://www.pomonahistorical.org/post/on-telling-the-whole-story> (accessed April 15, 2022).

³⁷⁸ “Solutions to Flareups Under Study in Pomona,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1969, 153.

pivotal era for Latinos in Southern California. During this period, Latinos mobilized with “increasing resolve to claim their rights and assert their place in American life.”³⁷⁹ The classroom became one of the major arenas where young Chicanos and Chicanas addressed systemic discrimination. During the climax of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, Mexican American students demanded equal educational opportunities, sought to resist Anglo-American culture, and asserted a unique cultural identity and ethnic pride. By 1971, approximately 16% of Pomona’s population was Latino.³⁸⁰

On September 16, 1969, 450 Chicano students walked out of Pomona Unified School District classes and picketed at the school district’s administration building. A little more than a year after the 1968 High School Blowouts in Los Angeles, the Pomona residents’ demands were similar: representation in faculty and more curricula on Mexican-American culture. In the Spring of 1970, *La Raza Unida de Pomona*, a coalition of the city’s Chicano organizations, again protested the District’s use of classroom materials that perpetuated stereotypes, and the lack of Latino school administrators.

A unified mission appears to have temporarily eased tensions in Pomona, but after police arrived at a peaceful gathering in Sharkey Park (present-day Tony Cerda Park) on May 31, 1970, protests again erupted in the city. In the ensuing days, the Latino population staged several peaceful protests, condemning police brutality, a lack of educational opportunities, and under-funded city services in Latino neighborhoods.

David Ochoa, a lead activist for *La Raza Unida de Pomona* was joined by other activists including Ron Gonzales, chairman of United Mexican American Students at Ganesha High School; Mike Quinonez, head of the Pomona office of the Mexican American Opportunities Foundation; and representatives from the Mexican American Political Association, Association of Mexican American Educators, and members of the Human Relations Council. Ochoa went on to become Hispanic Affairs Coordinator for the Democratic National Convention, before returning to Pomona in 1977.

IMMIGRATION

The end of the Vietnam War in 1975 produced a large wave of immigrants from South Vietnam to the U.S. The first wave included over 100,000 high-skilled and well-educated Vietnamese who had been friendly to U.S. interests during the war and were airlifted out of the country. In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed the Indochina Migration and Refugee Act that granted the refugees special status to enter the country. Most of this wave of immigrants came to California and Texas.

In the 1970s, two important sponsors were instrumental in bringing the first groups of refugees to Pomona. Gerald Martin, Director of Southern California Minority Capital Corporation arranged for Vietnamese refugees to be housed in the Sunflower Apartments on Holly Way, just south of Phillips Boulevard. The first group arrived in September of 1975. Martin organized a gardening business to provide employment for refugees. However, the plans went awry, and Martin’s

³⁷⁹ GPA Consulting and Beck Nicolaides, *Latino Los Angeles Historic Context Statement*, 23.

³⁸⁰ Ricci Lothrop, 118.

refugees ended up with no jobs, no medical care, in debt for necessities, and in unfurnished apartments. Most were forced to accept government assistance.

B. E. Tsagris, a professor at California State University, Fullerton, sponsored an additional group to be housed in vacant apartments in South Pomona. Subsequent groups of refugees resided in the La Fiesta Apartments on N. Garey Avenue and on Angela Street in South Pomona. Still other refugees were sponsored by local churches or families. This migration was quickly evident in the city's public schools: Asian students rose from 186 to 345 between 1975 and 1976.³⁸¹

³⁸¹ "White Flight from Pomona Continues," *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, January 4, 1976, 1.